

Tips for Department Chairs: Leveraging UC San Diego's NCFDD Membership to Foster Productivity and Collegiality in Your Department

Center for Faculty Diversity and Inclusion (FDI), UC San Diego, May 2020

What is NCFDD?

The National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (NCFDD) is an independent, membership-based organization that provides holistic professional development for faculty at all ranks through core curriculum webinars, multi-week courses, peer mentoring, writing challenges and other resources. As institutional members, UC San Diego faculty, researches, postdocs, and graduate students can access NCFDD resources for free by setting up an account online. The institutional membership is sponsored by the Center for Faculty Diversity and Inclusion at UC San Diego.

What are the benefits of membership?

NCFDD helps academics be the most effective and productive they can be with the limited time they have, while balancing the demands of research, teaching, service, and personal life. It can complement other scholar support and mentoring programs on campus by providing an additional source for learning, connection, and resources that faculty and other academics can access whenever from wherever.

Member services include the following:

- Webinars – Members can learn at their convenience. A calendar is available online at <https://www.facultydiversity.org/events> (only viewable when signed-in).
- Weekly emails, called the Monday Motivator that reinforce the core curriculum.
- 14-day Writing Challenges.
- Private online space to network, share, and peer-mentor
- Other: Career Center (post/search job listings), multi-week courses, and library.

How can I promote and maximize the benefits of NCFDD membership in my department?

NCFDD resources can be to support recruitment and retention efforts, as well as mentorship in your department. Here are several ways that chairs can promote and maximize the benefits of NCFDD membership:

1. **Become a Member!** If you are personally familiar with NCFDD workshops and services, you'll be better positioned to discuss them and promote them to faculty, post-docs, and graduate students in your department.
2. **Actively Promote NCFDD Membership at Departmental Meetings, Retreats, etc.** It sounds simple, but consistent reminders go a long way in driving utilization. It helps considerably when Deans and Department Chairs actively spread the word about NCFDD Membership at relevant meetings and departmental gatherings. You may also consider emailing faculty at the start of the academic year to remind them about the membership or in a welcome message to new faculty. Orientations for new graduate students and/or postdocs are another great opportunity to share information on NCFDD and ensure that everyone who might benefit knows about it.

3. **Host NCFDD Webinars on Campus.** Organize brown bags for faculty, postdocs and/or graduate students to and stream an NCFDD Webinar, either live or as playback on topics that your department finds important or helpful. This not only gets a group of people to participate in the curriculum, but it also allows them to process the content together and build a supportive collegial environment. Consider hosting a webinar at the beginning each quarter when faculty are more likely to participate.
4. **Embed NCFDD Resources within Existing Faculty Development Activities.** Consider NCFDD a complement to what your department is doing to advance faculty development. Perhaps there are ways to embed NCFDD resources in what you are already doing. For example, if you have a mentoring program, you could share information on NCFDD mentoring resources with mentors and mentees.
5. **Sponsor a Faculty Success Program.** For an additional fee per person, NCFDD offers the widely acclaimed Faculty Success Program, an intensive 12-week virtual boot camp for tenured and tenure-track faculty (<https://www.facultydiversity.org/fsp-bootcamp>). Consider sponsoring participation in the Faculty Success Program. FDI has sponsored 17 cohorts to date, and faculty at all ranks have rated the program as highly beneficial to their productivity and success. This type of support could especially benefit junior faculty and new hires, and could be included in an offer letter for a more attractive package.
6. **Start a small mentoring or writing group for junior faculty, postdocs, or graduate students.** In 2013, the Division of Arts and Humanities piloted a successful mentoring program for early assistant professors and a select group of graduate students. They met monthly to discuss the NCFDD tools and webinars. These meetings, which often took place over lunch, provided accountability and support, and also helped build community within the division. Members shared the following comments about the program:
 - “Another member of the group and I have begun to write religiously together, and we both feel that our level of productivity has increased greatly for that reason.”
 - “Overall, I think that my participation in the program has made me feel more confident and less overwhelmed about getting tenure.”
 - “The curriculum emphasized seemingly basic but often under-taught academic survival skills like managing your time effectively, developing and executing weekly and semester plans, and the importance of accountability mechanisms and maintaining daily writing habits.”

Similar groups can be easily replicated at a division or department level with little to no cost.