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# The Role of New Faculty Orientations in Improving the Effectiveness of Postsecondary Teaching Part 2: College Sector

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## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	3
Introduction .....	4
Research Questions and Methodology.....	4
Literature Review .....	5
Survey Results .....	7
Teaching and Learning Units at Ontario’s Publicly-Funded Colleges .....	7
New Faculty Orientations at Ontario’s Publicly-Funded Colleges .....	9
Other Services, Programs, and Support for New Faculty.....	17
Discussion .....	19
Summary and Recommendations.....	21
References.....	24
Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire .....	26
Appendix B: Detailed Institutional Size and Staffing Information.....	31

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Teaching and Learning Centres – Years of Existence .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 2: Teaching and Learning Centres – Full-time Staffing .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 3: NFO – First Time Offered .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 4: NFO Intended Audience – Full-time vs. Part-time Faculty .....	11
Figure 5: NFO Status – Voluntary or Mandatory .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 6: NFO Duration.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 7: NFO – Best Description of Content .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 8: NFO – Most Common Topics .....	15
Figure 9: NFO – All Topics.....	16
Figure 10: Other Services Designed To Help Improve Teaching Skills.....	18

## Executive Summary

The findings presented in this second report build upon those presented in the first installment, 'The Role of New Faculty Orientations in Improving the Effectiveness of University Teaching.' In the earlier published report, attention was directed at New Faculty Orientation (NFO) programs offered across Ontario's twenty publicly-funded universities. The survey-derived data presented in the first report provide insights into the composition, strengths and drawbacks of the range of services offered to foster the pedagogical development of Ontario's university faculty.

The purpose of this second report is to inquire into the availability of NFO programs across Ontario's 24 publicly-funded community colleges.<sup>1</sup> As in the first report, research presented herein is derived from an online survey instrument. Also like its counterpart, the present paper draws on survey-derived data in order to extend beyond questions about the prevalence of NFO programs in Ontario's community college sector to also include discussion of more general teaching development services offered to faculty working within Ontario's publicly-funded community colleges.

The main findings<sup>2</sup> of this report are as follows:

- 100 per cent of responding colleges host centralized annual NFOs.
- 16 survey respondents have mandatory NFO programs.
- 22 survey respondents indicated that funding for their NFOs is renewed annually as part of the base budget allocated to their respective teaching and learning centres (or equivalent).

In relation to other pedagogical development services, we found the following:

- All responding Ontario colleges offer pedagogical development programs for faculty throughout the year. The most common of these relate to individual consultations, formal scheduled workshops, and curriculum design and redesign assistance.
- The majority of surveyed institutions offer online modules for teaching sessions and consultations related to teaching with technology.
- The main challenges faced by Ontario colleges in their efforts to support new faculty with their pedagogical development relate to limited faculty time and too few resources dedicated to the staffing and funding of their respective teaching and learning units.

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<sup>1</sup> In this report, the term "*community college*..." is used to refer to institutions that traditionally have not awarded the baccalaureate and whose programs normally are of three years or less duration" and the term "university is used... to refer to institutions that traditionally have been authorized to award bachelor's and higher degrees, and in which these degrees constitute the larger majority of their academic awards" (Skolnik, 2011, p. 354, original emphases).

<sup>2</sup> Findings are based on data compiled in 2012.

## Introduction

In light of knowledge that community “college faculty are employed as full time *teachers*, with no expectation, remuneration, employment, tenure, or promotion specifically related to conducting research,” concerns have been raised that Ontario’s college faculty are provided with too few resources to foster this craft (Fisher, 2009, para 32, original emphasis; Fedderson, 2008). More specifically, scholars maintain that if they are to attract and retain effective teachers, colleges must provide their faculty – perhaps especially those who are newly hired and/or do not have formal educational training – with services that will socialize them into and foster their institutional roles as instructors (Maciejewski and Matthews, 2010; Miller, 1997). This general agreement notwithstanding, there is a scarcity of research about related programs and services offered to people hired to teach in Canadian colleges (c.f. Fisher, 2006; Lowry and Froese, 2011).

Additionally, there is a paucity of research into the benefits of new faculty induction programs and services, where they are available. Together, these findings reveal a concerning lacuna. As Twombly and Townsend (2008) suggest, if we are to be truly student-learner focused, we must subject programs and services aimed at teaching faculty’s pedagogical growth to ongoing, formal scrutiny and evaluation. Such efforts will help both to ensure student and faculty satisfaction and success and to better inform us about the appropriateness and/or transferability of such programs and services within and across postsecondary contexts.

It is with this aim in mind that we present in this report data about New Faculty Orientation (NFO) programming and related services across Ontario’s publicly-funded community colleges. Our hope is that our ensuing presentation and analyses of these data will spark discussions about the scope of training and support that Ontario’s college faculty members receive at the start of their teaching careers. More generally, we hope that these data provide reference points for ongoing considerations about intersections between faculty professional development and student teaching and learning experiences and how these relate to more general institutional practices and trends.

## Research Questions and Methodology

The purpose of this report is to provide a detailed inventory of the ways in which Ontario’s publicly-funded colleges support their faculty at the beginning of their initial teaching appointments. The main research questions are as follows:

- What programs and services do Ontario’s publicly-funded colleges organize for their newly appointed faculty members?
- What is the structure of these programs and which content areas are covered most often?
- What are some of the challenges faced by Ontario colleges in their efforts to support faculty’s pedagogical growth?

Prior to the formal launch of this study, the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) sponsored a meeting with representatives from teaching and learning units from all Ontario universities, whose job it is to promote the professional and pedagogical development of faculty, including but not limited to newly appointed faculty members. During this meeting, the authors of the [first report](#) had the opportunity to discuss Phase One

of the current project with those in attendance. All suggestions provided to members of the original research team regarding terminological clarification and question validation were subsequently incorporated into the online survey instrument used to facilitate this study (see Appendix A).

As a way to build upon the findings presented in [the first report](#) in a manner that speaks directly to Ontario's colleges, two further tasks were undertaken. First, members of the research team had some of their college sector contacts review our online survey instrument in order to comment on the transferability of the survey questions from the university to the college context. This consultation led to minimal wording changes made to our survey instrument. For example, for or college-based survey, the word 'college' replaced the word 'university' and the term 'part-time faculty' replaced the term 'sessional.' The relevance of the survey questions from the university to the college sector remained intact, thereby providing a good basis for comparisons to be drawn across these institutional contexts.

Second, in February 2012, an invitation to complete our survey was sent to representatives of teaching and learning units and, in some cases, provosts or heads of human resources, at Ontario's 24 publicly-funded community colleges. One college did not take part in the study, despite multiple invitations. Of the remaining 23 surveys, 22 were completed fully and one survey was partially completed. Thus, we had a return rate of 96 per cent. Most survey questions had between 20 and 23 responses, thus producing a response rate of 87 to 100 per cent.

## Literature Review

In their comparative study of teaching and learning and research innovations across Canada's postsecondary educational institutions, Croker and Usher (2006, p. iv) found that "[c]olleges, in particular, placed substantial emphasis on teaching and learning." More specifically, they found that it is common for community colleges across the nation to have "institutional 'hubs' of innovation" which are dedicated to "*best practices... in the areas of faculty development, teaching support, curriculum models, and integration of learning technologies*," for example (p. 19, original emphases). These findings are commensurate with research that points to the differing historical mandates of Canada's community colleges and universities, which situate the former as teaching-intensive and the latter as research-intensive institutions (Skolnik, 2002; 2011).

They are also consistent with findings that effective teaching "of and for critical thinking" is not only central to community colleges' missions, but is something about which college instructors are passionate (Barnes, 2005, p. 6; Barnes, 1997). Following this logic, a central reason why college faculty members attend to their professional development is because they want to become better prepared, more effective instructors. As Grabove et al. (2012) note, if it is true that such a high emphasis is placed on and embraced by college faculty to develop their teaching skills, then "teaching and learning centres at colleges may face less of an obstacle in their capacity-building efforts than their counterparts in universities" (p. 7).

This speculation aside, what is clear is that the quality of instruction received by college students in Ontario is of increasing interest to a range of stakeholders. As McCloy and Liu (2010) make clear, for example, the amount of funding received by Ontario colleges is tied to Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) such as graduates' post-program satisfaction and employment rates. More to the point, one of McCloy and Liu's (2010) key findings is that college graduates' levels of satisfaction are influenced not only by their ability to gain quality employment, but also by their acquisition of critical thinking skills (p. 5) and "various [other] aspects of educational quality, such as quality of instruction [and] course content" (p. 6).



In this regard, we are compelled to cite Fedderson (2008), who notes the importance of not conflating student satisfaction and effective teaching. Satisfaction, according to this view, is a key measure of effectiveness only when approached from a business- or institution-centered framework. To ensure that our colleges are touted and experienced as student-learner focused, we need to move beyond questions about student satisfaction per se to “assess [the] impact of [teaching and learning initiatives on] actual teaching behaviours [and] student learning... [as well as] long term changes to campus teaching and learning cultures” (Grabove et al., 2012, p. 9).

In keeping with this assertion, a number of scholars argue that far too little attention and far too few resources are dedicated to asking pointed questions and receiving direct answers about the particular needs, strengths and/or drawbacks associated with community college teaching (Townsend, Donaldson and Wilson, 2009; Townsend and Twombly, 2007). In particular, Twombly and Townsend (2008) note that “[m]uch of the existing literature on the community college faculty accepts the construction of community colleges as teaching institutions and the [related] assumptions about faculty members that accompany such a construction” – that is, that they are excellent and dedicated teachers (p. 19). Missing from this literature, they continue, is explicit consideration about “whether or how [faculty-development programs] improve [the] teaching and learning” competencies of community college faculty (p. 20).

Given all of the above, we might ask what challenges college faculty members and their employees face in their efforts to develop and promote effective teaching. In relation to the former, Lowry and Froese (2001) identify a range of influencing factors, including but not limited to “diversity in the student body both in academic preparedness and cultural differences [and] fragmentation of the student body and faculty into part-time, full-time and many other variations” (p. 5). With regards to more general factors, Luzeckyj and Badger (2010) note the following five factors as influencing the provision of professional teaching development programs within postsecondary institutions, internationally: fluctuating political-economic perceptions of the importance of and need for such initiatives; program and course variety and discrepancies across institutional and national contexts; *ad hoc* application of models and methods which rarely incite transformational learning; a general lack of evidence that such programs are effective; and departmental and faculty time constraints and conflicts.

Speaking directly to the Ontario context, Howard and Taber (2010) note that “traditional” conceptions of community colleges are being called into question. For example, not only do some Ontario colleges now have baccalaureate-granting capacities but, as a whole, they are also increasingly being called upon to produce students who are on the leading edge of shifting provincial and national socioeconomic trends (p. 35). One consequence of these intersecting factors, according to Howard and Taber, is that “[f]aculty development has become increasingly recognized as an important element for the success of community colleges” (p. 36).

It is with this literature as our backdrop that we present data below about the histories of teaching and learning units across Ontario’s publicly-funded community colleges. Additional data speak to the intended audience, status, funding and content of New Faculty Orientation programs and other services offered to support Ontario’s community college faculty with their development as effective teachers. Finally, we present data that highlight some of the challenges Ontario’s colleges face in their efforts to support faculty’s pedagogical development.

## Survey Results

### Teaching and Learning Units at Ontario’s Publicly-Funded Colleges

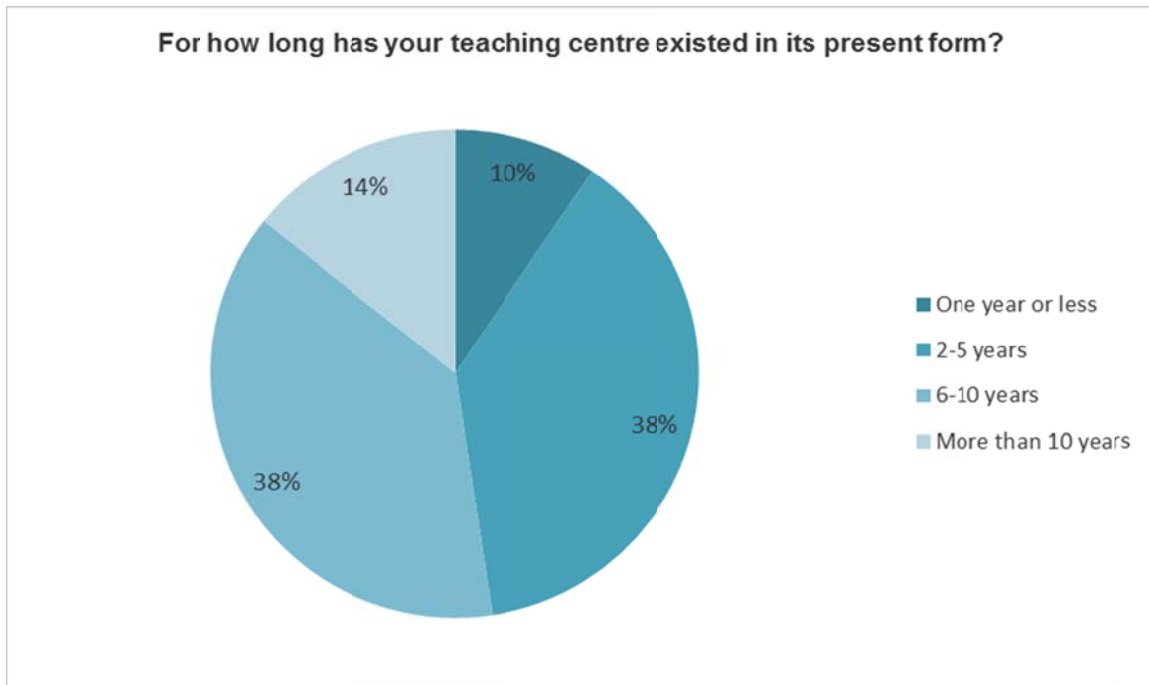
Of the 23 community colleges represented in this study, all but two – or 91 per cent – have a centralized unit with the explicit mission of supporting faculty’s teaching development.<sup>3</sup> Across surveyed institutions, these units work under a variety of names. Like their university counterparts (see [the first report](#)), the most common name given to such units by 22 per cent of our Ontario community college sample is the ‘Centre for Teaching and Learning’ or some derivative thereof (i.e., ‘Center for Learning and Teaching’ or ‘Teaching and Learning Centre’). In seven instances, these units also are responsible for the ongoing professional development of non-academic college employees. This is sometimes reflected in their names (for example, Centre for Organizational Learning, Organization for Staff Development, etc.) or in respondent comments such as the following: “please note the mandate [...] is to provide professional development for all employee groups and also includes organizational development.”

To get a better understanding of the configurations these units take across Ontario’s community colleges, our survey inquired into their histories and the number of employees working in college units dedicated to faculty teaching and learning development. In relation to the former, and as summarized in Figure 1, the majority of these units were established in their present form between two and five years (eight respondents) or six and ten years (eight respondents) ago. A mere 14 per cent of our sample (three respondents) indicated that their institutions’ teaching development units have existed in their present forms for more than ten years, and two respondents (9.5 per cent of our sample) noted that their teaching centres have existed in their present forms for one year or less.

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<sup>3</sup> In the two instances where no such central unit exists, faculty’s teaching development is handled, respectively, by a teaching and learning consultant employed by the Professional Development Department and by Human Resources.

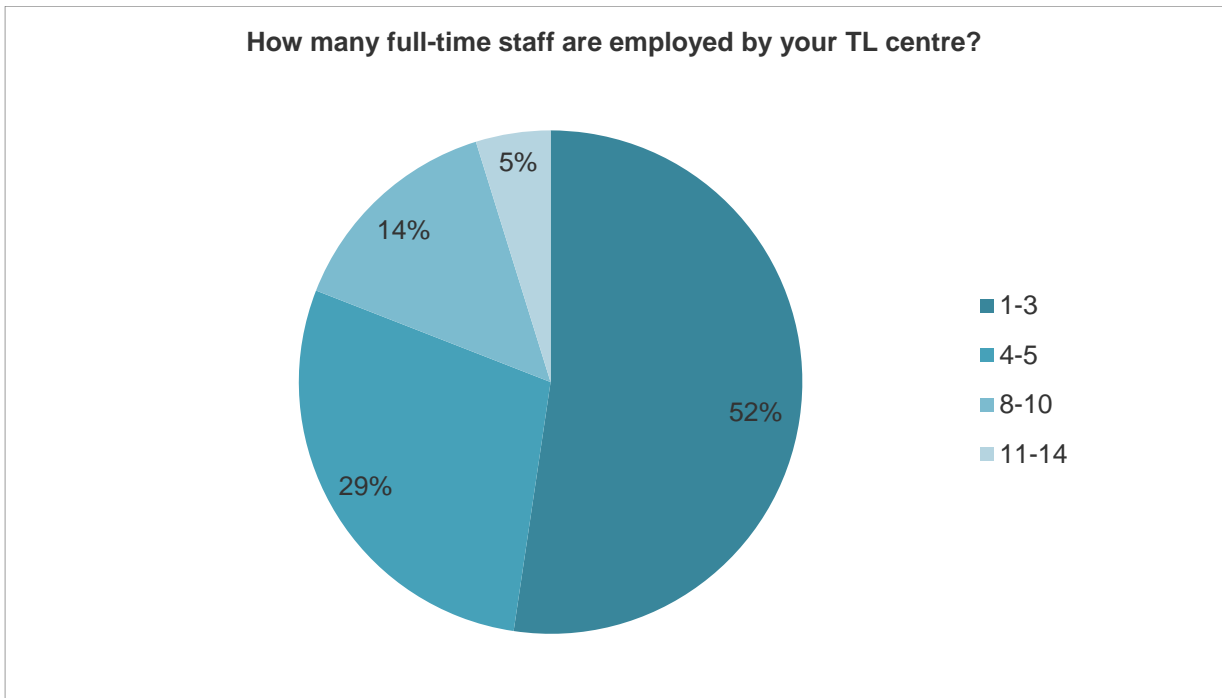
**Figure 1: Teaching and Learning Centres – Years of Existence**



As to their staffing, 81 per cent of responding Ontario community colleges have five or fewer full-time staff members working in their teaching centres, with the majority (53 per cent, or 11 respondents) having between one and three full-time staff members. An additional 19 per cent of respondents identified between eight and fourteen staff members in their respective units.<sup>4</sup> None of our college respondents has more than 15 full-time staff members employed by their teaching development units. This information is reflected in Figure 2.

<sup>4</sup> With regards to this higher number, it is important to recall that, in some instances, faculty development falls under the mandate of Human Resources offices, for example. The important point here is that, given that their responsibilities extend beyond faculty's pedagogical development, these offices tend to employ more people than their Teaching and Learning Centre counterparts.

**Figure 2: Teaching and Learning Centres – Full-time Staffing**

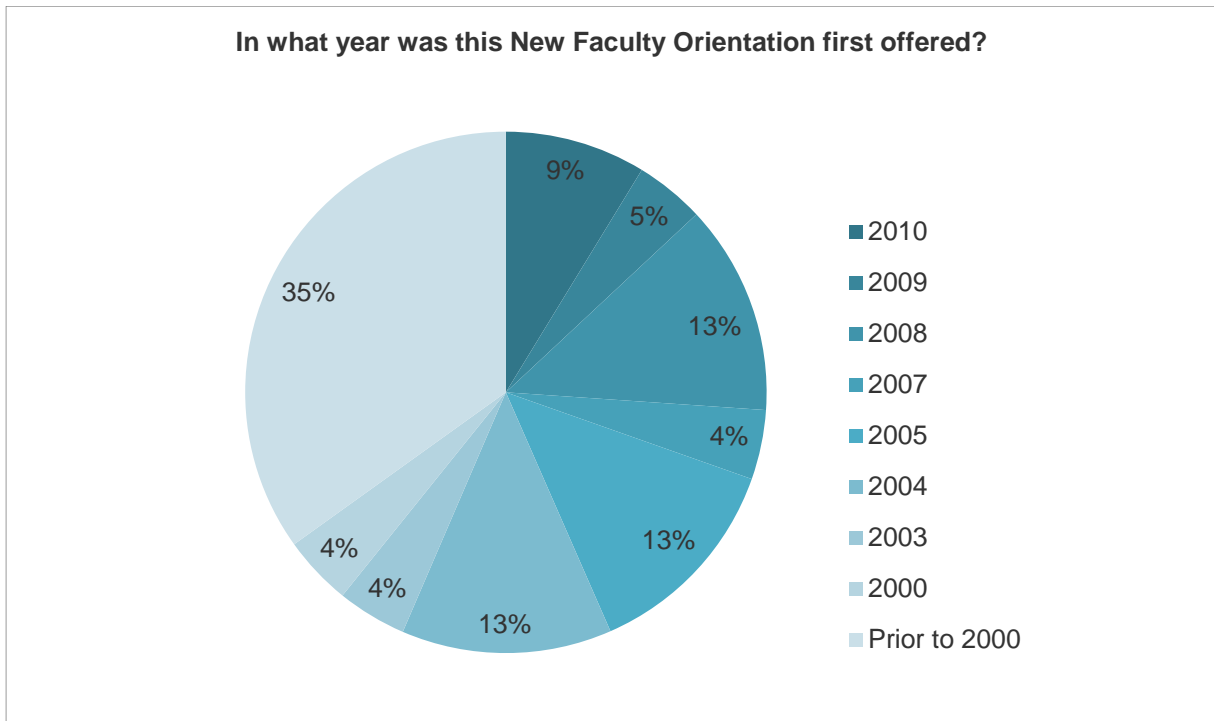


When cross-tabulated, there appears to be no significant relationship within our sample between the length of a teaching centre’s history and its number of full-time employees. Likewise, there is no obvious correlation between an institution’s relative positioning as small, medium or large and the number of people employed by its teaching and learning unit. In this latter respect, for example, survey respondents were most likely to indicate that their respective teaching and learning centre employs between one and three people, relative size of their respective institutions notwithstanding (see Appendix B).

### **New Faculty Orientations at Ontario’s Publicly-Funded Colleges**

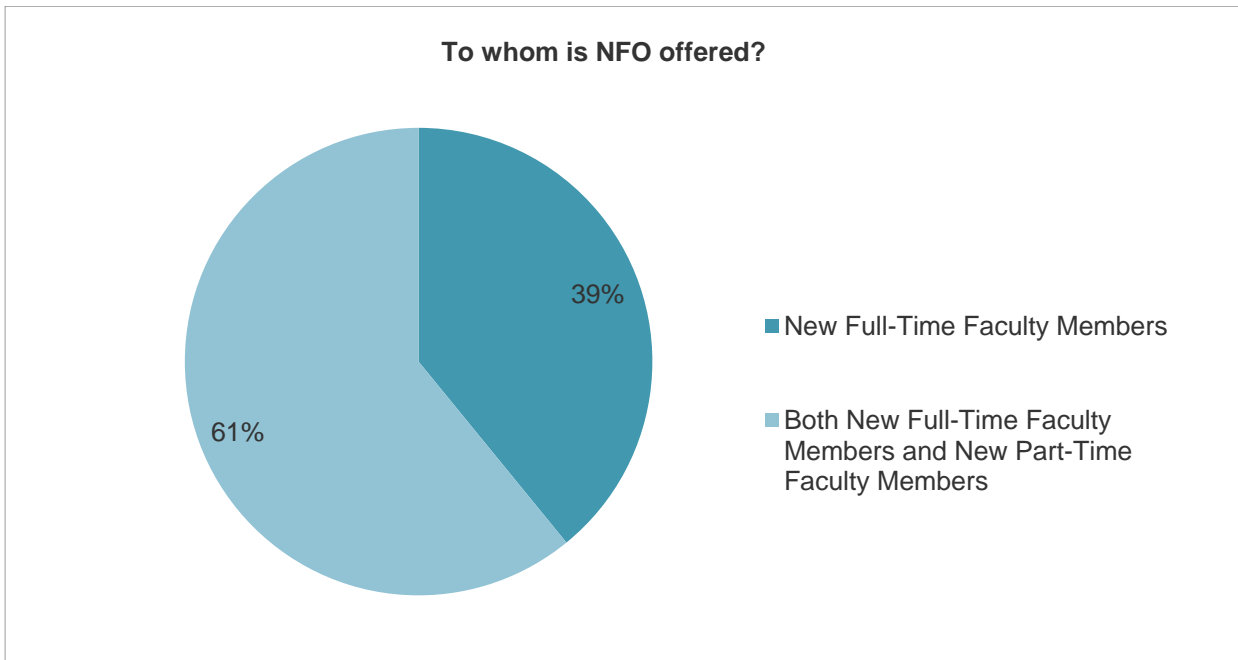
Our survey data reveal that it is common for Ontario’s community colleges to offer New Faculty Orientation events and programs. Indeed, all of our respondents indicated that their respective institutions host centralized annual NFOs. Nevertheless, the histories of these programs vary across institutions. For example, while many of Ontario’s community colleges began to offer NFOs in 2000 (one respondent) or earlier (eight respondents), seven did not begin to host centralized NFOs until 2007 or more recently, with two responding colleges offering their first NFO in 2010 (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: NFO – First Time Offered**

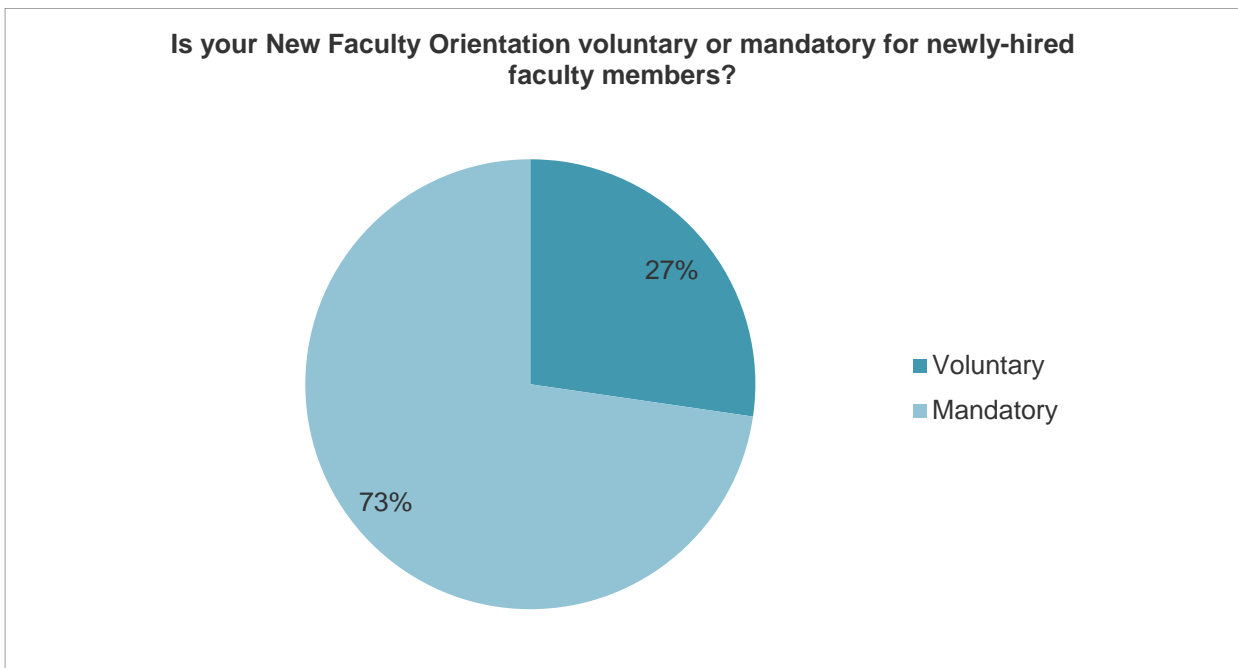


Our survey was designed to inquire into more than the histories of NFOs across Ontario’s publicly-funded community colleges. We also asked survey respondents questions about the intended audience of these initiatives and whether or not they are voluntary or mandatory. In relation to the first of these questions, we found that whereas 39 per cent of respondents (nine) offer NFOs to newly-hired full-time faculty only, 61 per cent of our sample (or 14 respondents) have NFO programs available to both newly-hired full-time and new part-time faculty (Figure 4). In relation to the second inquiry, we found that, at most publicly-funded Ontario colleges, NFOs are mandatory events for both full- and part-time newly-hired faculty members (Figure 5).

**Figure 4: NFO Intended Audience – Full-time vs. Part-time Faculty**



**Figure 5: NFO Status – Voluntary or Mandatory**



Of course, queries about the availability, intended audience and status of NFO programming raise funding and attendance questions. Thus, we asked survey respondents whether or not funding for their NFO programs is automatically renewed each year as part of the base amounts allocated to their respective teaching and learning (or comparable) units. Of the 22 respondents to this question, 20 (91 per cent) indicated that yes, this funding is renewed annually as part of this budget. In the remaining two instances, NFO funding is derived from the Human Resources and/or Organizational Development departmental budgets.<sup>5</sup>

Our survey also sought to gather data about faculty attendance of Ontario colleges' NFOs. These data reveal that NFOs are well attended. According to our survey respondents, on average, a total of 243 people/faculty attended NFOs at Ontario's colleges in 2011. Of course, these data at least partly reflect the above-noted finding that the majority of responding institutions (73 per cent of our sample) have NFOs that are mandatory.

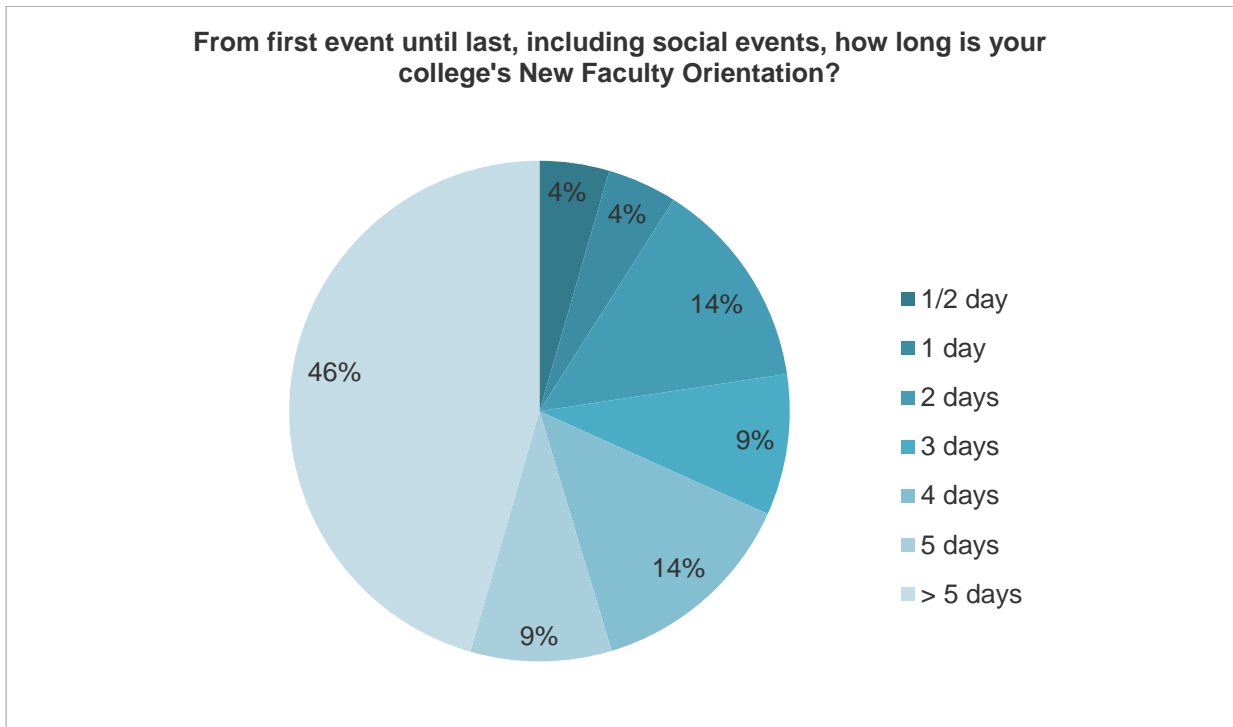
Other survey questions were designed to ask about timing, duration, content and evaluations of NFOs offered within and across Ontario's community college sector. With respect to this first topic, the majority of college representatives (19 out of 22 respondents) indicated that they offer NFOs in late August or early September, just prior to the beginning of the fall semester. Of these, 11 colleges also offer NFOs in December or January, just prior to the beginning of the winter semester. Three colleges within our sample offer additional NFOs prior to the spring semester, presumably in April or May.

With respect to their duration, four respondents – or 18 per cent of our sample – indicated that their NFOs take place in phases, which extend over two (three institutions) and three (one institution) years. That said, the majority of respondents noted that they have NFOs that last five consecutive days (two institutions) or longer (ten institutions). Two Ontario colleges represented in our sample have NFOs that are one day (one institution) or less (one institution) in duration. These divergences are summarized in Figure 6.

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<sup>5</sup> We asked survey respondents approximately how much money their units spend on NFO programming annually. However, low response rates and the confusion surrounding the wording of this question (“depends how you measure it”; “[h]ard to say”) did not provide reliable data that could be analysed.

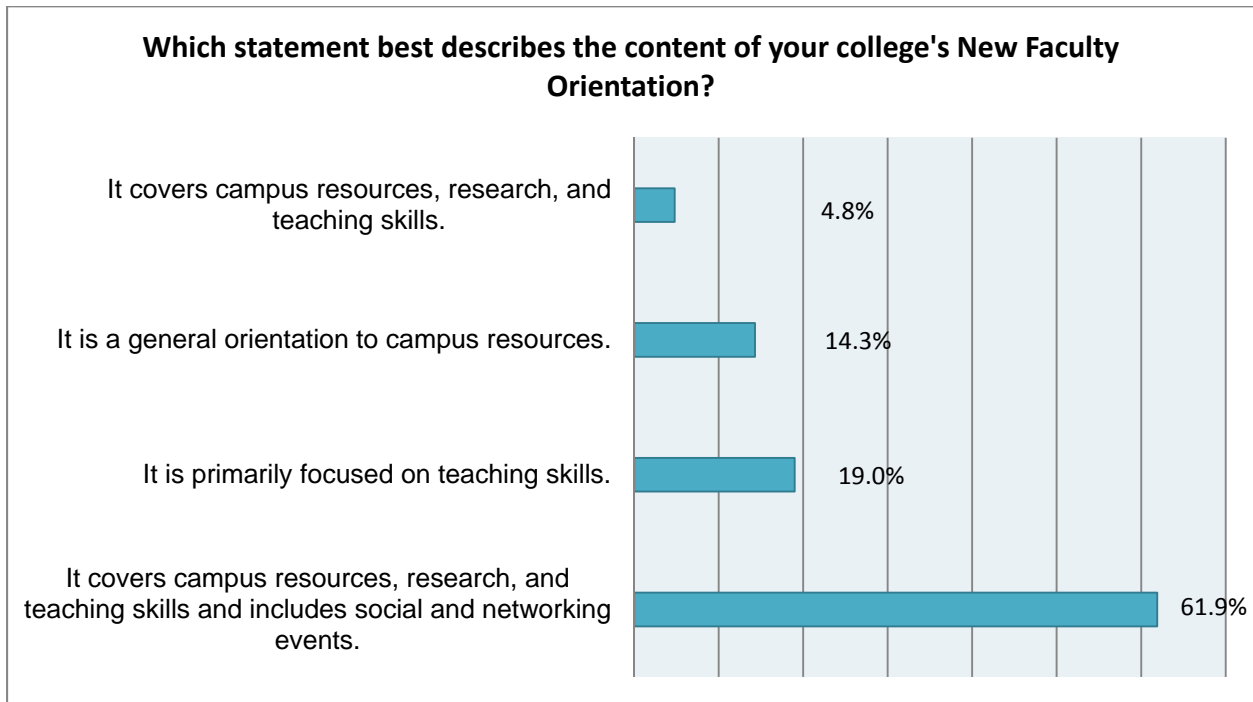
**Figure 6: NFO Duration**



This variation is partly reflected in the approach taken. For example, one respondent indicated that their college takes “a cohort approach” – meaning that for the first two years of their initial teaching appointment, faculty meet weekly with other faculty hired at the same time as them. This durational variation also partly reflects differences in the content of offered NFO programs. For example, and as indicated in Figure 7, while the majority of our sample (13 institutions, or 62 per cent) have NFOs that cover campus resources, research, and teaching as well as social and networking opportunities, a small but nonetheless significant number of surveyed colleges (four) have NFO programs focused primarily on teaching skills, while another three respondents (or 14 per cent of our sample) have NFOs whose main aim is to orient new faculty to the campus and a range of campus resources.

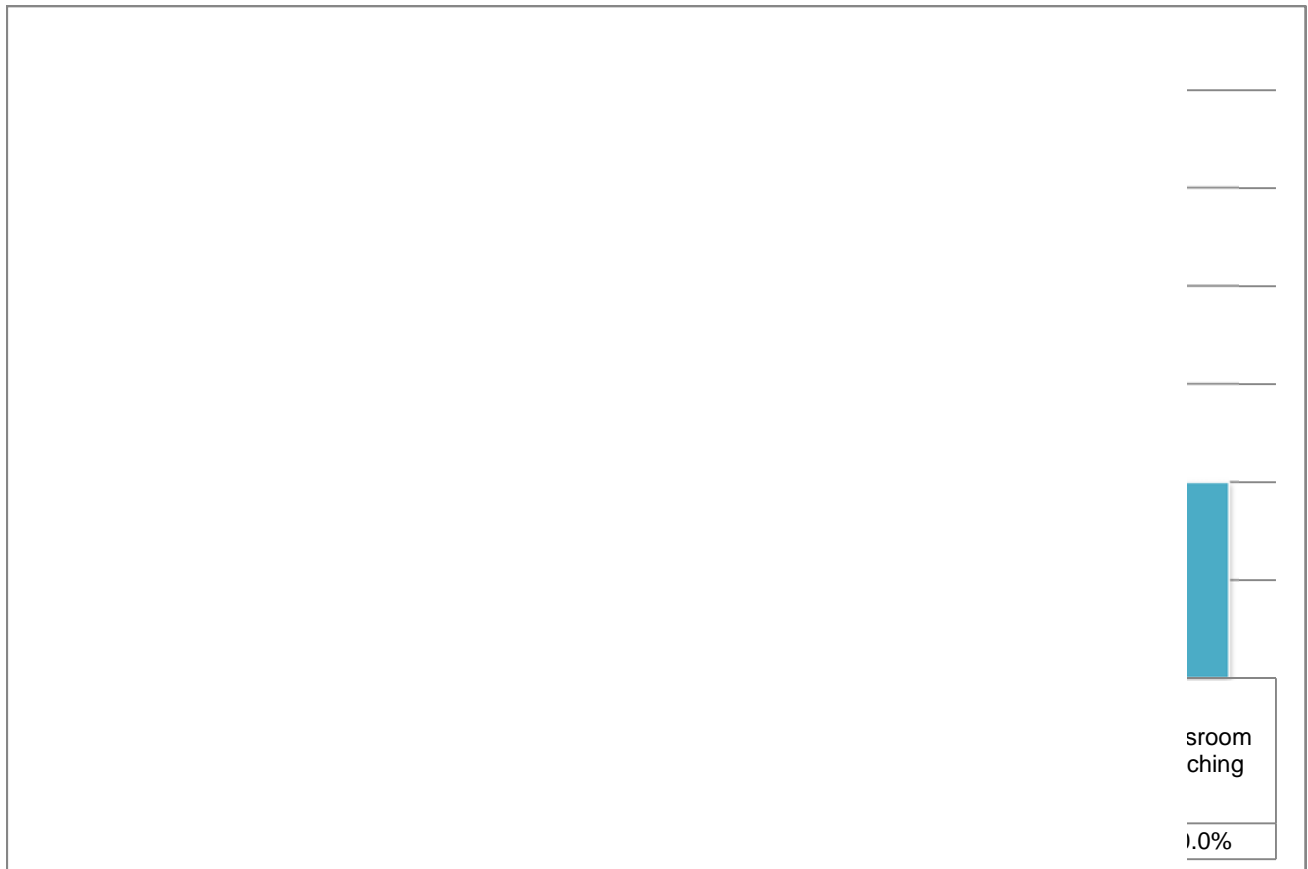


**Figure 7: NFO – Best Description of Content**



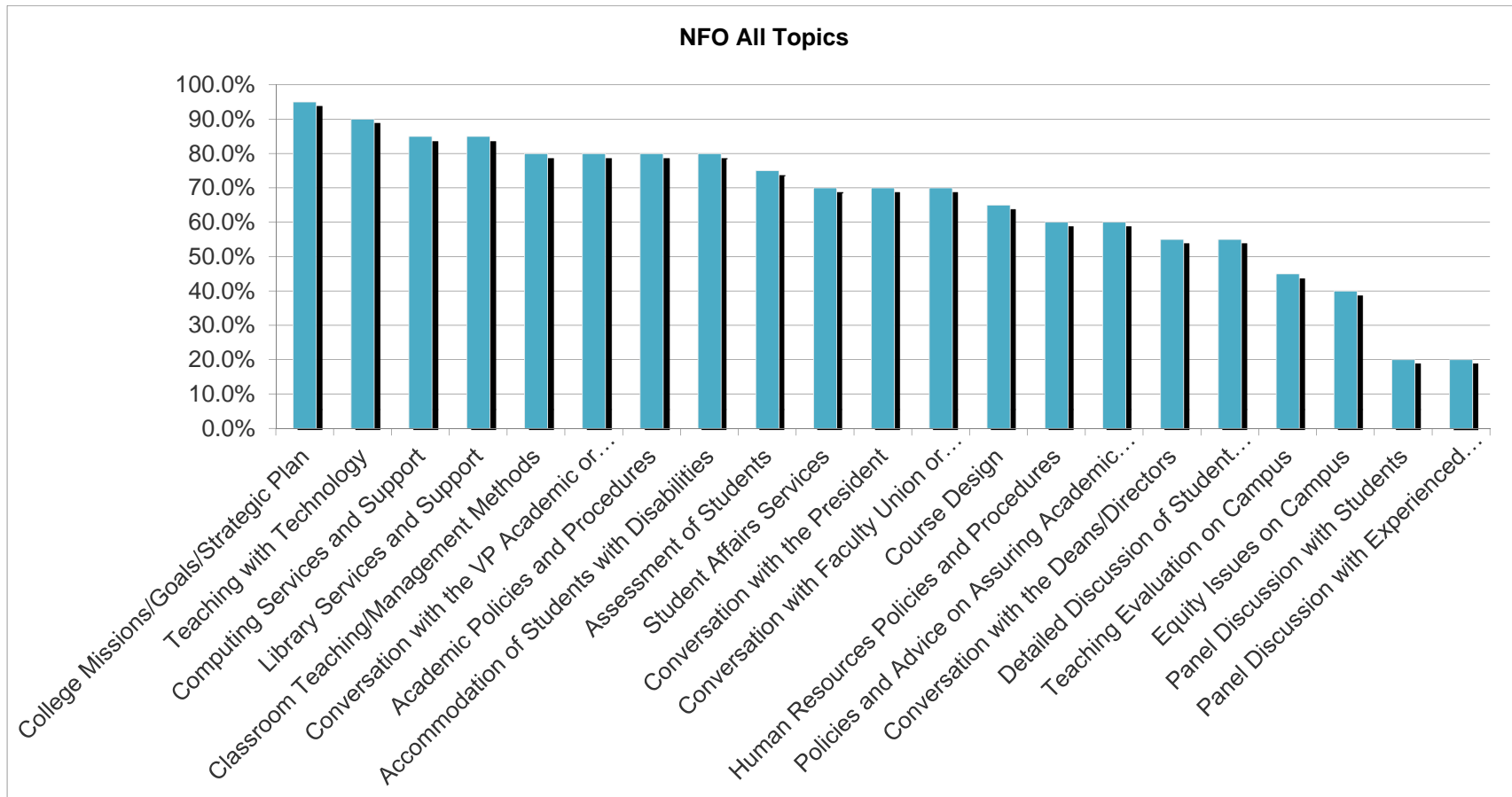
According to survey respondents, the most common topic and/or session offered as part of Ontario colleges' NFOs is related to institutional missions, goals and strategic plans (95 per cent of sample). This is followed closely by sessions on teaching with technology (90 per cent of sample), library services and support (85 per cent), greeting/conversation with VP Academic or Provost (80 per cent), and academic policies and procedures (80 per cent). Figure 8 details these findings.

**Figure 8: NFO – Most Common Topics**



Despite arguments that it is imperative for community colleges to “recognize students’ active engagement in the learning process as a core value and practice” (Barnes, 2006, p. 10), only four survey respondents – or 20 per cent of our sample – indicated that their NFOs include panel discussions with students. The same number of institutional representatives (four of them) indicated that their NFOs included a panel session/discussion with experienced faculty members. See Figure 9 for a list of the range of topics covered by Ontario colleges’ NFOs.

Figure 9: NFO – All Topics



With regards to program evaluations, we asked survey respondents a number of questions. For example, we asked how they evaluate the effectiveness of their NFO programs. To this question, 90 per cent of our sample (18 respondents) indicated that they distribute surveys to NFO participants. Another 60 per cent (12 respondents) gather this information via informal feedback and 15 per cent (three respondents) conduct focus groups. Other methods for garnering this information include feedback from faculty performance evaluations (one respondent), a follow-up quiz six months after NFO attendance (one respondent), grades in the formal courses faculty take to develop their teaching pedagogies (one respondent), and ongoing formative feedback using Classroom Assessment Test (CAT) (one respondent). Only one person indicated that their institution does not collect information regarding the effectiveness of their NFO programs.

When asked what the feedback they receive from participating faculty suggests about their NFO programming, all 20 respondents to this question noted that these evaluations are overwhelmingly positive. For example, one survey respondent stated, “They love it and those that missed it before they started teaching due to scheduling say, ‘How I needed that last semester!’” This same participant continued, “There is a lot of info[r]mation but we pace it out and deliver it using the same practices we are recommending to teachers to use with their students so we feel it also serves as a great teaching demo[n]stration[.]”

Building on these data are those offered in response to our question about which aspects of their NFOs faculty seem to find most valuable. Two themes emerged from the responses survey participants offered in this regard. First, faculty are appreciative for opportunities to meet, network and learn with colleagues (ten respondents) – what one respondent referred to as “the establishment of a cohort, or community of learners.” Second, faculty who participate in NFO programs offered at Ontario community colleges are grateful for information gleaned about how to integrate various technologies into their teaching/classroom practices (three respondents).

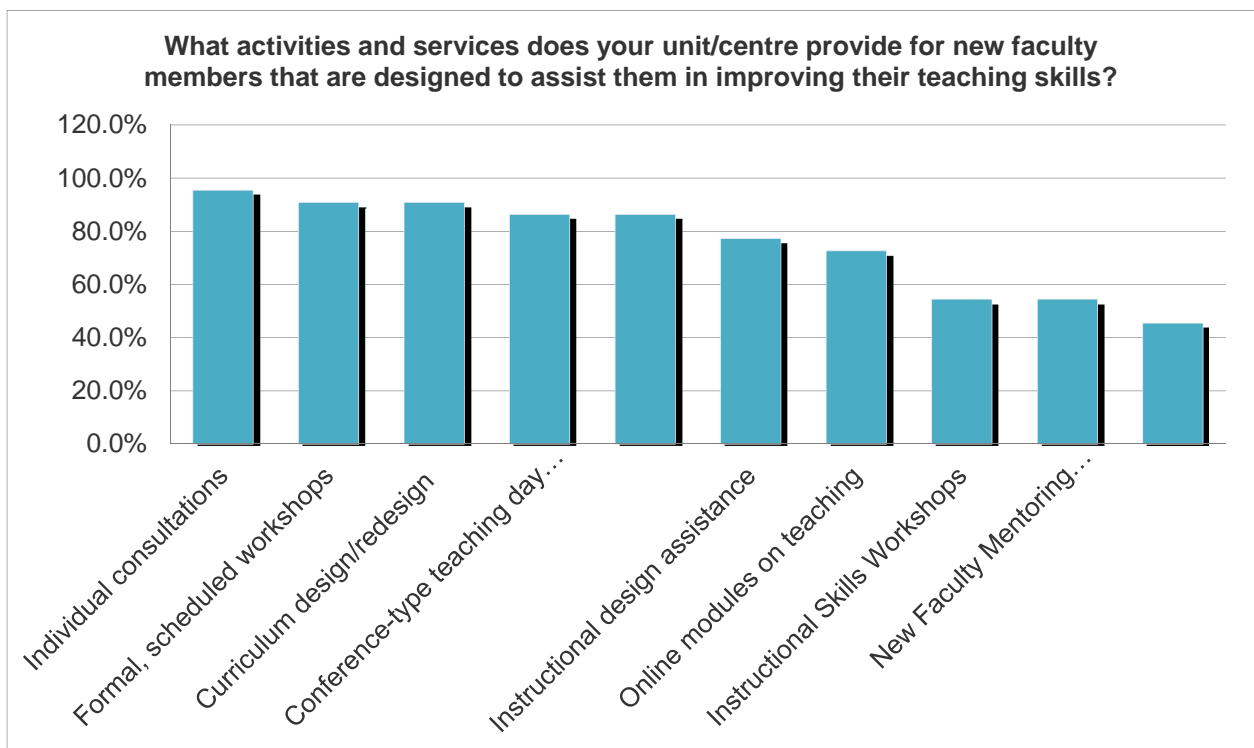
Our final survey question about NFO evaluations inquired into any components of Ontario colleges’ NFOs that might be lacking at this time. Of the 16 detailed responses offered, and as foreshadowed above, three respondents suggested the importance of including panel discussions with students and/or more experienced faculty. Three respondents indicated a need for more online support for new faculty. Two survey respondents expressed a desire that in the future their respective institutions offer workshops related to “teaching interculturally.” Two more respondents referred to time constraint issues such as a lack of “release from teaching... to develop their teaching skills” as issues to be addressed in the future. One survey respondent suggested that the development of a more “systematic mentoring program and [of] teaching and learning circles” would be useful additions to their institutions’ current NFO offerings.

## Other Services, Programs, and Support for New Faculty

In addition to NFOs, all of the institutions represented by our survey data organize programs for their new faculty members throughout the year. Twenty of them organize formal, scheduled workshops and provide curriculum design/redesign assistance, while 21 surveyed institutions offer individual faculty consultations. The majority of these colleges (19 institutions) also offer “teaching with technology” sessions and consultations. Ten institutions organize comprehensive teaching certificate programs, while 12 have mentorship programs for new faculty. In contrast to their university peers (see [the first report](#)), our data reveal that Ontario’s publicly-funded community colleges offer more online modules for teaching (16 colleges as compared with two universities). Other faculty development support services that exist within and across Ontario’s publicly-funded community colleges are: multiple e-resources; assistance with course development; and evaluation of teaching with in-class visits (Figure 10).

In response to our question about whether or not they offer other, less formal, programming for newly-hired faculty members, only two survey respondents said no. Many more (six) respondents indicated that they have a variety of programs available to both new and more seasoned faculty to support their teaching and learning development. Of those survey respondents who noted additional programming targeted at new faculty, these included department-based initiatives (one respondent), teaching circles (one respondent), as well as a host of teaching workshops (four responses), teaching certificate programs (two respondents), and conferences (one response). Our survey data indicate that additional services offered to new faculty, but not directly related to their teaching and learning development, include information technology sessions (three respondents) and/or e-learning assistance (one respondent), mentors (two respondents) and health and wellness programming (one respondent).

**Figure 10: Other Services Designed To Help Improve Teaching Skills**



The most common responses survey participants offered to our question about challenges they face in their efforts to support faculty’s development as teachers pointed to time limitations and human resource shortages. As one respondent noted in relation to the current staffing level of their institution’s teaching development unit, there are “[t]oo many of them [and] too few of me.” Building on this point in a way that suggests that required resources relate to more than the staffing needs of colleges’ teaching and learning units, another respondent highlighted “time and resources from both sides.” This person further explained, “We lack enough consultants and coaches, mentors to be available for new faculty and new faculty lack the scheduled time to commit to on-going development throughout the academic year.”

Two survey respondents were confident that their respective institutions are “well equipped to meet the needs of new faculty members.” Of these respondents, one noted that the college for which s/he works “does an amazing job at supporting faculty.” More common than this claim, however, were those offered by the three college respondents who – when asked if they would like to offer any further information regarding the support they offer to new faculty – noted a need for ongoing institutional and school-specific efforts to increase the effectiveness of new faculty’s pedagogical practices via extensive mentoring programs for example.

## Discussion

There are a number of points of discussion that emerge from our survey data. Here, we draw out three in particular. First, we consider what the data presented above suggest about a possible gap in NFO coverage in terms of the intended audience (full-time versus part-time faculty) and the status (mandatory versus voluntary) of NFO programs and services offered at Ontario’s publicly-funded community colleges. Second, we highlight data we find especially encouraging with regards to NFO programs and services offered within Ontario’s publicly-funded community colleges. Third, we revisit data related to stated impediments to the development and/or sustainment of NFO programming across Ontario’s public postsecondary educational system.

First, our survey data raise questions about the possibilities and advantages of offering NFO programs targeted at the specific needs of part-time teaching faculty. In this respect, recall that 39 per cent (nine institutions) of our sample of Ontario colleges does not offer any NFO programming to new part-time faculty. When read in relation to literature which consistently finds that, despite their competencies, part-time faculty are not provided with the same institutional resources and support as their full-time counterparts, these data are concerning (Christensen, 2008; Landrum, 2009; Leslie and Gappa, 2002; Meixner, Kruck and Madden, 2010). One survey respondent highlighted this as an institutional concern when s/he noted that because the college for which s/he works does not “have a specific new part-time faculty orientation process [they] are exploring [the option of] an online hub of information specifically geared to [this group].” More to the point, as this survey respondent suggests, there is a clear need for research into and development of NFO programming and services designed with the particular needs of part-time faculty in mind.

In relation to the status of Ontario colleges’ NFOs, recall that 73 per cent (16 colleges) of responding institutions hold mandatory NFOs. This finding is especially interesting when juxtaposed with findings presented in the [first report](#), wherein it is noted that a mere 12 per cent (two universities) of responding Ontario universities make their NFOs mandatory. In an effort to make sense of this divergence, one might draw to the fore claims about the historically mandated differences between these sectors of Ontario’s postsecondary education system, which, in the case of community colleges, are represented as placing relatively more value on the teaching pace research. Miller (1997, p. 89) articulates this logic as follows: “If the primary expectation of community college faculty is that they will teach, it seems reasonable to expect that considerable institutional [emphasis and] resources will be directed toward developing faculty’s... instructional methodology skills.”

At the same time, it may be fair to assume that this difference in the statuses of college as compared to university NFOs is reflective of findings that community college faculty are more likely to be hired for their position with ‘real-world’ professional experience. Recalling the relatively more varied trajectories that bring people to teaching positions within community colleges as compared to their university peers (Fugate and Amey, 2000; Twombly and Townsend, 2008), the assumption here is that NFO programs are especially necessary within and across college contexts. In other words, insofar as teaching is neither the only nor the

primary means of employment for many college faculty, their pedagogical training may be deemed as especially necessary if we are to ensure high degrees of student and faculty teaching and learning achievements and satisfaction across Ontario's community colleges.

These are two aspects of our data that we read as particularly encouraging. First, consider Crocker and Usher's (2006) findings that if they are to excel in the areas of research and/or teaching, postsecondary institutions require both internal and external institutional support structures, mandates and cultures – including but not limited to *stable* finances (whether high or low) and human resources (p. 56, original emphasis). When juxtaposed with this claim, we find it especially encouraging that the majority of our survey respondents noted that funding for their respective NFOs is automatically renewed annually, as part of the base amounts allocated to their institution's teaching and learning (or comparable) units.

A second aspect of our data that we find encouraging is the consistency with which survey respondents made reference to institutional efforts to promote and support the integration of various technologies into faculty's teaching practices. At the institutional level, this shift points to the adaptation of Ontario colleges' teaching and learning units to more general socioeconomic needs and trends, including but not limited to the prevalence/transformation/evolution of educational technologies within the last decade (Crocker and Usher, 2006). At the more individual level, such trends are believed to be important steps toward opening up access to postsecondary education to a more diversified student population via increased distance education and online learning opportunities, for example (Ontario, 2011; 2012).

Moving onto our third point of discussion, it is also important to underscore the consistency with which survey respondents made reference to human resource shortages and what Badali (2004) refers to as "time press" issues when asked about challenges they face in their ongoing efforts to improve teaching development initiatives. To substantiate and demonstrate this point, consider that the majority of interviewees referred either to the value of their mentoring programs or a need to develop such programs. At the same time, many of them noted how difficult it is both for new and more seasoned faculty to find time in their schedules to partake in such programs. More to this point, the claim here is that while long-term initiatives such as mentorship programs are valuable, they require a group of committed and available faculty participants.

Taking this discussion in a somewhat different direction, consider Fisher's (2006, p. 64) claim that while mentorship programs have their place in college faculty orientations, it is important for developers to consider that, historically, their primary focus and aim has not been the "acquisition of *teaching skills*" (original emphases). Rather, Fisher argues, mentorship programs serve as socialization forums through which older and/or more experienced faculty (who, often, were often hired under very different working conditions and assumptions) pass on their institutional knowledge to newcomers. When read through this decidedly critical lens, one might argue that "mentor-protégé models actually [are] *counterproductive*" to teaching development efforts and innovations (p. 64, original emphasis). As an alternative or supplement to traditional mentorship programs, Fisher – like many of our survey participants – suggests the importance of more, and more extensive, teacher training and certificate programs, particularly those which have as their primary aim "the development of communities of scholars" (p. 69).

Returning to our main point about challenges faced by Ontario's colleges regarding the professional development of their teaching staff, consider that only one survey respondent indicated that "[a]ll new faculty are released for one section during their first two semesters... to participate in NFO." This despite claims by scholars like Crocker and Usher (2006), Fedderson (2008) and O'Banion (2007) about the importance of lessened and/or more flexible faculty workloads – including but not limited to collective agreements that grant college faculty (like their university counterparts) research sabbaticals – for promoting and sustaining teaching-learning innovations across community colleges. In a similar vein, consider that whereas one of our

survey respondents indicated that faculty have told them that “one day is not enough for Orientation,” two other respondents indicated that they have received feedback from faculty stating that their institutions’ NFOs are “time intensive.” Taken together, these findings likely explain why, when asked about their personal evaluations of their NFO programming, many survey respondents highlighted a need to balance requirements for newly-hired faculty to be oriented into their teaching positions with faculty and institutional time and efficacy concerns.

Survey respondents also highlighted a need for their respective teaching and learning units to be better staffed. In other words, like their university counterparts (see [the first report](#)), our survey respondents feel that too few resources are dedicated to helping college faculty to develop as effective teachers. These findings are consistent with those offered in the various literatures reviewed for this report, which also point to a need for better funding and evaluation of programs and services offered to help college faculty develop pedagogically.

## Summary and Recommendations

In the keynote Sisco Address given at the 2002 meeting of the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario, Skolnik described five characteristics as central to the mandate and corresponding image of community colleges. Two of these are of particular interest for our purposes: emphasis on teaching, and responsiveness to constantly shifting societal needs. With respect to the former, Skolnik notes that for the most part, in Canada more so than elsewhere in North America, teaching – not research – is the primary activity of college faculty (para 26). A major corollary of this intense focus on teaching, Skolnik notes, is that effective teaching among college faculty has been, and continues to be, a high priority at both the institutional and provincial levels (see also Barnes, 2005; Crocker and Usher, 2006).

At the same time, Skolnik (2002) notes, this focus on teaching intersects with beliefs that the idea of change is also central to the institutional identity of Ontario’s colleges. More specifically, Skolnik states that “the core identity of a community college is that it is a postsecondary educational institution which is dedicated to meeting changing societal needs” by preparing students to fill jobs in the middle-range of a province and nation’s economy (para 10). As Skolnik and others make clear, however, this mandate is being called into question during an era in which access to so-called middle-range jobs is contingent upon higher levels and “more complex and sophisticated types of education” (p. 44), and community college faculty are expected to contribute to *applied research*, which can be used to promote local and national economies (ACCC, 2002; 2012; Bélanger et al., 2005; Fisher, 2009).<sup>6</sup>

In these regards, a central finding that emerges from the studies consulted for this report is that Ontario’s postsecondary educational landscape is increasingly characterized by a blurring of university and community college mandates. More to the point, at the same time as universities in Canada (and elsewhere) are being compelled to place more emphasis on teaching and student learning outcomes, community colleges are being expected to place more emphasis on research (Ontario, 2012). When read through the lens of effective teaching and faculty’s pedagogical development, the concern is that this latter trend represents either a potential catalyst for, or more general evidence of, the devaluation of teaching pace research across Ontario’s postsecondary educational system (Grabove et al., 2012).

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<sup>6</sup> As Fisher (2008, p. 6) notes, “*applied research* [is] a term often associated with other terms such as *innovation*, *research and development*, *commercialization*, and *technology transfer*” (original emphases).



Rather than viewing such decided mission creep in negative terms, we agree that it underscores another key claim made by many of the scholars upon whose works we draw: that we must refrain from thinking about theory and practice, teaching and research in dichotomous ways and begin instead to find ways to integrate the two. One way to do this is to bring one's research into the classroom. Such efforts are important insofar as they can help to relieve time pressures experienced by many teaching faculty and because, as one of Badali's (2004) interviewees notes, "doing research improves [one's] teaching" and vice versa (p. 8). The recommendation here is that despite institutional mandates that, historically, have separated them, research should be utilized as a way to improve faculty's teaching development.

Building on this point, we want to suggest that given the varied histories and content of NFO programs aimed at Ontario's college and university faculty, there is space to be opened up for longitudinal and comparative studies of these programs, as well as for related collaborative undertakings between and across Ontario's postsecondary educational system. Importantly, this suggestion resonates with another theme recurring throughout the research consulted for this report – and one that is echoed both by our survey data and in a recent discussion paper released by Ontario's Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities: that "a continued focus on teaching and learning outcomes in our postsecondary institutions not only contributes to an enhanced learning experience for students, but also supports the overall excellence of our educators" (Ontario, 2012, p. 18). In this sense, this recommendation is consistent with ongoing suggestions about the respective – or better, collaborative – roles Ontario's colleges and universities must play if we are to augment the quality of postsecondary education in the province (Colleges Ontario, 2012; OACC, 2012; Skolnik 2011).

To these discussions, we would like to add that collaboration between Ontario's publicly-funded community colleges and universities is a valuable way for respective teaching and learning units to learn from each other's successes. They also can provide useful starting points for institutional representatives to brainstorm and work toward development of NFOs that resonate across institutions. In particular, we suggest that those institutions that offer extensive NFO programming take a leadership role by documenting their institutional 'best practices' and sharing these with their colleagues at institutions that do not currently offer extensive NFOs. As we imagine them, such practices will provide opportunities for people whose jobs it is to ensure the pedagogical orientation and development of new faculty to make informed choices about how, when and under what conditions they offer particular programs and services.

Recalling the shifting mandates of Ontario's colleges and universities and the relatively more varied pathways that lead people into teaching positions within community colleges as compared to universities, it is an especially difficult task to make any final recommendations about the specific needs of Ontario's postsecondary teaching faculty. Nonetheless, we maintain that illuminating key characteristics of NFOs in Ontario's community colleges and situating these in relation to those offered within Ontario's public universities is an important step toward the establishment of a comprehensive overview and inventory of current practices at the provincial level. Again, our hope is that with such a data base in place, future studies can move beyond questions about the prevalence and breadth of NFO programming and services toward more in-depth considerations of what these data suggest about the convergent needs of faculty and students. More specifically, we hope that the current report and [its companion](#) will incite further dialogue among various stakeholders about what constitutes effective teaching-learning in the face of "changing student population[s], advancing technolog[ies], and educational ideologies" (Miller, 1997, p. 90), as well as the ongoing internationalization and commercialization of Ontario's postsecondary educational system (Grabove, 2009).

At base, this report represents a call for an increase in both the amount and availability of provincially-based incentives that encourage and reward faculty experimentation in the areas of teaching and learning innovation across and between institutions (see also Crocker and Usher, 2006). It is also a call for more detailed, longitudinal and comparative evaluations of the effectiveness of such initiatives. More generally, this is a call

for all of us attached to Ontario's postsecondary educational system to seek to find ways to move beyond claims about the value and interconnectedness of teaching and learning so that we can ensure that – even in the face of more general socio-economic and historical fluctuations – teaching-learning becomes a lasting, entrenched way of framing and experiencing Ontario's postsecondary system *as a whole*.

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## Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

### I. INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR COLLEGE

1. Which college do you represent?
2. Approximately how many full-time (equivalent) students are enrolled in your college?
3. Approximately how many full-time instructors/faculty members are employed by your college?
4. Approximately how many part time faculty are employed by your institution?

### II. ABOUT YOUR TEACHING CENTRE

1. Does your institution have a centralized unit/centre with the explicit mission of supporting teaching development and improvement of teaching skills?

Yes   
No

2. What is the name of your teaching centre?
3. Who is the senior administrator of your teaching centre and what is their title?
4. To whom does this person report? (position)
5. For how long has your teaching centre existed in its present form?

One year or less   
2-5 years   
6-10 years   
More than 10 years

6. How many full-time staff are employed by your teaching centre?  
1-3   
4-5   
6-7   
8-10   
11-14   
15+

7. If your institution does not have a central unit that supports faculty members in their teaching, please identify any other units which may share this responsibility, and describe briefly how this is accomplished at your college.

### III. ABOUT YOUR NEW FACULTY ORIENTATION (NFO) ACTIVITIES

1. Does your college host a centralized New Faculty Orientation event each year for new faculty members?

- Yes
- No

2. In what year was this New Faculty Orientation first offered?

3. To whom is this New Faculty Orientation offered?

- New full-time faculty members
- Both new full-time faculty members and new part-time faculty members
- Other (please specify)

4. Do you have separate orientations for new full-time faculty members and new part-time faculty members? (If yes, please continue this survey considering only your orientation for new full-time faculty members)

- Yes
- No

5. When is your New Faculty Orientation scheduled during the year (please provide either dates or times relative to the beginning of term)? If you hold more than one NFO each year, please indicate the timing of each.

6. From first event until last, including social events, how long is your university's New Faculty Orientation?

- ½ day
- 1 day
- 2 days
- 3 days
- 4 days
- 5 days
- > 5 days

7. Is your New Faculty Orientation voluntary or mandatory for newly-hired faculty members?

- Voluntary
- Mandatory

8. Approximately how many new faculty members generally attend your NFO events? (An average over the past few years would be most useful here.)

9. Approximately what percentage of new faculty members attends your New Faculty Orientation, on average? (Again, acknowledging that this will likely change over the year, please indicate your best estimate here.)

10. Approximately how much does your college spend on your New Faculty Orientation events annually?

11. Which college budget category(ies) are used to cover the expenses for your New Faculty Orientation?

12. Is the funding for your New Faculty Orientation program specifically identified and included in the base budget funding for your teaching centre (or some other college budget) - that is, automatically renewed every year? (As compared to an amount that has to be reapplied for annually, or funds taken out of your general budget lines.)

Yes

No

13. Which statement best describes the content of your university's New Faculty Orientation?

It is a general orientation to campus resources

It covers campus resources, research, and teaching skills.

It covers campus resources, research, and teaching skills and includes social and networking events.

It is primarily focused on teaching skills.

It is primarily a socializing and networking event

Other (please specify)

14. Please indicate which of the following topics/activities are substantially included as separate sessions in your New Faculty Orientation Program (Please check all that apply, and indicate other topics through the "Other" box following this question).

Greeting/Conversation with the President

Greeting/Conversation with the VP Academic or Provost

Greeting/Conversation with the Deans

Greeting/Conversation with Faculty Union or Association

College Missions/Goals/Strategic Plan

Academic Policies and Procedures

Student Affairs Services

Detailed Discussion of Student Demographics on Campus

Library Services and Support

Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Equity Issues on Campus

Policies and Advice on Assuring Academic Integrity

Teaching Evaluation on Campus

Human Resources Policies and Procedures

Computing Services and Support

Classroom Teaching/Management Methods

Course Design

Assessment of Students

Working with TAs/RAs

Teaching with Technology

Panel Discussion with Students

Panel Discussion with Experienced Faculty Members

Other (please specify)

15. Please describe all social and/or networking events are included in your New Faculty Orientation.

16. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about the structure or content of your New Faculty Orientation Program?

17. How does your unit evaluate the effectiveness of your New Faculty Orientation program? (Please select all that apply).

- |                                     |                          |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Surveys distributed to participants | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Informal feedback from participants | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Focus groups                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No evaluation conducted             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please specify)              | <input type="checkbox"/> |

18. According to the feedback that you have received from new faculty, how would you say they generally respond to the programming offered in your NFO? Please respond relating to their satisfaction with all aspects of your NFO relating to format as well as the applicability of the information provided.

19. What component(s) of your New Faculty Orientation programming do you believe your new faculty find most valuable?

20. What component(s) of a New Faculty Orientation program is currently NOT offered in your program, that you feel would be most valuable and that you would most like to include?

#### IV. ONGOING PROGRAMMING TARGETED AT NEW FACULTY MEMBERS

1. What activities and services does your unit/centre provide for new faculty members that are designed to assist them in improving their teaching skills? (Please check all that apply).

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| Formal, scheduled workshops                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Individual consultations                            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Conference type teaching day events                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Comprehensive teaching certificate programs         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Instructional Skills Workshops                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| New Faculty Mentoring Programs                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Online modules on teaching                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Teaching with technology sessions and consultations | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Instructional design assistance                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Curriculum design/redesign assistance               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please specify)                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. Other than a formal New Faculty Orientation event, does your unit provide any other programming targeted exclusively for new faculty members throughout the year? Please provide details of this programming.

3. What other support or programming (in addition to that provided by your unit) exists at your college for new faculty members?



4. What are the most challenging issues for your unit in supporting new faculty members with their teaching needs?

#### **V. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Is there any further information regarding the support of new faculty members in beginning their teaching position at your college that you would like to offer for the purposes of this study?

2. With whom should we be in touch in order to further explore your responses, and discuss new faculty orientation activities at your college?

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## Appendix B: Detailed Institutional Size and Staffing Information

Institution	Institution Size <sup>7</sup>	History of Teaching Development Centre (Years)	Full-time Faculty #	Contract Instructors #	Teaching & Learning Centre Staff #	Ratio Full-time Faculty/T&L Centre Staff <sup>8</sup>
Institution A	Medium	6-10	200	218	1 to 3	67
Institution B	Small	2-5	155	50	1 to 3	52
Institution C	Large	6-10	600	800	11 to 14	43
Institution D	Small	< 1	170	Up to 250	4 to 5	34
Institution E	Medium	n/a	400	1400	n/a	n/a
Institution F	Medium	6-10	300	350	8 to 10	30
Institution G	Large	2-5	400	1000	4 to 5	80
Institution H	Medium	6-10	200	400	8 to 10	20
Institution J	Large	6-10	514	858	1 to 3	171
Institution K	Medium	> 10	350	650	4 to 5	70
Institution L	Large	2-5	550	1000	1 to 3	183
Institution M	Medium	> 10	222	507	8 to 10	22
Institution N	Small	> 10	130	300	1 to 3	43
Institution O	Large	2-5	450	750	1 to 3	150
Institution P	Medium	6-10	300	340	4 to 5	60
Institution R	Small	6-10	80	47	1 to 3	27

<sup>7</sup> The information included in this column is taken from McCloy and Liu (2010, p.26).

<sup>8</sup> These are the approximate values. If the respondent chose values 1 to 3 for their staffing numbers, the higher value has been used in calculation.

Institution	Institution Size <sup>7</sup>	History of Teaching Development Centre (Years)	Full-time Faculty #	Contract Instructors #	Teaching & Learning Centre Staff #	Ratio Full-time Faculty/T&L Centre Staff <sup>8</sup>
Institution S	Small	n/a	140	100	n/a	n/a
Institution T	Large	< 1	689	2100	4 to 5	138
Institution U	Large	2-5	467	1087	1 to 3	156
Institution V	Medium	2-5	274	458	1 to 3	91
Institution X	Medium	2-5	200	500	1 to 3	67
Institution Y	Large	6-10	550	1500	4 to 5	110
Institution Z	Small	2-5	112	300	1 to 3	37



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