

## MENTORING PROGRAM FOR NEW STAFF

Mentoring is all about learning. The value and purpose of a mentoring program for new employees is to increase employee retention and transition new employees into an organization. Networking, whether formal or informal, is key to the transitioning and retention of employees. Employees who have mentors are more likely to have greater job satisfaction. Mentoring programs can help eliminate obstacles, difficulties, or stumbling blocks new employees might encounter. Effective mentoring programs should allow new employees to freely ask questions and express themselves in order to gain the information necessary to effectively perform their jobs.

Mentoring is also a critical component in the retention and success of women and minorities. A mentor can help a new employee discover how to survive in an environment that may not be entirely welcoming to him/her. Mentoring is a valuable tool which can be used to build an effective and diverse organization as it assists to ensure that all employees are equally given the opportunity to be successful.

### Goals

The goals of new employee mentoring are to:

- Accelerate an employee's perspective/understanding of the college and adaptation to a new position
- Increase employee loyalty
- Promote diversity
- Connect employees with one another (formal and informal/professional and social networking)
- Open the lines of communication
- Look after new employees' welfare and provide employees with a person to listen to concerns as well as successes
- Safeguard the college's new hire investment
- Enable employees to feel welcome and to believe they have a career or career path

### Informal Program

What little research exists related to community college mentoring does support the idea that informal mentoring programs are more successful than formal programs. Informal mentoring programs are not rigidly structured. Informal mentoring programs tend to be more successful for the following reasons:

- Informal mentoring relationships last longer than formal relationships
- Mentor/mentee relationship is not subject to evaluation
- Different types of networking occur, both professional and social
- No time limits are given as to when specific activities within a mentoring relationship must occur

- More commitment to the relationship exists, which can lead to more coaching
- One-on-one interactions across the college occur
- More friendships are built from a natural mentor/mentee match as opposed to a forced match

### **Scope of Participation**

Participants would include all new employees in the following job classifications:

- Full-time and Part-time A&P Staff
- Full-time and Part-time Administrative Classified Staff
- Full-time and Part-time Support Staff

### **Mentors & Choosing Mentors**

It is vitally important that the relationship between a mentor and mentee be based on four key factors:

- Trust
- Respect
- Commitment
- Confidentiality

Individuals who are mentors should possess the following characteristics:

- Leadership qualities
- People oriented behavior
- Successful in the institution
- Knowledgeable of the college's mission, values, vision, and strategic priorities
- Committed to developing staff
- Willingness share personal experiences
- Willingness to assist others to be successful

The Mentoring Program will be coordinated through the collaborative relationship between the Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) and Human Resources (HR). Communication of the Mentoring Program will occur as follows:

- Current MVCC staff will be informed of the program via the college's various communication venues.
- A web page devoted to the New Staff Mentoring Program will be created and maintained. The site will be a central location for all things related to the mentoring program, including various forms.
- New staff members will be made aware of the Mentoring Program by a representative from Human Resources during the initial orientation session.

The CTL is responsible for maintaining the mentor database.

All mentors must have training prior to beginning a mentoring relationship with a new staff member. Training will be provided to mentors through the CTL.

### **Qualifications for a Mentor**

- Must be a full-time staff member as defined by this document and have at least two (2) years of employment at MVCC
- Familiarity with the policies and programs available at MVCC
- Convey a positive image of the college (committed to the college's mission and purpose and exemplifies its expectations and core values)
- Must not be new employee's supervisor and preferably not employed in the same department
- Participation in a mentor training session provided by the CTL.
- Commitment to a three (3) to four (4) month mentoring relationship, allowing two (2) to four (4) hours per month to meet with the new employee.
- Available to the new employee by telephone, email, and in person

### **Process**

- All new staff members will be made aware of the Mentoring Program by a representative from Human Resources during the initial orientation session.
- Candidates for staff mentors must be nominated by their supervisor and reviewed and approved by the CTL and Human Resources.
- From the database, the CTL and HR would select a mentor for the new staff member from a pool of approved employees.
- Mentoring relationships will be established as listed below. Any deviations from these pairings require approval from the appropriate Vice President.
  - New Support Staff will be paired with Support Staff mentors
  - New Administrative Classified staff will be paired with Administrative Classified mentors
  - New Administrative & Professional staff will be paired with Administrative & Professional mentors
- The mentor will make contact with the new employee to begin the mentoring relationship.
- The CTL will sponsor at least one mentoring meeting during the first three months of the new employees' employment.
- The mentor and mentee will evaluate the mentoring relationship and program after a period of 3 – 4 months.

### **Guidelines for a Mentoring Relationship**

Mentors should provide a support network for a new employee. They should encourage participation in college meetings and activities, pass on information about the college

and experiences the mentor has encountered, help the mentee navigate office politics, and encourage professional development. A Mentor Checklist is provided to mentors to assist them with the mentoring process.

- The mentor will welcome the new employee, respond to questions that have arisen, and set a time for their first meeting (this should occur during the first month of employment).
- Based upon the needs of a new employee, the mentor may provide a campus tour, introductions to other college employees, and assistance with becoming familiar with college policies, programs, mission, priorities, activities, events, etc.
- The mentor and mentee should meet a minimum of once per month to discuss the new employee's experience at MVCC and to address any concerns or issues that the new employee has. The mentor should actively "insist" on the meetings since the mentees don't even know they don't know things.
- The mentor and mentee may wish to attend college meetings and events such as President's Advisory Council, athletic events, Fine & Performing Arts events, lectures, or other activities offered on campus.
- The mentor should provide encouragement and inspire dedication to MVCC and its mission.
- If either the mentor or the mentee is not experiencing a positive relationship, both have the option of selecting another partner and are to contact Human Resources.
- If the mentor is aware of any negative experiences or issues that the new employee may have encountered, he or she should contact Human Resources provided the sharing of this information does not compromise the confidentiality agreements established between the mentor and mentee.
- Confidentiality is a very important aspect of a mentoring relationship. Both the mentor and the mentee may learn personal information about each other that if revealed might have serious consequences. Both the mentor and mentee should use the college's checklist to define how confidentiality will be defined in the mentoring relationship. Refer to the Confidentiality Checklist document.

### **Suggested Mentoring Activities**

To help provide a support network for a new employee, the mentor may want to engage in some of the following activities:

- Meet for breakfast or lunch
- Tour the campus
- Visit various departments on campus
- Attend a college meeting, such as PAC or other department sponsored meetings/activities

- Introduce employee to other faculty and staff
- Explain some college procedures
- Discuss emergency preparedness procedures
- Discuss various employee events and accompany the new staff member to them
- Review the college's mission, vision, values, and strategic priorities
- Review benefits and staff orientation
- Discuss the mentoring program and what the responsibilities and expectations are
- Discuss each other's background and professional development/career goals

### **Coordinating Program & Training**

The CTL will be responsible for coordinating the Mentoring Program and providing training to mentors.

- Communicate the program to current staff.
- Maintain a database of potential, qualified mentors.
- Coordinate and provide training to mentors.
- Contact the chosen mentor to gain his/her agreement to be a mentor and follow-up with a confirmation notice.
- Communicate the program to new staff members during orientation.
- Conduct an informal yet organized introductory meeting to the program with the mentor (and mentee, if possible) to provide necessary information and forms. If a face-to-face meeting is not possible, provide written direction as well as the appropriate forms to the mentor.
- Sponsor at least one mentoring meeting during the first three months of the new employees' employment.
- Evaluate and assess the Mentoring Program (distribute, collect, log, and analyze participant feedback) and make recommendations for refinement and improvement.

### **Measuring Success**

To assess the value of the Mentoring Program, mentees and mentors will be asked to complete evaluation forms. Refer to the New Staff Mentoring Program Feedback forms. Activities that have promoted successful mentor relationships will be referenced in future training sessions and orientations.

- Retention (annual turnover report and exit interview analysis)
- Employee engagement (surveys)
- Productivity of mentee (performance evaluations)
- Career success of mentee (performance evaluations, promotions, transfers, etc.)
- Feedback from mentor and mentee (participant feedback forms – mentor and mentee)