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Cultivating a Culture of Mutuality:
The Role of Mentorship in Emerging Professional Development

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Abstract

All universities report being committed to meaningful teaching and scholarship, and supporting faculty in their professional development. Arguably, this commitment is particularly present for a new hire or professor in her early career. This article represents the experiences of a group of first year faculty with a particular focus on transition into a new working environment during our initial year at Lesley University. This article argues that mentorship programs are crucial to the success of faculty development throughout the course of one's career, and that the University is responsible for helping to create a "culture of care" by supporting mentorship initiatives at the systemic level.

Cultivating a Culture of Mutuality:

The Role of Mentorship in Emerging Professional Development

Introduction

All universities report being committed to meaningful teaching and scholarship, and supporting faculty in their professional development. Arguably, this commitment is particularly present for a new hire or professor in her early career. This experience can be very positive for the emerging professional, because inherent in any “educational institution” are myriad emotional responses to the demands of academia, which can be particularly intense in the first years of teaching. For this reason, support is essential for cultivating a successful transition into the institution’s academic culture.

This article represents the experiences of a small group of incoming faculty during our first year at Lesley University. The article explores the relationship between mentorship, both formal and informal, and our professional identity development. These relationships are explored by drawing from our specific experiences in formally developing new faculty orientation meetings with the support of the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship (CTLS) and the Dean of Faculty (DOF), and informally coordinating peer support among incoming faculty. The article will also explore how the responses to what is immediately present activates emotional reactions, which can impact the individual personally and professionally, positively and negatively, which ultimately affects the institution as well. This article will advocate for the creation of formalized mentorship programs throughout the University because these relationships are crucial to

the success of faculty development throughout the course of faculty members' careers. These programs are a part of the University's responsibility for helping to cultivate a "culture of mutuality" by supporting mentorship initiatives at the systemic level (Sorcinelli & Yun, 2009).

The premise of a formalized mentorship program is such that a new faculty member will have increased personal and professional success when such a program provides access to advice, consultation, and assistance (University of Alaska, Fairbanks, 2011). For those of us who have entered this profession at a pivotal time in higher education in the United States, navigating this new world has particular challenges which are exponentially affecting what it means to be a "professor." For this reason, mentorship is crucial in supporting professional identity development. Current challenges for new professors include: 1) the expansion of pedagogical methods from information delivery in person; and 2) learning fostered through the expanded use of technology and multiple modes of teaching, such as active learning, online discussions, virtual classrooms and blended learning environments (Marek, 2009). While these challenges are shared with professors at all stages of professional identity development, new professors are particularly vulnerable in negotiating the multiple variables in their first year. Cultivating professional integrity and work ethic in a way that is sustainable, renewable and rewarding is therefore crucial for longevity in the field. Because of an almost universally shared first year experience, it is important for formalized mentorship to move away from traditional hierarchical models and towards a culture of mutuality and "good enough" teaching.

There is a reciprocal relationship that can occur between mentor and mentee, and

among peers, that challenges the traditional notions of mentorship. In this article, we will focus on mentorship in its more general and basic form to support the success of the individual and the institution. Each one needs the other; we see this circular relationship evolving into more of a reciprocal one. However, mentorship must be valued and rewarded at the systemic level (Phillips et al. 2010). Through our autoethnographic accounts, this essay aims to provide a pathway to create a collaborative mentoring environment.

The current article reflects on the experiences of a group of three, firstyear faculty during our initial year at Lesley University. Specifically, the article will explore the following:

- 1) the role of mentorship, both formal and informal, in relation to our professional identity development
- 2) the development of new faculty orientation sessions based on our first year experience
- 3) our professional interactions within the educational environment
- 4) the emotional reactions triggered by the above experiences in terms of how they impacted us directly as individuals, and therefore impacted the broader institution.

In conclusion, our autoethnographic accounts based on our first year experiences will advocate for the creation of a culture of mutuality through the formation of mentorship programs at multiple levels (division, college, and university) (Sorcinelli and Yun, 2009).

Experiencing Transition

Individual Experiences. The following are autoethnographic excerpts from journals that chronicled our experiences as first year faculty at Lesley University. These journals were recreated retrospectively based on personal reflections, interactions with

our small group of new faculty members, and through the planning of new faculty orientation sessions. They represent our individuals and group experiences to the best of our recollection.

____'s *Story*

My name is _____, and I am reflecting on my first year experience as a new faculty member at Lesley University. I came to Lesley University from my first job as an Assistant Professor at _____ University. In addition, I graduated from the University of _____ approximately five years ago. These pieces of information are important to the reader's understanding of the lens through which I view my first year experience. Both the University of _____ and _____ University are substantially larger schools than Lesley University. They have upwards of 40,000 and 20,000 students respectively, and are public institutions. Lesley University was my first experience with a smaller, Liberal Arts based, private university. The following narrative describes my thoughts and feelings with regard to the time immediately preceding the beginning of the Fall 2013 semester and the beginning of the 2013—2014 academic year.

Alone. Alone is how I felt when I first arrived in Cambridge last July. I had left the comfort of my social work department at _____ University (____U) to begin anew at Lesley University. All of the welcoming and togetherness I felt when I was at ____U was non-existent when I got here. It was summer, and everyone was gone. I had been hired and given a set of three courses to teach for the fall semester. I had been sent the syllabi for these courses, but was given no further instruction. I

was told that there was an orientation at the end of August, but it was July 1st. I felt isolated – without much personal connection to my new place of employment.

What I did have were questions ...

What was I supposed to do?

How did I order books?

How did I get on blackboard?

How did folks teach at Lesley?

What were the students like?

What was the faculty like?

Do folks hang out?

Where are my classrooms?

What are the rules?

Are there rules?

Why am I being left to my own devices?

WHAT DO I DO?

I was fortunate in the respect that I had moved in with my boyfriend who had been in Boston for two years. Socially, I had some guidance... a personal touch... a human connection. Therefore, I used those summer months to orient myself to my new city. However, I was still very much in the dark and unable to begin the orientation process to my new University.

I spent the next six weeks developing the syllabi for the three courses I had been assigned. I called book distributors to get a copy of the texts that had been previously used - these were three new courses for me. I had taught similar courses, but not THESE courses, and not at this school. After spending these weeks in course development, I was sent an email basically telling me that I had been wasting my time on one of the courses because it had a pre-developed syllabus that everyone who was teaching this course would be using - that would have been nice to know. I was also informed that these professors had been communicating all summer, but I was somehow left out of the loop - those emails surely would have gone a long way to helping me establish a connection, any connection, at Lesley. These connections would eventually be established once the semester began, but until then I was a bit adrift - isolated.

In retrospect, here is what would have been helpful:

1) A contact person. Specifically, a peer mentor of sorts who could have taken me to lunch, shown me around, and told me about the things and people I needed to know going into this new work environment.

2) A departmental care package. Ok, this sounds a bit schmaltzy, however, one of the things that made me feel immediately comfortable at my previous school was a package I received soon after I was hired. This package included the textbooks for my courses, the syllabi for my course, the faculty handbook, the student handbook, and some notes from other professors who had taught the courses I

would be teaching. This package did not take long to assemble, but it sure went a long way towards making my transition smooth and making me feel a part of "the family".

These two things were the key to making my previous transition smooth, and, in turn, to making this one rocky.

____'s Story

Prior to joining Lesley University in Fall 2013, I had worked at three academic institutions as a visiting assistant professor. They include both small sized liberal arts colleges and a large research university. Having worked at different types of institutions, I had a set of expectations that a new hire would experience upon joining Lesley University. While there were some commonalities across these institutions, the excerpts from my journal below focuses on my own experiences and the events that were unique compared to the prior experiences in my academic career.

My new position as an assistant professor at Lesley University officially started on September 1st 2013. Prior to the official starting date, I was very anxious to get oriented myself as much as I could by getting in touch with the chair and the administrative staff. My chair and I discussed about the courses I would teach in June and several of my new colleagues whom I had not yet met kindly sent me their syllabus. I was not very clear about something like ordering books, the date of new faculty orientation, and setting up emails. I mistakenly assumed that I would receive a "big packet" in mail right around in July. I imagined that the

“big packet” would inform me about the things that I was not cleared about. Again, my mistake was that I passively kept waiting and waiting, not being proactive at all. By the last week of August, I finally realized that something was wrong. “The new semester is starting in a couple of weeks and I still have not received ‘the packet,’” I thought. I finally contacted the Human Resources. They told me that I should call the IT to set my ID and password for my email account. On the same day, I was able to set up my account and open my email account for the first time. There were quite few emails in my inbox already. As I looked through them, I noticed the invitation email to the new faculty orientation. “Oh no, it is today and it has already started.” I was only able to attend the 2nd half of the orientation...

I felt behind already before I started the new job. I felt that everyone else knew what to do to start the new job at Lesley. The truth is that this was not my first job. I had had experiences as a newbie at a couple of other colleges before. I thought that I knew how to be a new faculty—attending a series of orientation meetings and learning from senior faculty. I quickly learned that every institution has different culture. Based on my observation and talking to the other new faculty, I eventually learned that we not only needed to actively seek for information and advice, we also needed to proactively create a space where the faculty at all levels can play appropriate roles to help build supportive environment for teaching, research, and services. A number of new faculty and senior faculty members, then, started to discuss some possible activities we could

organize during the end of Fall 2013. We decided to plan a series of orientation meetings during the spring semester

Meanwhile, I attended every division, school, and faculty assembly meetings as possible to learn about the university structure, the committees, the issues the university faces, and how the administration and faculty work on those issues. There was quite a lot to comprehend and felt lost. Honestly, I understood what my students felt when they say “ It is too much. I can’t deal with it anymore.” As someone who did not grow up in the United States, I worry about me not understanding the items covered in the classes and meetings because of my English ability. I realize the same fear is still very alive when I attended those meeting feeling lost and behind. The fear made me feel more isolated. The fear then coincided with another layer of fear that I might possibly lose this job I just got. In this economy, there is an inflation of PhDs and so little jobs available that I have, like many others, moved around several temporary jobs before I got here. Because of this fear, I still felt and feel like I am hear on the temporally basis and I need to look for another job before the end of the academic year. I am sure many of us felt isolated, although the source of it might be different. I am also sure that this feeling is not unique to the new faculty members. The senior faculty may be feeling some pressure as well.

 ’s *Story*

My name is _____, and I came to Lesley University for my first core faculty member appointment after completing my PhD internationally, having lived in Europe for the greater part of the last decade and completing two master degrees.

I conceptualized these journal entries in response to interdisciplinary conversations occurring at Lesley University in Cambridge, MA during my first year as an Assistant Professor in the Expressive Therapies Division of Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences (GSASS). The first of the two main threads in this essay explores the intersectional spaces of my professional self, and includes how *who I am* is in conflict with *who I think I am supposed to be* in the academia. The second explores how I've struggled to find a balance while maintaining mindful awareness of these tensions. While I will acknowledge the influence of mentoring on my first year experience, my journey explores the complex, fascinating, and real dynamics I continue to experience at the time this manuscript was submitted for publication. The process of developing a professional identity is not easily addressed by mentoring alone but also requires a new paradigm of individual reflection on *who I am becoming as a teacher*.

Before stepping into an academic position at Lesley, I lived and worked as an artist and clinician, both in the US and abroad. Over the previous decade, I was used to living in the liminal space of these worlds. The thought of teaching in my field at the graduate level was both exhilarating and intimidating. I changed my life, yet again, to accept the new challenge.

During my first year of teaching, I kept a journal. The words and images I wrote revealed a process of adjustment I was not anticipating and represented both my

individual process and a parallel process of what I was witnessing and perceiving in the collegial academic environment. Helplessness, isolation, and exploitation, were the main themes that emerged over the course of the year in my journal writing. I was shocked. These words, saturated with negative meanings, were so unlike me or who I thought I was. They pushed me up against the walls of identity I had already built forcing me to break through and rebuild them in new ways. Initially, I was eager to re-frame these feelings of discomfort and find new language to process my understanding of my initial experiences in academia. I felt guilty that I was anything but grateful for the opportunity afforded to me. Not a stranger to discomfort and uncomfortable or “hard” conversations, my struggle to tolerate these feelings were a testament that something was off, both inside of me and in my new found environment.

I rationalized this discomfort was because I had always been committed to changing the conversation, and not one to ascribe to dominant narratives. I consider myself an advocate, for myself and others, and have dedicated my professional career to the mission of voicing. However, I quickly realized two major obstacles in even getting these conversations started, both within myself and with others.

First, the new role of professor was difficult for me. I continue to be ambivalent about how this new role influences me; the artist and clinician in me are at odds with the role of the “expert.” Secondly, I have entered into a professional space

which is tantamount to living in a blended family; the Lesley academic system, was different from any institutional bureaucracy I had ever experienced. Having lived in Italy for a decade, this statement is significant. Navigating the greater system of the six schools under the umbrella of Lesley University seemed to be, at best, like a farce wrapped in a comedy wrapped in an improvisation.

So, in the face of these challenges, I remembered what I do best; I began to investigate the ambivalence and humanize the institutional systems and all the players in it. I used the philosophical stance and principles of cultural humility and practice of compassionate creativity to formalize a call to action for myself; this included a robust critical self-inquiry of my emerging professional identity, which shares and is responsive to the multiple selves and spaces within which I live and practice; artistry, clinical and, now, pedagogy.

In an attempt to maintain personal and professional integrity, this reflection, is my pro-active response to current developments within my academic division in _____. Since the institution is currently conducting a self study/audit of its programs this year, I decided I would do the same for myself. I am sharing this self examination with my greater academic community in order to hold myself accountable to my formulating ideas and feelings with the hope realizing my goals and aspirations in the culture of academia. This is the first in a series of reflections I have been working on.

While I knew I idealized academic culture, I was surprised at how difficult this first year has been for me. While I have overcome many challenges this year, and demonstrated success and competency, I am still left with an unsettled feeling of “making it through hell” only to arrive at a place of “pedagogical purgatory”; a waiting space of teaching, meetings, presenting at conferences, being rejected, publishing, being rejected. I underestimated how negotiating this “new space” or “new reality” would challenge my core beliefs and continue to activate my curiosity in who I am constantly becoming, especially as I am now responsible for teaching the next generation of expressive arts therapists

I realized the weight of responsibility of training the next generation of practitioners was something for which I was not prepared. As a new professor, recently defending my dissertation in 2011, I had invested my entire adult life up until that point in the study and practice of my work. Shifting gears to encompass teaching activated many feelings associated with my own past and how I got here.

In order to follow my dream of using the arts in multiple ways to help facilitate human expression, I, as the eldest daughter of immigrant, working class parents with limited education and English language ability, put myself through school, working multiple jobs and taking out student loans. In order to achieve “the dream job,” this academic position in the pioneering academic institution in the United States for _____, I invested approximately \$170,000 in my training with multiple graduate degrees. Before 2008, this was actually expected, and

encouraged, since my mentors advised me my investment would “pay off.”

I know I am one of the lucky ones. No one can foreclose my “professional home” of brain/body/spirit essential to my field, where we use the “self as instrument.” My first “mortgage” is at a fixed rate, which, if I can maintain my payments, will forgive a final balance after 15 years of repayment. Before working in higher education, this choice was just “one more bill” to pay; stepping stones I walked on, month to month, on the path towards my dreams for a better tomorrow. When I accepted this position, it would be my personal choice of taking out student loans which would be the main source of emotional conflict.

I struggled with guilt and rage against the system of higher education in this country. How could I encourage individuals to follow their dream at such a cost? My guilt and shame regarding my choices began to color my belief in the “work” and the innocuous classism I perceived began to inform how I approached my teaching. I noticed conversations about socioeconomic status were few and far between faculty, but all students could talk about. And they were talking to me about how much they were struggling financially.

I experienced strong transference reactions to major issues like the use (and care of) art materials in our program to more minor issues like fellow faculty bringing organic snacks to faculty meetings or going out to dinner to decompress in Harvard Square. I was now making three times more than my father ever made,

working in my dream job, and living paycheck to paycheck. I aligned more with the student experience because of this and understood this was informing my teaching and emerging professional identity in academia. And I wanted to understand how.

Initially, I was greatly upset by my reaction and how it colored my first year experience. How could I put a price on helping the future of my profession and teaching vital professional skills like building the capacity for empathetic connections; role modeling integrating emotion regulation; strengthening capacity to support others and tolerate and work through frustration, anger, and sadness; addressing the shame dynamics that keep people in our broken mental health system; lowering the rates of violence in our communities; using the arts to markedly raise compliance with treatment goals; and daring to believe in the power of human spirit, human connection, and human agency in some of the most marginalized populations while using the arts. I had lived for 15 years before, encouraging individuals (and myself) to get in touch with our humanity. However, initially fear-based, punish-and-shame tactics of the academic system prevailed in my perceived experience and it forced me to take a hard look at classism in my field.

(Insert 1-2 general, transitional sentences here to move on to the next section.)

Developing A Culture of Mutuality

In the spirit of developing a culture of mutuality, the following is a combination of all of our personal reflections. Together, we created a set of new faculty orientation sessions that reflected our needs. The stories will still be told, at times, from an “I” perspective, however, the specific author of individual passages will not be identified. We thought it only fitting that this piece of the reflection transforms our individual experiences into an amalgamation, uniting our experiences into a collective whole.

Our Story

When I started the fall semester of my first year at Lesley, contacts were made and questions began to be answered - with more questions. Faculty were available for conversations, and were more than willing to answer my questions. I realized quickly that I needed a *pedagogical tether*. I was aware of the parallel process in my own field, but this new context stirred me up and I needed “supervision” to understand and monitor my transference. At Lesley, I had the opportunity for formal and informal mentoring, which I took advantage of, and it significantly improved my understanding of myself in this new work. I also discovered that I was still seeking the answers to a number of different questions, such as:

- 1) What do I need to concentrate on for contract renewal?
- 2) When can I go up for promotion?
- 3) How do I find out about the student and faculty resources on campus?
- 4) What is the function of committees on campus?

- 5) Should we be on committees during our first year?
- 6) Is service restricted to the Lesley community or do we need to be engaged with the greater Boston community?

I had other more seemingly direct questions that were answerable, but the above questions received varying responses depending on whom I spoke with and how long they had been employed at Lesley.

The atmosphere was at once both incredibly friendly and incredibly secretive. Secretive is probably a dramatic word to use, but that is how it seemed due to the inability to not get a direct and consistent answer to any of the above questions. Further, the questions that were "answerable" were those I didn't think I should have to ask. I didn't understand why I didn't have a copy of the faculty handbook, why I didn't know what was going on at Faculty Assembly, and why I never seemed to be consistently on any email list - these are just a few examples that come to mind.

During this time, a few new faculty members began meeting on Friday evenings after work. It was incredibly helpful to blow off steam and hear about other people's experiences. I wasn't alone! I wasn't the only one! I suppose you could categorize these realizations as "misery loves company" however, I thought of them as my life vest. They got me off the island of isolation and made me realize that although I was floating in a sea of confusion, I had a life vest, and I wasn't

floating alone...also, we wouldn't be simply floating for long. A few of us were about to start swimming.

We knew that ____ was so willing to work with us, so we just had to write up a letter that contains a list of several ideas for the new faculty orientation sessions. During the process of drafting the letter, we have experienced a bit of disagreements among the new faculty members. A few were worried that stepping up to create something new would have a negative impact on us. They were reluctant to proceed with the process only supported by us and Dean of Faculty. They thought that our division directors should know what we were doing. Several of us exchanged our opinions while acknowledging and respecting our colleagues' point of views. We sent out the letter to ___. I was not sure where this would take us, but was very excited to feel that it was our first collaborative task. The letter was received well by ___ and we planned a meeting in the beginning of the spring semester.

This meeting was the beginning of a new part of our journey. The DOF was the link for which we had been searching this entire time. She was more than willing to sit, sometimes for hours, and answer our questions. Through these discussions and with the inclusion of another new faculty member, we worked with DOF to re-establish information sessions for new faculty, and anyone else who was interested in attending. These sessions were based on all the questions we had and the DOF's previous experiences with new faculty. She let us know that these

sessions previously existed but had ceased due to lack of interest. This lack of interest did not derail our efforts. These meetings were important, even if they only educated the three of us. Without realizing it, we were attempting to produce a cultural shift at Lesley University - one of transparency, one of information dissemination, and one of faculty community.

A number of new faculty members raised some great ideas for future new faculty orientation sessions. While the full day orientation in the beginning of the academic year provides a great opportunity to be introduced about the university and meet your peers, scratching surface of many different items was overwhelming that made me nervous. We thought that organizing monthly meetings for the new faculty members would have positive effects not only on the new faculty but also on the entire university community. I was not sure exactly whether we had a long term vision then, but I sure was eager to start doing something that would help us move forward as long as there were a few others that I could work with.

We brainstormed some possible themes for the orientations and planned several orientation dates. The following orientation sessions were planned and executed over a three month period:

- 1) Advising – We invited representatives from the advising center to present general and specific information about the advising process. The

representatives provided us with general information about the advising process, and information specific to the individual majors. In addition, Mary Beth Lawton presented information specific to the Education major to provide us with a general understanding of the needs of their students.

- 2) Student Services – We invited representatives from the counseling center, disability services, and the career resource center to present information about the many student services on campus. Specifically, we discussed the usefulness of these services on campus and how faculty members can assist students in accessing these programs.
- 3) Rank and Promotion & Faculty Development – We invited representatives from the Rank and Promotion committee to present information pertaining to our paths to promotion. They presented the process of applying for promotion and answered individual questions. Further, we invited a faculty member to discuss the process of grant application and sabbatical. She presented her own research experiences and answered our questions about how to effectively organize our time in an effort to ensure the continuation and development of our research agenda.

The orientations were meant for newer faculty members, but I felt that we also made an important connection with senior faculty by inviting them as “experts” on their particular topic. The senior faculty members who participated in the orientation meetings were very enthusiastic about informing us on important

topics. This was an important possible outcome of organizing the orientations. Yes, the topics covered were of the particular interests for the new faculty, but I felt that we took a small step in creating a sense of community. It is so easy for newer faculty to feel isolated, so creating a space where the faculty members of all levels interact is crucial when developing a supportive environment. Creating such an environment is key to mutual mentoring.

One of the remarkable outcomes of organizing the orientations was that we formed a Peer Mentoring Committee. This committee comprises four junior faculty members and is advised by the DOF. Through a series of meetings, we developed a plan for a formalized peer-mentoring program. This program will work with new faculty starting the summer before their first semester throughout their first academic year. The program goals for the Faculty Peer Mentor Program are the following:

- 1) career progress and professional work
- 2) demystifying departmental, college, and university culture
- 3) fostering important connections
- 4) advocating for both junior and senior faculty interests
- 5) fostering intentional and mindful reflection regarding professional identity and behavior
- 6) creating a supportive environment that encourages new faculty retention

7) increasing meaningful collaborative experiences, which positively impacts university culture.

At the end of the 2013-14 academic year, we created small groups of incoming faculty and assigned them a committee member as a peer mentor. The committee member acts as a “point person” to answer questions and provide an orientation to the campus and Lesley community. Throughout the course of the academic year, the peer mentor will be responsible for organizing small gatherings, touching base via email, and working with the committee to organize and execute orientation sessions – similar to those previously discussed. We anticipate that the Peer Mentoring Committee will become a formalized University committee. This formalization will allow for the continued development of a culture of mutuality at Lesley University.

Discussion

New faculty members enter their new institutions with “baggage” – expectations, questions, and anxiety. This article unpacked the baggage through our autoethnographic accounts. Adjusting ourselves to a work environment with new expectations in teaching, research, and services has been challenging, and when these expectations are not clearly communicated, we often feel alone and isolated. Early-career faculty seek support in getting oriented to the institutions, developing teaching skills and a research plan, working towards promotion, building professional relationship with faculty, and balancing work and life (Eddy and Gaston-Gayles, 2008). Institutions of higher

education then, should strive for creating a productive environment for faculty in order to promote their professional development. Instituting a systematic mentoring program, we argue, benefits not only early-career faculty, but also faculty at all levels and institutions in creating supportive working environment.

Promoting a culture of mutual care in higher education involves a new, flexible approach to mentoring where new and early-career faculty are encouraged to seek mentors from multiples areas, including: 1) peers; 2) senior faculty; 3) administrators; 4) external mentors; and 5) writing coaches (Sofcinelli and Yun, 2009). Prior research suggests that a need for mentorship in skill-based guidance (e.g., teaching, writing/publishing, and program development) varies across faculty across different academic ranks (Blood et al., 2012). Therefore, developing an effective mentoring system that meets varying faculty needs is desirable, which, in turn, benefits institutions' retention rates through the creation of supportive working environments (Girves et al., 2005). Focusing on the development of a culture of mutuality among members of a university community – regardless of positions and ranking – fosters a sense of collaboration and an opportunity to build networks for guidance (Hammer et al., 2014). Thus, the benefit of creating a mentorship system with a specific focus of mutuality is reciprocal (Schrodt et al., 2003).

We have now entered year two of our academic journey at Lesley University. We have now located, both formally and informally, like-minded faculty across campus. These academic tethers helped organize our experience in a way that honored our personal histories while assisting in the cultivation of our emergent professional identities. We have learned from our first year experiences and will continue to use them to build a

culture of mutuality at Lesley University. We hope to continue fostering this culture by helping new faculty members through the Peer Mentoring Committee and the creation of ongoing faculty orientations. Bringing a level of formalization and consistency to the mentorship process can only work to sustain an evolving culture of mutuality on our campus.

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