

New Member Program

**Mentor
Guide**

Faculty Association

Suffolk Community College

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The Story of the Mentor

The story of the Mentor comes from Homer's Odyssey. When Odysseus, King of Ithaca, leaves to fight in the Trojan War, he entrusts his household to Mentor, who serves as teacher and overseer to Odysseus' son, Telemachus.

After the war, Odysseus is condemned to wander vainly for 10 years in his attempt to return home. In time, Telemachus now grown, goes in search of his father. Athena, Goddess of War, patroness of the arts and industry, assumes the form of Mentor and accompanies Telemachus on his quest.

Eventually, father and son are reunited and together they cast down would-be usurpers of Odysseus's throne and of Telemachus's birthright. In time, the word mentor became synonymous with trusted advisor, friend teacher, and wise person. History offers many examples of helpful mentoring relationships such as Socrates and Plato, Haydn and Beethoven, and Freud and Jung.

Mentoring is a fundamental form of human development where one person invest time, energy and personal know-how assisting the growth and ability of another person.

*History and legend record deeds of princes and kings, but in a democracy each of us also has a birthright, which is **to be all that we can be**. Mentors are the special people in our lives who, through their deeds and work, help us to move toward fulfilling that potential. (Adapted From Mentoring, Gordon F. Shea)*

Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College New Member Mentoring Program

Statement of Purpose

The New Member Mentoring Program focuses on identifying professional and work-related needs of new members by pairing them up with faculty members who will serve as positive role models, guides, and supports. The mentors' responsibility is to be available to field any questions the new members may have with their experience at SCCC. The mentors will serve as a connecting force among the new members, the college community, and the Faculty Association. The primary goal of the Mentoring Program is to instill a sense of community for these new members via the Faculty Association. The program will consist of activities and events designed to assist the new members with their adjustment to college life and to introduce them to union activity.

New Member Mentoring Program

Objectives:

1. To provide a support network connecting new members with the college community and the Faculty Association.
2. To provide positive, academic unionist role models for the new members.
3. To encourage new members to participate in both college and union-related activities.

Role and Responsibility of Mentors

The role of the mentor will be to assist the new member in undergoing a successful professional experience. Even though the role of the mentor is a voluntary position, there are certain responsibilities, including but not limited to the following:

1. Serve as an appropriate role model, guide, support;
2. Assist new member in answering their inquiries;
3. Serve as a resource person, making referrals to appropriate offices;
4. Serve as a liaison to the Faculty Association;
5. Attend new member activities and workshops with assigned new member;
6. Promote a positive, unionist awareness.

Busting a Few Myths about Mentoring

Myth 1: *Mentoring is something a mentor does to a protege.*

In fact, mentoring is not something anyone can do to someone else. Mentoring is a condition that arises out of an effective relationship, and is one that takes time to build. Mentoring happens when proteges trust, feel accepted by, and view their mentors as role models.

Myth 2: *A good mentor can literally save a career.*

This is a harmful misperception that leads to frustration when mentors don't see quick results. Mentoring, at its best, is a modest intervention. The most caring and effective mentor is still only one of many influences in a person's life. It's an important influence, but not one that should be expected to bring about radical change. Also, many of the positive effects reaped from mentoring may not be seen for many years.

A Good Mentor. . .

- **Is there when you need him or her**
- **Gives constructive criticism**
- **Is a good listener**
- **Is well-networked**
- **Is a role model**
- **Praises in public**
- **Criticizes in private**
- **Is actively engaged**
- **Promotes a notion that a position at SCCC is a career, not just a job**
- **Is proactive**
- **Is accessible**
- **Responds in a timely manner**
- **Can communicate well**
- **Is respectful**
- **Can be trusted**
- **Is compassionate and understanding**
- **Puts the “union face” on work experience**

Some Tips for Effective Mentoring¹

1. Meet the new member before or on opening day.
2. Establish a warm, genuine and open relationship. Be yourself and allow new members to be themselves.
3. Care about new members as individuals by showing empathy, understanding and respect.
4. Establish rapport by remembering personal information about the new member.
5. Trust and respect are the foundations on which mentorships are built. If something is discussed in confidence, it must remain confidential.
6. Don't use sessions with new members to simply talk to them—take time to be a good listener.
7. Be available.
8. Provide accurate information. Don't expect to have all the answers. When in doubt, refer to the FA office.
9. Help your new faculty member access resources such as media academic skills center materials and library resources and expand support networks. Also, refer to resources in...shhh... *The Underground*.
10. Help members make their own decisions.

¹ Crockett, David S. *Advising Skills, Techniques, and Resources*. Iowa City, Iowa: The American College Testing Program, 1988.

11. Focus on new members' strengths and potentials rather than limitations.
12. Encourage new member's progress toward professional development and realistic goals.
13. Don't be critical of other faculty or staff to new members.
14. Encourage new members to attend activities and accompany them when possible.
15. Don't assume the new member knows or understands the issues of the union or the college, for that matter.

When the semester is over, don't abandon new members. Your mentoring skills may be needed in the second semester. New members will be invited to new member-related activities for a full academic year.

Suggested Areas for Discussion with New Members

- Faculty Association Website
- *The WORD*
- *The Underground Guide*
- Physical layout of buildings and campus
- Email, listserves, and web access
- Faculty/department meetings
- Course outlines
- Office hours
- Grade and attendance reporting system
- Commonly used forms
 - Observation/evaluation forms
 - Promotion forms
- Union culture
- Salary schedule
- Paid and unpaid leaves
- Overload
- Ordering textbooks and desk copies
- Campus libraries
- Pre-registration

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“A Community of Union Professionals”

September 2018