Academic Affairs Fellowship Program

Purpose of the Program:

The University of North Carolina System’s Division of Academic Affairs, in collaboration with the Faculty Assembly, proposes the development of a faculty fellows program to engage interested faculty in academic affairs issues and mentored learning opportunities while tapping individual expertise to assist the UNC General Administration (GA) and constituent institutions. The program seeks to identify faculty members who have the potential for effective leadership. Fellows will also have the chance to become familiar with other General Administration initiatives as well as current challenges for public higher education at the state and national levels. Fellows will assume responsibility for special projects and will participate in ongoing routine activities in the Division of Academic Affairs. The overarching goals of the program for fellows include enhancing understanding of the complex landscape of public higher education, understanding the context for system-level decision making, and contributing to system-wide activities and initiatives in service to the constituent institutions.

Given recent surveys about declining interest in higher education administration, we hope this Academic Affairs Fellowship program will: increase faculty interest in higher education administration; increase their expertise related to academic program development and other administrative issues on the university campuses; and make them more effective in their current and future roles. Depending on the project and certain fellows’ locations, work may be from a distance with regular (e.g., monthly) meetings at GA.

Application to be submitted through the Provost’s Office:

- Recent CV.
- Letter of interest (no more than 2 pages).
- Short and long term career goals.
- Identification of potential activities (from a list developed by GA Academic Affairs – sample follows).
- Statements of endorsement by the chair, dean and provost.
- Please send to Ms. Minda Watkins (Executive Assistant to Dr. Junius Gonzales, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs) at mlwatkins@northcarolina.edu.
- Due date: November 10, 2015.
- Notice of selection around November 24, 2015.

Selection:

- To start, a maximum of three Academic Affairs Fellows will be selected by each year.
- Tenured faculty members at the associate or professor rank are preferred; consideration may be given to exceptional faculty at other ranks or in other tracks.
- Faculty members must have been on the home campus for at least 3 years.
- Selection of Fellows will be based on
  - Relevant experiences in the focus area of work, leadership activities.
  - Compelling link of potential benefit to future career and application to their home institution.
  - Review of application by committee which will include representatives from constituent institutions and GA.
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- Each campus may forward a maximum of two applications. The campuses should determine a process for vetting applications to identify the two applications to forward to GA Academic Affairs.
- The home institution agrees to share some of the costs of the program (e.g., travel expenses). The ability of a given campus to cost-share will be dependent on the financial resources of a given campus but will demonstrate a commitment to the fellow’s professional development. Scholarships will be available for campuses without sufficient resources to cost share.

Fellowship Support: (the below may vary with the scope of the project)
- Faculty Fellows will receive a reduction in teaching load, defined as either a 2 (or 3 or 4) course reduction (can be converted to percent effort) over an academic year. Depending on the area of work, travel expenses will be covered up to a maximum determined by the primary mentor at GA.
- Summer salary support.
- If the term lasts one year or more, partial support to attend a conference on higher education.

Fellowship Period
- Flexible scenarios depending on the nature and demands of the project and prior commitments of the fellow. For example:
  - Spring term plus first five weeks of summer.
  - Last five weeks of summer plus fall term.
  - Academic year.

Possible Areas of Focus (all require work with the constituent institutions):
- Undergraduate Education.
  - Propose concrete actions for institutions to enhance the development of oral communication skills of students, including assessment and refinement.
- Student Success
  - Determine needs for institutional research, technology tools, culture change and systematic planning to support ‘analytics’ that will answer student success questions by promoting intervention development or refinement and testing.
  - Assess best practices and innovations in financial aid and employment to help support students’ degree completion.
- Faculty Development & Retention
  - Determine needs for leadership development and recommend strategies to enhance such; this may involve various dimensions of leadership in a range of areas (e.g., from academic administration to the advancement of teaching and learning).
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- Campus Diversity
  - Determine strong models for recruitment, retention and success of underrepresented faculty.
  - Develop a faculty recruitment program that identifies outstanding doctoral students from underrepresented populations. For example, investigate partnerships with the top HBCUs and other minority serving institutions (MSI) that have doctoral programs for the creation of programs such as summer research or other mentoring programs to recruit strong emerging new faculty from these MSIs.

- Online and Blended Learning.
  - Develop recommended strategies to enhance the quality of online teaching and learning, including evaluation and research.

- Community engagement
  - Use metrics to identify areas/plans to work with community partnerships in innovative learning modalities that will impact student success.

- Academic Program Planning and Portfolio Management.
  - Conduct an environmental scan of best practices across the nation in public four year institutions.
  - Assess what constituent institutions currently do, identify ‘local’ best practices for dissemination and possible uptake.

Activities: in addition to leading an effort in a high priority area, fellows will be able to participate in key regular and special meetings at GA, the newly formed monthly journal club (led in part by graduate students employed at GA), and have individual and group fellow mentoring meetings. A reading list will be constructed tailored to the fellow’s needs and a draft project plan will be required within 30 days of the start date. Goals for the fellow’s experience will also be developed and assessed.

Post-Fellowship Engagement:
- Each year, current Fellows and alumni will meet at UNC General Administration ideally during a larger convening of interest, with special breakout time for the fellows.