



Community Research Project: Initial Findings

Theme I: How Can We Support New Faculty?

November 27, 2020

Goal of Breakout Session

Please come up with at least **one action you think Science Atlantic could take** to help answer the questions below. At this stage in our strategic plan, one concrete and actionable suggestion is more useful than five general ideas.

Instructions

1. **Read through the attached research results before you discuss the questions below.**
2. Narrow down to a few ideas (fewer is better!).
3. Think about how one (or more) of those ideas could be turned into actions. Prompts to get you started will be listed on the screen.
4. You will have 30-40 minutes for discussion and to develop recommendations for your action(s).

Keep in Mind

- We want to focus on the findings from the interview participants - none of whom are currently involved with Science Atlantic - to develop ways to get more people involved. Think like someone who doesn't know anything about Science Atlantic.
- Since Science Atlantic is a primarily volunteer organization, recommended actions should be tasks that faculty would be willing to make happen. Staff can provide cohesiveness/structure/communications but not implementation.

Questions

1. **How can we build on existing faculty orientation?**
2. **How can we help new faculty build their teaching and time management skills?**
3. **How can we encourage connection between new faculty and senior faculty?**



Community Research Results

Theme I: How Can We Support New Faculty?

Summary of Findings:

How Can We Support New Faculty?

Expand on Existing Orientation

Strengthen Teaching and Time Management Skills

Encourage Connection with Senior Colleagues

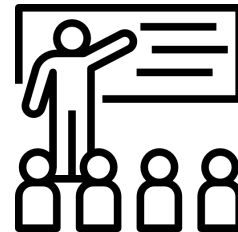
1. Expand on Existing Orientation

Some participants felt that the initial orientation they received at their institution did not provide enough guidance at the beginning of their career.

"The biggest challenge I had was that there wasn't any kind of orientation."

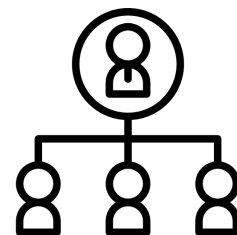
- Participant 36

"It's not governed by a lot of guidance. So you sort of have to make up a lot of stuff on the go." - Participant 27



It was noted that navigating the organizational structure of their institution was difficult for some new faculty.

"Just at first not knowing if all the information was out there, through a faculty orientation, and there's lots of information which isn't covered in those kinds of things.. supposedly everybody just knows it and you have to ask the right questions to find out the right answers. So that was a bit of a challenge." - Participant 6





“Biggest challenges that I faced? I think probably was just navigating how higher education institutions work, you know, sort of who's who. Who's responsible for what.” - Participant 38

Additionally, getting familiar with the culture of the university was mentioned as a challenge.

*“So that sort of finding a spot in that department, **finding my place was really a challenge in the beginning**” - Participant 19*

*“That transition for new faculty might not be about information. I should say **the other new faculty challenge when I started was fitting in, you know, fitting into the culture because the culture here was different than the culture at the other university.**” - Participant 30*



2. Strengthen Teaching and Time Management Skills

It was suggested by some that they were not comfortable with their teaching skills when they began in their role.

*“**My biggest problem was the fact that I knew I didn't know how to teach.**” - Participant 1*

*“**One of the biggest challenges was learning how to teach reasonably well. That is something that we don't get trained for, it was just assumed that you would learn and everyone would learn how to do that on the job. And so it took me a long time to get relatively comfortable with that.**” - Participant 9*

*“The open-endedness and lack of guidance. **Just learning how to deal with that many students, how to control the classroom and stuff like that. That's stuff that people in those types of teacher roles don't really get trained in teaching.** So everything's sort of on the fly and learning from what you've already done and the experiences you have, but **there's not really formal education.**” - Participant 27*

Some also noted having difficulties with managing their time.

*“One thing is dealing with it through a balance of the different aspects of the job. **How much time spent on teaching, how much time spent on research, how much time to spend doing committees, things like that.**” - Participant 6*

*“**I think probably the biggest one is balancing your time, time management.** How much time do you give to this versus that? So, the time management piece is an important skill.” - Participant 11*



3. Encourage Connection with Senior Colleagues

When asked what advice they would give to their younger self, the most common recommendation was to seek help from their senior colleagues.

*"I think the biggest thing would be **not to be afraid to go to the chair of the department or the Dean's office or if there's like a teaching and learning center, you know, to be able to step forward and ask those questions.**"-*

Participant 38

*"I think a lot of people feel like they're on their own and **I probably would have asked for more support either from my academic chair or from other colleagues who were in the same boat.** I might've asked for us to have some team teaching or to connect once a week to kind of have a mentor." -*

Participant 39