

Guide and Support for English Mentors and Mentees



English faculty created this guide to help strengthen the English mentor program to make it more supportive and meaningful.



The Mentor Advisors

The Mentor Advisors are a group dedicated to making good mentor-mentee matches and organizing useful group gatherings throughout the semester. Also, mentees can contact any or all members of this group for additional advice or support.

The Mentor Advisors:

Rachel Bell: bellr@smccd.edu 650-738-4349
Jim Bowsher: bowshe@smccd.edu 650-738-4360
John Calavitta: calavittaj@smccd.edu 650-738-7133
Jarrod Feiner: feinerj@smccd.edu 650-738-4231
Kathleen Feinblum feinblumk@smccd.edu 650-438-4477
Rob Williams: williamsrob@smccd.edu 650-738-4368

We would like to add more interested English faculty as well as some of our adjunct who have been with us a while and would serve as excellent resources.

Activities and Goals of the Mentor Advisors:

(1) WELCOME GATHERING—first week:

During the first week of each semester the Mentor Advisors will organize a welcome gathering for all full-time and part-time English faculty off-campus. This will be an excellent way for old and new colleagues to (re)connect in an informal setting. The Mentor Advisors will also individually invite each new hire and let him/her know this is not only an opportunity to meet faculty but to choose a mentor. Ahead of time, the Mentor Advisors will send the “Mentor Menu” with a list of pictures and blurbs for all full-time English faculty, so they have a sense of the potential mentors ahead of time. They will also include a “save-the-date” for the Week 6 on-campus gathering.

Right after the Mentor gathering, the Mentor Advisors, will email each adjunct and ask if they have a choice of mentor and ask them to make a selection by a certain date. If they don’t have a preference, the Mentor Advisors will make pairings.

(2) SECOND GROUP GATHERING—sixth week:


The Mentor Advisors will organize a second group gathering during the 6th week of classes. This will be on campus and will focus on sharing lessons, teaching strategies, challenges. Mentees can come with questions and email ahead of time the areas they would like to focus on.

(3) END OF SEMESTER CHECK-IN—two weeks before finals begin:


As finals approach, the Mentor Advisors will send an email to all adjunct with reminders of support and asking if they as advisors can provide any assistance in regards to finals exams, final papers and semester wrap-up.

The Mentor Menu


Here is a list of the full-time faculty in the English Department along with blurbs to get to know them better. Adjunct can use this to help them select who they think would be a good mentor match.

		Contact Info	Started at Skyline
	Rachel Bell	bellr@smccd.edu 650-738-4349 Office: 7306	1996


I started as a part-timer at Skyline in the fall of 1996. Right before I moved to SF, I lived in Madrid, Spain for a year teaching English. I got my Master's in Ethnic American Literature at SDSU with an emphasis in African-American Lit. I have an ESL Teaching Certificate and a Reading Certificate. I started teaching in 1993 and have been teaching online since 2006. I like to teach courses centered on a theme and many of those themes center on issues of race, gender and social class but over the years, I have taught many different themes and have all of the themes and texts listed here: <http://accounts.smccd.edu/bellr/texts-themes.htm>. In addition to teaching, I am currently working as the English Department Coordinator. We have a lot of really cool stuff going on and everyone is always welcome to join any of the projects: <http://accounts.smccd.edu/bellr/Englishprojects.htm>

		Contact Info	Started at Skyline
	Jim Bowsher	bowshe@smccd.edu 650-738-4360 Office: 8212	1998


I started at Skyline in 1998 and was at College of Marin before. I earned a degree in English Lit/Creative Writing/Comp Pedagogy at SF State U and my area of interest/focus is teaching anyone who wants to write better and gain confidence in their writing to write better and gain confidence. The themes/topics/texts I most often teach are Malcolm Gladwell's *Outliers* together with Sonia Sotomayor's *My Beloved World* a study of unearned advantages and how they work in success American-style; a pack of short stories and plays, including *Oedipus The King*, *A Doll's House*, and Roman Polansky's film *b* for a study of finding one's identity and free will in a "fated" world & *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* for a study of the high costs of submitting passively to Fate. The programs and projects I have been in involved in are importantly, the Puente Program, the Curriculum Committee, Hiring Committees galore. PS Usually, I like reading student essays.

		Contact Info	Started at Skyline
	John Calavitta	calavittaj@smccd.edu 650-738-7133 Office: 8218	2016


I started at Skyline College in Fall 2016 and before that I was at the University of Washington, and Cascadia College, Seattle. I earned a PhD in English, and an MFA in creative writing at the UW. I also earned an MA in American and New England Studies from the University of Southern Maine. My areas of interest and specialization are: Rhetoric and Composition Studies, Ecocriticism and literary theory, New Wave Science Fiction, Twitter Fiction, California Poetry, social realist Drama, and Magical Realism. The themes I often teach around are stereotypes, environmentalism, and the power and peril of social media. Some of the texts I teach are: *Dogeaters: A Play about the Philippines*; *Disgraced*, by Ayad Akhtar; *Chicana Goes to College*, by Teatro de las Chicanas collective; *Coyote Sits In Judgement*, by Donald Two-Rivers; and *Enrique's Journey: The Story of a Boy's Dangerous Odyssey to Reunite with His Mother*, by Sonia Nazario. I am co-advisor to Skyline College's literary magazine, *Talisman*, and I am currently working on a play about La Brea tar pits. I brought the campus Sustainability Blitz to my 110 class this year; the Sustainability Blitz is a program designed to support Climate Corps partnered colleges and universities in integrating sustainability throughout its curriculum and across disciplines. I am also interested in getting involved in Skyline learning communities.

		Contact Info	Started at Skyline
	Michael Cross	crossm@smccd.edu 650-738-4412 Office: 7302	2014


I started teaching at Skyline College in 2014, and before that I taught at Chabot College, College of Alameda, Los Medanos College, and De Anza College (among others)! I earned a B.A. in Creative Writing and English Literature from Southern Oregon University, an M.F.A. in Poetry Composition from Mills College, an M.A. in English Literature at SUNY Buffalo, and a Ph.D. in Contemporary American Poetry from SUNY Buffalo. My areas of interest include questions of identity as they relate to race, class, and gender, often taught through the lens of popular culture (married to less popular politics!). I'm interested in all kinds of things on campus, but I'm mostly involved with general education reform at the moment. Finally, I'm also a practicing poet, scholar, bookmaker, father, and animal welfare volunteer.

		Contact Info	Started at Skyline
	Liza Erpelo	erpelol@smccd.edu 650-738-4419 Office: 4244	2000


Greetings! My name is Liza Erpelo and I have been teaching since Fall 2000. I started my career at San Francisco State University, and I began teaching at Skyline College in Fall 2002. I teach the range of English courses in the Language Arts Division, from developmental reading and writing through second-year composition/critical thinking, and I also teach a variety of literature courses, including Filipino American literature, Asian American literature, queer literature, and comic books/graphic novels. I also coordinate the [Kababayan Learning Community](#), which focuses on the Filipin@ and Filipin@ American student experience. (Visit us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Instagram](#), too!). I was born in Hawai'i, lived in Alaska and Rhode Island, and ended up in California when I was in the 9th grade. I currently live in San Francisco with my husband and two young daughters, both of whom were named after San Francisco Giants players.

		Contact Info	Started at Skyline
	Kathleen Feinblum	feinblumk@smccd.edu 650-738-4477 Office: 8212	Started at Skyline?


I started at Skyline some time ago and was an adjunct professor at many colleges years before that. My master's degree was in English/Creative Writing from the University of Washington. I teach at all levels, human rights and global issues being my main interests inside and outside the classroom. I coordinate the Annual Plan, Program Review and Faculty Evaluations. I am also on the Curriculum Committee. My idea of heaven is to travel and write.

		Contact Info	Started at Skyline
	Jarrod Feiner	feinerj@smccd.edu 650-738-4231 Office: 4245	2009


After a career as an HVAC-R Technician, I went to Skyline with the intention of earning a degree in engineering. This plan didn't last long. After earning a degree from NDNU, I started teaching in 2009. I teach themes that encourage students to look at their lives as an archetypal hero's journey. My favorite class of the year to teach is the Jump Start Program; Jump Start is a bridging program for remedial, at risk students from Skyline's feeder high schools. I am the Co-Coordinator of the First Year Experience (FYE) program. I am Co-Advisor for the Skyline Student Veterans of America (SVA), and I am also an advocate for Acceleration. Glad to see you!

		Contact Info	Started at Skyline
	Nina Floro	floro@smccd.edu 650-738-4414 Office: 1311E	1991


After earning my BA in English, Single Subject Credential, and MAT in English/Education at UC Berkeley, and short, part-time stints at Ohlone, Diablo Valley, San Jose City, and Contra Costa Colleges, I was hired full-time at Skyline College in 1991. I've taught a range of courses from basic/developmental writing to transfer-level composition to literature, and I also teach LSKL 110 (Effective Tutoring & Practicum), which prepares students to work as peer tutors in the Skyline College Learning Center. Over the past few years, my primary work has been with the Center for Transformative Teaching & Learning (CTTL), where I've served as Skyline College's Professional Development Coordinator and Co-Coordinator of the Center, developing and facilitating programs to support the professional growth of faculty and classified staff. Much of my work on campus has focused on equity and diversity, faculty programs and advocacy, tutor training, and student-centered teaching.

		Contact Info	Started at Skyline
	Chris Gibson	gibsonc@smccd.edu 650-738-4409 Office: 7308	2006

I started at Skyline in 2006 and was at El Paso Community College and the University of Texas-El Paso (UTEP) before. I earned a degree in English/American Literature at UTEP and my area of interest/focus is resistance literature. The themes I most often teach are focused on music and its impact on society. The programs and projects I have been involved in are acceleration in English and the English 105 Community of Practice. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to get involved in my campus projects.

		Contact Info	Started at Skyline
	Nathan Jones	jonesn@smccd.edu 650-738-7307 Office: 8210	Started at Skyline?


Nathan A. Jones has a BA in Sociology CSU East Bay, a TESOL Certification from Oxford House College Barcelona, Spain an MFA in Creative Writing and English Mills College, and a Certificate for the Teaching of Post-Secondary Reading San Francisco State University. He is a poet, essayist, spoken word artist, book publisher, musician, and the author of Revolutionary Erotica (2003), Black Man In Europe (2005, 2008), and Excerpts From My Soul: Read Without Prejudice (2010). He has published numerous articles, poems, and essays for online publications and is featured in a variety of poetry anthologies. In the Spring of 2018, he will release a new collection poetry. He is currently an Associate Professor at Skyline College.

		Contact Info	Started at Skyline
	Nancy Kaplan-Biegel	kaplann@smccd.edu 650-738-4297 Office: 8110	1995

I have a bachelor's in journalism from San Diego State University and a master's in English literature, along with a composition certificate, from San Francisco State. I have been teaching at Skyline since 1995. I started off as a full-time English professor, which I loved. But after being asked to teach a standalone news writing class a few years later, I jumped at the opportunity to rebuild Skyline's dormant journalism program, including bringing back a student publication to the campus. And while I loved teaching English, this program has turned out to be my passion. (Let's put it this way: There were two things I wanted to be when I was a kid: a teacher and a journalist. This dream career has merged both.) I am a fervent lifelong learner and lover of all things related to technology, media literacy and pedagogy. I have spent the last several years experimenting with, among other things, the flipped classroom and gamification. You too? Let's talk or collaborate! I live with my husband, two teenager daughters, and a 6-year-old boxer dog whose middle name is Mydean, named by my younger daughter, after she met "my dean" at the time.

		Contact Info	Started at Skyline
	Lucia Lachmayr	lachmayr1@smccd.edu 650-738-4146 Office: 4248	2003

I was born in Bogota, Colombia, moved to the U.S. at 4, and have lived in the places as varied as Cincinnati, OH, to Novo Hamburgo, Brazil, as well as slowly moved up the California coast, from San Diego, Los Angeles, San Luis Obispo, to South and as well as regular San Francisco. I guess you could say I was an itinerant student having gone to 9 different schools in my 12 years of schooling. I started teaching at Skyline in 2003-2004 while also an adjunct for San Francisco State University and City College of San Francisco. I earned my B.A. and an M.A in Literature with a focus on World and Comparative Literatures at SFSU. I then went on to get an M.A. in Composition, focusing on Gen 1.5 students. The topics I teach vary by semester, but the Puente Program has really focused my interest on social justice issues. I am currently Co-coordinator for the Puente learning community as well as Co-Chair of the SEED committee. SEED meetings are often quite informative, so if you would like to take a gander, you are welcome to come sit in our SEED committee meetings as a guest. The meetings are on the 3rd Tuesday of every month. I am also interested in sustainability and am an Eco-nerd (word!). Am usually am at the SAN (Sustainability Ambassadors Network) meetings every 4th Tues. My office is in the Multicultural Center, 4248, so please stop by and say hello if you're nearby!

		Contact Info	Started at Skyline
	Rob Williams	lachmayrl@smccd.edu 650-738-4146 Office: 4248	2013

I came to Skyline in Fall of 2013 from San Diego where I taught at UCSD, Grossmont College, Mesa College and Southwestern College. My degrees are a BA in English from Arizona State and a Masters of Fine Art in Creative Writing/Fiction from Columbia University in New York City. At Skyline I teach or have taught Creative Writing (English 161/162), ENGL 110, ENGL 100, ENGL 846, ENGL 105, and ENGL 154-Queer Literature. I am the Faculty Advisor for Talisman, Skyline College's Literary Magazine (now in its 47th year!) and the co-advisor for the Deadbeat Writers--Skyline College's Creative Writing Club. I am the Chair of the Faculty Professional Development Funding Committee, so if you have any questions about funding for conferences or other professional development please let me know. In addition, I am the Skyline Chapter Co-Chair for AFT 1493--your Union. At Skyline I have coordinated the annual April National Poetry Month events on campus, the Talisman Literary Event and Magazine Release Party, and I've worked on our wonderful Rhetoric, am a member of the Community of Practice/English 105 cohort, as well as co-created the curriculum for ENGL 154-Queer Lit. I would love to involve other divisions (and other faculty members from my own division) in more Creative Writing endeavors on campus. Let's hold monthly readings, bring more local, and non-local writers and discussions here! Hit me up if you're interested. My academic interests include Creative Writing, Gender Studies and Gender Politics, Queer/LGBTQ Studies and Issues, Literature, Contemporary Poetry, and English Composition and Accelerated Learning. Outside of Skyline I write Fiction and Nonfiction-- anyone want to start a writing group? I live in the Portola (is it Portola or Por-tel-uh?) district with my dog, Hal Holbrook. I love art and film and books and want to ride my orange bike more.

Mentor-Mentee Connections

HOW TO GET STARTED: Once a mentor and mentee have been paired, what's next?

(1) Set-up your initial meeting! Ideally, you can meet in person, but with busy schedules video-chat or a phone conversation are also good ways to connect. Share your contact information, preferred methods of contact, and best times to reach one another.

(2) Mentors, we've been doing a lot of faculty-driven, hands-on activities in our English Department meetings, so invite your mentees to join, particularly for meetings that address topics you know they would be interested in. For all of the English Department meeting dates, agendas and notes, log into our Language Arts Canvas space: https://smccd.instructure.com/courses/8220/discussion_topics/19827

SUGGESTED MEETINGS: Mentors and mentees can meet as many times as they wish, but ideally they would meet one-on-one at least twice.

Here are some potential meeting topics, but don't feel limited to this list:

OBSERVATIONS, PORTFOLIOS and STUDENT SURVEYS:

All adjuncts are evaluated the first semester they are hired, so set up a meeting to go over this process, demystify it, and help your mentee prepare. Let them know what criteria they are being evaluated on, the reasons/goals behind observations, what goes into a good portfolio (perhaps share yours with them), and show them the student surveys their students will be asked to complete about their class experience.

SKYLINE COLLEGE and SKYLINE STUDENTS:

Share with your mentee what Skyline College is like and how we might be different from other community colleges. What are the campus philosophies, approaches to students, faculty support, main campus initiatives, projects and committees? What are some ways they can get involved if they like? Perhaps also discuss what they can expect with our students: their particular needs, levels of preparedness, demographics, best ways to support them, use of affective domain, strategies for success, challenges, resources available. Guide them to "Getting to Know Skyline" in our online Language Arts Division Canvas space where they can find an Orientation to our Division and the English Department and a PowerPoint with advice on getting hired full-time at Skyline:

<https://smccd.instructure.com/courses/8220/pages/getting-to-know-skyline-college>

SHARING MATERIALS:

It is so valuable for teachers to see the different approaches and methods their colleagues are using, so in a meeting you could both share lesson plans, successful texts, course themes, syllabi, and other class materials and activities. New teachers fresh out of programs can share strategies they recently learned and more seasoned teachers can share what approaches and strategies they have used that have worked well and ones to avoid.

CONSTRUCTING AND TEACHING WRITING PROMPTS:

Constructing prompts and teaching students how to successfully respond to them for both take home papers and in-class timed exams have their challenges. Discuss and share your writing prompts and your philosophies behind them, get feedback from each other on the clarity and effectiveness your prompts, share your in-class quizzes, midterms, and final exams. Discuss your best practices is teaching your students how to effectively respond to prompts.

INFORMAL CLASS OBSERVATIONS:

Sometimes a mentor will be the person doing the formal observation of his/her mentee and sometimes not. In either case, a mentor can help a mentee feel more comfortable having a colleague in his/her class through doing informal class visits. Mentees can invite a mentor in just to watch a class and get informal feedback afterwards. Mentors can also open their doors to their mentees and let them be in the observer role and see different methods of teaching.

DISCUSS DIVISION AND ENGLISH DEPARTMENT BEST PRACTICES:

Faculty across the disciplines in the Language Arts Division have worked closely together to create shared and agreed upon best practices, and the English faculty have also worked together to create English-specific best practices. Mentors and mentees can look at these best practices together and discuss.

Go to the “Getting to Know Skyline” page in the Language Arts Orientation to access the best practices: <https://smccd.instructure.com/courses/8220/pages/getting-to-know-skyline-college>.

This is a brief summary of the best practice topics you’ll find:

Shared Division-Wide Best Teaching Practices include:

- **Retention**
- **First day of class activities**
- **Syllabi**
- **Students first approaches**

The English Department Best Teaching Practices include:

- **Our shared English philosophies and program learning outcomes**
- **In-Class strategies**
- **Providing student feedback in-person and on papers**
- **Using the free online English Department Rhetoric that Skyline English teachers created: *What, Why, and How?* <http://www.skylinecollege.edu/skyenglish/>**