

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER

AFFIRM IDENTITY | BUILD COMMUNITY | CULTIVATE LEADERSHIP

Register for the Fall 2023 Faculty Development Series



Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty

AUGUST 2023

Check out the [January 2023 Faculty Development Newsletter](#).

Office hours (in person or on Zoom) for the Associate Dean of the Faculty are on Fridays. Sign up in advance for an [individual appointment](#).

To kick off the academic year, I am happy to release the August edition of the Faculty Development Newsletter, which is dedicated to sharing faculty development resources, programs, and priorities grounded in Beverly D. Tatum's ABC approach to creating engaged and inclusive academic communities: affirming identity, building community, and cultivating leadership.

I hope you had a restorative summer and feel regenerated. As I was starting to write this newsletter—surrounded by colleagues during a July Write-on-Site—I was reminded of how impressed I am by the commitment of our faculty and how privileged I feel to support them at every career stage. Through the work we do together, we build community and forge meaningful connections that help us learn from and support one another.

On that note, and on behalf of the provost's office, I would like to welcome new faculty into the Smith community and warmly thank you for contributing to the vitality of the college! Please know that the provost's office is available to assist you and help smooth your transition. I would also like to acknowledge our colleagues who recently retired after a long career at Smith and are transitioning to a new chapter of their lives. I want to thank you for all you have contributed to the college and hope you will attend events hosted by the Out But Not Down group and the Emeriti Advisory Committee.

Lastly, as part of our office's racial justice action planning work, we have revised our faculty development mission statement to better reflect our commitments and priorities: "The provost's office strives to enable faculty to thrive at every career stage through faculty development offerings that provide mentoring and support, foster equity and inclusion, and build community."

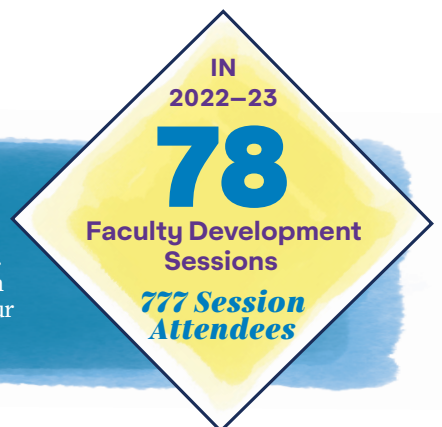
I look forward to connecting with you and wish you a good start to the fall semester.



Hélène Visentin

Associate Dean of the Faculty and
Dean for Academic Development

Faculty Policies Administrator Hayley Spizz is my partner in our faculty development work. Please feel free to reach out to Hayley (hspizz@smith.edu) or me (hvisenti@smith.edu) with any questions. We are also open to your suggestions!



Our faculty development work falls into the following categories:

1. Fostering Equity

The provost's office supports three equity-focused initiatives that build a healthy and more equitable community of teacher-scholars. I am happy to share some updates.

Faculty Workload Equity Working Group

Over the past two years, members of the Faculty Workload Equity Working Group have been engaged in discussions to better understand faculty workload distribution within departments, identify the main issues and concerns, and find out what work is the least equitably distributed. They also collected data—some data collection was straightforward (e.g., number of advisees) while some was more complex (e.g., identifying invisible labor, differentiating effort and labor)—and implemented evidence-based strategies to address faculty workload inequities. The following working group recommendations will be implemented starting this fall:

- An annual discussion of workload equity and expectations at the academic chairs' retreat and at the department and program levels.
- An annual faculty development session on workload equity.
- Workload equity resources for chairs, including dashboard templates and biannual meeting opportunities for chairs to connect around this work.
- Provost office and Institutional Research support for four departments/programs per year to advance workload equity.
- Use of the Workday Advising Dashboard by all departments/programs.
- A merit review process that explores the role of chairs.

Our work is based on the [Faculty Workload and Rewards Project](#). See O'Meara, K., Culpepper, D., Misra, J., & Jaeger, A., *Equity-Minded Faculty Workloads: What We Can and Should Do Now*, (American Council on Education, 2022).

Support for Non-Tenure-Track (NTT) Faculty

The provost's office has implemented the

following initiatives to support NTT faculty in navigating the college and being successful during their time at Smith:

- An NTT mentoring program led by [four mentors](#).
- An NTT welcome meeting at the start of the academic year.
- A series of fall and spring NTT meetings.
- A list of curated [resources](#).

In my role, I meet with Faculty Council to discuss issues pertaining to NTT faculty. This year, in response to feedback, we will be offering professional development opportunities to support NTT faculty on their career paths. Last spring, we conducted our anonymous annual survey to understand the experiences of NTT faculty. The majority of respondents reported feeling somewhat or very visible and included in department/program meetings. A greater majority of respondents reported that their chair communicates with them somewhat well or very well. I continue to be grateful to the NTT mentors who are playing a key role in creating a community of support and helping the provost's office shape initiatives targeted to NTT faculty.

Anti-Racist Learning Community (ALC) for Faculty and Staff Who Teach

Following in the footsteps of the ALC that was created in the fall of 2021, my office collaborated with the Office for Equity and Inclusion (OEI) to invite faculty to develop courses that engage substantively with content related to race and anti-racism. Supported by a Racial Justice Action Planning Grant and the Office of the President, our office hosted an anti-racist pedagogy workshop series for a group of 12 faculty members (following a call for proposals). Dr. Crystal Fleming, professor of sociology and African studies at Stony Brook University, facilitated this series and introduced participants to a framework for developing pedagogical practices oriented toward empowerment, equity, justice, and compassion. (We look forward to welcoming Crystal to our faculty in fall 2024!) Participants began a process of self-assessment and discovery

to examine their own degree of familiarity and knowledge with the ongoing history of racism

and anti-racism in their fields of speciality and academic expertise.

2. Onboarding and Mentoring Faculty

We are releasing this newsletter just as we are about to wrap up the [New Faculty Orientation](#) (NFO). Over the summer, a group of approximately 56 faculty—composed of tenured and tenure-track faculty, visiting assistant professors, full-time and part-time lecturers, laboratory instructors, and postdoctoral fellows—attended a series of sessions and activities led by over 25 presenters from across campus.

To onboard and support new faculty so they can thrive at Smith, the provost's office administers [three mentoring programs](#). Our aim is to ensure that all new and junior faculty have access to mentoring support. In addition to mentorship

through these formal programs, junior faculty are encouraged to develop their own network of mentors and do mutual mentoring; the National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity (NCFDD) interactive [Mentoring Map](#) is a useful tool. In an effort to provide greater support to mentors, we have created and continue to develop a [Mentoring Resources](#) guide. On August 24, 2023, thanks to a partnership between OEI and the provost's office, we offered a "Mentoring Across Identities" workshop. Targeted to all faculty who have a formal mentoring role at Smith, this workshop addressed social identities and the differing needs of our faculty.

3. Building Communities of Support

Smith offers many opportunities for faculty to gather around scholarship, teaching, and social identities. Faculty may attend weekly [Liberal Arts and/or Sigma Xi Luncheons](#), take part in a project led by the [Kahn Liberal Arts Institute](#), attend a [faculty development](#) session, or join a [Teaching Circle](#) or a [Teaching Arts Luncheon](#) hosted by the Sherrerd Center for Teaching and Learning. Faculty are also welcome to join an [affinity group under the auspices of the OEI](#). There are three groups for junior faculty: Junior Faculty in Science and Engineering (contact Alicia Grubb and/or Greg de Wet), Junior Faculty of Color (contact Elizabeth Pryor), and Junior Faculty in Divisions I, II, and IV

(contact Hélène Visentin). Another way to connect is via Smith Slack channels (look for "Smith Faculty Community" on Slack).

Smith is part of the Five College grant-funded program [Building Academic Leaders in the Humanities](#), aimed at building a pipeline of humanities and humanistic social science faculty into leadership roles. Four Smith faculty benefited from this program last year. This initiative is currently entering its second year, with seven Smith faculty in the introductory track and three in the advanced track. As a member of the leadership team, I am looking forward to our work together.

Faculty Wellness Fellow

For the 2022-23 and 2023-24 academic years, Benita Jackson, professor of psychology and health scholar and practitioner, is serving as the Faculty Wellness Fellow as part of a pilot program. Building upon last year's theme of "joy choices" in faculty life, this year's theme focuses on cultivating authentic power as a key to faculty wellness. The series will introduce proactive approaches that emphasize sources of authentic power—in the face of personal and structural constraints—to create alignment between work, the rest of life, and one's true self.



4. Accessing Resources To Meet Your Needs

For an overview, explore the [Faculty Development Map](#) that charts—by rank and general topic—the variety of ways Smith offers faculty ongoing professional development. Faculty can also use [Pivot](#) and [GrantForward](#) to identify funding opportunities that match their profile. For faculty who are thinking of applying for a fellowship or research grant but are not sure where to start, the Grants and Sponsored Research team will be offering a faculty development session titled “First Steps Toward Seeking Grants and Fellowships” on November 7. As a reminder, the [Smith College Moneybook](#) includes internal grants and fellowships for research and curricular development.

The Sherrerd Center has two teaching mentors who can help instructors with their teaching. To schedule a meeting, please visit the Sherrerd Center [website](#).

This fall’s [Faculty Development Series](#) includes sessions focused on equity, faculty wellness,

student mental health, and scholarship. Additionally, the provost’s office hosts several [review meetings and workshops](#)—emails will be sent with more information and to invite cohorts.

I encourage faculty to explore the NCFDD core curriculum—especially [Skill #1: Every Semester Needs a Plan](#) to create a realistic plan and set priorities. Faculty can also subscribe to the [Monday Motivator](#), a weekly email that presents the core curriculum in bite-sized portions with actionable steps and a dose of positivity. I also recommend the [NCFDD Hidden Handbook](#), a miniseries that provides quick tips for success in various academic areas. For faculty who are interested in having a writing accountability partner, NCFDD matches people by rank with a writing buddy; go to their [website](#) to request a buddy match. Finally, faculty can join the [NCFDD Writing Challenges](#) in the discussion forum and/or sign up for the [14-Day Writing Challenge](#), October 9–22 (registration ends October 4).

NATIONAL CENTER FOR FACULTY DEVELOPMENT & DIVERSITY (NCFDD)

Smith College is an institutional member, which allows all members of our community to [access NCFDD professional development resources](#) for free.

2022–23 Smith Engagement with NCFDD

220

Account
Members
(15% increase
from last year)

1,504

ACTIVE SESSIONS

36

Smith registrations
for the 14-Day
Writing Challenge

5. (Re)creating a Community of Scholars

Over the summer, to build community and create accountability, I hosted Write-on-Sites on campus and writing retreats at the MacLeish Field Station, which included an optional hike in the woods. During one of these retreats, some of us were eager to hike despite unfavorable weather and got caught in a torrential downpour! We made memories, for sure. You can now [register](#)

for monthly Write-on-Site sessions that will be offered throughout the fall semester, and a writing and hiking afternoon at the MacLeish Field Station on September 26. You can also check out the [Writing Groups](#), which can be utilized to share and identify opportunities. Writing groups foster relationships of accountability and provide support and motivation.

SMITH COLLEGE.