Unofficial Guide for New Faculty at NCCC

Advice Given to New Faculty By NCCC Faculty

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http://www.niagaracc.suny.edu/frcae/
In the past, we have held receptions in the Center welcoming new faculty to NCCC. We have asked that seasoned faculty bring one piece of advice to share with our new colleagues. The response has been overwhelmingly positive! I hope you find the information that fills the following pages very useful.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kathy Gerbasi, Coordinator
V. James Renda Faculty Resource Center
for Academic Excellence

1. You have just met a new, part-time faculty member. What is the most important thing you could tell them about teaching and learning at NCCC?

• I encourage you to talk to colleagues and get their advice. Faculty here is very innovative and student centered; feel free to engage them. Also, don’t miss the FRCAE “New Faculty” sessions.

• What is great about teaching at NCCC is that we have a diverse student body—some have the skills and abilities to leave us at graduation and transfer to Cornell; others are diamonds in the rough and when they graduate, you are so proud and fulfilled.

• Get here early if you want a parking space!

• Keep the “Help” and “Student Guide” for the semester handy for answering student queries about important dates and college services.

• Take advantage of Faculty Resource Workshops.

• When you need anything and don’t know where to go—ask your division secretary.

• Be patient with students!

• Set your expectations high for students but be flexible.

• There is a collegial approach to teaching and learning at NCCC and don’t be afraid to ask questions or seek help from other faculty.

• Learn to ask questions. Colleagues are extremely willing to share information.

• Everyone at NCCC can answer your question—if it’s not their department, they will tell you who to contact and where they are located.

• They should not be afraid to ask questions about any aspect of their class or the college.

• Make sure to take time to LISTEN to students’ answers to see if they understand the information.

• For great teaching tips, follow the links from FRCAE’s website.

• I tend to always focus on details of the course outline and division policies. Also, the importance of
meeting as many faculties as possible.

- We count on you to maintain the standards of the content you are teaching and we are available to help and mentor you.
- The students are eager to learn find college material.
- My own personal philosophy of teaching and learning at NCCC is this: community college students need an instructor who not only teaches, but facilitates learning.
- Try to find a mentor in your department who is as great as Tom McCully is for me.
- We have a very diverse student body, diversity in age, diversity in abilities. We need to consider this when developing teaching materials, learning activities.
- Welcome! Keep your wits! You might go insane at times.

2. What do you wish someone had told you about our students when you first started teaching?

- Search out and use all the resources the college has available to you.
- Work summer advisement.
- Remember to put your students first.
- Many of our students have incredibly complicated lives with no support from home. You are encouraged to introduce them to support services.
- They may ask much unexpected not even about the material questions during a class. So don’t let it unnerve you.
- That they don’t like/have time to complete work outside of class.
- That some students do not have education as their #1 priority and you have to work on a way to reach them.
- We have a great group of students with a lot of different backgrounds.
- Many NCCC students need help “learning to learn” strategies.
- Do not confuse lack of preparation with lack of intelligence.
- They begin at a variety of levels. Some come in with a great deal of experience, which can be shared to help others. Other students have absolutely no background to build upon
- Challenges they face, poverty, family crises, academic deficiencies and their response non attendance, no texts, emotional outbursts, etc.
- We have a wonderfully diverse student body.
- That some are academically fragile, that is they do not quite understand the college relationship between students and faculty and course material and personal responsibilities.
- The extent of their learning disabilities, social/behavioral problems, etc, and overly complicated lives.
- Diversity is the lack of students being prepared for college.
- I wish I had understood better how much distraction they have in their lives that make learning more difficult.
- Actually they are better students than I was led to believe. They work hard and learn. If you
encourage them.

- Most any information about who our students are would have helped I guess.
- Get involved in committees and all other activities possible to maximize your on-campus network.
- Take time to know each student by name and LISTEN to “their story”; each background and home life will affect their learning experience.

- I wish I had know exactly how poor, in quality, of an education they had received in area high schools. Many have a false sense adequate preparation.
- Set up guidelines or rules and STICK TO THEM!
- Those students today are more vocal, abrupt, challenging, technologically wise, and want everything in a handout format. Nothing is personal (own life stories).
- We must maintain standards but also recognize that our students have many responsibilities outside of our classrooms.

3. **What are some of the ways we could communicate our commitment to excellence in teaching to part-time faculty?**

- Newsletter for adjuncts articles written by faculty
- Be on time for classes.
- Just having a conversation on your philosophy of teaching takes the time to talk with them.
- Lead by example. Be willing to put forth an extra effort for them.
- Talk to them as we pass them in the hall and ask how their classes are going see if they have any questions or problems.
- Be available make an effort to welcome them.
- I think it’s very important to give feedback to students on assignments to give them direction for the next assignment.
- We could be available to offer assistance “ unofficially” mentor and provide any materials or learning activities that may be helpful.
- Share assignments, grading strategies, time to kibitz.
- Don’t be afraid to tell students you don’t know the answer to a question, but tell them you will find out and get back to them. Just make sure you remember to do so.

- Mentoring and sharing teaching materials in printed forms.
- Offer services to part-timers at night.
- Wear our new buttons.
- Open our classrooms to them.
- Provide an open door for part-time faculty to meet with you to discuss any issues.
- Foster ownership in our division, department meetings, Christmas lunch etc. Ask for their contributions what worked, what didn’t suggested media, text.
- Remind them that maintaining excellence is more important than being liked.
• Maintain minimum standards.
• Be there, be a listener, be an observer.
• By being willing to help the part-timers. They too represent this institution so we need to assist them.
• Connect with a colleague for support and advice. Best of luck.
• Go to Faculty Senate!
• Make contacts outside your Division.
• Volunteer for a committee to get to know others on campus outside of your division and department.