Title III Grant To Launch Faculty Mentoring Program

UT Martin’s Title III grant, Soaring Toward Success, has multiple components to strengthen the institution, one of which targets faculty development. To capitalize on the role of faculty in student success and to promote dialogue and research about effective teaching, UT Martin will institute a peer mentoring program (i.e. Faculty Teaching and Learning Communities) based upon the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) model. Training for the mentors will begin Summer 2015, and the FTLCs will begin meeting in Fall 2015.

The work of the Faculty Teaching and Learning Communities will mirror SoTL in supporting the development of a scholarship of teaching and learning that fosters learning for all students, enhances the practice and profession of teaching, and brings to the teaching role of faculty the recognition and reward afforded to other forms of scholarly work. The FTLCs will be comprised of 8-10 tenure track faculty per group, mentored by trained UT Martin faculty members. Prospective mentors will apply for the positions, and a sub-committee of UT Martin’s Faculty Research and Development will select mentors based on their experience with mentoring, strong evaluations, and recommendations from peers, chair, and dean. The training for the mentors will include attending a Professional Organization Development (POD) meeting and a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning conference. Mentors will receive 25% release time in the academic year to allow sufficient time for their role with the FTLCs. The submission date for consideration for mentor positions in 2015-16 is March 31.

The mentees will also apply to participate in the program, and eligibility will include having taught at UT Martin five years or less, teaching in a tenure-track position, a recommendation from their chair, and a brief statement about how they would contribute to the group and what they hope to learn from the experience. A sub-committee of the Faculty
Research and Development Committee will select the participants, and the deadline for mentees to apply for consideration is April 6.

The FTLCs will meet four-six times per semester to discuss basic issues (e.g., how to use the student enrollment/grade system, committee service, and an understanding of UT Martin within its service region). The majority of time, however, will focus on issues related to the SoTL such as course design and creating environments for significant learning. While one of the outcomes of the FTLCs will be to provide individual and group support for new faculty, another outcome is for the group to produce a scholarly work individually or as a group around an agreed upon theme. Mentees will be provided with common readings regarding best practices of teaching in college, as well as a variety of resources. To supplement the group meetings and readings, webinars will also be offered.

For more information about the program, the application process, or the research of SoTL, contact Dr. Bonnie Daniel at bdaniel@utm.edu or 7015. Application forms and more information about SoTL will be available at http://www.utm.edu/departments/rgc/newfaculty.php after March 10.