

# New Faculty Member Orientation at Southeastern Louisiana College

E. E. Pul, Dean  
Division Applied Sciences

A prospective faculty member, after the usual routine, locates in a community, school starts, and he steps into the role of new faculty as best he can. Sometimes the adjustment is simple; other times it is not so simple. The difference between becoming a successful faculty member, a mediocre one, or a flat failure is often dependent on how well he has been able to adjust himself to the educational community in which he finds himself. The problem of helping new faculty members was one that was recognized by the academic deans of Southeastern Louisiana College, particularly after the announcement was made that approximately 40 new persons were to be added to the teaching staff for the session 1964-65. Southeastern is divided into three academic divisions with a dean as head of each one. During the summer of 1964 a series of planning meetings was conducted by the deans for the purpose of formulating an orientation program for the early part of the scholastic year.

In the belief that a review of the program which was conducted during the latter part of September and the early part of October, 1964, might be of interest to administrators and faculty in other colleges, a report of it is here presented.

During the planning session the deans discussed what they believed to be major problems confronting new faculty members, and it was agreed that certain information would be of value to them. It was decided that there would be three sessions in a 3-week sequence. The meetings were held each Monday night beginning at 7:00 o'clock with a presentation by a number of persons followed by a question-answer period. The three main areas treated were teacher welfare, grading, and testing. Often meetings of this kind can result in advice giving: so in the planning session it was agreed that those who appeared on the program would be asked not to engage in educational platitudes and, as sometimes happens, vague theories, but rather that they would relate to the group their experiences - a kind of testimonial. Those selected to appear on the panels were regarded as successful teachers and persons who had been on the faculty for a number of years. Each of the academic deans took his turn serving as presiding officer at a meeting.

The first session, which was presided over by the Dean of the Division of Applied Sciences, dealt with teacher welfare. The introductory remarks were given by the President of the College,

who, when approached on the idea of the project, had given enthusiastic support to it. His presentation to the group was both stimulating and inspirational. At Southeastern a program of group insurance is in effect, and the State administers a high type retirement system. These topics were treated by the College Auditor. The Dean of the College reviewed the salary schedule, and how merit raises and promotions may be attained. Because attendance regulations are something which every instructor should understand and for which he is responsible, the Dean of Men was asked to review the regulations which prevail at this College. The Registrar talked to the group about the relationship of his office to instructors, giving special emphasis to grade reporting.

The second session dealt with grading, the Dean of Education serving as general chairman. This session was conducted as a panel, members having been chosen from several different departments. The Business Administration Department was represented by a faculty member who has been here for more than 20 years and who is regarded as an outstanding teacher. The other members were a teacher of economics and a teacher of mathematics, each in his own sphere a teacher of high calibre. The panel members each reviewed his method of determining grades.

The last session was presided over by the Dean of Liberal Arts with the topic of testing being considered. Members of the panel consisted of a person who teaches chemistry, another who teaches psychology, and the third a member of the social science department. Each one in turn described the type of tests he gives and why he gives them, pointing out which type or types he feels has given best results. At the conclusion of the presentation by panel members, a summary of the orientation program was given by the Dean of Liberal Arts. Judging from the enthusiasm of the group, the questions asked, and general discussions, it was agreed that the project was successful. It is understood that the real test is in what the new faculty members are doing, and how well they have become oriented to Southeastern Louisiana College. This is something difficult to evaluate because of the intangible factors involved.

Favorable comments which academic deans have had from the heads of departments have encouraged them to plan for a similar program for the Fall of 1965 for new faculty members. Older teachers on the faculty indicated that they would like also to have attended the sessions.