"This book is revolutionary! It is about transforming the very essence of higher education through the power of authentic conversation, knowing that as the people within the institution evolve, the institution will transform." —Patricia and Craig Neal, The Art of Convening: Authentic Engagement in Meetings, Gatherings, and Conversations; founders, Heartland Inc.

Transformative Conversations
A Guide to Mentoring Communities Among Colleagues in Higher Education

By Peter Felten, H-Dirksen L. Bauman, Aaron Kheriaty, Edward Taylor

In this difficult and challenging time in higher education, faculty and administrators more than ever need the support and encouragement of their peers. Yet the competitive academic culture and silos within typical departments often lead to isolation, a lack of authentic community and a loss of connection to their vocation as educators.

However, TRANSFORMATIVE CONVERSATIONS: A GUIDE TO MENTORING COMMUNITIES AMONG COLLEAGUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION (Jossey-Bass, March 2013, ISBN: 9781118288276, $35.00 / Paperback / also available as an e-book) provides an antidote to the competitive, high pressure culture of higher education.

Based on the experience of four seasoned professors and administrators, the book explains how teachers and administrators can form small conversational groups, or “formation mentoring communities” (FMCs) to re-energize teaching, research and administration through honest conversation. Within these FMCs, the book provides guidelines on how these groups can have “transformative conversations” that not only breakdown the divide between the personal and professional, but also liberate the participants from any competitive barriers that might be stunting their professional or institutional growth.

TRANSFORMATIVE CONVERSATIONS provides a flexible model and guide on how to create and sustain FMCs. Readers will receive step-by-step instructions that exemplify how to apply the approach to varying settings and professional or education disciplines within groups of 3-10 people. Furthermore, the book answers the what, why and how of the FMCs and provides themes, questions and other resources that groups can use for discussion and exploration.

“This book began when the four of us received an invitation to participate in an experimental project to participate in intergenerational mentoring communities sponsored by the Fetzer Institute. At the beginning it wasn't clear how the experiment would evolve, but we imagined that community conversations could reinvigorate the academy and eventually transform higher education itself. As we went through the process, we found that the conversation and participation in FMCs did inspire meaningful change and we wrote this book to show others how to do the same,” said author Peter Felten.

TRANSFORMATIVE CONVERSATIONS is for anyone who wants escape from the abyss of isolation and create a more intimate and relational culture inside the halls for higher education.