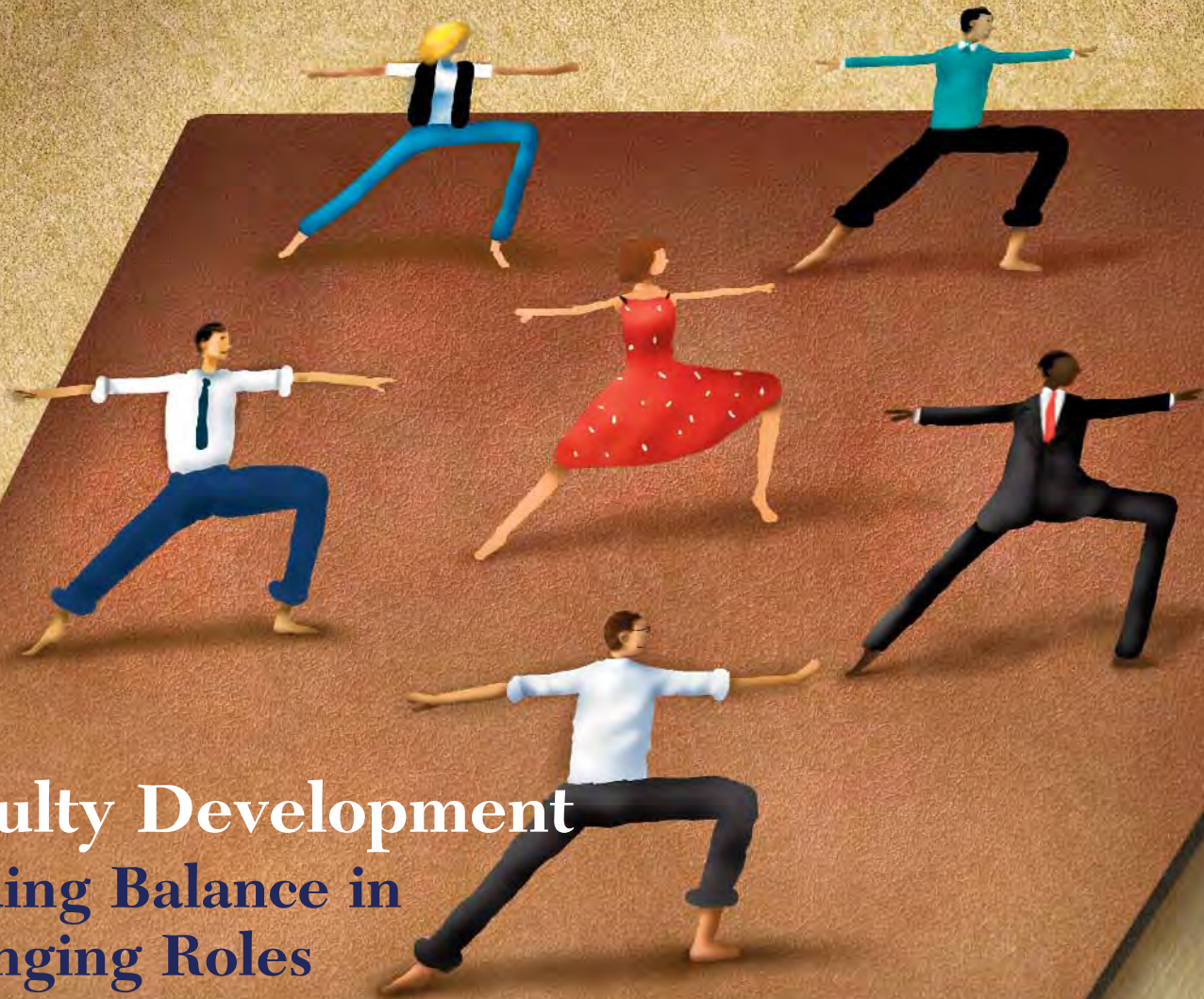


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# peerReview

Emerging trends and key debates in undergraduate education



**Faculty Development**  
**Finding Balance in**  
**Changing Roles**



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Cover Illustration by Dave Cutler for peerReview.

I recently had the chance to chat with James Miller, one of my former communications professors, who still teaches at my alma mater, Hampshire College. Jim's thoughtful guidance was invaluable throughout my undergraduate career. The following are Jim's reflections on the rich experiences of his more than thirty years in the academic trenches. In concert with the articles in this issue of *Peer Review*, his comments speak to the necessity and challenges of supporting faculty as their roles evolve in the twenty-first-century academy.

—SHELLEY JOHNSON CAREY

When Hampshire offered me a job, I held the contract long enough so I could sign it on my birthday. This was a big deal, becoming a professor. Full-time, regular, tenured faculty—the *New York Times* recently reported we are a minority in the academy—lead a charmed life. True, most of us are not getting rich, but we have phenomenal independence to pursue what interests us. And student interest often spurs us to explore new subjects. To do this sort of creative exploration as a job is a unique and profound privilege.

My own work has meandered over time, starting with a focus on media policy and technology and the work of journalists to settling now more on questions of political culture. Along the way, I've been involved in Canadian and European studies, which have made my work comparative and internationally oriented. That really pushed back my horizons. I've been able to lecture, collaborate, and conduct fieldwork all over Europe.

New technologies have definitely changed the way I work. It's common to use the Web in class instruction. All my courses have Web sites where most of the readings are available in PDF form and students put together digital video and PowerPoint

presentations at the end of each semester. My office phone almost never rings. Now it's e-mail, 24/7.

Students these days, most people seem to agree, come to college less prepared—or maybe less ready in different ways—than students in the past. The serious challenges we all face are basic and persistent ones: students who arrive lacking the skill and discipline to read thoroughly and write analytically, and who don't possess reasonably sophisticated general knowledge. Maybe, too, much of youth culture is anti-intellectual, and that can breed a bad attitude toward academic expectations.

My advice to new professors requires reflecting on one's own career, and that in turn makes it clear how, like the rest of life, work trajectories have developmental patterns. When you start teaching, you're only a few years older than your students. Now, after more than 30 years, I'm teaching the kids of Hampshire graduates, and some of my earliest students are in the middle of work lives marked by extraordinary accomplishment. The conditions of your personal life change, too, over the decades, sometimes unpredictably, or in ways that make your work harder than it should be.

The big question is whether to advise someone to become an academic at all. The emerging higher ed world is filled with challenges: online instruction and part-time faculty are becoming the norm to cut expenses; the culture at large often lacks an appreciation for the value of the liberal arts, instead favoring narrow occupational training; and faculty compensation often falls far short of what business pays and what a PhD deserves. These are tough working conditions. Maybe the academy that we baby boomers knew as students and experienced as members of the professoriate will turn out to have had a short but historically significant life. For the sake of our future students, let's hope not.

—James Miller



# Faculty Development: The Challenge Going Forward

**By Mary Deane Sorcinelli**, associate provost for faculty development; associate professor in the department of Educational Policy, Research, and Administration; and founding director of the Center for Teaching; University of Massachusetts–Amherst

**A** midcareer faculty member in the sciences stopped at my office to ask for assistance in designing a short course that he will be teaching to colleagues at an international program in Mexico. Next, two early-career women faculty called, seeking a small grant to create a peer writing group to support their scholarship and teaching. That afternoon, a department chair in the social sciences made an appointment to brainstorm how to develop a mentoring program for his six new faculty, four of whom are women and/or faculty of color. Then a new faculty member arrived for a consultation on ways to assess student learning in the art studio—with her four-month-old son in her arms. Her child care had cancelled, so I bounced the baby while we talked.

This is a snapshot of the day-to-day work of a “faculty developer” as she partners with faculty to support and enrich their work. What will be the future challenges facing these faculty members and their institutions? What will be the issues around which faculty are likely to need support over the next few years? What future directions will be important for campuses to consider when they make decisions about faculty development? These questions are significant, especially in light of the changing context of faculty roles and responsibilities.

To find out some answers, my colleagues and I conducted a major study of the field of faculty development in higher education (Sorcinelli, Austin, Eddy, and Beach 2006). We asked developers what goals and purposes guide their programs, what are the influences on

their programs and practices, and what services are currently offered and the importance of those services.

Perhaps most important, our survey was the first to ask developers to identify the key challenges and pressures facing faculty members and their institutions, and what they see as potential new directions for the field of faculty development.

The individuals we asked were members of the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network in Higher Education, the oldest and largest professional association of faculty development scholars and practitioners in higher education. Five hundred directors of teaching and learning centers, faculty members, department chairs, academic deans, and other senior administrators completed our survey. They came from research and doctoral universities, comprehensive universities, liberal arts colleges, community colleges, Canadian universities, and other institutions such as medical and professional schools (Sorcinelli et al. 2006).

What, then, are the issues that faculty development programs, services, and resources will likely need to address in the next five or ten years? Faculty developers in our study identified a constellation of issues that coalesced around three primary challenges and forces of change:

- The changing professoriate
- The changing nature of the student body
- The changing nature of teaching, learning, and scholarship



### **The Changing Professoriate**

Professors today are facing a growing array of changing roles and responsibilities that will require them to engage in ongoing professional growth. Faculty developers in our study described faculty members as being in the midst of transformational changes to their traditional roles and tasks, and identified several fundamental challenges facing faculty and their campuses.

### **Expanding Faculty Roles**

Faculty developers at liberal arts colleges and research and comprehensive universities identified expanding faculty roles as one of the most important issues facing faculty on their campuses. The set of tasks expected of faculty is intensifying under increasing pressure to keep up with new directions in teaching and research. Thus, for example, new faculty members may need to develop skills in grant-writing or in designing and offering online courses. Seasoned faculty members may need to keep up with emerging specialties in their fields as well as to engage in more interdisciplinary work. All faculty will continuously need to learn new skills in the face of an increasingly technological workplace. Providing opportunities for faculty to consider new ways to organize their courses and learning materials and work collaboratively across disciplinary fields will be essential.

### **Finding Balance**

Closely related to the challenge of managing new and expanding faculty roles is the challenge of achieving balance in work and life. In our research, faculty developers identi-

fied balancing and finding time for multiple work responsibilities as a significant issue of concern for faculty at all career stages. New faculty, especially, find it a daunting challenge to simultaneously achieve distinction as a scholar, teacher, and campus citizen. Faculty members also are concerned about how to achieve balance as they handle personal as well as professional commitments. Not surprisingly, concerns about balancing work and family are especially intense among women faculty who often face the press of biological clocks for childbearing at the same time as they are trying to start their careers and, in many instances, earn tenure. Faculty development services would be well served to include programming and coaching for managing time and work–family issues as well as the more traditional emphasis on teaching and learning.

### **Needs of New Faculty**

Significant numbers of experienced faculty will retire in the coming decade, and our study identified new faculty development as a critically important area to address. Faculty developers reported a number of “roadblocks” to the professional success and well-being of new faculty: getting oriented to the institution, excelling at teaching and research, navigating the tenure track, developing professional networks, and creating work–life balance. More opportunities to participate in new faculty orientations, mentoring programs, individual teaching consultation, “learning communities” and writing groups can only enhance newcomers’ skills and satisfactions.

### **Non-tenure-track and Part-time Faculty**

Addressing the needs of part-time and adjunct faculty was identified as a critically needed new direction for faculty development. Many institutions are hiring more non-tenure track or part-time faculty to achieve fiscal savings, respond to changing student interests, or help students connect their academic studies to the workplace. As the faculty ranks become more diverse in terms of appointment types, faculty development should ensure that each faculty member, regardless of appointment type, feels supported. Initiatives might include orientations or seminars for part-time faculty in which departmental colleagues address common teaching issues (e.g., preparing a syllabus, understanding who their students are, testing and grading guidelines) and department policies and practices.

### **The Changing Nature of the Student Body**

With each year, the student body has become larger and more diverse across several variables—educational background, gender, race and ethnicity, class, age, and preparation. This growing diversity of students is an admired aspect of American higher education; at the same time, it places considerable demands on faculty members. Faculty developers in our study highlighted two key challenges: the challenge presented by increased multiculturalism and diversity and the challenge presented by underprepared students.



## **Increasing Multiculturalism and Diversity**

An emphasis on increasing diversity requires an expanded focus on how we can foster learning environments in which diversity becomes one of the resources that stimulates learning—and on how to support faculty with students who learn most effectively in different ways. Faculty developers identified the issue of multiculturalism as it relates to teaching and learning as one of the most important issues that needs to be addressed through faculty development services, *but* there was great disparity between perceptions of the need to address these issues and the extent of relevant faculty development services being offered (Sorcinelli et. al 2006).

Traditionally, campuses have tended to focus diversity efforts in student affairs, suggesting that diversity concerns are a student development rather than a faculty development issue. Faculty members themselves may be reticent about addressing issues of diversity in and outside of the classroom because of a lack of training. For faculty members to be able to meet the learning needs of a diverse student body, they will need to stay abreast not only of new developments in their fields, but also of the characteristics of their students, the various strategies for teaching to multiple learning styles, and the possibilities for facilitating learning offered by technology.

Faculty development programs can promote teaching methods and strategies that increase students' capacities for problem-solving, teamwork, and collaboration—skills required in a rapidly changing and

increasingly global world. Further, they can provide guidance for engaging all students, particularly in the classroom, about the sensitive issues surrounding gender, religion, race, and ethnicity. Investing in such programs offers a means of ensuring that we cultivate teachers and students who value diverse ideas, beliefs, and world-views, and promote more inclusive student learning. In these contexts, faculty development programs can help build faculty capacity both for meeting the needs of students and incorporating new disciplinary content about issues of diversity across the curriculum.

## **The Challenges of the Underprepared Student**

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) reports that about half of students entering our colleges and universities are academically underprepared—lacking basic skills in at least one of the three fundamental areas of reading, writing, or mathematics (2002). AAC&U's Greater Expectations report also notes that students lacking academic preparedness also fail to do well in college for a variety of other reasons, such as lack of self-confidence, appropriate study behaviors, and skill in navigating an institution's bureaucracy. Our study's respondents similarly identified the underprepared student as one of the most important educational problems facing faculty and faculty development.

As a faculty member embarks on a course and the underprepared student engages in the coursework, there is often a

substantial mismatch between student and faculty expectations for academic work, especially in terms of time devoted to study outside of class. As well, faculty may be unprepared to recalibrate the course or teaching of it for students who may need additional support in college-level reading, writing, and computational work.

For these reasons, the responsibility for underprepared students often falls to academic staff in a student learning center and may be seen as a burden to individual faculty. Here faculty development programs can remind teachers to emphasize their expectations for students, help familiarize new instructors with student resources offered by the college or university (e.g., basic skills courses, tutoring, supplemental instruction), and highlight the range of effective strategies available for teaching and facilitating the learning of all students.

## **The Changing Nature of Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship**

The changing environment for teaching, learning, and scholarship was identified as the third pressing challenge for faculty and institutions, a challenge resonant with implications for faculty development.

## **Emphasizing Learner-Centered Teaching**

The need to engage in student-centered teaching was identified as one of the top three challenges confronting faculty members and *the most important issue* to address through faculty development services and activities.



For many faculty members who are accustomed to lecturing while students listen, learner-centered teaching may require new and unfamiliar teaching skills and raise fears about lack of coverage of content or less control over assessment activities. Learner-centered teaching, however, allows students to do more of the learning tasks, such as organizing content or summarizing discussions, and encourages them to learn more from and with each other. Teachers, on the other hand, can do more of the design work and provide more frequent feedback to students (Weimer 2000).

There is a large repertoire of active learning strategies from which faculty can draw, including student-led discussions, team learning, peer learning, oral presentations, writing-to-learn activities, case studies, and study groups. Faculty development programs can convene successful teachers to share these approaches with their colleagues through campus-wide seminars or forums. They can also provide course development funds to recognize faculty members who develop learner-centered activities.

### **Integrating Technology into Teaching and Learning**

Participants in our study from liberal arts, research, and comprehensive institutions named the integration of technology into traditional teaching and learning settings as one of the top three challenges facing their faculty colleagues. Respondents expressed a strong desire that institutions focus on ways to use technology to help students to acquire content knowledge, develop prob-

lem-solving skills, participate in learning communities, and use digital information sources.

When considering technology in teaching and learning, one immediate issue faculty members face is what tools — PowerPoint, e-mail, the Internet, course management systems — might best serve their student-learning goals. But the successful integration of technology is more complex, entailing the careful consideration of course content, the capabilities of various technology tools, student access to and comfort with technology, and the instructor's view of his or her role in the teaching and learning process (Zhu and Kaplan 2006). Faculty development programs can offer the kinds of support and training required to thoughtfully integrate technology into the classroom.

### **Emphasizing Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes**

Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves deciding what students should be learning, making expectations for learning explicit, systematically gathering and analyzing student assignments to determine what students actually are learning, and using the resulting evidence to decide what to do to improve learning. In our findings, assessing student learning outcomes was perceived as one of the top three challenges facing faculty *and their institutions*, and important to address through faculty development.

There are a number of teaching resources that can help faculty members

develop a better understanding of the learning process in their own classrooms and assess the impact of their teaching on it. They feature classroom assessment techniques and advice on how to adapt and administer these techniques, analyze the data, and implement improvements in teaching and learning practices (Angelo and Cross 1993).

### **Expanding Definitions of Scholarship**

In his seminal work *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (1990), Boyer argued that it was time to move beyond the “teaching versus research” debate and to redefine and broaden the concept of scholarship to include four distinct but interrelated dimensions: the scholarship of discovery, the scholarship of teaching, the scholarship of integration, and the scholarship of application. In our study, developers from all types of institutions agreed that expanding the definition of scholarship to include the scholarship of teaching is an important issue to address through faculty development services.

In recent years, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has greatly advanced this form of scholarship through work with faculty, campuses, and disciplinary associations. Several lines of work at Carnegie have contributed to the understanding of the scholarship of teaching, notably projects exploring the peer review of teaching, the use of teaching and course portfolios, and how teaching and learning differ among the disciplines. Faculty development programs



have been part of this conversation by, for example, offering seed grants, and campus conversations about course-focused research projects centered on teaching and learning.

### **Building Interdisciplinary Collaborations**

“Building interdisciplinary connections and communities of practice” was indicated as an important new direction to address through faculty development. Interdisciplinary collaboration may involve a variety of types of connections, such as working on a research or teaching project from a multidisciplinary perspective or incorporating service learning into academic experiences.

Interdisciplinary work is often the result of individual faculty members deciding to engage in team teaching across departments or to pursue new areas in the course of their research. Faculty development programs, then, can support interdisciplinary connections by encouraging team-teaching, the development of interdisciplinary courses, and the development of learning communities for students. They can also host campus-wide cross-disciplinary learning communities around teaching and scholarship.

### **Conclusion**

As we enter the twenty-first century, faculty developers have identified three areas that are driving change and shaping the future of faculty development. The impact of the changing professoriate is a major influence. How do we develop and sustain the vitality of our entire faculty —

newcomers, midcareer, senior, and part-timers —as faculty roles change? A second factor is the increasingly diverse student body. How can we invest in faculty development as a means of ensuring that we cultivate more inclusive student learning environments and provide our best educational practices to all students, including those traditionally underserved by higher education? The third shaping influence is the impact of a changing paradigm for teaching, learning, and scholarly pursuits. Faculty development will require a larger investment of imagination and resources in order to strategically plan for and address new developments (e.g., teaching for student-centered learning, retention, learning technologies, assessment) while not losing sight of our core values and priorities. ■

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## **AAC&U RESOURCES**

As faculty and campus leadership set goals, plan instruction and curricula to achieve those goals, assess student accomplishment, and revise and improve the learning/teaching cycle, the following AAC&U publications can serve as effective assessment and faculty development resources.

### **Academic Freedom and Educational Responsibility**

AAC&U Board of Directors Statement

### **Advancing Liberal Education: Assessment Practices on Campus**

by Michael Ferguson

### **The Art and Science of Assessing General Education Outcomes: A Practical Guide**

by Andrea Leskes and Barbara Wright

### **Assessment in Cycles of Improvement**

by Ross Miller

### **Globalizing Knowledge: Connecting International and Intercultural Studies**

by Grant Cornwell and Eve Stoddard

### **Integrative Learning: Mapping the Terrain**

by Julie Thompson Klein

### **Making Diversity Work on Campus: A Research-Based Perspective**

by Jeffrey F. Milem, Mitchell J. Chang, and Anthony Lising Antonio

### **Purposeful Pathways: Helping Students Achieve Key Learning Outcomes**

by Andrea Leskes and Ross Miller

### **Shared Futures: Global Learning and Liberal Education**

by Kevin Hovland



# Does Your College *Really* Support Teaching and Learning?

By **Michael Reder**, director, Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, Connecticut College

I believe that although small liberal arts colleges claim to care about teaching, the majority only give lip service to the idea. Small liberal arts colleges, for instance, have a reputation for being student-centered and focused on teaching as core to their mission. They emphasize the centrality of undergraduate education. They boast of small class sizes that allow for interactive learning. They go out of their way to hire faculty who “know” how to teach and are interested in working with our students. Good teaching is taken for granted at such institutions. I mean taken for granted in two senses, both good and bad: good teaching is *assumed* to be the norm (which is good). However, because it is assumed, there is often the collective illusion that good teaching happens “naturally” (which is bad) (Reder and Gallagher 2007.) The false logic goes something like this: “We all value teaching; that is why we are here; therefore, we must be good at it.” Not surprisingly, most administrators are complicit with the idea that good teaching always happens on their campuses, without the need for support or intervention. And, as a whole, faculty members *do* care about their teaching and improving student learning, but caring is not enough. Too many institutions are failing miserably when it comes to actually supporting faculty to become the most effective teachers possible.

Although my remarks are focused on small liberal arts colleges, my argument is certainly applicable to a range of institutional types that claim to be focused on undergraduate teaching—which includes larger

universities. I focus on such small colleges because as institutions they make special claims about their focus on the education of undergraduate students.

Another way of stating my point is this: Good teaching does *not* happen naturally—and when I say good teaching I mean *effective* teaching: the types of intentional pedagogical practices that lead to significant and deep student learning. In the past decade or so, higher education as a whole has spent a great deal of time and energy thinking about student learning and, in the case of the ever-growing pressure for accountability, how to measure the effect of the education we offer our students. Most of the recent movements in higher education are centered on improving student learning: the use of technology inside and outside of the classroom, experiential learning, information fluency, learner-centered teaching, community learning. The Association of American College and Universities’ focus on liberal learning outcomes, civic learning, diversity, global education, residential learning, general education, and critical thinking echo this current trend of concentrating on student learning.

The shortcoming of too many of these discussions focused on student learning, however, is that faculty—and the role that faculty play—is often an afterthought. While the integration of the diverse aspects of a student’s educational experience can only be a good thing, we cannot lose sight of the fact that at most of our institutions, learning is “classroom-centered”: the majority of student learning either takes place in or is directed



through classroom activities. In order to affect any kind of widespread change in student learning, we need to offer specific pedagogical support to faculty who will play an essential role in that change.

### **From Faculty Teaching to Student Learning**

Over the past ten years there has been a fundamental shift away from *teaching* (which views knowledge as central, something that is objective and simply passed on from teacher to student) to *learning* (and the idea that knowledge is something that is constructed and relational, a process in which the learner is central). It is a mistake, however, to think that this shift in focus away from *what* is being taught to *who* is learning de-emphasizes the importance of the teacher. If anything, the role of the teacher is even more demanding and complex, as she is forced to negotiate not only a body of knowledge, but also an ever-changing and diverse group of learners. As Robert Barr and John Tagg note, this new learning paradigm views faculty as designers of learning environments who work in consort with learners (and other support mechanisms on campus) to “develop every student’s competencies and talents.” They argue that, far from the traditional notion that “any expert can teach,” “empowering learning is challenging and complex” (1995). In other words, although the learner may be at the center, the teacher’s role is more varied and demanding.

This relatively new role provides an excellent opportunity for faculty to become

learners themselves. As Trudy Banta asserts in a recent issue of *Peer Review*, “Most current faculty are not trained as teachers, so extensive faculty development is needed to raise awareness of good practice in enhancing teaching” (2007). The programs that I and my colleagues at other faculty teaching centers coordinate ask faculty to connect across disciplines and ranks in order to think critically about something they all share in common: teaching. Our work provides faculty with the opportunity to overcome what Lee Shulman, the president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, terms “pedagogical solitude.” Faculty from different departments, some on the opposite ends of our campus, many with differing levels of teaching experience, work together and learn from each other. By providing occasions during which faculty may talk about their teaching, we create the opportunities for them to learn: from each other, from the literature about teaching and learning, from reflective practice.

### **From Student Learning to Faculty Learning**

Many at liberal arts colleges are quickly becoming aware of the reality that favorable conditions for good teaching are not the same as *truly supporting teaching in a visible and intentional manner*. This new emphasis on effective teaching explains the tremendous growth over the past five years in faculty development programs at such institutions (Mooney and Reder 2008). One strong indicator of this trend is the significant increase in small-college membership

and participation in the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network, the professional organization for faculty and administrators running faculty development programs and centers for teaching and learning. Once mostly the domain of large research universities, centers for teaching are also being established at small “teaching” colleges all over the country, as such schools have realized that teaching deserves attention, and that for professionals to do something well, they need to practice their craft publicly and critically.

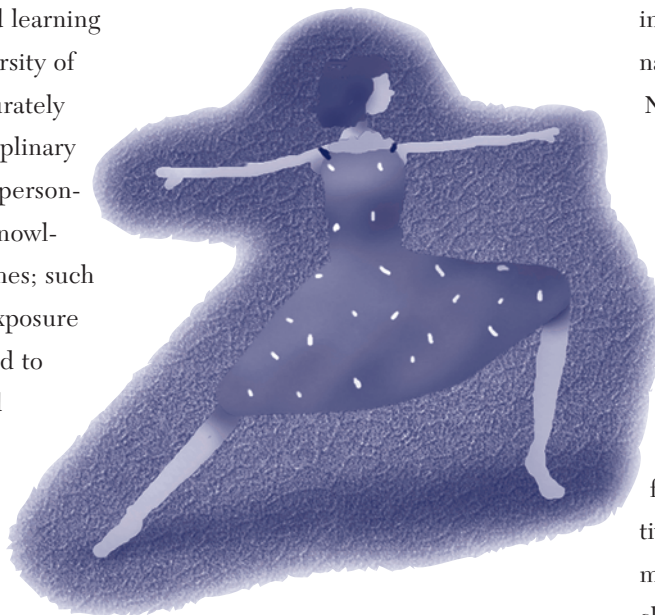
There are several widespread misconceptions about the work of faculty teaching programs, and I would like to address three that I encounter most often when working with faculty and administrators:

**Misconception One—Programs for faculty teaching and learning are about remediation.** In reality, programs that focus on faculty teaching are about intentionality and critical practice. People who do things well are constantly reflecting upon what they do, gathering information, and making it better. Our programming allows faculty to become more intentional, and therefore more effective, teachers. At Connecticut College, for example, the faculty regularly involved in the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) programming are not only exceptional teachers, they are also well-known scholars and campus leaders. Our most engaged faculty—in terms of research, teaching, and service—participate in and help lead our programming. Especially at a small liberal arts college, there is a sym-

biotic relationship between effective teaching and scholarship (see Misconception Three).

**Misconception Two—Programs for faculty teaching and learning advocate one right way to teach.** How one teaches is shaped not only by a person's individual identity (race, gender, age, sexuality, experience), but also the nature of the discipline, the difficulty of the material, the size of the course, and the experiences of the learners. Successful faculty teaching and learning programs must embrace a diversity of teaching styles in order to accurately reflect both the variety of disciplinary approaches and the individual personalities of faculty. Our work acknowledges this diversity of approaches; such diversity is essential because exposure to a range of options is required to allow faculty to make informed choices about their teaching practices. The discussions that the CTL fosters are almost always interdisciplinary, where scientists might learn from studio artists, or economists from humanists. Additionally, when we focus on the question of *who* is doing the learning, the diversity of the learners themselves becomes central to the educational enterprise. Thus, programs for faculty teaching address not only diversity related to teaching and content, but also diversity related to our students—in terms of their abilities, experiences, learning preferences, as well as race, gender, and class.

**Misconception Three—Programs for faculty teaching and learning force faculty to make a choice between being scholars and being teachers.** Teaching well and disciplinary scholarship require the same habits of mind: teaching and learning programs ask faculty to become learners themselves, in a way that is similar to their engaging in their research or creative work. As teachers we are asked to learn about our own teaching, about student



learning itself, about designing learning activities, and about improving instruction and curricula. Like our research, which is reflected upon, made public, and therefore improved, our teaching should undergo the same processes. At many kinds of colleges, faculty are asked to be both teachers and scholars, and the lines between faculty teaching and research are often blurred, particularly when we involve our students in our own research. Above all, teaching needs to be conceived

as a collaborative practice (something done within a larger community that is open to discussion) and a critical practice (something shared with an eye toward discovery, integration, refinement, and improvement), just as faculty do with their disciplinary scholarship.

### **Teaching and Learning: What Really Makes a Difference**

Recent research suggests that there are specific classroom practices that lead to improved student learning. The preliminary results of parts of the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education create direct links between faculty teaching methods and achieving the goals of a liberal arts education. The results indicate that faculty interest in student development (both inside and outside of the classroom), a high level of challenge, and the overall quality of teaching, are just a few of the conditions that correlate positively with student growth in areas such as motivation, openness to diversity and change, critical thinking and moral reasoning, attitudes toward literacy, and the desire to contribute to the arts and sciences. Having clear goals, requiring drafts of papers, incorporating class presentations, offering prompt feedback, and utilizing higher-order assignments (writing essays, solving problems not presented in the course, and making and analyzing arguments), all contribute to student growth in areas that many schools identify as overall educational goals. Although these teaching characteristics may seem



obvious, Charles Blach, the director of Wabash's Center for Inquiry in the Liberal Arts, notes that preliminary results show great room for improvement in our classrooms: "... a majority of the students at our institutions are not getting 'high enough' levels of these teaching practices and conditions, which may explain why students, on average, do not seem to grow much in the first year on the outcomes we measured." Just as most colleges support faculty undertaking their own scholarship, it is equally important for schools to support faculty in their quests to become as effective teachers as possible.

### **Supporting Faculty as Teachers and Learners**

Efforts focused on improving teaching can be coordinated using a variety of models, the most common of which include a faculty development committee, a dean's office, a rotating faculty coordinator, or a center model with a director. At many colleges, faculty learn about teaching in a variety of often-decentralized locations: first-year experience programs, community learning projects, information fluency initiatives, the writing program, instructional technology, and departmental discussions. Beyond helping to shape and connect faculty to these many initiatives and opportunities, an effective teaching and learning program will offer at least two types of programming: a yearlong experience designed specifically to meet the needs of incoming faculty with the primary goal of helping them make the successful transi-

tion to teaching at the institution, and some form of ongoing programming open to faculty of all ranks.

### **Supporting Incoming Faculty**

Doctoral education emphasizes research, not teaching, and as the vast majority of faculty are trained at research universities, the need for faculty teaching development is particularly salient at small liberal arts colleges, where the teaching ethos and classroom practices contrast considerably. The excellent literature on early-career faculty (Rice, Sorcinelli, Austin 2000; Moody 1997; Boice 1992, 2000) clearly defines the challenges new faculty face across institutional types. However, faculty at small liberal arts colleges confront a variety of distinctive challenges that the literature does not directly address, including the small cohorts of incoming faculty and the relatively small size of departments and the faculty as a whole. In addition, diversity has been slow coming to many small liberal arts colleges, and new faculty, often hired to diversify the curriculum or the composition of the faculty in terms of race or gender, can be challenged to find like peers. Thus, early-career faculty might feel an isolation that their counterparts at larger institutions do not experience, not only in terms of their own research and disciplinary interests, but also in terms of pedagogical approaches, methodological training, and lifestyle.

There are additional issues that can impact early-career faculty at small col-

leges in ways different from their colleagues at larger institutions, such as the distinctive missions of many small colleges (including those with a religious affiliation) and their locations, which are often away from larger metropolitan areas (meaning that dual-career couples may need to commute to find employment, and faculty who are single may want to commute in from a larger community). Connecting incoming faculty to other early-career faculty across the institution provides them with a network of colleagues who have experience negotiating similar issues. Connecticut College, which uses a peer mentoring model to connect first-year faculty to each other and across cohorts to second- and third-year faculty (Reder and Gallagher 2007), and Otterbein College, which employs a single-cohort learning community (Fayne and Ortquist-Ahrens 2006), are two schools that have successful yearlong programs that are designed to address the issue that small-college faculty face.

### **Continuing Support for Faculty: Creating a Community of Learners**

In addition to orienting new faculty, it is essential to support faculty at all stages of their careers. Although there are many types of programming for faculty beyond their first year, the programs that often have the most impact are ones in which faculty engage in a yearlong exploration of some aspect of teaching and learning, or programs that offer a series of standalone events that faculty can

attend according to their interests and needs. Many of these discussions focus on curricular objectives to liberal arts values and goals, such as critical thinking or teaching writing or oral communication skills. Programs such as Colorado College's "Thinking Inside and Outside the Block Box" series ([www.coloradocollege.edu/learningcommons/tlc/programs\\_luncheons.asp](http://www.coloradocollege.edu/learningcommons/tlc/programs_luncheons.asp)) and Connecticut College's "Talking Teaching" series ([ctl.conncoll.edu/programs.html#talking](http://ctl.conncoll.edu/programs.html#talking)) offer faculty the opportunity to discuss specific teaching issues with colleagues in an informal setting. Other successful yearlong programs include Allegheny College's Teaching Partners (Holmgren 2005), Macalester College's midcareer faculty seminar ([www.macalester.edu/cst/Mid%20Career%20Seminar/Index.htm](http://www.macalester.edu/cst/Mid%20Career%20Seminar/Index.htm)) St. Lawrence University's Oral Communication Institute (Mooney, Fordham, and Lehr 2005), and St. Olaf College's CILA Associates Program (Peters, Schodt, and Walczak 2008).

Colleges that support faculty in the development of their teaching skills recognize the difference between "caring about teaching" and "critically practicing teaching." They are working to create a faculty community of critical practitioners who teach in a reflective and intentional manner that leads to better student learning. And this community, composed of colleagues from across the disciplines right on campus, creates the opportunity for faculty to become lifelong learners. ■

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# Faculty Work in a Changing World

By **Richard C. Turner**, professor of English, and **Sharon J. Hamilton**, associate dean of the faculties for integrating learning, both of Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), like many of its peer institutions, has devoted sustained attention to faculty work during the past two decades. The commitment to ensuring that faculty can do their work and succeed in their professional aspirations recognizes that all roads to achieving complex and evolving university missions go through faculty work and faculty success. This commitment has led to four general initiatives: (1) formal and informal conversations about faculty work, (2) significant resources invested in faculty development, (3) a readiness to reconfigure faculty appointments to match faculty work with university missions and aspirations, and (4) efforts to restore a sense of cohesion as an academic community.

## Faculty Work through the Years

Regarding faculty work as a problem that must be addressed originated in the work begun by Ernest Boyer and Gene Rice at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in the 1980s, which culminated in Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered* (1990). Their surveys revealed that faculty in America felt their work was becoming fragmented, with disconnected parts competing for time and attention in an unhealthy dynamic. Addressing this threat, IUPUI engaged actively in the national conversations about faculty work ignited by the Carnegie Foundation, while concurrently engaging faculty on campus in reflective dialogue on faculty roles.

During the mid-1990s, Bill Plater, then dean of the faculties at IUPUI, and Gene Rice conducted a running discussion on how to deal with persistent sense of disconnection and dissatisfaction among faculty in American universities. Rice took the position in *Making a Place for the*

*New American Scholar* (1996) that each faculty member should be a “complete scholar” by maintaining their connection to all three traditional areas of faculty work. In subsequent working papers, *Future Work* (1995) and *Using Tenure*, Plater (1998) suggested that, in the face of these pressures, universities needed to reconfigure faculty roles and responsibilities to enable faculty to differentiate elements of their work and so manage it better. In various ways, IUPUI has tried to pursue both models of faculty work, keeping the “complete scholar” as the ideal of faculty work while supporting operationally differentiated faculty work. It has created many options for faculty appointments and sought to support and recognize faculty whose work contributes to university missions and aspirations, a path at odds with that of a unified “complete scholar.”

Institutions like IUPUI have operated with some form of differentiated faculty work since the expansion of American higher education after World War II. Full-time, tenure-track faculty have the time to fulfill their responsibility to pursue research and service responsibilities because other groups, such as part-time faculty and graduate students, have been hired to teach classes. These *de facto* delegations of traditional faculty teaching responsibilities, which have been expanded at our institution to include full-time lecturers, clinical faculty, researchers, scientists, and public scholars, have created campuses operating through a system of differentiated faculty work. These differentiated faculty roles necessitate the intentional approach to community building that we discuss later.

## Responding to Challenges

IUPUI responded to the challenge of managing the difficult demands of the “complete scholar” and the disconcerting



effects of differentiated faculty work by building an important and extensive faculty and staff development organization, one that recognized the centrality of faculty work and put into place flexible and rich resources to enhance the success of faculty work across the three traditional areas. The Office of Professional Development (OPD) was established to bring together in one central location several distinct and mostly fledgling areas of faculty support, in order to mediate the demands of faculty work with the sometimes competing expectations of the campus and some academic units. With the well-established Center for Teaching and Learning as the nexus, OPD took the lead in supporting faculty efforts to develop a scholarship of teaching and learning, especially in making extensive and effective use of technology in teaching, provided support and opportunities for collaboration and consultation among chairs and deans, housed and nurtured the already-established campus-wide Office for Women, created the Office for Multicultural Professional Development and other diversity-focused initiatives, and offered other faculty and staff development programs in response to school or campus goals and aspirations.

Expanded faculty appointments offered IUPUI a way to incorporate valued and talented faculty members whose aspirations and/or credentials made a traditional tenure-track appointment unattractive or inappropriate. In 1985, one school converted five part-time instructors to full-time, non-tenure track “clinical” appointments and experimented with using them in teaching and service positions to support courses with

high enrollments and multiple sections. In the mid-1990s, the medical school expanded its use of clinical faculty and introduced “scientist” and “researcher” ranks to enable some colleagues to make important contributions to research without building the broad career that tenure requires. Other professional schools introduced clinical ranks to address important faculty work focused on curriculum without a direct connection to pursuing a productive research program. In 2002, the trustees of Indiana University, concerned about retention and graduation rates, asked some campuses to convert large numbers of their part-time faculty to full-time, non-tenure-track “lecturers.”

The new appointments and the accumulated effects of differentiated faculty work required increased campus attention to faculty work. The campus developed extensive promotion and tenure guidelines to help faculty move through the differentiated processes more easily and with greater control. The guidelines provided shape and focus to a process that often differed among twenty-two schools and five libraries, stimulating the articulation of the values and expectations shaping decision processes. Using detailed and explicit guidelines created a framework for developing transparent and clear expectations for all faculty appointments.

In response to the increasing pressure on faculty to do more with less, especially the increased pressure on faculty time, OPD began to move some of its formative faculty development work closer to the Office of Academic Affairs to create an overlap with and a closer connection to the various summative review processes. Through its Office

of Faculty Appointments and Advancement, Academic Affairs gathered in activities connected to appointments, such as orienting new faculty, advising chairs and deans on mentoring junior faculty, and ensuring that annual reports and reviews led to productive conversations. Academic Affairs strengthened the formal ongoing conversations with faculty about advancement as they progress toward tenure and/or promotion in the form of individual consultations, repositories of sample materials, and workshops anticipating three-year, promotion, and tenure reviews. The goal of keeping faculty development and faculty advancement closely connected was to enable faculty to see their progress toward tenure and/or promotion and the help needed for advancement as located within the same arena. Faculty who often regard themselves as too busy to reflect on faculty work have an easier time incorporating workshops and consultations into their schedules when these support activities appear as part of the central and compelling process of advancement.

### **Taking Ownership and Responsibility for Professional Development**

Centralizing faculty development in one large organization played a crucial role in providing a rich resource of support for faculty. Faculty who use the resources of OPD value this support very highly, and virtually all faculty are served one way or another by OPD, through new faculty orientation, tenure, promotion, sabbaticals, honors and awards, and the myriad of consultation and events offered. Recently faculty have indicated a preference for formal and informal in-school faculty development opportunities



sensitive to different disciplinary traditions and cultures, with additional and complementary centralized support primarily for key campus-level issues, such as multicultural teaching and learning, diversity, promotion and tenure, chairs and deans orientation, new faculty orientation, honors and awards, and the like. In response to faculty interests, OPD is transitioning to become a Consortium for Learning and Scholarship. This smaller office will be closely aligned to the three traditional areas of faculty responsibilities of teaching, research, and service, and collaborating with other support units and the schools to address both campus-wide and school-specific needs. We are working currently with the School of Medicine and the School of Dentistry to develop “in-house” models of faculty support that will draw upon the expertise of the consortium as needed, but will function independently when appropriate. In this way, faculty are taking more ownership in and responsibility for their professional development. Even the Faculty Club is providing professional development through programming that brings faculty together over lunch for structured talks about faculty research and publications. Still in its evolutionary phase, it remains to be seen whether this more faculty-driven decentralized approach engages more faculty in professional development activities and results in a stronger overall sense of the quality of faculty life at IUPUI.

The complexity of IUPUI, its responsibility-centered management system, and its strong emphasis on disciplinary or professional excellence has, for decades, made it difficult for faculty to come to a sense of

community as a faculty. Thus, enriching faculty work requires special attention toward building community. Faculty development activities make a point of including community building and set goals for those projects in terms of creating a sense of community across professions and disciplines. For instance, new faculty orientation builds group work into all its activities so that new faculty get to meet at least some other members of their cohort. The faculty who come together to reflect on their three-year review and plan for their upcoming tenure review collaborate on a letter to new faculty, sharing what they learned in the first three years and offering advice on what works best.

Community building is important because the diversity of appointments and differentiated faculty work results in some very real disjunctions among the faculty ranks, threatening the principle of peer review. By hiring faculty members who in their training, their assignments, and/or their commitments to university missions differ deeply from each other, universities have created faculties made up of colleagues who may not be peers, and who cannot evaluate the work and the promise of each other because they lack experience and/or training in the work to be evaluated. Without the pervasive point of definition provided by the notion of peer review, a faculty is just a collection of experts hired to carry out specific university missions. Recent trends in hiring that look to lower-cost teaching faculty as a way to meet teaching responsibilities in tight-budget environments have created differentiated

faculty, without doing the work to find the common ground of university work and experience that might make them peers and so able to operate as a traditional faculty. Without some effort to create that common ground, faculties cannot maintain their traditional independence about the work they do. Facing this threat requires faculty to return to their values and assumptions about peer review and reestablish the parameters of their responsibilities, finding ways for faculty with varied responsibilities and training to act as peers in all aspects of faculty work. IUPUI's next challenge lies in nurturing the conversation about faculty work. Conversations of this sort will articulate the common values and assumptions, the responsibilities and aspirations, which drive all faculty work, however differentiated. The new consensus emerging from such conversations should assure all faculty that all contributions to the three traditional responsibilities of faculty are measures of faculty success and achievement and thus benefits to the entire academic community. We are attempting to meet that challenge in our current organizational restructuring of OPD. ■

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# Faculty Collaboration as Faculty Development

By **Lott Hill**, acting director, the Center for Teaching Excellence, **Soo La Kim**, associate director, the Center for Teaching Excellence, and **Robert Lagueux**, director, New Millennium Studies—The First-Year Seminar, all of Columbia College Chicago

Since 1999, the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) at Columbia College Chicago has developed a wide range of professional development opportunities and taken a variety of approaches to meet the needs of a large and diverse faculty body, where part-time faculty members outnumber full-time tenure-track colleagues by nearly four to one. Like teaching and learning centers elsewhere, our center approaches faculty development as an ongoing reflective practice for all faculty at all stages of their career, not simply as remediation for faculty in difficulty nor reserved for faculty new to teaching. In doing so, we address the principles and practices of teaching at the individual, departmental, curricular, and institutional levels, facilitating communication within and across departments and helping to foster an academic community that supports the scholarship of teaching and learning. More concretely, this means that wherever possible, we create and support occasions for faculty to learn from each other. We design CTE workshops and seminars with collaboration in mind; that is, with ways for faculty to participate as facilitators, leaders, and initiators. Perhaps more significantly, we promote a culture of collaboration through our joint faculty development endeavors with key departments and programs across the college.

Such an approach is driven both by principle and by practical necessity. With more than 120 academic programs and nearly 11,000 students, Columbia College Chicago is the largest and most diverse private arts and media college in the nation. There are currently 328

full-time and 1,250 part-time faculty members, many of whom are professionals active in the fields they teach. The CTE is staffed by the acting director, the associate director, and an administrative assistant. We offer weekly workshops or seminars throughout the semester, and cosponsor many workshops with other offices and departments. In addition to partnership opportunities, small centers like ours can strengthen our impact on campus by identifying and cultivating faculty members who are committed to faculty development and willing to take leadership roles. As the key examples below illustrate, faculty collaboration that fosters faculty development can be structured in many ways, but its success depends on faculty having a sense of ownership over the process and outcome of their efforts.

## **Collaboration for a Common Curriculum**

The New Millennium Studies (NMS) Teaching Academy was conceived and is convened in conjunction with the development and three-year progressive launch of the First-Year Seminar curriculum, which will be fully implemented and required for all first-year students at Columbia in fall 2008. As an interdisciplinary course, NMS is an integrative learning experience that provides the educational scaffolding for connecting authentically liberal learning with reflective and creative practice in the arts and media. Organized around the central theme of identity and culture, NMS ties the close study of media in a variety of genres to questions about identity, creation, responsibility, and artistic



voice. The course asks students to consider their artistic and creative impulses in light of larger, self-conscious modes of inquiry and results in the creation of an NMS Portfolio, a body of work that is the culmination of a semester of reflective analysis and thinking.

Co-convened by NMS and the CTE, the Teaching Academy currently has more than sixty full- and part-time faculty from across the disciplines who meet frequently in small groups, at least twice as a whole each semester, and at a two-day retreat in the summer. Led by the director and staff of NMS—who also teach the course—the academy not only prepares NMS instructors to teach the course successfully, but provides a context for meaningful curricular and pedagogical connections between NMS and other Columbia courses.

Meetings address a variety of topics such as learning objectives and goals, stages of student learning and development, and evaluation. This community of support is critical for faculty teaching on often unfamiliar territory outside their disciplines, providing a structured and regular dialogue around questions of theory and practice.

Because no individual instructor is an expert in all the assigned texts and because students construct their portfolios from multiple artistic approaches and media, there is an opportunity for each Teaching Academy member to bring an important disciplinary perspective and expertise to the conversations, thus learning with and from each other while ensuring that NMS students have a common experience across sections. For example, an instructor of cul-

tural studies might model a culture- and identity-based exercise she uses in the classroom, an instructor of film might lead a conversation on responding to student artwork, and an instructor of English might present methods for generating and assessing student writing. Some meetings focus on course texts, others on specific elements of the portfolio and assignments, and others on what we know about how our students learn. All of the meetings are interactive, with continuing opportunities to reflect on common purposes and challenges.

This community of support is critical for faculty teaching on often unfamiliar territory outside their disciplines, providing a structured and regular dialogue around questions of theory and practice.

#### **Collaboration for Reflective Teaching**

In its current form, the Teaching Partnership program is a collaboration between First Year Writing (FYW), part of the English department, and New

Millennium Studies (NMS). It pairs three FYW instructors with three NMS instructors to exchange class visits, meet informally, produce a report on the experience, and consider curricular and pedagogical intersections between the two programs. The collaboration is a natural one, as both FYW and NMS form a critical part of first-year students' common experience and offer small-sized classes that are discussion based and student centered.

The program coordinator, a full-time lecturer who teaches both FYW and NMS courses, consults regularly with the CTE and the directors of FYW and NMS, and is responsible for organizing all aspects of the program. NMS, CTE, and the coordinator also drafted a “Guidelines and Expectations” document explaining the program’s goals and timeline. As we emphasize to the teaching partners, these peer observations and discussions are *not* meant to be evaluative in any way, but are designed as opportunities for reflection, learning, and community. In support of this goal, we leave the specific terms of class visits up to participants, encouraging them to exchange syllabi and discuss what they’d like to get out of each visit.

Although the Teaching Partnership program is relatively small and in its early stages, it promotes collaborative faculty development on multiple levels. Participants learn from each other in specific, experiential ways. At a recent meeting, participants were enthusiastic about seeing colleagues in action, and about ideas from their partners’ class that they wanted to try in their own. For example, according to meeting notes,



“at least two writing instructors were impressed by the multimodal nature of NMS and felt encouraged to try more multimodal approaches in their writing classes. Another instructor was more impressed by his partner’s personal style of getting students to talk and think.” The advantages of directly observing a colleague’s teaching are difficult to replicate in other ways.

The partnerships promote dialogue not only across disciplines, but also between veteran and novice teachers in a nonhierarchical, mutually beneficial way. All the participants are part-time faculty, and programs like this provide an all-too-rare venue for connecting part-time faculty to each other and to the departments and the college of which they’re a part but from which they often feel disconnected. While the interaction among instructors forms the heart of the teaching partnership, the collaboration also benefits the larger FYW and NMS communities, as teaching partners share their insights about both programs with their peers.

### **Collaboration for Civic Engagement**

In support of Columbia’s college-wide civic engagement initiative, Critical Encounters, the CTE convenes a colloquium each spring semester to bring together faculty members from across the departments and disciplines, so that they may collaboratively develop exercises, activities, and assessment tools that can be adapted for use in any classroom. This colloquium consists of sixteen full- and part-time instructors who apply to participate based on their understanding of and com-

mitment to a global social issue that has been designated as the annual focus of Critical Encounters. These individuals meet collectively and in small groups five times over the course of the semester to develop and articulate class-based stand-alone activities and modes of assessment that are designed to challenge students’ perceptions and increase understanding of issues such as HIV and AIDS or poverty and privilege.

A faculty fellow oversees the colloquium and participants are each responsible for designing three to five exercises or activities that they themselves would assign in their own classrooms, and then they work collaboratively to translate those exercises and activities across disciplines. For example, a composition assignment around myths and misconceptions about HIV might be adapted as a science assignment mapping the HIV life cycle, which might inform a service learning project where television production students produce public service announcements for AIDS service organizations. These conversations result in a shared knowledge of how a subject is addressed through other disciplines while building a more comprehensive understanding of what and how students are learning in classes across the college. Participants report that they are better able to connect the material in their classes to other courses and better able to make use of on- and off-campus resources and events to enhance their curricula. The materials developed with the colloquium are distributed through faculty-led presentations as well as online.

### **Collaboration for Department-Specific Initiatives**

The CTE has also begun to work with select departments on faculty development connected to department-specific, even course-specific, initiatives. For example, we consulted with a committee in the department of art and design that was charged with assessing and redesigning the curriculum for History of Art 1, a critical part of the foundation core required of all art and design majors. In collaboration with committee members, we developed, organized, and delivered a two-day teaching workshop to introduce the new curriculum. The workshop sessions were designed to model as much as possible the kind of active learning integral to the new curriculum.

### **Conclusion**

Faculty development efforts, whether within or between departments, need not be elaborate, time-intensive, or costly. However, they do need to be conceived with clear goals and structures in mind, and with the support (organizational, financial, logistical, symbolic) of key administrators in order to create an environment in which faculty feel encouraged to collaborate in their own development as teachers and professionals. In the projects described above, we have been inspired by the energy and dedication that our colleagues bring to innovate and improve their teaching. ■



# “The Times They Are A-Changing:” Faculty Support Mechanisms in a Shifting Academic Landscape

By **Barbara Hornum**, director, Drexel Center for Academic Excellence; and **Antonis Asprakis**, assistant director, Drexel Center for Academic Excellence, both of Drexel University.

The Drexel Center for Academic Excellence (DCAE) opened its doors in August 2005. While funded through the provost’s office, the center is an independent entity committed to providing a variety of services to Drexel faculty that can enhance and expand their academic and professional activities. The DCAE works with individuals, faculty cohorts, departments, and other academic units by eliciting suggestions for programs that meet special needs as well as providing programs typical of such faculty development centers nationally. It also sponsors attendance at relevant conferences and gives some support to faculty who wish to develop the scholarship of teaching and learning. In addition, speakers on topics of interest are brought to campus, as are facilitators for activities such as portfolio development. The DCAE—while a centralized, university-wide operation—collaborates with other units within the university who are providing more localized programs for their faculty.

Key goals and objectives of the DCAE revolve around the provision of opportunities for the faculty to work individually and collectively to:

- Examine some of the critical challenges of teaching and learning in the twenty-first century
- Expand and maintain the creation and development of knowledge
- Translate and transmit that knowledge to students in increasingly effective ways

- Recognize and respond to the impact on faculty and student interactions brought about by the increasing use of technology in the classroom
- Assist faculty in accommodating and productively responding to career paths and career life cycles during a period of rapid change, shifting expectations and sometimes-conflicting demands

## **Redefinition of Changing Expectations**

As a center, the DCAE needs to deliver its services within a context of greater variability in faculty categories, roles and rewards. At Drexel University, as in many other institutions of higher education, there are a number of full-time, non-tenure-track positions that increasingly coexist with the traditional tenure-track positions. While the career trajectories for these groups vary, as do some performance criteria, many of the concerns that relate to classroom management and student learning are strikingly similar. For both groups, expectations may undergo frequent redefinition reflecting changing expectations within disciplines, in the university, in the academic community at large, and among stakeholders both internally and externally.

These changes affect not only new faculty but also those who have moved into midcareer and late-career stages. The age range among faculty is a factor relatively unique in the history of the academy and in some instances provides a span of forty or more years



of very divergent experiences, goals, and perspectives about higher education.

New policies and procedures, more diverse faculty and students, rapidly changing technology, and altered expectations about performance criteria may overwhelm faculty seeking to strike a balance between course content and the process of teaching for learning. In addition, colleges and universities are facing greater variations in student levels of preparation and an enlarged awareness and need to be responsive to different student learning styles. Faculty at all levels find themselves searching for commonalities, more dialogue about issues and a desire for an academic community that may be difficult to achieve without support structures.

The Drexel Center for Academic Excellence operates to provide faculty with information and with a variety of programs that not only give knowledge and skills but that also assist in establishing both formal and informal contacts among faculty and between faculty and administrators. In the first year of operation, the DCAE offered an intense two-day introduction to the structure and culture of the university to new full-time faculty, which was the followed by a yearlong series of workshops on issues like grading, dealing with students with alternative needs, and balancing conflicting demands for teaching, research, and service. The DCAE also began a series of brown-bag lunches open to all faculty with informal topical discussions—but most importantly, with opportunities for faculty from different units and with differ-

ent experiences to interact and network. The brown bags also were designed as a forum for junior, midcareer, and senior faculty to share their concerns and collaborate on effective problem solving. It should be noted that all these activities were and continue to be voluntary for participants. Every session included an assessment or feedback form that was used in the planning for subsequent activities.

### **Shifting Career Goals**

In reviewing the assessment of the activities of the first year, it became clear that we needed to recognize that “new” is a relative term and that one size will not fit all so designated. It also became apparent that many long-term faculty had shifting career goals and also found some of the changes to an expanding university and an enlarging and more diverse student population to be challenging. This encouraged us to open the topical workshops to all faculty.

For example, when we looked at the assessments of the initial orientation for new faculty, it was very clear that only some were actually new to teaching at the post-secondary level with full classroom management responsibility. Others had taught elsewhere or at our university as part-timers. Still others were making a midlife career change from outside of the academy to college teaching. While all were full time, some were on the tenure track while others were on contracts. Thus, certain parts of the two-day program clearly had different meanings and applicability for the diverse partici-

pants. Accordingly, we structured the orientation for the following year with concurrent sessions that addressed some of the subgroups and gave individuals the opportunity to select those activities that they felt were most meaningful.

In addition, conversations with some long-term faculty indicated that while they appreciated the informal discussion-oriented brown bags, they also wanted to be able to attend the more formal topical panels and workshops. Thus, in the second year, all the workshops after the orientation were opened to all interested faculty. This has the added benefit of providing opportunities for interaction between those relatively new to Drexel University and those who have been here for several years. The activities of the second year continued the activities of the first year, with some topics recurring and others added in response to the assessment feedback gathered.

The DCAE has also brought nationally known experts to campus for workshops and open forums. These activities have been highly useful for faculty,





department heads, and deans, as outside speakers generally set what we are doing locally within a national context. In this same category of enrichment, we also have supported the attendance and participation of faculty at offsite conferences where the focus was on issues of teaching in higher education. This type of exposure enabled networking as well as engagement in the scholarship of teaching. Since most of this participation has involved small groups, a core of faculty has worked together to bring the information that they acquired back to Drexel.

A major enrichment activity that was initiated prior to the formal creation of the DCAE but continued and expanded by the university involves portfolio workshops. These provide opportunities for individual reflection and benefit individual faculty, our students, and the institution. Last year, in addition to the portfolios designed for teaching, we initiated and held a professional/leadership portfolio workshop for senior faculty. This workshop received positive assessment and will be repeated in 2008.

We also work with what we call an on-demand service with individual clients, assisting them in self-analysis of their teaching techniques. This service is totally confidential and provides an option for individual faculty to discuss their teaching and other professional concerns in a formative context.

In our third year, we have expanded our outreach to faculty, departments, and units by our willingness to customize services to meet their emerging needs. As

a result, we are involved in working with several departments on establishing collaborative peer review processes that reflect the specific and varied requirements of diverse groups. In the process of this work, we have become increasingly aware of concerns about two issues that are also reflected in national conferences. One of these involves issues of what faculty perceive as student incivility, while the other—possibly related—issue questions how to teach “millennial” students. As these are issues that concern faculty nationally, the staff of the center is disseminating information through topical discussions with faculty and will bring guest workshop facilitators to campus to explore effective ways to engage this new student population and promote their learning.

There are challenges that our center faces, as do many others. University faculty have a number of professional and personal obligations and face continual and competing demands on their time. Scheduling meetings that can engage more than those who are already involved in enhancing their teaching in ways that they find meaningful requires a great deal of effort. While there is no one best time, a midday lunch arrangement seems to work better for us than late afternoon. The university does not have any open period when all faculty are free.

### **Creating Positive Teaching and Learning Situations**

We must continue to demonstrate the importance of creating the most positive

teaching and learning situations that are rewarding to faculty and beneficial to students. We need to assist faculty within a research university to feel that good and innovative teaching is important. One of our efforts here has been to use the DCAE Web site to showcase the profiles of our teaching award winners along with their personal statements of what teaching means to them. Since Drexel University gives such awards to faculty representing all levels, this enables us to demonstrate in a cost-effective way the promotion and attainment of teaching excellence. We are also using our Web site to post a written guide on teaching tips, which is available to all faculty.

It is apparent to us that our faculty development center cannot be static. It must be responsive to what is happening outside of the university, to the changing requirements and expectations of the university and its varied constituents. It needs to create a viable feedback loop that is flexible, receptive to innovation and empowering for faculty teaching in the twenty-first century. ■

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# Professional Development Issues for Community Colleges

By **Althea Smith**, resource specialist, North Shore Community College

**N**orth Shore Community College (NSCC) is a two-year institution with campuses in Danvers, Beverly, and Lynn, Massachusetts. A primary focus of our current strategic plan concerns academic programs and curriculum and the institution's commitment to teaching and learning. We plan to renew and expand NSCC's program, curriculum, and learning opportunities in response to educational and labor needs through relevant curriculum with new constructs for delivery; liberal arts courses, transfer courses, and programs that emphasize critical-thinking skills; incorporation of technology into teaching and learning; institutional structure with a full range of workforce development services; and comprehensive education that embraces civic involvement and community. Faculty development is vital to achieve these goals at NSCC, as well as to facilitate student learning.

This article will address the challenges of providing effective professional development in a community college setting. While this is not meant to be a comprehensive list of challenges and solutions, this discussion will touch upon issues that are representative of the faculty development challenges faced by my community college colleagues.

## **Successful Community College Professional Development Models**

The range of faculty development offerings at North Shore Community College is rich and varied. Our professional development efforts begin with monthly two-hour faculty/staff meetings. For the 2007–8 academic year there have been a variety of suggested topics for

meetings, including discussions on campus security in the wake of the Virginia Tech tragedy, technology, teaching learning-challenged students, cross-campus communication, service learning, co-ops and internships, civility in the classroom and on the Internet, information literacy and research, “the greening of the college,” advising, student retention, improving reading and writing in classes, common reading projects, and rubrics.

There is also an ongoing yearlong seminar for new full-time faculty offered through the Center for Teaching Learning and Assessment (CTLA). Throughout the year, faculty will discuss the resources and services available through the CTLA, such as advising, the library, academic technology, and disability services. The seminar meets twice in the fall and twice in the spring. Although attendance to the seminar is not mandatory, all new faculty are expected to participate. We've also instituted a voluntary adjunct faculty seminar on teaching and learning and what it means to be a North Shore faculty member. The seminar for adjuncts is offered online by the assistant dean of liberal studies. At our college, we make a special effort to offer professional development sessions in the evenings, on weekends, and online to accommodate the schedules of the full- and part-time faculty.

Through the Center for Teaching, Learning and Assessment, faculty are encouraged to attend conferences related to teaching and learning, sponsored by national organizations and regional groups. Faculty are also encouraged to attend conferences in their individual disciplines.



Professional Day, a faculty-run and attended event offered once in the spring of each year, is another venue for professional development for faculty and professional staff. In recent years topics have included program review and diversity. In a 2007 survey of faculty and staff, the suggestion list for Professional Day yielded a range of topics that was broad and diverse. These topics were influenced by staff input as well as faculty interest.

## Faculty must gain a basic understanding of the mission, vision, and operations of the college as part of their learning process.

The Technology Across the Curriculum (TAC) program at NSCC stimulates and nurtures innovative ideas from faculty and professional staff that employ technology in support of teaching and learning. It is an opportunity to learn about how technology can be applied to individual courses. Faculty learn about online courses, hybrids, Webcasts, and other instructional designs.

For more than twenty years, the NSCC Writing Across the Curriculum program (WAC) has promoted the use of writing to improve student learning across the disciplines. The program has served as a professional development opportunity for individual faculty members, and as an instructional resource for the entire college community. The WAC Program provides up-to-date writing guidelines and offers brown-bag work-

shops on specific writing topics, such as the writing process, grading, researching and documenting, and maintaining writing standards. WAC also provides one-on-one consultation on all faculty concerns, from designing effective assignments to handling specific writing problems. Overall, WAC strives to help teachers help students become better learners. In the process, faculty learn more about good writing. NSCC also has a professional development commit-

tee operated by faculty and staff that distributes small grants for participation in career enhancement and personal growth sessions. Proposals are submitted and reviewed in an ongoing, cyclical manner. Faculty may also apply for fellowships to the Community College Leadership Academy (CCLA), a training program for leaders at New England community colleges. A separate review committee, including the vice president of human resources and the president and CCLA, looks at applications and makes awards. Faculty and staff can pursue educational, professional, and personal development without the burden of added expenses.

### **Designing a Professional Development Program for a Community College**

Unlike faculty at four-year schools, where symposia, colloquia, and seminars within

an academic discipline are the center of the professional development agenda, the needs of the community college faculty are different. Therefore, the topics we must address include not only the educational and academic, but also those related to personal growth and teaching. Topics include not only presentations on poetry, short stories, and essays, but also information on institutional data. Sample topics in professional development sessions at our school included student enrollment and retention rates, advising, teaching first-generation students, diversity, and assessment.

At NSCC, there are specific learning goals and outcomes for faculty professional development. The learning outcomes for faculty are developed from topics related to the progress of the college. Many faculty must gain a basic understanding of the mission, vision, and operations of the college as part of their learning process. Much of their teaching is interdisciplinary and broad in scope. Because of the emphasis on teaching and learning, many community colleges concentrate their efforts on developing core general education outcomes such as written communication, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and so on. Faculty are required to teach with more innovation and creativity. In addition to general education, however, the curricula at many community colleges also include—in addition to academic disciplines such as history, math, and English—career and professional programs like nursing, environmental technology, and paralegal studies. Faculty out-



comes must focus on building new knowledge, skills, and abilities for teaching in these fields as well as addressing issues such as writing business plans, filling out job applications, and thinking critically about business situations. Workshops on teaching as well as learning as a process, identity, and profession are all important parts of the professional development process.

The learning outcomes might include the ability to identify aspects of the career professions or academic disciplines; understand the structure, function, and operation of each department, program, division and college; find new skills to improve teaching; and develop awareness of ways to promote wellness and personal growth.

### **Challenges and Solutions**

There are several challenges in facing professional development for full- and part-time faculty. Barriers to involvement in professional development at a community college for full-time faculty include

- Faculty workload of five courses plus advising and community service raises questions about when faculty can fit it into their schedules;
- Meeting time is difficult to fit into teaching schedules. Faculty members who must attend a meeting and cannot find someone to cover their course are left with few options;
- Cost to attend conferences can be prohibitive, especially if the college does not reimburse for travel, meals and/or transportation;

- Compensation or stipends for attending a session are not always available, making it impractical for faculty to attend professional development sessions;
- Over the course of a year, there may be multiple opportunities to attend a conference or workshop. Having multiple options and then deciding which session to attend can be complicated and confusing.

Some of the challenges for part-time faculty include

- Part-time faculty are often not integrated into the life of the college and therefore they are not aware of professional development offerings;
- They are not on college e-mail or the regular phone system, so it can be difficult to reach them;
- They don't receive the college newsletter;
- Many of the faculty work full- or part-time in another career, and scheduling sessions can be difficult. Part-time faculty in career programs are likely to be professionals chefs, stylists, or landscape architects, with little experience teaching.

Despite the challenges community colleges face, their faculty members are eager to engage in professional development activities. Through such workforce development seminars and workshops, North Shore Community College faculty have gained key strategies and skills, enabling them to provide a range of innovative learning opportunities for students. ■

## **AAC&U CALENDAR**

In addition to its annual meeting, AAC&U offers a series of working conferences and institutes each year. Additional information about the upcoming meetings listed below is available online at [www.aacu.org/meetings](http://www.aacu.org/meetings).

### **Annual Meeting**

**January 23–26, 2008**

#### **Intentional Learning, Unscripted Challenges**

Knowledge and Imagination for an Interdependent World  
Washington, DC

### **Network for Academic Renewal Meetings**

**February 21–23 2008**

#### **Integrative Designs for General Education and Assessment**

Boston, Massachusetts

**April 10–12, 2008**

#### **Discovering, Integrating, and Applying Knowledge**

Austin, Texas

### **Summer Institutes**

**May 30–June 4 2008**

#### **Institute on General Education**

Minneapolis, Minnesota

**June 18–22, 2008**

#### **Greater Expectations Institute**

Snowbird, Utah



# Collaborating to Learn, Learning to Collaborate

By **Roger G. Baldwin**, professor, Department of Educational Administration, and **Deborah A. Chang**, doctoral student and research assistant, Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education, both of Michigan State University

College and university professors need ongoing opportunities for professional development in an era of rapid and continuous change. However, higher education institutions have limited resources to invest in their faculty as programs to work with diverse student populations, technology, and new initiatives compete for limited discretionary funds. In this context, collaboration is a powerful vehicle to promote faculty learning and professional development and an effective way to maximize the impact of institutional investments in faculty.

Collaborative faculty development can help to maintain a dynamic institutional climate that sustains good faculty and ultimately promotes a healthy learning environment for students. Collaboration also requires individuals and institutions to step out of the comfort zones where they usually operate quite autonomously. To achieve the benefits that collaboration promises, the parties involved must learn how to work productively in tandem with others.

This article examines collaborative activities supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation through its Faculty Career Enhancement (FCE) grant program. The grant program, which funded activities at twenty-three liberal arts colleges, led to the development of a variety of strategies to support faculty across the academic life cycle. Here we focus specifically on collaborative initiatives that emerged from the program and discuss their objectives, outcomes, and benefits. This research is drawn from examples at liberal arts colleges, but many of the faculty development model lessons learned here are very relevant to the efforts of other kinds of colleges. The article also shares lessons learned that can help other faculty

groups and institutions to form collaborations that are productive, long-lasting, and successful.

During the 2006–7 academic year, we studied the implementation and impact of the Mellon Faculty Career Enhancement program in three ways. With the permission and cooperation of the institutions and the foundation, we reviewed proposals and annual reports submitted by the twenty-three institutions to the foundation. We surveyed chief academic officers of all twenty-three colleges concerning their institution's involvement with the FCE program. Finally, we interviewed program participants, program leaders, and chief academic officers at eleven of the twenty-three participating colleges. We gathered information on the specific activities of FCE participants, project outcomes, and insights gained from implementing the FCE program within and across institutions. We made a special effort to understand the collaborative activities the FCE program facilitated. We used qualitative analysis methods to identify key themes, patterns, and insights that would be useful to other institutions and individuals interested in collaborative approaches to faculty development.

## What Do We Already Know About Collaboration?

Several key questions helped to build a foundation for our examination of collaborative faculty development. Why do individuals and organizations spend their time and resources collaborating? What incentives motivate collaborators to embark on such a commitment? What challenges are encountered along the way? And what advice can we take from experienced collaborators? We explore



these questions through a brief analysis of the literature on collaboration in order to frame our real-world examples in the context of prior research.

### **Motivation and Perceived Benefits**

One of the principal benefits of collaborating with others is to achieve goals that cannot be achieved alone. In fact, one definition of collaboration characterizes the process as “an effective interpersonal process that facilitates the achievement of goals that cannot be reached when individual professionals act on their own” (Bronstein 2003, 299). In many ways, this is the all-encompassing reason why individuals and institutions enter collaborative relationships. However, beneath this overarching benefit, we find that the motivation for collaborating can be broken down into three more specific reasons: increasing prestige or influence, sharing resources and reducing costs, and facilitating learning. Each of these motivators is a pillar supporting the overall incentive for collaboration: the desire for greater achievement through working with others.

From a competitive standpoint, collaborators work together because of the need to enhance an individual’s or an institution’s position in terms of prestige or clout (Chen 2004). Collaborative ties can unite independent actors as allies against common rivals or to fight for a common cause.

Another motivator is the need to access resources and reduce costs (Ebers 1997; Farmakopoulou 2002). Budgets are tight, especially in higher education, and there is a growing need to create ways to

maximize the use of limited resources while maintaining high performance.

Finally, “learning” is a major incentive for collaborating. Individuals and organizations are seeking to learn about the newest or “best” practices to apply to their own situations. Increasing knowledge is best achieved by connecting with others and sharing information rather than expending time, energy, or other resources extracting or researching the desired information (Ebers 1997). The outcome is new learning or insights to better adapt and more effectively respond (Kelly, Schaan, and Joncas 2002) to a rapidly changing environment.

### **Collaboration Challenges**

Whenever people or organizations come together, conflict is bound to surface. The most common challenges of collaborating revolve around cultural differences, finding common interests and goals, time, geographic constraints, and power differences present in the group.

*Cultural differences* are present across individual, disciplinary, and institutional boundaries. And the more that cultures differ, the more likely that barriers to communication, and ultimately collaboration, will develop (Kelly, Schaan, and Joncas, 2002). Similarly, finding *common interests* or successfully negotiating *common goals* can also prove to be challenging.

*Time* is a valuable resource that is often required to develop collaborative proposals, maintain communication, resolve conflicts, and complete shared projects or tasks. Similarly, the challenge of arranging face-to-face meetings because of *geographic distance*

can make ongoing communication among collaborators difficult. Projects may be carried out at different locations and finding the time to communicate and keep a long-distance collaboration moving forward can be a burden.

Finally, the balance of *power* between partners is also a factor that can influence any working relationship (McCloughen and O’Brien 2006). If one party has more power to make decisions or is superior to another member in some relevant capacity, there are possible negative ramifications for the entire relationship.

### **What Makes Collaborations Successful?**

We have found four key elements common to successful collaborations: trust, communication, a sense of shared interests and goals, and defined and clear expectations and roles.

*Trust* is an unspoken but essential component of a successful collaboration (Koza and Lewin 1998; Kelly, Schaan and Joncas 2002). If an individual perceives his or her partner(s) as being overly opportunistic and/or acting as a rival, the individual may be reluctant to participate fully in the collaboration for fear of being exploited. This is true for collaborating institutions as well. Trust between partners must exist in order for the collaboration to flourish. Fortunately, a high level of pre-existing trust often exists between partners who have previously worked together, and many collaborations emerge from prior collaborations (Cohen and Levinthal 1990).

Moreover, the quality and frequency of *communication* is key to improving and maintaining trust between individuals or institutions (Mohr and Spekman 1994). In



fact, researchers suggest that communication is “central to the creation of the alignment of partner’s expectations, goals and objective” (Kelly, Schaan, and Joncas 2002, 15). A sense of *shared or common circumstances, interests, and goals* is crucial for maintaining collaborations. Collaboration leaders must ensure there is a “shared responsibility in the entire process of reaching goals” (Bronstein 2003, 301). This is achieved by having (1) a shared vision, (2) clearly defined goals, (3) an agreed-upon mission and strategy, (4) all parties engaged in the decision-making process, and (5) the ability to compromise (Bronstein 2003). Clear rules and expectations reduce the chance for conflict and help to move joint projects ahead.

Finally, having *defined rules, procedures, and expectations* of members in the relationship help to define formally the boundaries of what each partner is or is not supposed to do (Doz 1996). These also help clarify what each partner is expected to contribute to the relationship.

### **Collaborative Faculty Development Strategies**

The Mellon Foundation and the twenty-three institutions that received FCE grants recognized the inherent benefits of collaboration. For this reason, the colleges participating in the FCE program developed a variety of interpersonal and inter-institutional collaboration opportunities for faculty. These included:

1. **Comentoring.** Comentoring projects, like those at Macalester and Carleton colleges, provided support for junior and seasoned faculty members to work together on teaching, research, or

service projects of mutual interest.

These alliances were based on the belief that well-designed mentoring partnerships can provide beneficial learning opportunities to both parties, not just the junior member.

2. **Scholarly consultation grants.** These grants provided modest funds to enable professors to travel to consult with a colleague elsewhere who shares a common research interest or to bring that colleague to the grant recipient’s home campus. Wesleyan University’s mini-grant program for scholarly consultation is one example of this technique. In a time when collaborative work is increasingly important within and between many fields, small travel grants can help professors to keep up with rapid advances in knowledge and, in some cases, to initiate or maintain important professional partnerships.
3. **Support for collaborative research.** Several FCE institutions developed strategies to promote faculty research collaborations either within or across institutions. For example, a number of the FCE colleges supported the research projects of partners who work at different FCE colleges but share common scholarly interests. Reed College funded semester-long leaves for its faculty members to collaborate with colleagues in research universities or other types of institutions. This type of support for cross-institution collaboration is especially beneficial for faculty who may be the only person at their institution who specializes in a certain field. In addition,

some FCE programs intentionally encouraged cross-generational and cross-disciplinary collaborative research.

4. **Research/student assistants.** Beneficial collaborations are not always between faculty peers. Some FCE funds permitted professors to hire advanced students to assist with their research or other professional projects. Professors at Oberlin, Amherst, and several other FCE colleagues benefited from such opportunities for faculty-student collaborations. This small grant program provided a win-win opportunity for faculty and students. Students could benefit from a professional apprenticeship and their faculty “collaborators” were able to initiate or advance important and invigorating professional projects.
5. **Field/interest-based conferences and workshops.** Faculty from FCE colleges also came together to design conferences and workshops focusing on shared subject specializations or common interdisciplinary or pedagogical interests. One example was a workshop on empirical methods and the liberal arts curriculum planned by professors at Smith and Reed Colleges. These collaboratively planned meetings brought together faculty from many institutions to share information, enhance research skills, and, in many cases, trade creative instructional strategies.
6. **Support for intellectual community.** Many FCE colleges used a portion of their grant to create space and time on their campuses for intellectual community. Recognizing that the personal and

professional demands on faculty today leave little room for community and intellectual discourse, faculty on several FCE campuses formed reading or discussion groups around broad-based themes. One example is the TriCo Colleges [Bryn Mawr, Haverford, Swarthmore] “Food Group,” which drew faculty from the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities to discuss issues related to food. “Floating seminars,” another example of community building, were sponsored jointly by eight of the FCE colleges. These seminars brought together small groups of faculty members who traveled from campus to campus among the eight schools to discuss topics of multidisciplinary interest.

**7. Leadership development.** Leadership development and succession is a concern on most college and university campuses. To enhance leadership capacity, a number of FCE colleges, including Barnard and Wellesley, pooled their resources and planned joint department chair workshops or retreats. Other colleges, such as Grinnell and Oberlin, brought their own department chairs together to learn with and from each other about effective ways to lead their academic units. The department chair role has similarities across many institutions, disciplines, and departments. By organizing collaborative leadership development, the participants could exchange information and creative ideas to enhance their job performance while better utilizing limited professional development resources.

#### **Outcomes: Tangible and Intangible**

The collaborative activities we describe above led to a variety of outcomes, both tangible and intangible. Faculty members and their institutions benefited in significant ways. *Tangible outcomes* included publications, new and revised courses, and curriculum enhancements. For example, an interinstitutional writer’s workshop produced books published by several major university presses. One participant observed that “my book wouldn’t have been half the book had it not been [for this collaborative workshop].” Interinstitutional FCE conferences and workshops helped some faculty participants to design new courses or add major new components to continuing courses. As a result, their institution’s curriculum and student learning opportunities were enhanced. New professional networks and sometimes additional collaborations were further outcomes of the varied collaborative activities the FCE grant program stimulated.

The opportunity to meet and work with people across disciplines and at other institutions helped participants to build relationships and professional networks that often continue beyond the life of the foundation grant. Some of these networks have led to more benefits than originally anticipated. A prime example is a network of senior women scientists that has been continued and expanded by a half-million dollar grant from a federal government agency. The interinstitutional leadership development programs have also yielded positive results. We learned that department chair training has helped to broaden the perspective of chairs by helping them to understand the current challenges confronting higher education and their type of institution

in particular. This enlarged perspective helped chairs to focus on the welfare of their institution as well as their own department.

The *intangible benefits* of collaborative faculty activities and programs are less visible and certainly more difficult to measure. However, they can be equally important to individual professors and their institutions. At numerous colleges we heard that enhanced community and collegiality were outcomes of the joint faculty programs the FCE grant program helped to initiate. For instance, one participant described faculty reading groups as “some of the only occasions that are just for faculty members from different disciplines to meet, exchange ideas, and learn together.” We heard how collaboration opportunities encouraged cross-boundary idea sharing by providing time and space for faculty from widely divergent disciplines or distinctly different institutions to come together around a shared interest or situation. Collaborations can stimulate new initiatives and innovation by exposing faculty to new perspectives and introducing them to a new disciplinary or institutional culture. As we learned from this study, various forms of faculty collaboration can pull away blinders we do not even know we are wearing when we have few opportunities to interact or work closely with colleagues from different environments.

Most important, we learned of renewed and reenergized faculty as we studied the impact of FCE-supported activities on many campuses. The learning, increased productivity, and enhanced collegial relationships that resulted from the varied collaborations we examined contributed substantially to these intangible, but very beneficial, outcomes.



## Lessons Learned

Collaborations to promote professors' learning and professional development can produce lasting benefits for individual faculty members and their institutions. However, as research on collaboration indicates, collaborating can be costly, time consuming, and frustrating for all involved if not properly designed and managed. We conclude with several lessons learned from our study of collaborative faculty development activities:

1. **Choose partners carefully.** This advice holds for individuals and institutions who wish to collaborate. The chances for a successful collaboration increase when potential partners get to know each other, possess common interests, and identify similar purposes and goals. Entering into a collaboration casually without thinking through the nature of the partnership, the division of labor, and developing shared goals has the potential to leave one or more participants in the alliance disappointed or even angry.
2. **Never underestimate the importance of socialization.**

Collaborations are quintessentially social enterprises. Hence, conditions that promote conversation are important. Many of the participants in our study observed how the presence of refreshments and opportunities to socialize facilitated collaboration. Although refreshments are often the first thing to go when budgets are tight, we were cautioned not to minimize their importance. "Brilliant ideas emerge over food," one person noted.

And nothing is more beneficial to successful collaboration than brilliant ideas that emerge through dialogue.

3. **Monitor progress and assess outcomes.** Collaborations are dynamic entities. Few evolve exactly as originally planned. For this reason, collaborators should periodically take stock of how things are going, identify challenges, and work to resolve conflicts. Failure to monitor the collaborative process allows problems to fester and potentially prevent a collaboration from achieving its original objectives.
4. **Be flexible.** Many of the collaborative arrangements we studied lived up to their promise, but a few did not. When a collaboration does not work as planned, partners should be flexible. Either they can rethink the structure and process of their partnership to make it work more effectively or they can invest their resources in something that will be more productive. The lesson several collaborators learned was, "Don't stick with the original plan if it isn't working." Try something different.

## Conclusion

The twenty-three colleges that participated in the Mellon Foundation's Faculty Career Enhancement Program developed a variety of creative strategies to support faculty development through collaboration. They used collaboration (both interinstitutional and interindividual) as a powerful tool to promote learning and professional growth. In the process, the colleges learned valuable lessons on how to collaborate effectively. The insights they gained can help other colleges

and universities that wish to support faculty at all stages of academic life.

Working closely with colleagues to address shared concerns and to grow together is the hallmark of a vital academic community. Creating conditions that encourage faculty collaboration is an important way for higher education institutions to innovate and adapt in a time of rapid and continuous change. ■

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## Dreaming of a New Semester

By **Michael Bérubé**, Paterno Professor in English Literature and Science, Technology, and Society, Pennsylvania State University

I realized why professors have anxiety dreams at the start of the academic year: teaching is really hard to do. If you're doing it in classes of fifteen and forty students, as I am, you're teaching in a setting where the students will find out not only what you think about  $x$  and  $y$  but also what you are like in some strange and intimate way. They'll get a sense of how thoroughly you prepare, of course, but, even more, they'll see how you respond to the unexpected—to the savvy young woman who wants to know whether you're using the term "postcolonial" in a cultural or economic sense, to the curious junior who wonders aloud why Don DeLillo gave the name Simeon Biggs to a snappish African American character in *Underworld*. For such moments, you simply can't prepare—except by accumulating years upon years of teaching experience and weathering night upon night of anxiety dreams.

Because on that first day of class, truly anything can happen: your students aren't going to love you just because your last three semesters went well, and it's a fair bet that none of your undergraduates (and almost none of your graduate students) will have come back from the summer freshly impressed by how deftly you handled that ludicrously unfair book review in the June issue of *Crank Quarterly*. Amazingly, none of your students will arrive on the first day having heard anything you've said to other students over the past twenty years; amazingly, you'll have to make a first impression all over again, for the twenty-first time.

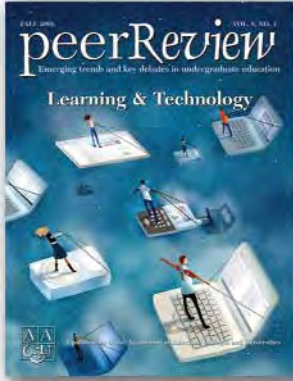
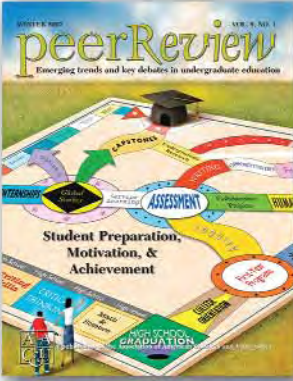
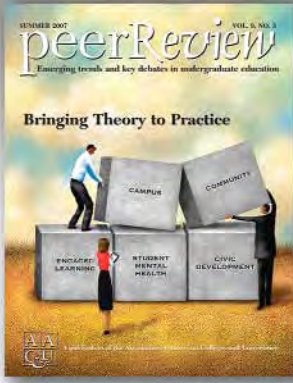
If it's a course you've never taught before, you may wind up rewriting or scrapping the syllabus in midstream; if it's a course in a fairly new area of study, you'll have no idea what kind of knowledge base to expect from your students. And, of course, if the window ledges are seven feet high in Zzyzzych 304, how will anyone be able to close the windows when the motorcycle gangs roar by?

Buddhists speak of learning to see the world with "beginner's mind," and that's precisely what you have to do every semester: begin again, from scratch, knowing that anything can happen—seeing those ten, or fifty, or even five hundred students, like the two thousand students you've seen before, with beginner's mind. Our anxiety dreams, surely, are the index of our secret fears of failure and inadequacy. But they are also the measure of how very difficult it is—and how very exhilarating—to begin each semester with beginner's mind.

*Excerpted from the essay, "Dream a Little Dream" and reprinted with permission from Rhetorical Occasions, © 2006 Michael Bérubé*



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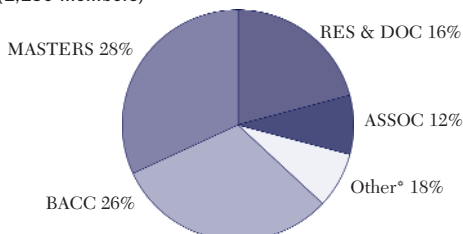
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