

Center for Teaching & Learning

A Request for Support | LCCC Innovation Funds FY2016

Applicant | Kari Brown-Herbst, Director, Center for Teaching & Learning

Project Area

The Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) is a faculty-driven body dedicated to promoting, facilitating and honoring excellence in teaching and learning throughout Laramie County Community College (LCCC). The CTL is focused on the development of a community engaged in a spirit of creativity, collegiality, and scholarship that is devoted to the purposeful and informed development of all those who teach at the College. This request to fund the CTL is directly linked to improving Instructional Effectiveness. Additionally, the development of the CTL is identified as an important strategy towards achieving Goal 3 of the LCCC Strategic Plan which addresses the organizational climate and establishing a culture of continuous improvement at the College.

Executive Summary

The CTL is a pilot project proposed as an avenue for the development and promotion of excellence in teaching at LCCC. The foundational principles upon which the CTL is developed include supporting a campus culture where the role of faculty is valued and expertise is shared and celebrated. The CTL strives to provide an avenue for the exchange of ideas and the development of effective skills with current teaching practices. Summarily, the goals of the CTL include fostering collaboration and professional growth, providing professional resources for all those who teach at LCCC, advocating for teaching practices that are engaging and effective, and supporting student success by encouraging cross-institutional relationships.

This funding request is intended to support the continued development of the CTL in FY2016. The CTL was established in FY2014 with the generous support of the Innovation Funds project and has continued to gain momentum as a viable entity of the College. Since the establishment of the CTL Director position in FY2015 the work of the CTL has been positioned in important conversations about professional development and instruction with the Learning Leadership Team (LLT) as well as the Academic Leadership Team (ALT). This has created opportunities for collaboration across the College as well as a cohesive and purposeful approach to developing our faculty. This final funding request proposes to support the initiatives of the CTL with estimated expenses for this fiscal year totaling approximately \$23,300. This third-year award will support the continued phasing in of the CTL, allowing the CTL to further demonstrate its value to the College and to make the case for future inclusion in the College's operating budget.

Project Description

In its 2012 report, *Reclaiming the American Dream*, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) called on all community colleges to renew the promise of improving students' lives through education. The report proposed that institutions must be committed to professional development in order to equip all those who teach with the knowledge and skills required to support the most important element in any institution's mission, student success. In writing for the League for Innovation in the Community College, O'Banion (2013) maintained that college faculty must cultivate skills in new approaches to teaching. O'Banion further proposed that institutions will best be served if they embark on developing such skills when faculty members are new employees to the institution. In an examination of high-performance organizations as reported through the Community College Research Center, Jenkins (2011) stated that the professional development programs which are most successful at effecting widespread change are those in which collegial and professional communities of practice are created. Both O'Banion (2013) and Jenkins (2011) highlight the need to purposefully develop faculty in order for community colleges to fulfill their missions. Bailey, Jaggars, and Jenkins (2015) also favored this institutional approach over the long-held practice of investing in specific skills development for individual faculty members.

In October 2012, President Schaffer formed an interdisciplinary task force charged with considering the development of all faculty and the support of student success through the creation of a Center for Teaching & Learning. President Schaffer further suggested the CTL have a significant focus on the development of new faculty at the College in order to correct faculty onboarding which at that time was neither purposeful nor comprehensive. The CTL began to address this critical need at LCCC in the Fall 2013 semester with the launch of year one in the New Faculty Learning (NFL) program. Through solicited feedback from project participants the CTL revised the NFL program for the 2014 cohort and in August 2014 began the acculturation process with 11 new faculty while simultaneously engaging the ten year-2 faculty in a purposeful development program as well. Additionally, in both the 2013-14 and 2014-15 academic years the CTL planned and delivered professional development opportunities to include in-service and regularly scheduled workshops. The CTL also partnered with Academic Standards in both years in the review of curriculum and the assessment of student learning across the College, and helped strengthen the link between the College and the large pool of adjunct and interim faculty by providing support through various online resources in D2L and regularly scheduled meetings. In May 2014 the CTL Co-chairs were selected to showcase the work of the CTL at the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) International Conference on Teaching and Leadership Excellence in a session titled "Valuing Teaching & Learning: Building a Culture of Faculty Learning". In March 2015 the CTL leadership team was selected to present at the League for Innovations annual conference in a session titled "A Faculty-Driven Center for Teaching & Learning: Promoting Excellence".

In its third year the CTL intends to continue active engagement with all those who teach at LCCC through the new faculty experiences in the Faculty Academy. The CTL will serve three cohorts of new faculty simultaneously. The 2015 cohort, LCCC's newest faculty, will be engaged in the first-year faculty experience, a year-long endeavor that requires attendance and participation at monthly meetings. Faculty engaged in this work will collaborate on the exploration of instructional practices that can support student success and will also complete and present a final reflection project. The year two and year three faculty will be similarly engaged in two semester-based learning communities in which they will collaborate and target continued improvement of their instructional practices to further support student success. Additionally, the CTL will develop, in collaboration with the Center for Learning Technologies and volunteer presenters from across campus, a schedule of professional development opportunities to be offered in the Fall 2015 semester, as well as one for the Spring 2016 semester. Finally, the CTL will again partner with Academic Standards in their efforts including the evaluation of the SP15 program modifications, academic program reviews and program assessment, and course curriculum review, all of which target continuous improvement of the processes and products that shape curriculum at the College.

Goals, Objectives, Outcomes and Evaluation

The overarching goals for the CTL were developed by the initial task force in the Fall 2012 semester. They include:

1. Foster a collaborative culture of exemplary teaching where faculty is dedicated to continual progress toward excellence
2. Provide resources that foster the professional growth of faculty as teachers and advisers, particularly in ways that impact student learning
3. Promote informed, student-centered teaching that engages students in effective learning

4. Provide a comprehensive program of faculty support for academic programs and student learning assessment activities
5. Support all who teach in achieving their full potential in pursuit of enhanced student learning
6. Establish purposeful connections across all elements of the college in order to support student learning

The Center for Teaching & Learning will continue to target these goals through four specific initiatives:

1. The cohort-based New Faculty Learning experiences will:
 - a. engage all first-year faculty in a year-long course designed to ease their transition to working at LCCC; and,
 - b. engage all second-year and third-year faculty in the continued development of competencies in the essential functions of successful LCCC faculty in the areas of facilitating learning, serving the College, and developing as professionals.

Successful completion of each year of this cohort-based project represents an annual milestone in the path to tenure at LCCC. In addition to the first, second, and third-year cohorts, the CTL is committed to providing optional support sessions to the group of three interim faculty members who recently joined the College. Supporting the interim faculty was not a part of the original charge before the CTL but we recognize that the need for support for this group exists and must be addressed.

2. The Continuous Improvement Academy will focus on offering professional development opportunities to all faculty and staff at LCCC. Workshops on a variety of topics including current issues in higher education will be offered. Participation in these activities will be voluntary, confidential and developmental. Through this effort the CTL will support the growth of a professional community engaged in the practice of teaching and learning. The CTL has been encouraged in this endeavor by the overwhelmingly positive response to calls for in-service conference presentations. In the Fall 2014 semester the CTL offered a schedule of 29 optional sessions for all in-service attendees. The Fall 2015 schedule offered 42 varied workshops involving more than 55 presenters.
3. The Adjunct Boot Camp will provide adjunct faculty with the tools and resources to be more successful in their teaching at LCCC. Adjunct orientations will be held at the beginning of each semester, and a discussion board to discuss instructional concerns or basic questions that arise will be available in D2L. Prior to the start of the Fall 2015 semester the CTL, working in collaboration with the entire Academic Affairs team, offered assistance and resources to all adjunct faculty attending Adjunct Orientation. All adjunct faculty are members of the CTL online community in D2L, all have access to the resources populating that online community, and all adjunct faculty will also be invited to attend any of the professional development opportunities sponsored by the CTL.
4. The Center for Teaching & Learning will continue the work of the Student Learning Assessment subcommittee by assisting faculty with common course assessment development and assessment reporting, chairing the institutional rubric revision conversations, and assisting Academic Standards in the effort on evaluating the SP15 program modifications, academic program reviews and program assessment, and course curriculum review.

The Center for Teaching & Learning leadership developed several instruments to assess the work of the CTL in 2013-14 and these were employed again in 2014-15. Feedback collected from faculty engaged with the CTL was used to refine several areas such as workshop scheduling and content, timing of topics in the New Faculty Learning experiences, celebrating the expertise of current LCCC employees, pursuing avenues for professional development opportunities for staff, and connecting the materials used in the new faculty experience to classroom practice. The CTL will continue to gauge the effectiveness of its initiatives through the following assessments:

1. Anecdotal feedback collection at all face-to-face sessions of the first-year faculty experience.
2. Anecdotal feedback collection at all monthly meetings of the CTL membership.
3. Mixed methods survey of the first-year faculty experience participants in December 2015 in order to assess the effectiveness of the project.
4. March 2016 survey of year-one faculty to collect feedback on the first-year experience in order to refine the structure of the project for the coming year; March 2016 survey of year two and year three faculty to assess their experiences and develop improvements for the coming year.
5. Qualitative survey of the first-year participants in May 2016 as final reflection of the experience.
6. Collection of feedback from participants at all professional development workshops.
7. Faculty survey in April 2016 to prioritize professional development offerings for the 2016-17 academic year.
8. Weekly conversations between the CTL leadership to assess progress towards the goals of the CTL and to review feedback received.
9. Twice monthly conversations between the CTL leadership and the Associate Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness to assure alignment between the assessment initiative of the CTL and the goals of the College.
10. Twice monthly conversations between the CTL leadership and the Vice President of Academic Affairs to assure clear communication regarding the status of the CTL initiatives and alignment between the work of the CTL, the objectives of the VPAA, and the priorities of Academic Affairs at LCCC.

Project Budget

The CTL worked with Jayne Myrick, Budget Director, to outline the projected expenses as follows:

1. The **Salaries** line item represents a \$2,100 stipend per semester for each of the four CTL Specialists assisting the CTL. There is one CTL Specialist position in each of the four schools of the College; several of these positions are being recruited currently with a due date for all applications of September 18, 2015. Responsibilities associated with this position include delivery of at least three professional development opportunities per semester (presented on both campuses), active participation in curriculum review and common course assessment development through Academic Standards, assistance with the 2015 Cohort in the first-year faculty experience, assistance with In-Service, and consulting with faculty on all areas related to instruction.
2. **Employee Benefits** is a required budgetary consideration any time employees are paid. The figures here are driven by the stipend amounts in Salaries and were determined by Jayne.

3. The anticipated **Purchased Services** item estimates the cost of hosting the first-year faculty project and meetings for the year-2 and year-3 faculty. Included in this amount are two lunches, nine meetings of the 2015 Cohort, and two meetings of the combined 2013 and 2014 cohorts.
4. **Supplies and Materials** reflects an amount for Food Items from the Fall New Faculty Welcome and the Fall In-Service Conference Day, expenses that were classified as Contract Services in previous requests. This change has been dictated by new purchasing directives from Accounting and this revised classification has been confirmed by Jayne. The contingency funds are classified in this category as well.

The funding request for FY 2016 is the smallest amount requested by CTL in three years of Innovation Funds participation. Though the 2015 Cohort is the largest group of new faculty to join the College in several years, the decreased funding needs for CTL are the result of changes to the Fall Welcome, the combined and collaborative meetings of the 2013 and 2014 faculty cohorts, and the CTL commitment to use Open Education Resources with all faculty experiences for the 2015-2016 academic year. The CTL operating budget for FY2016 is outlined below.

**Center for Teaching & Learning
Operating Budget FY2016**

SALARIES		
8120	Faculty - Part Time	16,800.00
TOTAL SALARIES		16,800.00
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS		
8610	Retirement	2,488.92
8620	Social Security	1,285.20
8630	Health Insurance	0.00
8633	Retiree Health Insurance	100.80
8650	LTD Insurance (benefitted positions only)	252.00
8655	STD Insurance	67.20
TOTAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS		4,126.92
PURCHASED SERVICES		
9210	Contract Services	1,100.00
9311	Registrations	0.00
9320	In State Travel	0.00
9330	Out of State Travel	0.00
TOTAL PURCHASED SERVICES		1,100.00
SUPPLIES & MATERIALS		
9110	Educational Supplies	0.00
9158	Food Items	300.00
9764	Contingency Reserve	1,000.00
9770	Miscellaneous Expenses	0.00
TOTAL SUPPLIES & MATERIALS		1,300.00
TOTAL		23,326.92

Project Timeline

The CTL project for FY2016 began in mid-June when the CTL leadership began planning the welcome and ensuing work with the 2015 cohort of 22 new faculty. The CTL was further involved in the design and delivery of Adjunct Orientation on August 18, an evening attended by 74 adjunct faculty and involving the cooperation of several campus entities including Academic Affairs, Campus Safety, Student Records, and Human Resources. On August 21 the CTL, while collaborating with the Center for Learning Technologies, introduced the large 2015 Cohort of new faculty to the first-year faculty experience and conducted technology orientation (D2L, EaglesEye, Outlook 365) as well. The CTL also combined efforts with Human Resources to further orient this group to policies and procedures that will impact them in their work at the College. The CTL further assisted with the planning and delivery of the Fall 2015 In-Service which was presented through the week of August 24. The planning for these pre-semester activities began in Spring 2015. Their successful execution reflects the commitment of the CTL leadership and demonstrates the feasibility with which this project is proposed.

The first-year experience for the 2015 cohort will meet monthly for a total of ten sessions, concluding on May 13, 2016. The 2013 and 2014 cohorts will begin their work in learning communities on September 18, 2015 and will conclude their experience in early May 2016. The Fall 2015 In-service was the first all-campus professional development opportunity of FY2016. The CTL anticipates offering workshops through the Fall semester, delivering the Spring 2016 In-Service, and offering additional workshops in the Spring 2016 semester. The CTL leadership will continue the collaboration with the Academic Standards Committee throughout the 2015-2016 academic year. The CTL membership (see Project Team) will be established and a meeting schedule for all CTL members will be developed at the start of the Fall 2016 semester.

Project Team

Kari Brown-Herbst became the Director of The Center for Teaching & Learning in August 2014. She joined the College in 2009 as a Web Design Instructor. She has served on several committees including the College Council and is currently the faculty representative to the LCCC Foundation Board. Kari received her Master's in Education Technology from Marian University (Wisconsin) and her Bachelor's in Sociology with an Education endorsement from Kalamazoo College (Michigan). She is currently studying for her Ed.D. in Instructional Technology at the University of Wyoming. Her research interests include investigating the impact of purposeful faculty development on student retention in the online environment.

Kari will share overall responsibilities for the Center's initiatives with Jonathan Carrier, Assistant Director. Jonathan joined the Psychology faculty of LCCC in 2010. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Sociology from East Tennessee State University and a dual Master's degree in Community Mental Health Counseling and Rehabilitation Counseling from Portland State University. Jonathan is currently working on a Ph.D. in Leadership with a Specialization in Psychology at the University of the Cumberlands. Jonathan began his teaching career 10 years ago as a psychology and English instructor in Louisville, Kentucky and Nashville, Tennessee. In addition to his roles as an assistant director and college educator, Jonathan also spends time writing scholarly articles, book chapters, and giving presentations in the fields of counseling, psychology, and adult education. His published work focuses on suicide assessment, counseling theory, group psychotherapy, classroom management skills, and best practices in adult education.

Additional membership includes one faculty representative from each one of the schools (CTL Specialists), a librarian, a Division of Workforce Development representative, the Director of the Center for Learning Technologies, one instructional designer, and the Vice President, Academic Affairs. Additionally, at the

suggestion of College Council in 2014, a staff member has been asked to join this advisory group in order to assist in the design and implementation of professional development opportunities that reach to all branches of the College. Finally, Melvin Hawkins has volunteered to join the group to offer a lens from the deans, a request that came from the Academic Leadership Team.

A rotating appointment schedule was implemented in the first year of the project and is used to establish the envisioned interdisciplinary composition for the CTL.

CTL membership for 2015-2016 includes:

- *CTL Specialist, School of Arts and Humanities
- *CTL Specialist, School of Math and Science
- *CTL Specialist, School of Health Science and Wellness
- Jim Streelman, CTL Specialist, School of Business, Agriculture, and Technical Studies
- Janice Cheever, Division of Workforce Development
- Les Balsiger, Center for Learning Technologies
- Tim Kochery, Center for Learning Technologies
- Terry Harper, Vice President Academic Affairs
- Jennifer Thompson, President's Office, staff representative
- Melvin Hawkins, Dean, School of Business, Agriculture, and Technical Studies

* The CTL Specialist positions in the School of Arts and Humanities and in the School of Math and Sciences became vacant in Spring 2015 due to the rotating nature of these two-year appointments. The CTL Specialist position in the School of Health Sciences and Wellness became vacant in Fall 2015 when Geoff Green was needed to take on additional responsibilities on behalf of the school. All three of these positions have been announced as vacant; applications are being accepted through September 18.

References

- American Association of Community Colleges. (2012). *Reclaiming the American Dream: A Report from the 21st Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges*. Washington, DC. Available from <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/21stCenturyReport>.
- Bailey, T. R., Jaggars, S. S., & Jenkins, D. (2015). *Redesigning America's community colleges: A clearer path to student success*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Jenkins, D. (2011). *Redesigning community colleges for completion: Lessons from research on high-performance organizations (Working Paper No. 24)*. Community College Research Center website: <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/high-performance-organizations.html>
- O'Banion, T. (2013). *Access, Success, and Completion: A Primer for Community College Faculty, Administrators, Staff, and Trustees*. Chandler, AZ: League for Innovation in the Community College.