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Onboard, don't orient, new faculty

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The good news: The job outlook for college faculty is excellent (US BLS, 2018). Employment is projected to grow about 15 percent from 2016 to 2026—a rate "much faster than the average for all occupations." The bad news: About 500,000 faculty positions will be filled by highly educated, accomplished people with *no* preparation for most of the tasks that comprise faculty work. Although a small number will have had some prior experience, the "vast majority" according to Fink (1992) will be "people who recently completed their doctoral degrees."

New faculty are expected to be ready to teach and engage in service, have an active scholarship agenda, and be able to adjust to the institution's *unique academic life* (Schönwetter and Nazarko, 2004). Is this realistic? Fink (1992) answers this question bluntly: "Of course not."

For decades, institutions have offered orientation programs for new hires. They typically run from one to three days just before beginning of the semester and include a welcome lunch, the introduction of key individuals and resources, and information about faculty responsibilities (Morin and Ashton, 2004). Many also include information about the learning management system used. In addition, departments may provide a mentor to help with the faculty member's transition. Genrich and Pappas (1997) identified two clear issues with typical orientation programs: new faculty receive "an inordinate amount of information during their first two days of employment" and they feel such an "intense need to prepare" for their classes that it takes "precedence over learning the orientation content."

Organizations of all types (including colleges) have begun rethink their orientation efforts and many have developed onboarding processes. While orientation is an event or stage of familiarization and welcome, onboarding is a strategic process that anticipates a newcomer's needs and systematically provides the training and support required for a new hire fit in and be a successful. Put another way, onboarding is a process through which *outsiders* become *insiders*. It's time to develop effective onboarding programs for all new faculty.

This session has three goals. Participants will gain knowledge of the differences between orientation and onboarding programs, consider whether current programs for new faculty address specific institutional expectations, and evaluate a sample onboarding process for fit with the needs of new faculty in their department.

These goals will be accomplished in four steps:

1. Comparing elements of orientation programs and onboarding processes to discern the differences and potential of each. (7 min.)

2. Engaging in table talk to identify expectations for faculty knowledge, skill, and behaviors that are unmet by current orientation programs. (7 min.)

3. Working with peers to propose changes in their programming for new faculty that might address problems they have encountered /witnessed during faculty members induction period (first three years). (15 min.)

4. Sharing and discussing the outcomes of the table talks and personal views with the whole group (15 min.)

Handouts with orientation and onboarding exemplars, comprehensive list of institutional expectations for discussion, template/exemplar of onboarding plan for new faculty.