

# Paying it Forward

## Faculty Mentoring Handbook

**2023-2024**

**Center for Engaged Learning  
Kutztown University**





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# A NOTE FROM THE CEL DIRECTOR

Dear Colleagues,

When I think about my career, both the past and the future, I am so grateful for my mentoring relationships. Established colleagues have shared their wealth of different experiences and perspectives. My current peers who share similar timelines offer their support and advice. New department members with fresh eyes inspire me to look through a new lens. Whether I am the mentor or the mentee, I have learned so much.

A mentoring relationship takes not only time but also vulnerability. It requires self-reflection, careful listening, and thoughtful responses. Thank you for your participation in our mentoring program. I am excited for the growth and opportunities for learning in our Kutztown University faculty community.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric R. Kaa". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "Q" at the end.

# What is Mentoring?

Simply put, mentoring is a relationship; a mentor can be a trusted counselor, coach, tutor, advisor, trusted guide, trainer, advocate, or role model.

The mission of KU's mentoring program is to foster mentoring partnerships among faculty to enhance lifelong professional learning in teaching, scholarship, and service.

## **Mentoring is focused on achieving three key goals:**

- 1. Building a culture of learning and collaboration.** Co-learners affirm progress and accomplishments, promote critical thinking, provide resources, and stimulate individual growth.
- 2. Fostering a growth mindset.** Participants are focused on ways to improve and on providing the necessary support and motivation to ensure ongoing learning.
- 3. Facilitating reflective practice.** Participants examine activities to challenge beliefs and effectively problem-solve in nonjudgmental formats.

# Benefits of Mentoring

Some of the benefits of participating in a mentoring program include:

- 1. Self-Confidence.** Having an experienced faculty member beside you to answer questions and consistently let you know that “you’ve got this” can help tremendously. Not surprisingly, mentors also experience an increase in self-confidence, they report feelings of pride that they can effectively assist their mentees.
- 2. Career Satisfaction.** Participants report that discussions about career goals were some of the most valuable interactions they had with their mentors, even helping them prioritize career requirements and commitments.
- 3. Network Expansion.** Faculty mentorship prioritizes peer-to-peer connection and network expansion both within and outside disciplines.
- 4. Exposure to New Ideas.** A strong mentoring relationship gives mentors and mentees the chance to learn from each other. Mentors provide new faculty members with needed information about pedagogy, the academic community, grant writing, and departmental culture, among other topics. Mentors report that having a mentee forces them to reflect on their experiences and encourages them to be more collaborative in nature.

- 5. Self-Reflection.** Faculty mentorship engages the participants in opportunities to reflect in a non-evaluative setting. Mentors provide safe, judgment-free sounding boards who encourage growth through reflection and strong teaching practices.
- 6. Student and Faculty Success.** When faculty develop their pedagogical skills, students see a benefit. And with the collaborative and often innovative nature of the mentoring relationship, new and experienced faculty gain insights, techniques, and knowledge that can help them more effectively meet their goals.
- 7. Growth Mindset.** Faculty participants in mentorship programs are more likely to continue to pursue professional development opportunities. Mentors report development of leadership, management, and coaching skills, which have institutional benefits as they become more capable of taking on new roles.
- 8. New Skills.** Mentees report improvements in time management, research/scholarship, and commitment to the profession. Mentors have revealed that serving as role models, advocates, and guides improved their time management, collaboration, communications, and listening skills.
- 9. Retention Rates.** Study after study demonstrates that students' experiences with faculty in the classroom are one of the most important factors in student outcomes. In short, faculty members are the key to solving the retention challenge. Institutional culture plays a critical role in creating the collaborative environment required to support student success.
- 10. Mental Health.** A mentoring program provides opportunities to discuss work-life balance, and other wellness issues that impact the lives of faculty.

# Expected Outcomes

**The CEL's goal is to provide a flexible mentoring program that can be tailored to meet the needs of the mentor and mentee in each pairing. Below are some guidelines and outcomes for the establishment of this relationship:**

## **How often should we meet?**

As often as you would like, but at least 2 times per semester

## **Where should meetings take place?**

Wherever you both agree - in your office, on Zoom, over lunch or coffee, or while taking a walk.

## **What should we talk about? Below are some suggested topics:**

- Balancing teaching, service, and scholarship
- Balancing work and life
- University-specific culture, policies, and resources
- Evaluation process, peer review, and SRIs
- Day-to-day tasks of the job
- Teaching strategies
- Technology issues, concerns, or tips
- Assessment schedules and policies
- Grading, Starfish, and attendance verification
- Course syllabi, assignments, assessments, and activities
- Student advising
- Suggestions for university service
- Classroom management



**In addition to the expected outcomes, participants should also consider the following steps to maximize your mentoring relationship:**

- Observe at least 30 minutes in each other's class and reflect on at least one strategy or technique that you either do not already use yourself, or that you think you could improve in your own teaching. Note – observations can be conducted whenever you agree, they do not necessarily need to be split up by semester the way they are on the checklist provided later in this handbook. These observations are NOT EVALUATIVE and are not to be used as such.
- Complete a survey/reflection for the CEL at the conclusion of each semester

**What else might you do together?**

- Discuss your research interests and plans, and read each other's work
- Discuss the publication process and feedback
- Go on a social outing
- Attend a CEL event (cookie chat, learning circle, etc.)
- Share teaching resources
- Have a writing retreat
- Have discussions on professional identity
- Meet up with another mentor-mentee pair for discussion
- Connect the mentee with at least one other colleague outside of their department



# Tips for Mentors

## As a faculty mentor please keep these tips in mind:

- 1. Practice active mentoring.** Don't wait for your mentee to contact you, assuming that if you don't get a request for help, none is needed. The opposite is often the case. New faculty may be reluctant to admit that they need help. Reach out.
- 2. Be clear about the kinds of help and support you are able to offer.** No one mentor can provide for all the needs of a new faculty member. Think of yourself not as the "one stop mentoring shop," but as the person who can connect them with the resources they need.
- 3. Be aware of social difference, which comes in many forms.** Do not make assumptions that others' experiences are like yours. Allow for the possibility that your mentee may have needs or sensitivities that are related to their particular social position. Attempt to respond to their expressed needs and perspectives supportively and non-judgmentally.
- 4. Listen carefully for what your mentee doesn't say, as well as what they share.** If you encounter avoidance or defensiveness, do not assume that this means that the subject is off limits. Perhaps it can be approached in a different way, at a different time.
- 5. Do everything you can to protect the confidentiality of the information your mentee shares with you, but ask for support if you are facing a situation you don't know how to handle.** You can always contact the CEL for additional support or suggestions, or encourage your mentee to do so directly.

If for whatever reason your relationship with your mentee just isn't working and you believe that perhaps someone else might be a better faculty partner, discuss this with the CEL.



# Tips for Mentees

**Here are a few things that we hope you keep in mind:**

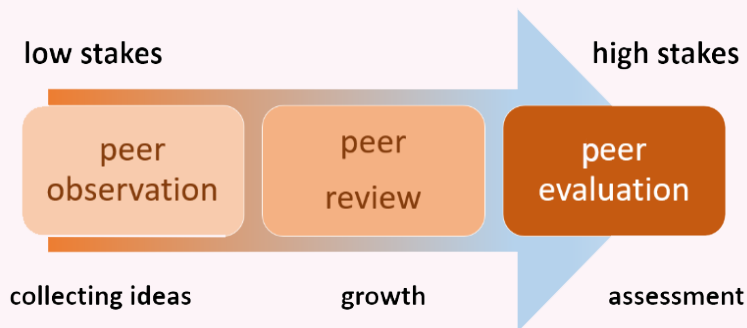
- 1. Realize that you don't have to do it alone.** Seeking support to grow professionally is helpful. Just because you were hired as a professor and/or have a doctoral degree, you are not expected to know everything there is to know.
- 2. Identify a few key things that you need to move your academic career forward.** You may need more support with teaching, research, grant writing, or understanding structures and policies within the University. Your mentor can help with this!
- 3. Identify the people or resources to support your professional needs.** There are people around you who can help meet those needs, such as your mentor, people within or outside your department and the CEL.
- 4. Consider formalizing informal networks.** Sometimes networks evolve organically, so to make those networks more beneficial you can plan a regular meeting time, set goals, identify a consistent mechanism for meeting, make conscious decisions about the size and membership of the group. If you are doing research, make agreements regarding authorship and use of data upfront.
- 5. Talk to your mentor about any issues you may be having.** These could be things such as classroom management, technology, teaching techniques, student engagement, managing courseloads, scholarship, and university service.
- 6. Utilize CEL services and attend CEL events!** CEL services and events, are a great way to boost your teaching and engage with your peers!

# Peer Observation

The goal of the observation is to provide an opportunity for exposure to different methods and styles of teaching and a chance to learn from each other. These observations are low stakes means of collecting ideas and fostering growth among colleagues and are not intended to be evaluative.

On the following pages you will find an observation worksheet that can help you structure your thinking during the observation. Additionally, a list of other questions to think about is provided. You will NOT be asked to turn this information in to anyone; these are provided as guidelines to support your observation.

Following the observation, you are expected to meet with the instructor you observed, engaging in a discussion about any observations you made, things you want to know more about, etc. Share two “glows and a grow:” two things you liked or that went well, and one suggestion or idea to consider.



## **Things you might want to focus on during a peer observation:**

### **1. Supportive Climate**

- How does the instructor greet the students?
- How does the instructor establish their presence?
- Does the instructor try to motivate students?

### **2. Construction of Knowledge**

- Does the instructor convey information clearly?
- Is the instructor using different methods to convey information?
- Does the instructor identify misconceptions and errors and find alternative explanations?
- Does the instructor connect new to prior knowledge?
- What kind of questions is the instructor asking?

### **3. Active Engagement in Learning**

- What fraction of the class is the instructor talking?
- What percentage of students participate?
- Does the instructor allow time to ask questions?
- Does the instructor provide opportunities for students to use and apply their knowledge?
- Does the instructor encourage explaining ideas, predicting results, or constructing arguments?
- Does the instructor provide opportunities for students to practice important skills?

### **4. Learning From Peers**

- Do the students have an opportunity to learn from each other and appreciate different points of view?
- Do students have an opportunity to work in a group to answer difficult problems?

Peer Visit Observation Form

Step 1: Contact instructor and confirm date/time/focus of visit

Date	Time	Room/Location	Focus

Step 2: Observation from the visit

I See / I Hear (What is happening during your visit) You can use the questions on the previous page to help guide your observation as well.	Ideas I would like to try Observations/Reflections I would like to share

Step 3: Reflect

What questions might I ask the instructor after my visit? What observations might I want to share?



## Step 4: Apply

What might I try in my classroom as a result of my visit? What resources/support do I need?

## Step 5: Evaluate

1. This peer visit was a useful professional development opportunity.

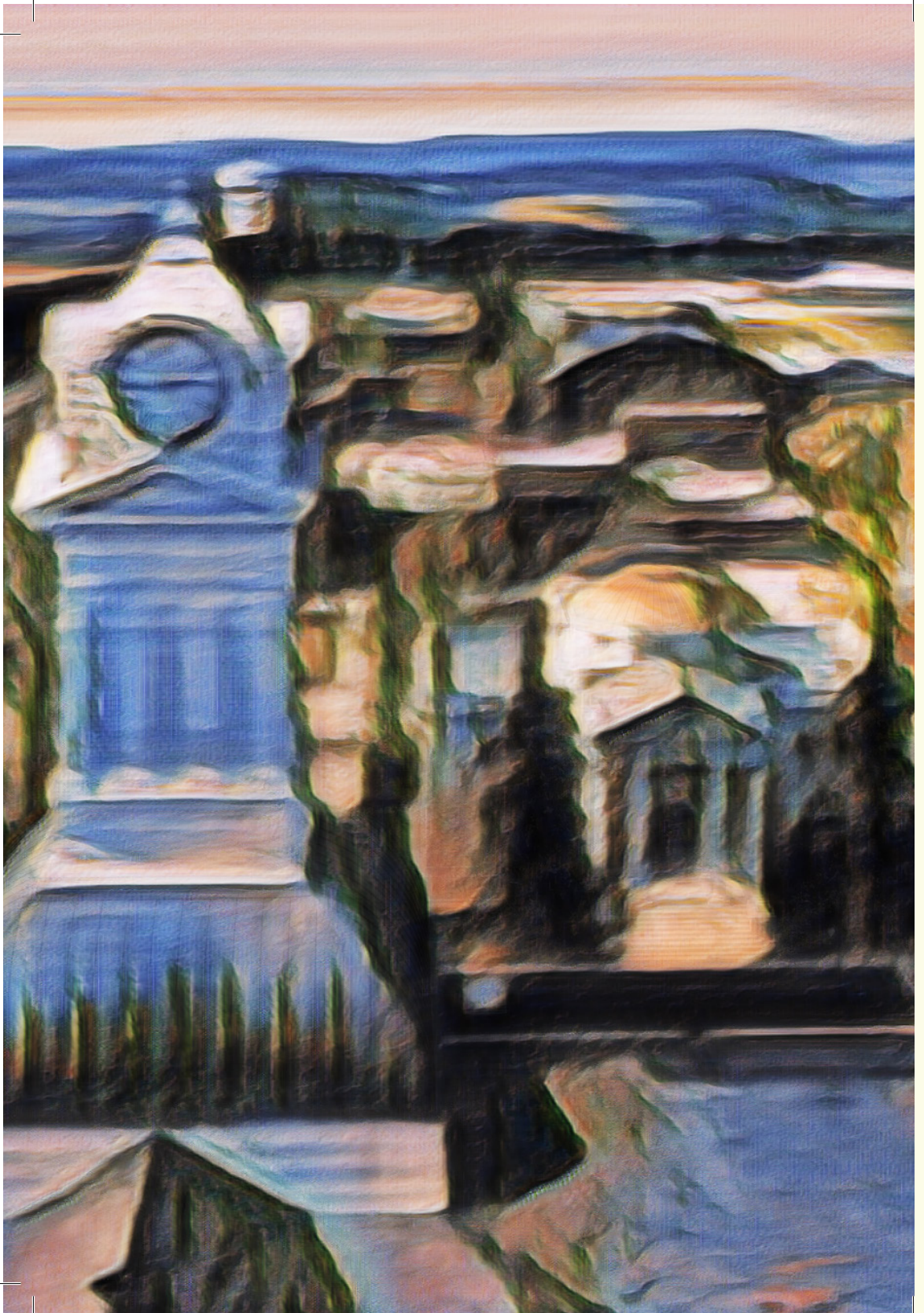
Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

2. Next time I observe a peer I want to think about...

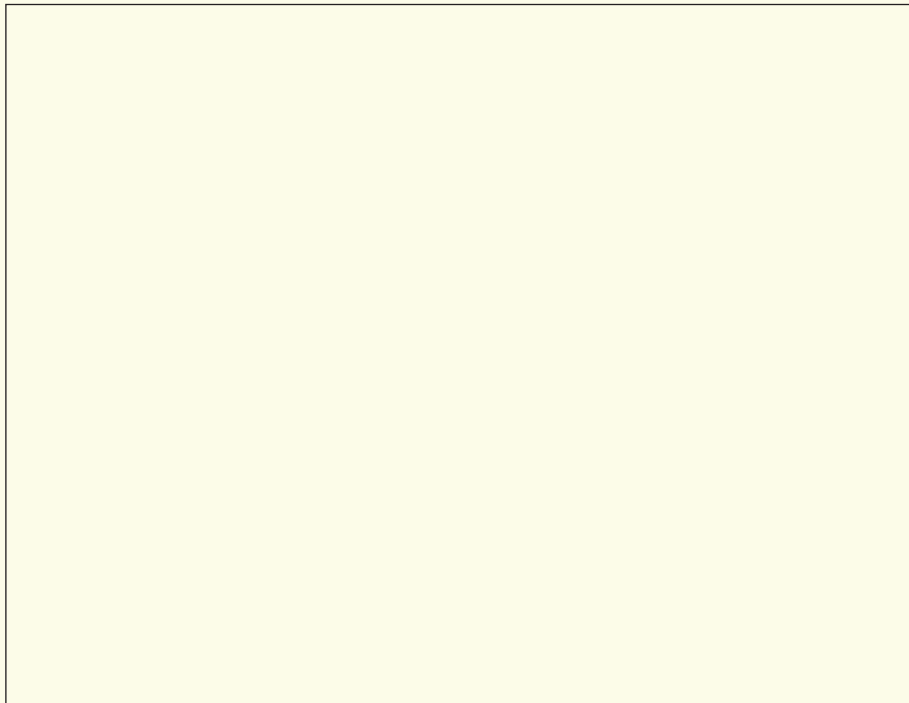


# Reflections

**Below, reflect on your mentor/mentee relationship, your continued goals for the relationship, and any questions or advice you may have.**

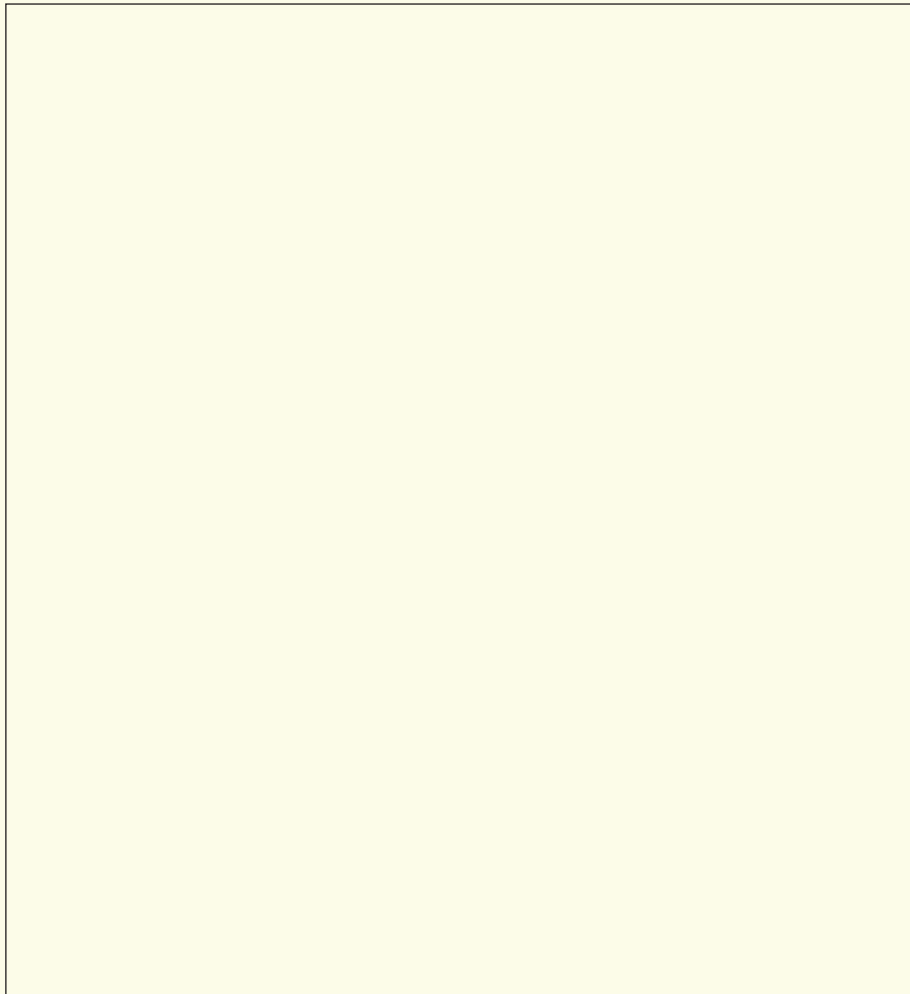
## **August – September**

- What do I hope to gain from this experience?
- Mentee: What are 2-3 questions I have?
- Mentor: What are 2-3 things I wish someone would have shared with me (or I was glad someone shared with me) when I first started at KU?



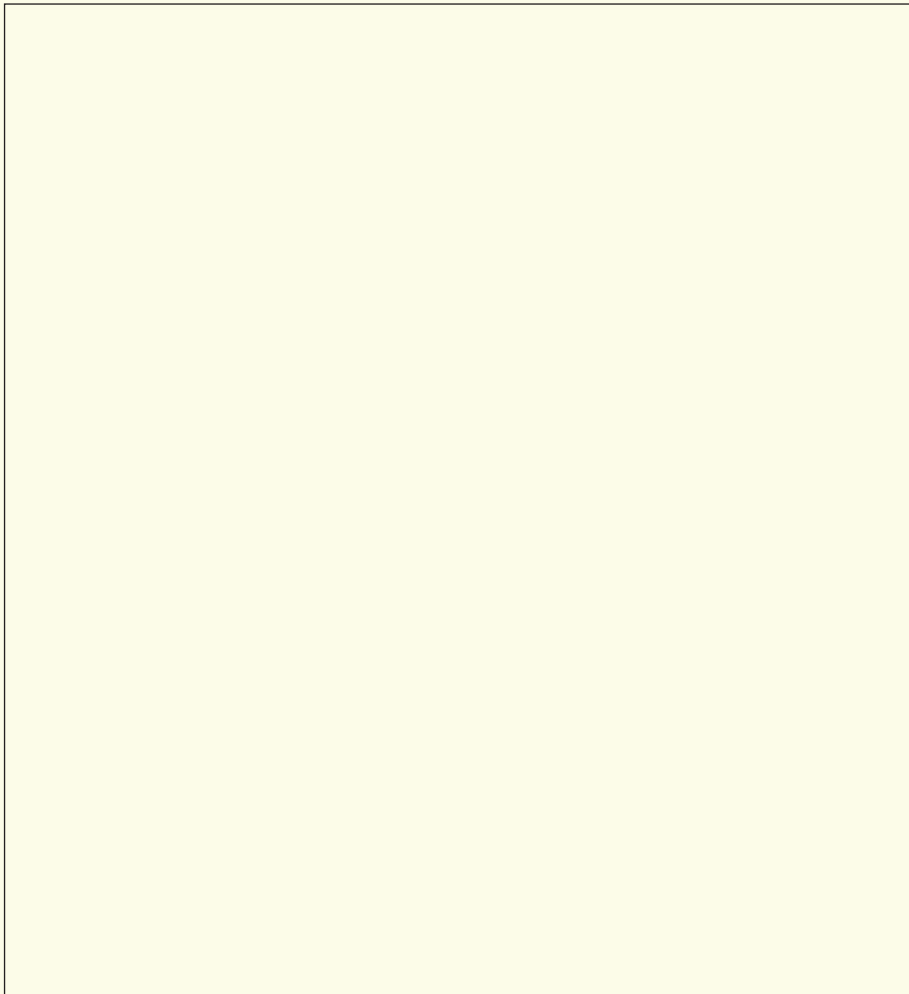
**December – January**

- What is going well in our mentor/mentee relationship? What could be better?
- Mentee: Is there something I need to make sure I ask about?
- Mentor: What is something I want to make sure I share with my mentee in the Spring?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying the lower half of the page. It is intended for the user to write their responses to the questions listed above.

**April – May**

- Did you gain what you had hoped for from the mentoring experience or was there something unexpected or missing?
- Would you like to continue this relationship next year? What else can you gain from it?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their reflections on the mentoring experience.

# Mentoring ©

**This checklist can help you track meetings and topics covered and observations. Observations are not required to be conducted at these specific points, but they can be conducted at other times if desired. Meetings are not necessarily as requirements.**

Activity	Date	Topics	
Initial Meeting			
Check-in email			
Meeting			
Mentee observation			
End of semester CEL survey			
Meeting			
Check-in email			
Mentor observation			
Meeting			
Check-in email			
End of year CEL survey			

# g Checklist

and any items for follow-up or further investigation.  
ic points; this checklist is provided as an organizational tool,

	Notes





# RESOURCES

1. Bean, N. M., Lucas, L., & Hyers, L. L. (2014). Mentoring in higher education should be the norm to assure success: Lessons learned from the faculty mentoring program, West Chester University, 2008–2011. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 22(1), 56–73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13611267.2014.882606>
2. Bloomberg, L. D. (2022). Peeling back the onion: a multi-layered coaching and mentoring model for faculty development in online higher education. *Journal of Faculty Development*, 36(1), 48–58.
3. Pegg, J. M., Risser, H. S., Kern, A. L., Adams, A. E., Bottoms, S. I., Wu, K. (2014) Finding FRiENDs: creating a community of support for early career academics. *Brock Education*, 24(1), 47-54.
4. Tran, Y. (2022). Equity into action: examining the role of a mentorship program for faculty of color. *Journal of Faculty Development*, 36(1), 59–70.

Check out the CEL website for additional resources and more information about our faculty mentoring program:  
***[kutztown.edu/cel](https://kutztown.edu/cel)***

# Journal

While we provided some specific reflection questions earlier in this handbook, the remaining pages are intended as a personal journal of your experiences.









































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