



POD Network News

POD Peer Mentoring

Has this happened to you? You go to the POD conference, meet some fascinating people and exchange business cards with every intention to stay in contact in order to share ideas, problem solve or collaborate on a future project. You then get back to your office, get caught up in the semester and never reach out to your new friends. Fast forward to POD the following year, you run into those folks and vaguely recall meeting them the year prior.

This scenario seems to happen to me every year. It occurred to me this is very similar to a trend we noticed with our new faculty, at the University of Wyoming, when they go through two full days of orientation, meet interesting new people and swear that they will keep in touch. They then get to their respective departments and never see one another again. In order to encourage them to stay in contact, provide support and build relationships, we organize peer-mentoring groups. We encourage them to sign up for a group with news friends they have met or allow us to create a group for them. We have a kick off celebration at the beginning of the semester in which we provide space for them to get to know one another, create a plan for what they would like their group to look like. I provide some examples, but it is up to them to decide how they want to operate as a group.

Replicating the model UW uses for these peer-mentoring groups, I thought it might be helpful to address the challenge that POD conference goes face when unintentionally not maintaining contact with fellow POD members. Therefore, I put an email on the POD listserve to see if anyone would be interested in forming peer mentor groups. There were 28 members who responded and I arranged these into six groups. I intentionally formed groups with diverse members, mixing large universities with small colleges, seasoned faculty developers and newer members. I arranged kick off videoconference meetings where members got to know one another and formulate plans for how they would like to support one another throughout the year. My intention is to get everyone together at the POD conference next year to share what successes and challenges came from these groups.

It's not too late for you! If you would like to be part of a peer mentoring group as well, I'd be happy to help you get one organized. E-mail me, Janel Seeley, at jseeley1@uwyo.edu by Feb. 14 and we'll get started.