

**From:** Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Advancement <avpfa@neu.edu>  
**Subject:** ONTrack - February 14, 2006  
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ONTrack – February 14, 2006

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ONTrack is an e-bulletin sent to Tenure Track Faculty, Faculty Mentors, Department Chairs, and Deans containing information about resources for faculty development and opportunities for scholarship and effective teaching. Please respond to this email with topics you would like to see here. ONTrack is archived at: <http://www.facultymentoring.neu.edu>.  
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Topics:

- 1) Annual Tenure and Promotion Workshop (3/2/06)
- 2) Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- 3) Instant Professor Access using IM
- 4) Research Expo – Abstracts due today (2/14/06)
- 5) Jonas Chalk on Class Attendance
- 6) Upcoming Events and Deadlines

1) Annual Tenure and Promotion Workshop (3/2/06). Each Spring the Office of the Provost offers a Tenure and Promotion Workshop. The objective of this workshop is to provide tenure track faculty and their mentors with information about the tenure time line and process at all levels of the university. The workshop is scheduled for March 2 during activities period (2:50 – 5:00pm) in 450 Dodge Hall. Note that this is a date & room change due to several existing conflicts. The workshop agenda includes: overview of processes, guidelines, timing, and college-specific breakout groups. We will have a reception for some informal mingling. Whenever possible deans (or a designee), college administrative personnel, and the chair of the college tenure and promotion committee will attend. This is a good forum for faculty to share questions, concerns, and hear from others regarding this important process in all of our careers.

2) Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP provides resources to help balance home and work lives. Benefits include: referral services for child and elder care; assistance to resolve personal problems of employees and their families; counseling services provided by licensed clinical professionals; and online resources to comprehensive recommendations related to a wide variety of work/life and health issues. You can access the EAP website at: [https://www.achievesolutions.net/entry\\_page](https://www.achievesolutions.net/entry_page). More information about the EAP benefit can be found at the Northeastern Human Resource Management Website.

3) Instant Professor Access using IM. What do you think about that? Students can contact you at any hour of the day through IM and you can respond to their current need. It sounds daunting doesn't it? Come hear engineering Professor Sue Freeman's EdTech Talk describe the considerable success and occasional pitfall she's experienced offering IM office hours. For the past few years Professor Freeman has added to traditional office hours by communicating with her students online through IM. The EdTech Workshop is scheduled for Wednesday, March 1, 12:00-1:30, EdTech Center, 50 Dockser Hall. If interested, register at: <http://www.edtech.neu.edu/workshops/registration>.

4) Research Expo – Abstract due today February 14, 2006. Submit abstracts at: <http://www.expo.neu.edu>. This year's expo will be held on Wednesday

March 15, 11am – 2pm in the Curry Student Center Ballroom, McLeod Suites, and the Indoor Quad. The Expo provides a great opportunity for the NU Community to explore the wide range of research and scholarship activities at Northeastern University, and allows faculty and students to generate ideas for future collaborative research projects.

5) Jonas Chalk on Class Attendance. Jonas Chalk is a regular column on teaching best practices developed by the General Electric (GE) Master Teachers Team and sent through email as a Q&A. Go to <http://gemasterteachers.neu.edu/chalktalk.htm> if you are interested in viewing archived columns or if you wish to subscribe to receive email from Jonas. If needed use username: Jonas and password: Dusty. The following is from the Jonas archive.

Dear Jonas, As the Spring Semester gets started, I am concerned that attendance in my classes will be a problem. I found that last semester, sometimes out of a class of 30 students it was not unusual for 6 to 8 to be missing. These students then want to know what they missed, and providing these overviews has become very time consuming for me. They also want to hand in assignments late and they request makeup work. I would like to address this now before it gets out of hand this semester, what do you recommend? -- Lonely in the Classroom

Dear Lonely,

I try to be proactive in the classroom to address this behavior early. I try to explain the responsibility that students have for their own learning and tell them that coming to class is the students' job. It is their responsibility to attend, and should be considered a commitment. I compare it to a co-op experience: if they were not going to work on any given day, I discuss what they would do, such as, call the boss, email the boss, etc. However, if you really want to require attendance, then consider instituting an attendance policy on the syllabus, which you could stress in the first class and review with them periodically during the semester. There are a number of policies that encourage attendance or provide consequences for lack of attendance. Some encouraging policies include: attendance as a percentage of the course grade; bonus points or extra credit for good attendance. Some policies that involve consequences include: points deducted for a certain number of missed classes or grade reductions by certain percentages, based on the number of classes missed. I tell my students that of course I allow excused absences, but they must provide a Doctor's written note for the missed classes to be counted as excused.

You do not appear to have an attendance policy, so at this juncture, some discussion with the whole class can be helpful. You can remind the students about their responsibilities as I discussed above. Or, if you know all of the students by name, you can acknowledge that they will be missed when they are not there, and give positive feedback when they are. This is, of course, easier with small class sizes. In larger classes you can try in-class assignments, one-minute reflections, or other ways to check attendance, and follow up individually when non-attendance is a problem. I also try to keep variety in my classes, to keep them dynamic, to let the students know what is coming up, so that they are motivated to attend the next class. If I am excited to be there and looking forward to it, and genuinely disappointed when they are not there, they follow suit.

Also, as a quick tip: For the first few classes of the semester, I am very deliberate about taking attendance, to set the stage that I consider it important. Later in the semester I will ask quickly in the beginning of class who is missing, and figure it out myself, showing that I am aware of missing students and do keep track.

Jonas

6) Upcoming Events and Deadlines.

\* Abstract Deadline for NU Research Expo is today February 14, 2006. See: <http://www.expo.neu.edu>. This year's expo will be held on Wednesday March 15, 11am - 2pm in the Curry Student Center Ballroom, McLeod Suites, and Indoor Quad.

\* Women's Studies BROWN BAG: "Is that your Mom?: A qualitative Investigation of White mothers of non-White Children." Wednesday February 15 at noon in 220 BK. Contact Dr. Lihua Wang at x4984 for more information.

\* Tenure & Promotion Workshop: This workshop has been rescheduled for March 2, 2006 from 2:50 - 5pm in 450 Dodge Hall. NOTE CHANGE OF DATE & VENUE.

\* End of Year Luncheon for tenure track faculty and mentors: Wednesday April 19 (noon-2pm) in the Raytheon Amphitheatre.