

The Joy Shechtman Mankoff Center for Teaching & Learning  
presents a new initiative for faculty & staff ...



# The Rhythms of Academic Life

“The Rhythms of Academic Life,” facilitated by CTL Faculty Fellow Karen Gonzalez Rice is a new, year-long series. This CTL-sponsored initiative includes a continuing series of workshops for faculty & staff as well as opportunities for faculty members to participate in free, one-on-one coaching sessions designed to support faculty in joyfully exploring and expressing their authentic selves at all stages of their careers, and in pursuing personal and professional fulfillment while navigating and resisting the patriarchal, colonialist structures of academic institutions.

## Reflecting on the Fall, Anticipating the Break, Imagining the Spring

### A Special CTL Event at the Lyman Allyn Art Museum

Part of the CTL Series “The Rhythms of Academic Life,” facilitated by Karen Gonzalez Rice.

Wednesday 15 December 2021, from 10 AM to 11:30 AM

Lyman Allyn Art Museum

Seeking a moment of self-reflection at the end of this turbulent fall semester? Come to the Lyman Allyn Art Museum, on the South edge of campus, to share a moment of spacious calm. In this low-key, small-group event--limited to twelve participants--we will pause the noise of the semester and use the quiet of the museum as an opportunity to unwind, take a breath, and consider our fall challenges and successes. We will wander the galleries, where artworks will serve as catalysts for reflecting on what we learned this semester, what we'd like to change for the coming spring, and how we'd like to think about winter break and the semester beyond.

In this workshop we will:

Find a space of calm in a turbulent time. Practice strategies of slow looking to foster self-reflection. Reflect on who you were, what you did, and what you had this fall. Assess what to take with you and what to leave behind from this tough semester. Create a set of intentions for winter break and beyond.

You will leave the workshop with a greater sense of calm, purpose, and intentionality as we enter our winter break after this challenging fall semester.

# **Imagining 2022: A Faculty Workshop for Sustaining Hope & Anticipating Satisfaction in the New Year**

Part of the CTL Series “The Rhythms of Academic Life,” facilitated by Karen Gonzalez Rice

Workshop on Thursday 27 January 2022 1 PM to 2:30 PM on Zoom

Individual One-on-One Coaching Sessions on Zoom by emailing Karen at [kgonzal1@conncoll.edu](mailto:kgonzal1@conncoll.edu)

Dread and anxiety seem to be the dominant perspectives on the new year. Many of us are having trouble thinking beyond the next few days or weeks—which makes sense given the ongoing realities of uncertainty, instability, and injustice. In this workshop, we will acknowledge this constrained start to the year while also making space for envisioning new ways of being, and for open-ended, playful exploration of what we imagine for 2022.

You will have opportunities to:

- Build curiosity about what might be possible in 2022
- Reconnect with your expansive, resistant, resilient self
- Practice hopefulness, anticipation, and looking forward
- Create your own tiny interventions against the culture of doom-scrolling and numbing

## *One-on-One Coaching*

Another way of envisioning your new year is through an individual, personalized, one-on-one coaching session with Karen, who is trained as a Co-Active life coach. In a one-hour Zoom conversation, we will discuss the topics listed above, but instead of interacting with peers, we'll focus on your own specific journey and dreams. We will develop plans and strategies tailored to your needs and circumstances. All faculty are welcome, coaching is confidential, and you are free to discuss professional goals and/or personal aspirations.

To schedule a one-on-one coaching session email Karen at [kgonzal1@conncoll.edu](mailto:kgonzal1@conncoll.edu)

# **Winding Down for Spring Break: A Workshop for Faculty & Staff Who Need a Break before the Break**

Part of the CTL Series “The Rhythms of Academic Life,” facilitated by Karen Gonzalez Rice.  
Thursday 10 March, 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM on Zoom

Join us for a quiet afternoon of chatting, coloring, and reflecting on what we want from Spring Break. We'll connect with our community via Zoom, with time to practice relaxing with a coloring book while sharing our experiences of the semester. We will consider strategies for finding rest, fun, connection, or whatever you need or want during the break. Please register by Friday 4 March so that a bag of relaxing goodies, including a coloring book and colored pencils, can be available for pick up at the CTL or delivery to your office before the session.

# **Freedom at Mid-Career: A Workshop for Associate Professors, Recently-Promoted Full Professors, and Newly-Tenured Faculty**

Part of the CTL Series “The Rhythms of Academic Life,” facilitated by Karen Gonzalez Rice.  
Friday 13 May 10 AM to Noon on Zoom

You may be surprised to learn that many faculty experience mid-career--those long years between receiving tenure and promotion to full professor--as the most difficult phase of academic life. New expectations, growing responsibilities, and life changes can surprise us into disenchantment and counter the security and freedom promised by tenure. But this stage can also bring powerful opportunities for expansion, transformation, and growth. In this workshop, we will explore the challenges of this season of life and practice some possibilities for open-hearted mid-career freedom.

*In this online workshop, you can expect to:*

Question assumptions about productivity and efficiency, instead centering sustainability and satisfaction. Consider how to rediscover and reclaim parts of ourselves that we may have lost in the pre-tenure process. Play with new approaches to your life's work that foreground your own values and measures of success, distinct from external/institutional goals or benchmarks.

*While this workshop is geared toward associate professors, full professors promoted within the last several years, and newly-tenured faculty, all faculty are welcome to participate.*

The Joy Shechtman Mankoff Center for Teaching & Learning  
presents a new program for faculty ...



# Freedom at Mid-Career

A Six-Month CTL Program for Associate Professors, Recently-Promoted Full Professors, and Newly-Tenured Faculty

For many academics, mid-career is the most difficult phase of academic life. The security, freedom, and, yes, privilege of tenure can be undermined by increasing leadership responsibilities, new or disrupted research agendas, family care-giving roles, and life transitions—all in the context of pandemic-era burn-out, disenchantment, and exhaustion. What would it be like to re-imagine your relationship to your work in this season of life? How might you show up differently in your daily life if you followed your curiosity about possibilities for expansion, transformation, and growth?

In this six-month, small-group program, we will make space for self-compassion, practice bringing more ease and fun into our lives, and build resilience through rest and supportive networks of care. We will meet monthly for a group connection call via Zoom with other mid-career faculty colleagues in the program, and you will work with me individually for one hour each month in one-on-one coaching sessions via Zoom tailored to your circumstances and desired outcomes.

You will have opportunities to:

- Expand your purpose and your impact in the world.
- Play with new perspectives on your research, teaching, leadership and beyond.
- Rediscover joy and fun in your daily life.
- Challenge capitalist narratives of efficiency and time management to create more ease, sustainability, and satisfaction.
- Share your experiences with a community grappling with similar challenges.

Participation is limited and requires that you commit to both the monthly group meetings as well as the individual sessions.

*"Freedom at Mid-Career" is part of the CTL Series "The Rhythms of Academic Life."*

Email sent to faculty listserv with above information on 2 June 2022 soliciting participants:

## FAQs

### **What is coaching and what can it offer faculty?**

Life coaching is a set of evidence-informed practices that can support faculty in creating more sustainable, satisfying lives through meaning-making, critically reflecting upon their work, challenging capitalist narratives of efficiency, and questioning the status quo of higher education. Life coaching is NOT counseling, consulting, or giving advice. In my coaching training, I have learned to ask critically-reflective questions and to support people in defining, prioritizing, and pursuing what matters to them; attending to information in the body and their feelings; identifying and living their values more fully; creating networks of support, and more.

### **How did you become a coach?**

About seven years ago, during a sabbatical with intense writing deadlines, I reached out to a professor and coach who was a regular contributor to the ProfHacker column in The Chronicle of Higher Education. The experience helped me finish my book, and much more: over the years, I have worked with my coach to connect with my values and implement them more intentionally in my daily life, complete stalled writing projects, navigate challenging working conditions, and identify what I really want to do with my free time, among other things. During remote teaching in the spring of 2021, rethinking labor in the academy and craving connection and meaningful ways to extend my work as a Faculty Fellow with the CTL, I decided to pursue coach training. I'm an historian, so of course I chose to attend the original coaching school that established the field in the 1970s, the Co-Active Training Institute. Why this matters to you is that the Co-Active approach is flexible, straightforward, and meets you where you are, in my view, an excellent fit for faculty.

### **Who can join this program? What does "mid-career" mean?**

For this program, mid-career includes all newly-tenured faculty, all Associate Professors, and Full Professors who were promoted in the last several years. This is a small-group program, so the size of this cohort is limited.

### **When will the monthly meetings take place?**

Participants will collectively decide on a regular meeting time for our monthly Zoom meetings.

### **What will I need to prepare in advance? Will there be "homework"?**

No outside work is required for either the monthly meetings or the individual coaching sessions. Everything we do in this program happens in the group meetings and the one-on-one coaching sessions.

### **Will group meetings be recorded in case I miss one?**

The group meetings are an opportunity to explore our honest and sometimes messy experiences. Given the sensitive nature of these conversations, we won't be recording monthly group sessions. If you miss a meeting, I suggest grabbing coffee with someone from the group to catch up on what we discussed and learned.

### **What happens in a one-on-one coaching session?**

You are welcome to bring to coaching sessions whatever topics might be on your mind, academic and beyond. I often work with folks on transitions in life and/or work, feelings of being stuck or burned out, finding more joy and satisfaction in the everyday, issues around time and not-enoughness, reconnecting to hobbies and fun, imposter syndrome, moving forward on research projects, etc. Coaching is confidential.

### **Questions? Interested in joining the "Freedom at Mid-Career" program?**

Please email me at [KGONZAL1@conncoll.edu](mailto:KGONZAL1@conncoll.edu).

Karen Gonzalez Rice  
Associate Professor of Art History  
Associate Director, Museum Studies Certificate Program  
Chair, Department of Art History & Architectural Studies  
Faculty Fellow, Center for Teaching and Learning



# FREEDOM AT MID-CAREER

CENTER FOR TEACHING & LEARNING  
PROGRAM EVALUATION  
SPRING 2023



## Program Overview

Part of CTL's initiative to support faculty well-being

6 months of programming, August 2022-January 2023

- Monthly group meetings (90 min each)
- Monthly one-on-one coaching sessions (60 min each)
- 2 peer mentoring sessions (late addition to the program)

Meetings and coaching sessions took place via Zoom





## Monthly Topics

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<i>August</i>	Envisioned expectations/realities of post-tenure life.	
<i>September</i>	Mapped career trajectories with imagined landscapes.	
<i>October</i>	Became familiar with saboteurs.	
<i>November</i>	Identified and strengthened networks of support.	
<i>December</i>	Intentionally infused work with play.	▲
<i>January</i>	Created a vision for a fulfilling post-tenure life.	▲

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## Participants

### 13 Participants

- 4 BIPOC, 9 White
- 0 Nonbinary, 3 Male, 10 Female
- 2 Arts, 3 Humanities, 4 Social Sciences, 4 STEM

### 7 faculty regularly attended group and coaching sessions

- Six are later in mid-career (4+ years post tenure)
- Six are active in campus leadership

### 6 faculty

- 5 are earlier in mid-career (<1-3 years post tenure)
- 5 have children under age 5 (Childcare was cited as barrier to participating)





## Program Results

Created a supportive community of mid-career faculty with shared experiences!

Supported faculty in acknowledging and processing complex emotions around this stage of life!

Demonstrated to faculty the importance of self-compassion and rest!

Empowered faculty to envision fulfilling long-term career and to practice connecting their daily choices/actions to broader career goals!



## Community

The program created a community of mid-career faculty with shared experiences:

- “[I learned] that my experience is a shared one.”
- “[I learned that] feeling so untethered/frustrated is not uncommon and manifests differently for different people. Also, of course I'm learning how to do research at mid-career. It's different than ever before.”

Participants built community beyond the program:

- A small group organized participation in a local 5K run
- Two participants created a nanny share
- Several participants met outside of the program for coffee or a walk







## Community

In addition, I noticed that faculty were seeking peer advice, so I scheduled separate meetings for structured peer mentoring, with guidelines for participation adapted from [Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process](#), to provide opportunities for direct peer support:

- Two peer mentoring meetings took place during the program, with 6-7 people attending each one.
- Faculty submitted anonymous questions, and the group discussed their own experiences, suggestions, and ideas.



## Wellbeing

The program supported faculty in acknowledging and processing their complex emotions around this stage of life:

- “The acknowledgement of grief. Because that's what it is. We're conditioned from before we even enter graduate school to believe that a tenured position is the be all/end all. It's romanticized. This group bore witness to the struggle of individuals in an extremely resonant way.”
- “It helped me to realize that I truly need help. Time to restart therapy.”
- “The most difficult thing about the program was] giving voice to feelings and anxieties that I didn't realize I had.”
- “[I was surprised about] my raw emotions stemming from some unclosed wounds that I thought were closed.”





## Wellbeing

The program demonstrated for faculty the importance of self-compassion & rest:

- “A reminder that I need to be kind to myself.”
- “Self-examination is valuable and that I should try to do it more often.”
- “The realization (and acceptance) that I do need to take BREAKS to be productive, and I'll be happier. The realization that I might actually be able to happier \*and\* more productive if I treat myself a little better.”



## Empowerment

The program empowered faculty to envision fulfilling long-term career and to practice connecting their daily choices/actions to broader career goals:

- “The extent of my own feeling of empowerment is much greater than I expected was possible when we started the program.”
- “It's an opportunity to transition after tenure into a different kind of life than what came before. We know that having support at life transitions is monumental to our success, and that's what this does - helps us transition so we can be more successful (whatever that is for each of us).”
- “[The most meaningful part of the program was] the specificity and usefulness of each tool, in conjunction with setting goals and dates to use these tools.”
- “[The most meaningful part of the program was] refocusing on big goals and connecting daily issues to the big picture.”





## Coaching Results

Regular attendees considered coaching sessions to be essential to the program.

- "It was a wonderful complement that served the purpose of digging deeper as an individual, but with experienced guidance."
- "It helped me to think through specific challenges."
- "It really helped me apply what we talked about to my case - I needed that support to connect to my own situation."

Participants valued one-on-one coaching.

- "KGR has an incredible spacious attention and also an incisive way at getting to the point. Coaching has been helpful for clarifying large goals and small steps."
- "I needed the support of talking through things I thought I had resolved but clearly still struggle with."
- "[The most meaningful part] was KGR's compassionate attention and gentle way of probing."
- "[I was surprised about] how fun it was."
- "[I was surprised about] how my narrative was questioned...because it was at times flawed!"



## Challenges & Opportunities

Some participants felt that the program did not include enough problem solving or strategizing.

- "Witnessing each other's problems is valuable but I felt there could have been more room for problem-solving and brainstorming."
- "It was more blindly supportive and less challenging and goal-oriented than I expected. ... But that might just be the masochist in me, looking for a coach to use a stick to get me to write papers, rather than a carrot."

On a few occasions in group meetings, I did not stick to my workshop plan and allowed extended, unstructured discussion. When this happened, I observed:

- Faculty discussion devolved into unproductive complaining.
- There was not enough time to complete planned activities and exercises designed to deepen the learning and forward the action.

While faculty often asked for more time for discussion and "venting" in the moment, their feedback when this happened indicated that they were unsatisfied with the conversation and left wanting more forward-looking activities.





## Challenges & Opportunities

A few participants felt exposed after sharing their personal struggles in the group meetings.

- Two individuals contacted me to share concerns based on personal antipathies and assumptions about colleagues in the program. They also noted hierarchies (including departmental structures and campus leadership roles) that made them uncomfortable.
  - “[The most difficult thing about the program was] trusting that everything was safe to share depending on who was in ‘the room’.”
- In addition, my own multiple roles as a member of the community, long-time CTL Faculty Fellow, and friend of many present complicated matters for a few participants.
  - “I think of Karen as a good friend. That's almost a blurred line here and I'm not sure I ever really figured out how it's the same/different depending on the context.”



## Challenges & Opportunities

Scheduling, as usual, was an issue for some faculty.

- Several faculty noted the intrusion of “competing scheduled meetings/events.”
- Some simply forgot to schedule their coaching appointments.
  - “I just didn't get them scheduled. It's on me. There came a point where if something wasn't on my calendar then I missed it and I was so busy I didn't realize it was missing until the next group meeting.”
- One enthusiastic faculty member was not able to attend group meetings due to a teaching conflict.
- As noted earlier, faculty with children aged <5 often were often prevented from attending group meetings due to lack of childcare, and they frequently rescheduled coaching sessions.





## Challenges & Opportunities

Some participants with scheduling conflicts disconnected from the program over time.

- “I can see I could've taken better advantage of the opportunity.”
- 2 participants did not appear committed to the program from early on.

I observed that faculty may not have had enough “touch points” in the program, with meetings and coaching spread across the month and Zoom rather than in-person connections.



## Learnings for Next Time

Next time:

- I will create more participant investment in the program from the outset.
- I will commit to implementing my group meeting plans, with activities and exercises that I know work.
- I will provide more opportunities for faculty to connect with each other individually and as a group.





## Learnings for Next Time

Next time, I will create more participant investment in the program from the outset:

- Clearly state what the program does/does not do, expectations for their participation, and my role as a facilitator/coach
- Draw on this first program experience to build a more focused program description, more fully describe the arc of monthly topics, and show the coherence of the entire program experience
- Consider setting up a simple application process to signal active participation and uniqueness of the program
- In group meetings, describe what activities are designed to do, for example, draw attention to transitions between emotional well-being activities to planning/implementation exercises



## Learnings for Next Time

Next time, I will commit to implementing my group meeting plans, with activities and exercises that I know work:

- Resist requests for unstructured “venting” time during group meetings (while acknowledging participants’ needs).
- Adjust the frequency and/or length of meetings to accommodate the workshop flow from emotional wellbeing to practical reflection and implementation.
- Adjust meeting exercises and activities to be more focused and concise.
- Consider offering homework for faculty to complete before or after the group meetings.
- Extend the program with additional topic areas to address areas of challenge for faculty, including self-advocacy, perfectionism, people-pleasing, boundaries, and leadership.
- Intentionally address and amplify the anti-racist goals and process of this program and why/how reflection is important in anti-racist pedagogy.





## Learnings for Next Time

Next time, I will intentionally set the conditions for participants to bravely and authentically get vulnerable with each other.

- Attend Trudi Lebron's "Coaching for Liberation" workshop to learn more about psychological and emotional safety and boundaries of responsibility in creating coaching programs.
- Frame the challenges and possibilities of vulnerability at the beginning of the program, and facilitate a frank discussion about concerns and strategies
- Communicate the role of vulnerability in the program's anti-racist approach
- Consider interventions such as including only one person per department (facilitated by application process, mentioned earlier)



## Learnings for Next Time

Next time, I will provide more opportunities for faculty to connect with each other individually and as a group:

- Meet in-person with the group for a kick-off and/or closing event (planned for April).
- Pair participants for the duration of the program and ask them to meet up regularly for homework/fun.
- Incorporate more small-group discussion and collaborative work into group meetings.
- Pro-actively follow-up with faculty who miss meetings/coaching appointments.
- Consider compressing the program timing to meet more frequently.
- End on a celebratory note by inviting faculty to share their post-tenure visions at a fun closing event.
- Simplify scheduling by choosing a meeting time before sharing the program invitation and allowing participants to schedule coaching appointments for the entire semester in advance.
- Consider partnering with one or more colleges to create opportunities for connection beyond the college (and disrupt hierarchies).





## Conclusion

This program successfully created meaningful shifts in how faculty experience post-tenure at Connecticut College!

With the adjustments discussed here, I anticipate that the next iteration of the program will even more effectively build community, support faculty wellbeing, and empower faculty to explore post-tenure possibilities.







# 1:1 Coaching

## Spring Semester 2023



The Center for Teaching & Learning Announces:

### **1:1 Coaching for Faculty** **Spring Semester 2023**

To support faculty wellbeing this semester, the CTL is offering individual coaching with Karen Gonzalez Rice. Coaching is available for faculty, staff, and administrators who want to:

- Find more joy in life and work
- Finish a project
- Navigate caregiving and campus responsibilities
- Reduce or avoid burnout
- Embrace leadership without overcommitment
- Slow down and release the grind
- Create satisfying connections on campus and beyond
- ...and more.

Curious?

- Read the FAQs below.
- [Meet with Karen to learn more.](#)
- Please note that spaces are limited.



# 1:1 Coaching

## FAQs from Karen



*Colleagues,*

*Curious about one-on-one coaching? Below I answer some questions that I'm often asked about the coaching process. [Contact me to discuss next steps if you'd like to know more!](#)*

*Warmly,  
Karen Gonzalez Rice*

### **What is coaching?**

The Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) offers coaching as part of its larger mission to holistically support faculty wellbeing. Coaching can help you create a more sustainable, satisfying life through evidence-informed practices that support you in meaning-making, critically reflecting upon your work, challenging capitalist narratives of efficiency, and questioning the status quo of higher education. As a trained coach, I can help you:

- Define, prioritize, and pursue what matters to you
- Attend to information in your body and your feelings
- Identify and live your values more fully
- Create networks of support, and more.

My focus is on supporting you in showing compassion for yourself, building self-trust, identifying what matters to you, and then being and doing more of that in your daily life, whether that is at home, on campus, or in some other area of life. Life coaching is distinct from counseling and is not therapy, consulting, or giving advice.

### **How does this work? When and where will coaching take place?**

First we'll meet for a 30-minute Zoom conversation to talk about your goals for coaching, discuss any questions you may have, and discern whether you'd like to work with me this spring ([sign up here for this initial conversation](#)). If you decide to pursue coaching, we'll begin meeting for regular, 60-minute coaching sessions. This spring, you can choose three sessions (monthly) or eight sessions (weekly or every-other-weekly), which are available to you between March and May.

### **What happens in a one-on-one coaching session?**

You are welcome to bring to coaching sessions whatever topics might be on your mind. I often work with faculty on transitions in life and/or work (parenting, caregiving, transition to tenure, approaching retirement, etc.), feelings of being stuck or burned out, finding more joy and satisfaction in the everyday,

issues around time and not-enoughness, reconnecting to hobbies and fun, perfectionism, boundaries, people-pleasing, moving forward on research projects, etc. Coaching is confidential.

**What will I need to prepare in advance? Will there be “homework”?**

No outside preparation or homework is required! What is important is that you come to coaching ready to reflect, observe, and experiment with the new ways of being and doing that you generate in the coaching process.

**What do other faculty have to say about coaching with you?**

- “KGR has an incredible spacious attention and also an incisive way of getting to the point. Coaching has been helpful for clarifying large goals and small steps.”
- “Karen creates an atmosphere in sessions that cultivates my own insight. It has been exciting to see the epiphanies that emerge for me in the middle of our conversations. I also appreciate how she scales from addressing my overarching vision and goals to topics like time use and how I start my day.”
- “I deeply appreciated the sessions I had with Karen and noticeably benefited from reframing my goals, my reflections on my use of time, and my relationship with the concept of rest. My biggest change was a mindset shift that allowed me to not only dream about goals, but actually move towards them, even if it was in small steps.”

**How did you become a coach?**

I started working with a coach about eight years ago, during a time when I had intense writing deadlines. The experience helped me finish my book, and much more. Over the years, I worked with my coach to connect with my values and implement them more intentionally in my daily life, complete stalled writing projects, navigate challenging working conditions, and identify what I really want to do with my free time, among other things. During the spring of 2021, craving connection during the pandemic, I decided to pursue coach training. I’m an historian, so I chose to attend the original coaching school that established the field in the 1970s, the Co-Active Training Institute. Why this matters to you is that the Co-Active approach is flexible, straightforward, and meets you where you are.

*If this sounds interesting to you, [let’s meet to talk more about coaching!](#)*

*I look forward to it,*

*Karen*