

# FACULTY DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER

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Register for the Spring 2024 Faculty Development Series



## Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty

**JANUARY 2024**

Check out the [August 2023 Faculty Development Newsletter](#).

happy new year • **bonne année** • **urte berri on** • **gutes neues gahr** • **buon anno** • **un an nou fericit**  
**feliz ano novo** • **gott nytt år** • **feliz año nuevo** • **新年おめでとう** • **heri ya mwaka mpya**

Inspired by an incoming [Kahn Liberal Arts Institute short-term project](#) aimed at celebrating the diverse languages used by the Smith community, I wish you a Happy New Year 2024 in some of the many languages spoken around the world! May you find joy and fulfillment in the coming year. I am happy to share with you the January edition of the Faculty Development Newsletter, dedicated to sharing faculty development resources, programs, and priorities grounded in Beverly D. Tatum's ABC approach to creating engaged and inclusive academic communities: affirming identity, building community, and cultivating leadership.

Through various activities across campus, my office supports the many ways faculty and students collaborate. To make this important work more visible and to celebrate faculty-mentored undergraduate scholarly projects, we are hosting the annual event [Celebrating Collaborations](#) on the afternoon of Friday, April 19, 2024. If you are interested in engaging students in your research and/or thinking of creating a research lab, I encourage you to attend the upcoming faculty development session titled [“Faculty-Student Research Collaborations: Opportunities, Challenges, and Rewards,”](#) which will feature three panels—in the social sciences, the sciences, and the arts and humanities—with colleagues who have succeeded in actively engaging students in their research projects.

Because it is an opportunity that is too often overlooked by faculty, and one that requires planning ahead, I want to draw your attention to the Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program, which offers U.S. faculty, administrators, and professionals grants to teach and/or conduct research around the world. The 2025–26 Fulbright U.S. Scholar Competition will open in February 2024 (register [here](#) to stay informed). If you have any questions or would like to discuss what you have in mind, you can sign up for [my office hours](#) held on Fridays.

I look forward to supporting you and wish you a good start to the spring semester.



### *Héléne Visentin*

Associate Dean of the Faculty and  
Dean for Academic Development

Faculty Policies Administrator Hayley Spizz is my partner in our faculty development work. Please feel free to reach out to Hayley ([hspizz@smith.edu](mailto:hspizz@smith.edu)) or me ([hvisenti@smith.edu](mailto:hvisenti@smith.edu)) with any questions. We are also open to your suggestions!

**332**

SESSION ATTENDEES

**Summer 2023**

8 Faculty Development  
Sessions

**Fall 2023**

25 Faculty Development  
Sessions

# Our faculty development work falls into the following categories:

## 1. Fostering Equity

The provost's office supports three equity-focused initiatives that build a healthy and more equitable community of teacher-scholars. I am happy to share some updates.

### Faculty Workload Equity

The purpose of the Faculty Workload Equity initiative is to implement evidence-based strategies to increase transparency, clarity, and accountability, with the goal of making the distribution of work *within* departments/programs more equitable. What we have learned so far is that (1) the work around faculty workload equity is a collective effort; (2) we need systems and policies in place to resolve inequities, otherwise we often fall into [“hallway” and “unscripted” asks](#); and (3) it is important to recognize identity taxation, acknowledge differences in context, and take a holistic view. In the fall, the provost's office hosted a Faculty Workload Equity Community of Support meeting. During this meeting, we heard that many departments have good policies in place to distribute service, teaching assignments, and/or advising, or intend to do so. We also heard about several challenges that chairs are navigating related to balancing workloads among their colleagues. To help chairs in this important work, the provost's office has curated some resources. For those faculty who want to explore further, one of the best evidence-based strategies that departments/programs can use to increase transparency is the dashboard (see K. O'Meara et al., [“Faculty Work Activity Dashboards: A Strategy to Increase Transparency,”](#) *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 2020). Dashboards can be used for advising, teaching, and service—either all together or for each one separately. To engage further with this work, all chairs are invited to attend the spring Faculty Workload Equity Community of Support meeting on February 13 from 12:15 to 1:15 p.m. All faculty are also invited to attend [“Toward Equity: Faculty Workload Equity”](#) on February 27 from 12:15 to 1:15 p.m. as part of our Spring 2024 Faculty Development Series.

### Support for Non-Tenure-Track (NTT) Faculty

Building on New Faculty Orientation, in early September our office hosted an NTT faculty welcome meeting. We then hosted two meetings in October—one for NTT faculty in renewable positions and one for those in nonrenewable positions. These meetings are an opportunity to share [helpful resources](#), create a space for NTT faculty to ask questions, form a channel of communication with my office, and introduce our [Non-Tenure-Track Mentoring Team](#). The NTT Mentoring Team's charge is to support NTT faculty in navigating the college and being successful during their time at Smith. To build community, NTT mentors are hosting a [Sherrerd Teaching Circle](#) again in the spring and will organize their traditional social gathering of the semester (TBA). At the October NTT meeting for nonrenewable faculty and at the December chairs meeting, we shared the results of the annual anonymous survey to understand the experiences of NTT faculty in nonrenewable positions. In response to feedback from NTT faculty, we offered the October professional development session “Support for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty: Strategically Updating Your Documents”—led by Johanna Yunker, associate director of the Office of Professional Development at UMass Amherst—to support NTT faculty on their career paths. And in December, I met with the Faculty Council to discuss issues pertaining to NTT faculty. The spring NTT faculty meetings will be held on March 13 (for renewable faculty) and March 26 (for nonrenewable faculty).

### Anti-Racist Learning Community for Faculty and Staff Who Teach

Supported by a Racial Justice Action Planning grant, an anti-racist pedagogy session was recently hosted by my office and facilitated by Crystal Fleming, professor of sociology at SUNY Stony Brook University, for a cohort of 12 faculty who had committed to developing courses that engage substantively with content related to race and anti-racism (following a call for proposals

launched in spring 2023). Participants asked for help with two issues related to difficult conversations: 1) How faculty can structure a class at the start of the semester so they are well prepared for difficult conversations, and 2) How faculty can approach a difficult conversation in the classroom and structure such a conversation. Fleming

## 2. Onboarding and Mentoring Faculty

Mentoring is key in career and personal growth, in building inclusive communities, and in developing a sense of belonging. But cultivating a relationship with one mentor is not enough to make sure all our needs are met. To help faculty identify their needs, ask for help to meet their

recommended the [University of Michigan guidelines](#) for facilitating both spontaneous and planned class discussions on a variety of difficult topics—including racism and racial bias—as well as the [Packback guide](#) on using classroom conversations as a key tool of anti-racism pedagogy.

specific needs, and develop their own network of mentors, I recommend using the NCFDD interactive [Mentoring Map](#). As a reminder, the provost's office administers [three mentoring programs](#) and keeps an updated list of [Mentoring Resources](#).

## 3. Building Communities of Support

Our president, Sarah Willie-LeBreton, wrote in a letter to the community that “sharing knowledge is the beginning of incalculable good.” We have frequent opportunities in the course of the semester to share knowledge and build communities of support. Faculty may attend weekly [Liberal Arts and/or Sigma Xi Luncheons](#), attend a [faculty](#)

[development session](#), join a [Teaching Circle](#) and/or a [Teaching Arts Luncheon](#) hosted by the Sherrerd Center for Teaching and Learning, or take part in an interdisciplinary project led by the [Kahn Liberal Arts Institute](#). Faculty are also welcome to join an [affinity group under the auspices of the Office for Equity and Inclusion](#). There

## Faculty Wellness Fellow

In the day-to-day pacing and rhythms of the semester, there are many sources of faculty exhaustion. These are compounded by the social, political, and global climates in which we do our research, teaching, and administrative work. Living within larger contexts of unrest, how do we bring our better-rested selves into our writing, classrooms, service meetings, and the broader campus? Given reports of exhaustion from faculty during fall 2023, while building upon last semester's theme of cultivating authentic power as a key to faculty wellness, the mandate for spring 2024 Faculty Wellness programming became clear. This term, we turn with more sustained attention toward strategically using rest to fuel faculty capacity. In the face of personal and structural constraints, we contemplate what rest is and what it is not—how it impacts faculty wellness, why it

matters, how to enact it in our day-to-day lives, and implications for wider culture shifting.

This is year two of our pilot Faculty Wellness initiative. What kinds of programming would you like to see? Feel free to email [bjackson@smith.edu](mailto:bjackson@smith.edu) with your half-formed thoughts, wish lists, practical suggestions, off-the-wall ideations, and faculty wellness curiosities—they are all welcome.



are also three groups for junior faculty: Junior Faculty in Science and Engineering (contact Alicia Grubb and/or Greg de Wet), Junior Faculty of Color (contact Elizabeth Pryor), and Junior

Faculty in Divisions I, II, and IV (contact Hélène Visentin). Another way to connect is via Smith Slack channels (look for “Smith Faculty Community” on Slack).

## 4. Accessing Resources To Meet Your Needs

For an overview, explore the [Faculty Development Map](#) that charts by rank and general topic the variety of ways Smith offers faculty ongoing professional development. The provost’s office hosts several [review meetings and workshops](#)—emails will be sent with more information and to invite cohorts.

To identify funding opportunities that match their profiles, faculty can access three main databases: [Pivot Proquest](#), [GrantForward](#), and [Grants.gov](#) (for federal grants). The Grants and Sponsored Research team ([grants@smith.edu](mailto:grants@smith.edu)) can help faculty get started with these databases, and the office’s [website](#) lists opportunities and resources for faculty interested in seeking external fellowships. For faculty who are new at grant writing, I highly recommend a recent book by Betty S. Lai, [The Grant Writing Guide: A Road Map for Scholars](#) (Princeton UP, 2023). Earlier this month, Lai facilitated an “Effective Grant Writing” workshop at Mount Holyoke College open to the Five College community. A list of available grant samples is available on Lai’s [website](#); the Grants and Sponsored Research office can also help you locate samples from faculty at liberal arts colleges.

As a reminder, the [Smith College Moneybook 2023–24](#) includes internal grants and fellowships for research and curricular development. **The deadline for proposals for 2024–25 endowed fellowships is Friday, February 9, 2024.**

As always, I encourage faculty to explore [NCFDD](#) resources. Faculty can subscribe to the [Monday Motivator](#), a weekly email that presents the core curriculum in bite-size portions with actionable steps and a dose of positivity. For faculty who are interested in having a writing accountability partner, NCFDD matches people by rank with a writing buddy; go to their [website](#) to request a buddy match. Faculty can also join the [NCFDD Writing Challenges](#) in the discussion forum and/or sign up for the [14-Day Writing Challenge](#) from February 26 to March 10 (registration ends February 16). Smith College is an institutional member, which allows everyone in our community to access NCFDD professional development resources for free. To learn how to make the most of your NCFDD membership, I recommend viewing this [webinar](#).

## 5. (Re)creating a Community of Scholars

On January 18, a Write-on-Site group met at the MacLeish Field Station and enjoyed a breath of fresh air while hiking in the snowy woods of Whately, MA. Writing together in a place of such natural beauty is truly a memorable experience. It is always a challenge to organize a Write-on-Site at MacLeish with the semester in full swing, but I plan to do so in late spring and during the summer. In the meantime, you can now [register](#)

for monthly Write-on-Site sessions that will be offered throughout the spring semester. You can also check out the Smith Writing Groups, which can be utilized to share and identify opportunities, and the [Feminist Writing Community](#) hosted by the Five College Women’s Studies Research Center. Writing in the company of others provides support, motivation, and joy.

**The provost’s office strives to enable faculty to thrive at every career stage through faculty development offerings that provide mentoring and support, foster equity and inclusion, and build community.**