

## Program Overview and Description of Activities

### *Program Overview*

The Searle Fellows program is a comprehensive, year-long (eight month) faculty development program for early career faculty. Rather than focusing simply on providing strategies, techniques or tips, the Searle Fellows program seeks to foster critical inquiry and professional reflection on teaching, drawing on the university's assessment framework. Each Searle Fellow will develop an individual project that seeks to address a substantial question that is meaningful and relevant to them, usually focusing on the development of a new or revised course or curriculum, the revision of a key assessment strategy in a course, curriculum, or other learning context, or a research inquiry into learning. Some Searle Fellows may opt to conduct focused educational research projects. **All details of the program may be found on Canvas Course Management site.**

### *Program Aims and Objectives*

The program has been designed to (1) integrate with existing faculty teaching demands, (2) draw on the academic experience of faculty in their current research/scholarship, (3) provide academic rigor and stimulation at a high intellectual level, and (4) create a professional experience which will be rich and rewarding for faculty over the course of their careers.

### **The program encourages faculty to develop:**

- the ability to reflect on all aspects of teaching and on their own identity and positionality of themselves as educators;
- a deep understanding of key issues and practices of learning and teaching;
- inclusive learning and teaching environments;
- knowledge and expertise in the areas of learning and teaching;
- skill in assessing student learning;
- evidence-based approaches to learning and teaching; and
- capacity for facilitating conversations about these ideas with others.

### *Program History*

In 1999, the Searle Center for Advancing Learning and Teaching established the Searle Fellows Program to provide an innovative and sustained approach to faculty development. We began with 8 junior faculty members and 8 senior mentors; by 2019, 283 early career faculty, and 201 mentors have been actively involved in the program. The program aims to provide faculty with the expertise and knowledge to critically assess and solve problems in their courses. It does not simply focus on providing strategies, techniques and tips, but is designed to foster critical inquiry and professional reflection on teaching, by promoting learning-focused conceptions and approaches to teaching. Through surveys, interviews, critical accounts, student feedback, examination of student grades and individual case studies, we have found substantive evidence of successful adoption of student-centered approaches to teaching, as well as powerful evidence of positive changes in the understanding of teaching. Through the dissemination of the program to the wider academic community through conferences and academic journals, the program has begun to impact academic communities both nationally and internationally.

## ***Program Activities***

Searle Fellows participate in a series of linked events focused on a variety of issues and aspects of learning and teaching in higher education. These include:

### **(A) *Full and Small Group Activities***

1. *Searle Fellows Fiesta*: At this informal welcome to the program, the new Searle Fellows will have a chance to interact with the Searle Center staff, as well as the other Searle Fellows and their mentors.
2. *Dinner Meetings*: Throughout the academic year, we will meet for dinner to explore participant-selected topics and conduct other business of the program. We open the year with the Welcome Dinner, during which we will extend a general welcome to the fellows and their mentors. The 2019-2020 Searle Fellows Program will conclude at the *Celebratory Dinner* in the spring, during which participants will receive their certificates from the Provost, and present the results of their projects to the group. Senior members of Northwestern University administration will be on hand as we present certificates and reflect on the year. *Mentors are welcome and encouraged to attend all dinners.*
3. *Two-Day Overnight Retreat*: In late November, the Searle Fellows will retreat to the shores of Lake Michigan for a time of reflection and professional growth. Amid the picturesque landscape of Lake Forest, we will hold sessions and discussions to further explore important issues related to learning and teaching. **Please note: Searle Fellows are required to attend this event.** *Mentors are welcome and encouraged to attend.*
4. *All-Day Retreat*: In mid to late April, Searle Fellows will again leave campus to focus on their teaching projects (sharing their progress, giving and receiving feedback, discussing common teaching concerns and issues, etc.). **Please note: Searle Fellows are required to attend this event.** *Mentors are welcome and encouraged to attend.*
5. *Faculty Workshops*: Searle Fellows are required to participate in at least **3** teaching and learning workshops of their own choosing. These workshops are open to all Northwestern faculty and address various learning and teaching issues in higher education, such as inclusive course design, academic integrity, lecturing, small group teaching, assessment, and learning with technology. Please register on-line at <https://www.northwestern.edu/searle/initiatives/faculty/index.html> . Faculty from Feinberg may attend sessions offered by FAME (Feinberg Academy of Medical Educators) [http://educationinmedicine.northwestern.edu/center/about\\_us/index.html](http://educationinmedicine.northwestern.edu/center/about_us/index.html)
6. *Project Group Meetings*: Throughout the year, Fellows will meet with 3-4 peers in project groups on their own time to discuss the progress of their projects and focus on specific teaching questions. A member of the Searle Center staff will facilitate project development. (See expectations for project groups on pages 8-9)
7. *Group poster*: Each project group will put together a single poster that highlights key aspects of their individual projects, identifies key findings (including shared reflections on projects), and emphasizes a specific theme common to the group. (See Canvas for examples of past projects and posters). (See Poster Details on Page 15)

***(B) Individual Activities***

1. *Individual Consultations:* Searle Fellows should meet with Susie or other Searle Center staff as appropriate to discuss their projects and other teaching concerns during the course of the year.
2. *Class/Course Analysis:* During the course of the academic year, each participant should have a Small Group Analysis (SGA) conducted in class if appropriate. (See description below for further details). Fellows are expected to meet with a Searle staff member to discuss the results of the SGA. If an SGA does not seem to be the appropriate format, than the Searle staff will help devise a different format to acquire feedback from the students.
3. *Meetings with your mentor:* Fellows should meet with their mentors as appropriate to develop their projects and teaching expertise in their discipline. Fellows should observe their mentors teach, and be observed by the mentors in return.
4. *Critical Account of Teaching Project:* (See recent examples on Canvas [See full description of Critical Account on Page 13])

***Additional Services Provided to Searle Fellows and Mentors:***

- **Small Group Analysis (SGA):** See handout for full description of SGA service. We usually conduct SGAs in the middle of the quarter (weeks 4-6). Typically, we use the **last 25 minutes** of class time and we do a follow-up consultation the following week. To schedule this service complete our on-line form at <https://www.northwestern.edu/searle/services/feedback-on-teaching/index.html>
- **Structured Observation:** In addition to the SGA, fellows may opt to have a session observed. To schedule this service, contact Susie Calkins ([s-calkins@northwestern.edu](mailto:s-calkins@northwestern.edu)). See page 24 for complete description.
- **Focus Group/ Survey Support:** Some learning and teaching contexts do not lend themselves well to an SGA, and it may be more appropriate to construct a focus group or design a survey or set of surveys to get feedback from learners. Just contact Susanna (Susie) Calkins for assistance.

## **Mentor Roles and Expectations in the Searle Fellows Program**

### **The Mentor**

The Searle Fellow will identify a suitable senior colleague to serve as their mentor during the program. This person should be in their discipline or in a related field. The mentor should have a strong understanding of their Searle Fellows learning and teaching context, even if they do not teach in that area. The mentor works with the participant with respect to the program, discussing various aspects of learning, teaching, and their relationship to the fellow's project.

Please note: We do not expect the mentors to be experts in the area of learning and teaching but they should care about their Searle Fellow's professional development as educators. Moreover, they will have a wealth of experience to draw on, including their experience of the particular discipline, department, and institution that will be helpful to the Searle Fellows as well.

### **Mentor's Role**

#### ***The mentor should:***

Be aware of the program requirements for the Searle Fellow.

- Provide opportunities for Searle Fellow to reflect on their teaching, especially how they relate to student learning, research, administration, etc.
- Attend program events. At the very least we would like mentors to attend the formal dinners, the overnight retreat in December (at least parts of it if not overnight), as well as the final dinner in June, (the Searle Fellows present their projects and to a number of senior administrators, including the provost, who will be in attendance as well).
- Observe the Searle Fellow's practical teaching (including a written commentary if possible).
- Provide feedback about their Searle Fellows' project and critical account.

## Expectations for Project Group Meetings

### **First Project Group Meeting (Fall Retreat)**

During this session we will ask you to reflect on your project, thinking about your rationale, learning objectives, teaching methods and activities, assessments and evaluations. We will ask you to share your thoughts with the group, accepting feedback and comments from your colleagues, and providing constructive feedback and questions to your peers in return. (Please see the worksheet on page 16)

### **Second project group meeting (around mid-February)**

75-90 minutes scheduled at a time, date and location agreed-upon by members and facilitator. Each group member should get about 10-15 minutes each to share where they are in the project, and answer questions from the group.

We would like you to be prepared to share in more detail:

- 2 or 3 pieces of relevant literature you will use to frame your project (you do not need to print them out for your colleagues). We have many articles on Canvas that might be helpful to you. Searle staff members will be glad to share relevant materials with you as well.
- How you are thinking about your
  - Overall rationale for project
  - *Learning objectives*
  - *Teaching methods/activities*
  - *Gaps and Challenges*
  - *You may also wish to share relevant assessments and evaluation, if you have worked them out already*

### **Third project group meeting (around mid to late March)**

75-90 minutes scheduled at a time, date and location agreed-upon by members and facilitator. Each group member should get about 10-15 minutes each to share where they are in the project, and answer questions from the group.

We would like you to share **a one-page bullet point description of your project**, focusing on

- *Assessments—How will you know to what extent are students meeting/achieving learning objectives, and at what level?*
- *Evaluation—How will you know what worked/didn't work?*
- *Other gaps and challenges*

### **Fourth project group meeting (at Spring Retreat)**

A good portion of the Spring Retreat will be devoted to giving your group the space and time to identify a theme, idea, or key practice that unites the group members' projects in a meaningful way, in preparation for the final celebratory dinner. Each project group will create a draft of a presentation that highlights portions of each member's individual project around a common theme. See Canvas for examples of final presentations. (See poster and presentation details on page 15)

**Fifth and final project group meeting (between retreat and final celebratory dinner)**

Each group will meet on their own to finalize two versions of the presentations in preparation for the final celebratory dinner. There will be a paper poster to be displayed at the pre-dinner reception, and a more developed PPT slide presentation to share during the dinner. For each PPT demonstration, each group should prepare an introductory slide (which may be similar in form to the poster), and 1-2 slides for each individual to share aspects of their project as it relates to the group's theme. A concluding slide should summarize group's discoveries, reflections, lessons learned, final thoughts etc. Each group member will get 2-3 minutes to present their own slides. One member should introduce the group (1 minute) and one member should conclude the presentation (1-2 minutes).