Orientation of Teaching Intensive Faculty

What does ‘orientation’ mean?

Teaching intensive faculty are a large and integral part of the educational programs administered by departments, and make a significant contribution to the effectiveness of those programs. Teaching-intensive faculty members, especially those who teach part-time, may have many questions about the practical issues of teaching, and about being an employee of the department and the university at large. Effectively conveying essential information about teaching expectations and providing clear and accurate access to resources assures that all faculty have the support needed to reach the levels of excellence in their teaching that the University expects.

Successful orientation makes possible a collaborative learning and professional culture; opportunities for sharing and communicating departmental program goals; receiving current feedback from classroom experiences; and productive use of time for teaching-intensive faculty. This ultimately enhances the classroom and undergraduate experience.

Best practices relating to orientation (gleaned from surveys and a search of national best practices) covered in this section of the handbook include:

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Communication of Expectations

Establishing strong and consistent communication with teaching-intensive faculty about the department’s expectations is essential to effective teaching. This can present a special challenge for departments as they seek best ways to communicate with part-time faculty who often teach at times and locations that preclude ‘normal’ access to department staff and resources. These faculty members, like their full-time peers, need a means of direct communication with department staff and other faculty members who can answer any questions that may arise. All teaching-intensive faculty who may not have been involved in an overall curriculum design process can benefit from understanding where their course fits into the larger sequence of courses in the department. As one faculty member put it: “It is good to be kept up to date as the expected flow of outcomes from one class to another evolves over time.”

Best Practices/Recommendations for Increasing Communication of Expectations

- Clearly communicate course description and expectation of ways a course will meet the curriculum goals and program mission; provide current examples of similar syllabi; facilitate discussion between faculty members who have taught sections of the course previously
- Emphasize how the course taught by a teaching-intensive faculty member relates to the other courses within the program/major
- Set forth all responsibilities expected of part-time and full-time faculty members (office hours, etc.)
- Provide information about the department’s program, curriculum and its overall educational goals; introduce any ancillary means by which the department assists students to achieve these goals (honors programs, internship programs, student mentoring program, undergraduate conferences...)


Department Notes and Ideas:
Introduction to Department & University Procedures

It is important for teaching-intensive faculty to have information about department and university procedures and practices regarding plagiarism, undergraduate advising, cancelling classes, grading, incomplete grades, grade rosters, add/drop and enrollment periods, permission numbers and course caps. Departments can develop effective ways to inform teaching-intensive faculty of any and all policies and procedures necessary to help them be most effective, thereby preventing or mitigating potential issues in the classroom by arming faculty with tools and information early on.

Best Practices/Recommendations for Introduction to Departmental & University Procedures

- Direct all faculty to the Undergraduate Academic Regulations of the Undergraduate Bulletin (http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/)
- Provide information regarding syllabi requirements; provide samples from the department; foster discussions regarding the customs of other faculty in the department
- Engage all faculty in conversations regarding the department and university procedures for academic dishonesty
- Talk with the teaching-intensive faculty about the expectations of the students in the particular program
- Coordinate part-time faculty to meet with tenure-track faculty and departmental staff
- Invite all faculty to join their departmental colleagues at the University Fall Faculty Retreat
- Share the Guided Tour of the Year at UAlbany handout (see Appendix)
- Share the Campus Resources handout (see Appendix)
Department Notes and Ideas:
Professional Development

An already large number of teaching-intensive faculty at the University at Albany are actively engaged in professional development efforts. The undergraduate educational experience for students can be enhanced if all faculty members, whether full- or part-time, are encouraged and informed about opportunities for professional development and on-going research and scholarship available on campus and beyond.

Best Practices/Recommendations for Involving Teaching-intensive Faculty in Professional Development

- Distribute information about ITLAL services, seminars, conferences
- Encourage all faculty to take part in department colloquia, brown bag lecture series, annual funded lecture series, conferences, study groups
- Consider part-time and full-time faculty in distribution of travel funding and other resources and inform them of those opportunities
- Distribute information about events and resources on campus, such as Discover UAlbany (refer to Guided Tour of the Year at UAlbany)

Department Notes and Ideas:
University Employee Information

Teaching-intensive faculty benefit from receiving the HR New Hire Packet as early as possible, and by receiving information not included in the HR packet (such as how to obtain a NetID for access to MyUAlbany and Blackboard; SUNY ID Card and its available benefits; and tuition waivers, etc.)

Best Practices/Recommendations for Communicating University Employee Information

- Review the Steps for Getting a New Employee Settled checklist, available as an appendix to this handbook.
- Refer part-time faculty to the ITLAL “For Part-time Faculty” web page (http://www.albany.edu/teachingandlearning/tlr/adjunct_faculty/index.shtml)
- Inform all new faculty of the Human Resources information available on website (http://hr.albany.edu/)
- Check to make sure faculty have received the HR packet
- Provide instructions for obtaining NetID and MyUAlbany (refer to checklist in Appendix)
- Provide additional information about SUNY CARD and its benefits (http://www.albany.edu/uas/sunycard.shtml)
- Inform all faculty of other benefits: tuition waiver and application process (http://hr.albany.edu/content/sue.asp)
- Inform all new faculty about payroll processes; pay period schedules; distribution of first pay check; options for direct deposit; pay stub delivery, etc. (http://hr.albany.edu/content/payroll.asp)
- Provide information regarding parking permit applications, appropriate parking lots (http://www.albany.edu/pmts/parking.php)
- Provide new faculty with campus maps and/or a tour of the campus (http://www.albany.edu/main/maps.shtml)
Department Notes and Ideas:
Teaching Resources

Informing teaching-intensive faculty about the teaching resources available to them, including what they can expect in UAlbany classrooms, library resources and logistical and technical support for teaching is essential. Offering them a tour of facilities on campus, including meeting and eating places in the Campus Center, classrooms they are likely to teach in, the ITS Help Desk, the library and the department is very helpful.

Best Practices/Recommendations for Assisting Teaching-Intensive Faculty to Access Teaching Resources

- Provide office space (help with access to keys and after hours swipe card access to buildings) even if it shared among a set of part-time faculty
- Provide access to photocopy machine, fax machine, office phone system, department stationery, mailbox, package delivery
- Assist with information about requesting desk copies and placing book orders; copies of course packs
- Discuss special requests for smart classroom or other technology needs
- Explain swipe card access to classrooms
- Direct to ITLAL website for assistance with teaching strategies, workshops and help with media conversion (http://www.itlal.org/)
- Inform about Blackboard use and training/assistance (http://www.albany.edu/its/faculty_staff.htm)
- Inform about UAlbany Library privileges and resources associated with employment
- Arrange for a tour of library, classrooms, campus center facilities
Resources for Problematic Situations or Emergencies

It is essential to keep all faculty informed about the University’s emergency system and also to provide information about what to do in the event of an emergency in the classroom. In addition, departments can provide names of contact persons within the department and within the university who should be notified if there is a problematic student situation.

Information to Share about the University’s Resources for Emergencies and Problematic Situations

**Emergency Information to Share**

- Provide procedures for fire drills, emergency evacuations.
- **In an EMERGENCY, from a campus phone dial 911; from a non-campus phone dial 518-442-3131**
- Call 518-442-SNOW to see if classes are in session during snow storms
- Sign up for NYAlert

**Non-Emergencies (but faculty still need help)**

- Print out the list of Campus Resources (available in the appendix) and provide copies to part-time faculty
- Inform part-time faculty about the resources available for questions about opportunities for students or problematic student behaviors such as:
  - Student Success: 518-956-8140  
    [http://www.albany.edu/studentsuccess/departments.shtml](http://www.albany.edu/studentsuccess/departments.shtml)
  - Conflict Resolution: 518-442-5501  
    [http://www.albany.edu/studentconduct/](http://www.albany.edu/studentconduct/)
  - Undergraduate Education: 518-442-3950  
    [http://www.albany.edu/undergraduateeducation/](http://www.albany.edu/undergraduateeducation/)
  - Graduate Studies: 518-442-398  
    [http://www.albany.edu/gradstudies/](http://www.albany.edu/gradstudies/)
  - Counseling Center (confidential consultations): 518-442-5800  
    [http://www.albany.edu/counseling_center/](http://www.albany.edu/counseling_center/)
  - Customer Service (for classroom issues): 518-442-3480
Department Notes and Ideas:
Appendices

✓ Steps for getting a new employee settled Checklist
✓ Campus Resources
✓ Guided Tour of the Year at UAlbany