



# Monthly Mentoring Memos

November 2018

## Advising & Teaching Effectiveness

### Advising

The documentation of student advising is expected as part of your reappointment materials at UMaine.

For example, you may be asked to document the following:

- Do you have regular meetings?
- How do you make contact with advisees that don't come to your office?
- How do you ensure that your advisees are meeting the General Education requirements?
- How many undergraduate (majors, undeclared students, Honors) and graduate students (master's, doctoral, IPhD, chair, committee) do you typically advise during the academic year?
- How do you know your advising is effective?

Like many other things in academic life, the amount of time you will dedicate to advising will vary during the year. Peak times may include:

- Prior to spring semester enrollment (end of October-beginning of November) and fall (end of March-beginning of April)
- Add-drop periods

- End of semester/beginning of semester

### Advising Tips

- Seek out assistance from experienced colleagues and department support about forms, handbooks, and norms around advising
- Utilize resources available in your college - for example, the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences and the College of Education and Human Development have Advising Centers
- Consider utilizing forms and guidelines to assist you and your students as timelines, procedures, etc. may be unfamiliar to many of the first-generation students

## Teaching

Reappointment materials and your promotion-tenure materials include areas to comment on teaching effectiveness and the steps you've taken to demonstrate your commitment to professional development in this area.

Even the best teachers can use some tips! In fact, in his extensive study of the “best college teachers,” Bain (2004) found that “part of being a good teacher is knowing that you always have something new to learn” (p. 174).

Utilize the many resources available on-campus, such as:

- **Your Colleagues** - ask to observe their classes and ask them to come observe yours, document in your reappointment materials
- **Center for Innovation in Teaching & Learning** - [CITL offers many workshops and 1:1 services to help with your teaching](#)

- **Your Students** - move beyond the standard end-of-the-semester form. Consider brief feedback mechanisms at these points in the semester:
  - Fourth Week- this is early enough in the semester that concerns can be voiced and changes to the class can be made. A half sheet of paper provided to students can ask them a few simple questions: “What’s working so far? What could be improved? What other suggestions do you have for improving the teaching/learning experience in the class?”
  - Mid-Term - asking similar questions - another chance to get feedback early enough in the semester
  - End-of-semester - an additional form that includes questions such as students’ thoughts about (a) course pacing, (b) classroom environment, (c) student-instructor interactions, (d) assignments, (e) texts/readings, etc.
  - Also, consider asking students about *how much they have learned* rather than simply focusing on your teaching - after all, that’s what it’s all about, right?

## Resources

*McKeachie’s Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers* (2013; Cengage Learning)

*What the Best College Teachers Do* (Bain, 2004; Harvard University Press)

*Teaching at its Best* (Nilson, 2010; Jossey-Bass)

Mentor Program Update November 2018

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