The FRieND Program:
Building a Peer Network to Improve Teaching

MENTORS' HANDBOOK

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Center for Excellence in Teaching, Learning, and Assessment
Howard University
Washington, DC 20059

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Preface

Thank you for accepting my invitation to become a Faculty Mentor in CETLA's FRieND Program. You have now joined a select group of faculty who have been recruited because of their outstanding teaching. Together, we can build a community of "FRieNDs"—teachers helping other teachers teach better. This handbook will briefly explain how you can participate. After reading the handbook, if you have additional questions, please contact me at 202-806-0870 or cetla@howard.edu .

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Teresa M. Redd, Ph.D.
Professor and Director of CETLA

How does the FRieND Program work?

The FRieND Program is a peer network designed to improve the teaching of faculty who are referred to CETLA for assistance. The program relies upon a cadre of **Faculty Mentors** and a **Faculty Resource Network Database** (FRND). Via this password-protected database, CETLA matches referred faculty with Faculty Mentors who excel in the areas where the referred faculty need to improve. CETLA recruits these mentors from the ranks of faculty who have been recognized by their department or other organizations for their teaching. (See FACULTY SHOWCASE on CETLA's homepage at http://www.cetla.howard.edu.)

CETLA asks mentors to assist only one faculty member per semester. To "free up" time for mentoring, mentors can earn time-saving student services through a system called **Time-Banking**.© For instance, in exchange for one hour of mentoring, a mentor can earn an hour of clerical, research, or technology services from CETLA's student assistants—services such as scanning documents, posting materials in Blackboard, searching the Web for multimedia, locating articles in databases, designing PowerPoint presentations, entering data into tables, creating animations, constructing an online survey, or videotaping a class. Thus, the FRieND program facilitates the exchange of services; however, no money is offered, owed, or exchanged.

The FRieND program operates as follows:

1. The Department assesses Professor X's teaching.
2. The Department informs Professor X in a letter that (a) it is referring Professor X to CETLA's FRieND Program and (b) it will consider Professor X's participation when evaluating Professor X's professional development for merit, promotion, and reappointment decisions.
3. The Department refers Professor X to CETLA by completing an online form that lists Professor X's teaching challenges, states an objective for improvement, and specifies a benchmark and review date for assessment.
4. CETLA recommends professional development activities for Professor X and records them in the database.
5. CETLA then searches the database for an appropriate Faculty Mentor, assigns Professor X, and asks the Faculty Mentor to help Professor X fulfill the Department's objective. (Note: CETLA will *not* choose a mentor from the mentee's department.)
6. The Faculty Mentor confirms that he or she can accept the assignment and agrees to maintain strict confidentiality.
7. The Faculty Mentor and Professor X interact during the semester for at least 5 hours (e.g., visiting one another's classes, sharing syllabi, looking at one another's graded exams or papers, discussing pedagogical books or videos or chatting about Professor X's teaching challenges over lunch).

©Edgar S. Cahn, 1987

8. As they engage in each activity, Professor X updates the online form, which automatically "banks" the Faculty Mentor's hours so that the Faculty Mentor can begin "purchasing" time-saving services from CETLA. (Note: CETLA, the Department, and the Faculty Mentor can also access this form.)
9. On the review date, the Department assesses Professor X's progress toward fulfilling the objective.
10. The Department posts the outcomes on the online form for Professor X and CETLA.
11. If necessary, the cycle begins again with the same or a new objective.

If implemented as explained above, the FRieND program can significantly increase the teaching effectiveness of faculty who are referred to CETLA. The program enables CETLA to assist far more faculty than its staffing permits while providing essential "follow-up" mentoring and assessment. The program also furnishes departments with "anywhere, anytime" access to documentation of the faculty member's participation in a program for improvement. Mentees, in turn, can use this documentation to earn professional development credit from CETLA—credit that departments can consider during performance evaluations. Best of all, by linking Faculty Mentors with referred faculty, the FRieND program builds a learning community of peers dedicated to improving one another's teaching.

These benefits accrue without overextending the Faculty Mentors or departments. For instance, the FRieND program places the responsibility for reporting on the mentee. Most important, through "Time Banking," the program offers Faculty Mentors time-saving student services to compensate for time spent helping referred faculty. Thus, the FRieND program provides a cost-effective means to strengthen teaching across the campus.

What are my roles and responsibilities?

(Northern Illinois University[1])

Mentors can take on various roles, such as coach, friend, champion, advocate, career guide, role model, instructional resource, or confidant depending on the needs of their mentees and the nature of their mentoring relationship. *[Remember: Mentors are helpers, not evaluators.]*

Mentors are responsible for:

- **Taking the initiative for contacting their mentees and staying in touch with them.** *[Try to contact your mentee by phone or email at least once a week, if your mentee doesn't contact you first.]*
- **Devoting time to the relationship and being available when requested.** *[Try to meet with your mentee at least once a month for the rest of the semester.]*
- **Assisting mentees with their various questions, needs, or concerns.** *[However, sometimes mentees just need a sounding board!]*
- **Sharing their knowledge and experience to benefit their mentees and following up on their progress.** *[Invite your mentee to visit your class and look at your course materials.]*
- **Maintaining confidentiality of the information shared by their mentees.** *[Also, don't reveal the identity of your mentee.]*

Both the mentors and mentees have the responsibility for gaining each other's trust and confidence, interacting in a collegial manner so as to value each other's time as well as professional and personal commitments, and engaging in activities that support the mission of the University. *[Don't hesitate to report any concerns to CETLA.]*

[1]quoted, with minor changes, from Northern Illinois University, "New Faculty Mentoring Program," 2007 http://www.facdev.niu.edu/facdev/services/newfacmentoring.shtml

How can I become an effective mentor?

(Perrone-Ambrose Associates[2])

Perrone-Ambrose Associates have identified the following characteristics of effective mentors:

Supporting
Supporting includes those actions and behaviors that affirm the validity of the mentee's actions and allow the mentee to feel safe and sustained throughout the learning process. The mentee experiences understanding, comfort, and trust in the relationship and believes that the mentor has the mentee's best interests at heart.

Challenging
Challenging behaviors are those that attempt to raise the level of expectations and skills of the mentee. The challenger nudges the mentee beyond the comfort zone, raises expectations, and encourages the individual to accept activities that are increasingly difficult. Challenging examines the gaps between where the mentee is and the potential levels of achievement.

Pathfinding
Pathfinding involves assisting the mentee to select and organize experiences that lead to learning and growth. Pathfinding behavior includes acting as a trusted guide and personifying what is possible for the mentee. Pathfinding helps the mentee to see not only the tasks ahead, but also the broader context in which the tasks are taking place and the meaning behind involvement in them. Pathfinding includes taking a long-term, "big picture" view of planning and selecting experiences and activities.

Empowering
The empowered person has the freedom to decide and has developed the skills to make solid decisions and take appropriate action. Empowering may involve helping the mentee to think through concepts, to plan and evaluate potential actions. Empowering also includes relinquishing control, giving someone an opportunity to succeed or fail, and assisting the mentee in evaluating options. Empowering behavior assists the mentee to clarify thoughts and feelings on issues in order to be able to decide and act.

[2]from Perrone-Ambrose Associates, 2007 < http://www.paamentoring.com/mentoring >

Double –Loop Learning

Double-Loop learning moves beyond simple problem solving (single-loop learning) to examine trends and root causes of issues. The double-loop learner is one who, in the solving of one problem, always learns something about preventing similar problems from occurring. This learner examines how their own actions, habits, and thoughts may be contributing to problems at hand.

Managed learning

Managed Learning covers the actions that engage the mentor and mentee in specifically planning and managing the mentee's learning. This includes establishing learning goals and defining the developmental strategies the mentee should employ. Managed learning is concerned with consciously organizing the short-term as well as the long-term. Learning is managed through evaluation of progress and following up with specific activities to further the development process.

What kinds of activities should I suggest?

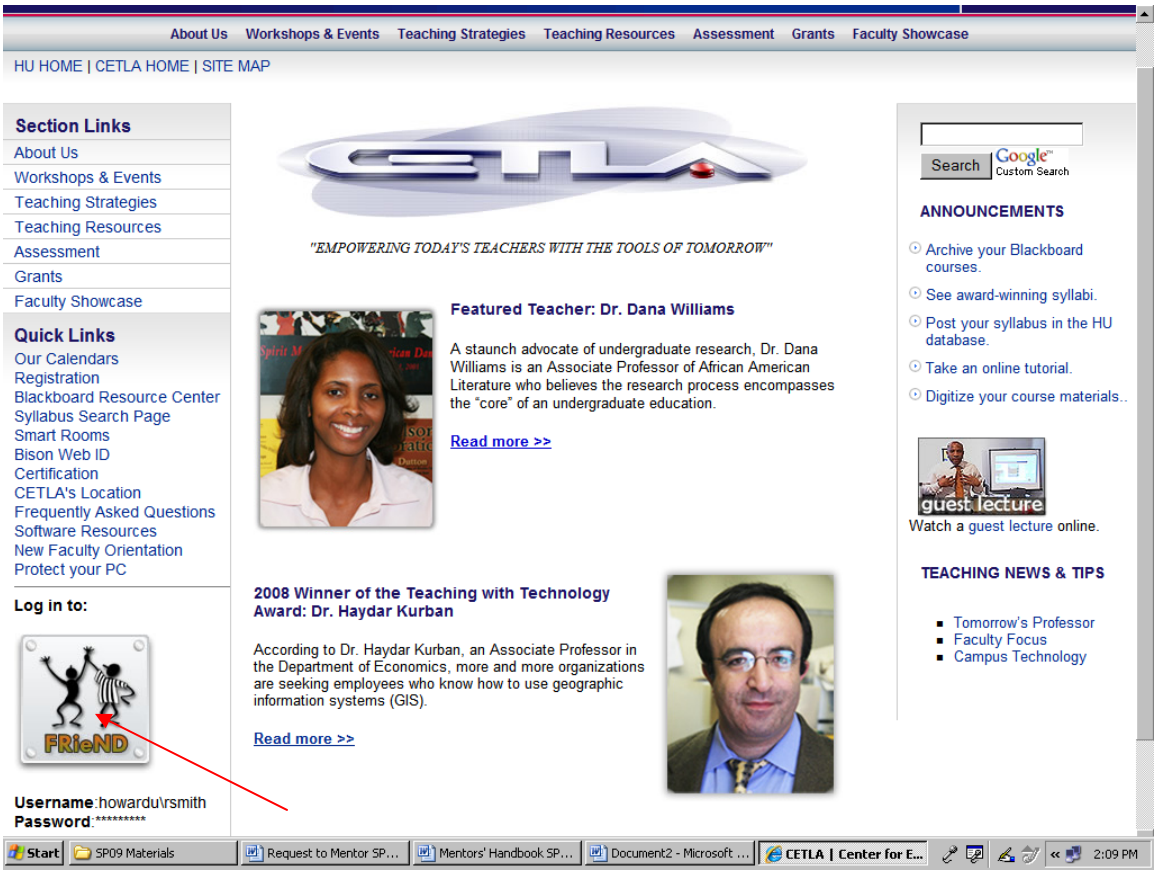
When CETLA assigns you a mentee, CETLA will tell you which objective for improvement the mentee's department has selected for the semester. Below are some ways you might help your mentee fulfill that objective. **However, choose only activities that pertain to the objective and appeal to you and the mentee.** Feel free to add other activities!

1. Visit one another's classes.
2. Visit one another's Blackboard sites (if available).
3. Discuss one another's syllabi.
4. Discuss one another's course materials (e.g., handouts or PowerPoint slides).
5. Review one another's graded exams.
6. Review one another's graded papers.
7. Discuss a book or article on teaching, learning or assessment.
8. Attend a CETLA workshop and discuss it afterward.
9. Discuss a CETLA guest lecture or another pedagogical video.
10. Call your mentee to find out how his or her "teaching day" was.
11. Email your mentee links to helpful webpages to discuss later via email.
12. Take a coffee break in CETLA's lounge or Starbucks to discuss your mentee's concerns.
13. Respond to first drafts of your mentee's assignments or exams.

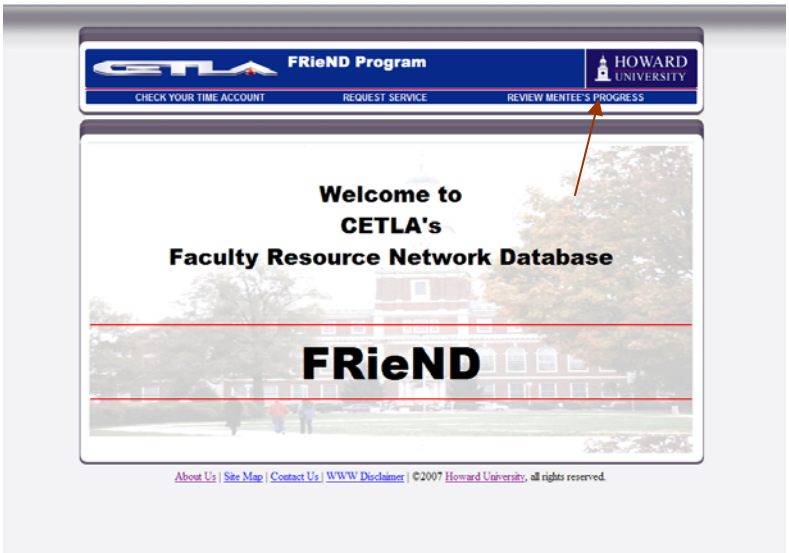
How can I access my mentee's report?

As you mentor your mentee, your mentee will report your mentoring activities on a form in the FRieND database. At any time, you can access this report by logging into the database as shown below. If you notice any omissions or inaccuracies in the report, advise your mentee immediately.

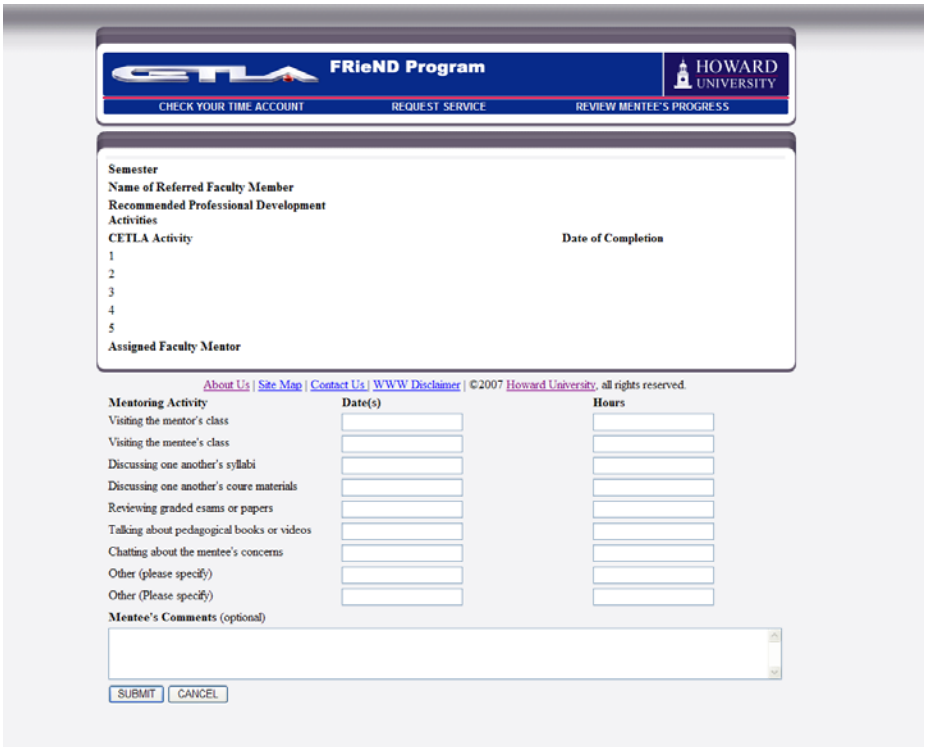
(CETLA Homepage)



(FRieND Welcome Page)



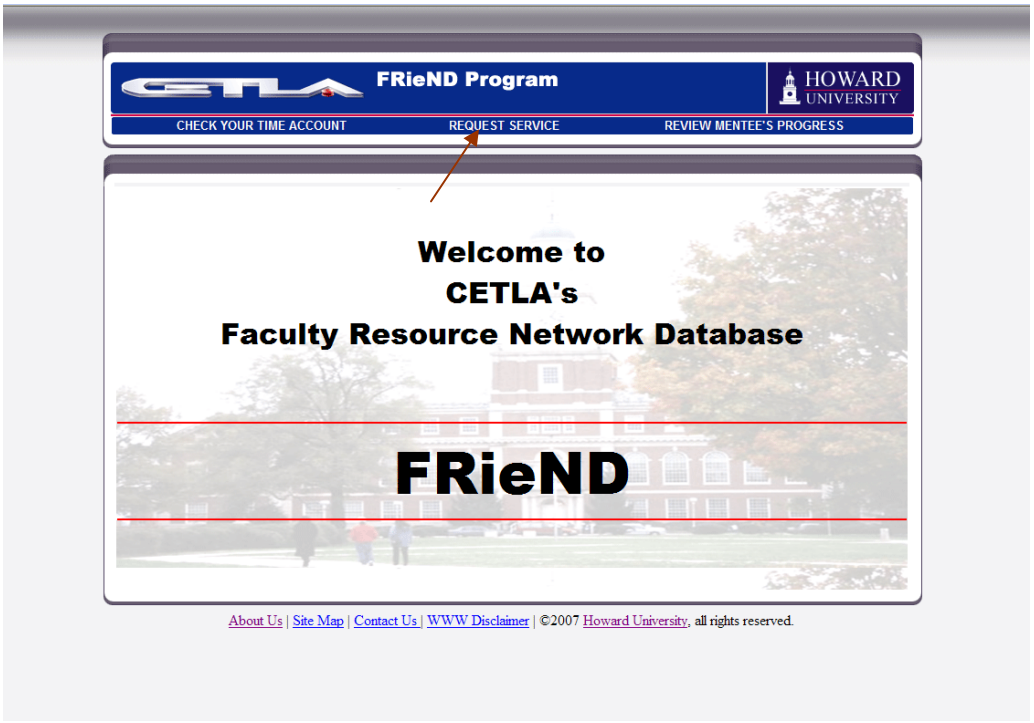
(Mentee's Report Screen)



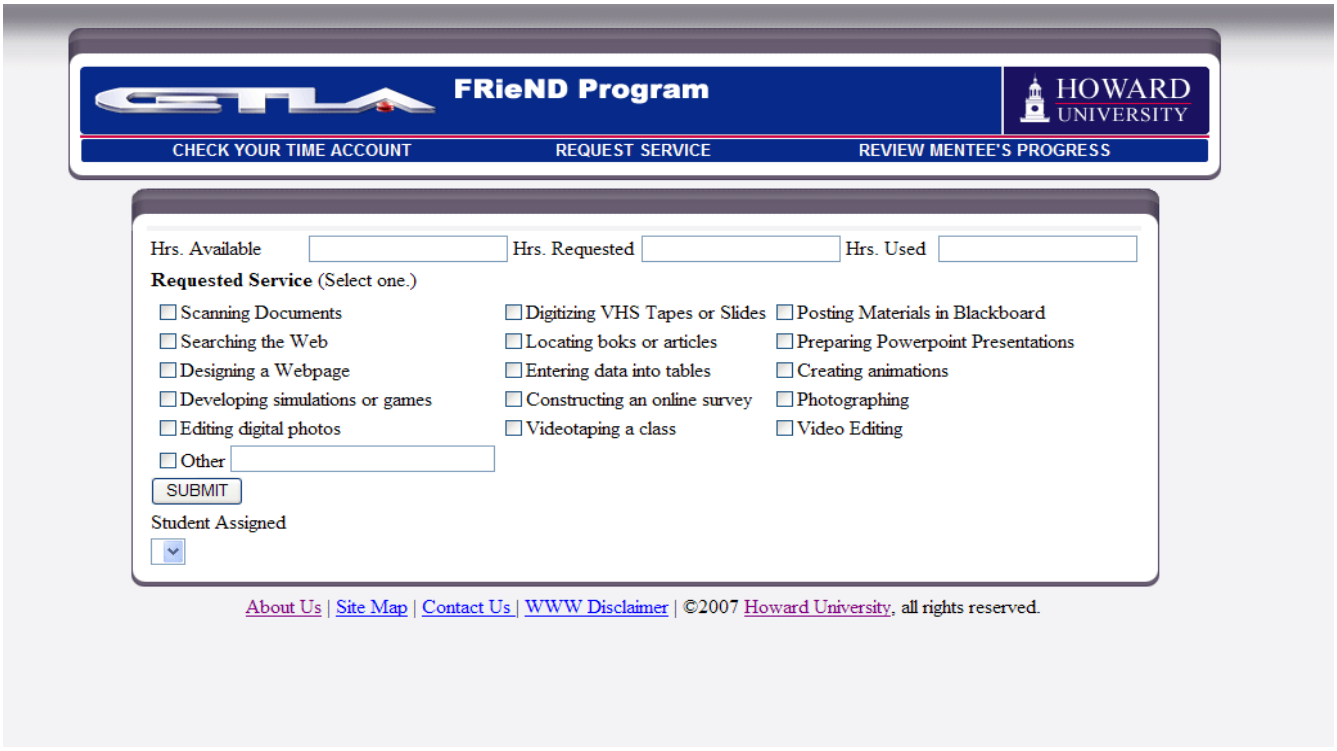
How can I obtain student services?

As your mentee updates the activity report, the FRieND database will automatically "bank" your hours so that you can begin "purchasing" time-saving student services from CETLA. To check your "balance" and request services, follow the steps below (after logging into the FRieND database):

(FRieND Welcome Page)



(Mentor's Request Screen)



Thank You!

If you have any questions or concerns, contact CETLA:

202-806-0870
cetla@howard.edu