

Mentorship of Novice Faculty Members

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This article continues the discussion on mentorship previously shared in the December 2024 issue. The article focused on mentorship for novice Nurses in Professional Development (NPD) specialists and can be found at <https://www.myamericannurse.com/sna/nj/> on page 10. In this article, however, Dr. Dione Sandiford, a seasoned academician shares insights, via an interview format, into how mentorship of new faculty members can be a source of comfort, alleviating many of the frustrations and pitfalls that new faculty members experience transitioning from the bedside to the didactic faculty role. The interview questions and responses are recorded as follows:

DR: Please tell us how long you have been a faculty member and your specialty.

DS: I have a passion for supporting nurses and began working as a nursing faculty member in January 2017 at a two-year RN Diploma school. I then transitioned to work as a faculty member at a large research institution as part of a baccalaureate nursing program. My credential is CHSE, and my specialty is nursing simulation.

DR: Were you formally prepared for

your role as a faculty member? If not, how were you able to navigate your beginning days as a faculty member?

DS: I was not prepared for my faculty role. There are so many parts to adequately function as a faculty member. These include service, scholarship, and teaching. The clinical expertise of a new faculty member may ease the transition into the clinical aspect of academia due to skillfulness. Classroom management, student engagement, test item analysis, lecture presentations, and reappointment preparation are most beneficial with a mentor. In fact, I believe that all new nurse faculty need mentors. I recommend an ideal approach of having a mentor for each aspect of the faculty role: A mentor for teaching, a mentor for scholarship, and a mentor for service. As per the words of Dr. Beverly Malone, NLN President, new faculty members need a bouquet of mentors (Personal Communication, May 13, 2024). I recommend that a mentor not be a direct supervisor but someone at the course or department level so that you can benefit from shadowing their activities, asking course-related questions, and having a strategic plan for the semester.

DR: How do you choose a mentor, especially at a large university? How long should the relationship last?

DS: A good idea might be to choose a faculty member who teaches the same course as you. Ask them if you can sit in on their lecture or share their Canvas. As a mentee, be prepared to share your time and any previous experience that you may have. The mentor must pull the mentee up to their level fostering a collaborative relationship that grows with time.

DR: What professional development activities have you become involved in to help improve your effectiveness as a faculty member?

DS: As a new faculty member, make the time to attend any new faculty developments offered by the University, even if they are not from the School of Nursing. It could be from the School of Public Health. Always be involved in continuous learning to provide the most up-to-date classroom and clinical teaching. I always attend the item analysis workshops. Join a nursing organization and make the time to attend webinars that are offered that are relevant to your specialty. At times, these webinars may be complimentary with membership. The use of a strategic plan and the use of an electronic portfolio that includes continuous nursing education certificates, podium presentation acceptances, etc., should be maintained. ■