

Center for Teaching & Learning
A Request for Support, LCCC Innovation Funds
FY2015
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. The CTL funding request is directly linked to improving Instructional Effectiveness. Additionally, the implementation of the CTL is identified as an important strategy towards achieving Goal 3 of the LCCC Strategic Plan.

Executive Summary

The CTL is a pilot project proposed as an avenue for the development and promotion of excellence in teaching among all faculty at LCCC. The foundational principles upon which the CTL is developed include supporting a campus culture where the role of faculty is valued and the expertise of faculty is shared and celebrated. The CTL does not engage in personnel-making decisions; rather it endeavors 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 amongst faculty and from faculty, providing professional resources, 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 Center for Teaching & Learning in its second year, FY2015. The CTL was established in FY2014 with the generous support of the Innovation Funds project. The success of the CTL in its inaugural year *coupled with the* development of the Center as a stated strategy in the LCCC Strategic Plan helped garner financial support for the creation of the CTL Director position, effective FY2015. This subsequent funding request is intended to support the initiatives of the CTL with estimated expenses for this fiscal year totaling approximately \$25,200. This second-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 appropriate funding through the operating budget. A third and final request for Innovation Funds support will be made in August 2015 if the CTL is not yet an element of the College's general fund.

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, Davis (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. Davis favored this institutional approach over the long-held practice of investing in specific skills development for individual faculty members. Both O'Banion and Davis highlight the need to purposefully develop faculty in order for community colleges to fulfill their missions.

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. Ten new faculty completed their year one experience in May 2014. In addition to this focused acculturation of the College's newest faculty members, the CTL also planned and delivered professional development opportunities to include in-service and regularly scheduled workshops throughout the 2013-14 academic year. Finally, the CTL partnered with Academic Standards 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 faculty by providing support through various online resources in D2L. 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 its second year the CTL expects to continue this active engagement with all those who teach at LCCC. The New Faculty Learning project will run two cohorts simultaneously. The newest faculty will be engaged in the year one experience, a year-long endeavor that requires monthly meetings, online discussions of selected readings and texts, and a final reflection project. The year two faculty will be similarly engaged in a year-long experience, this one to culminate in the development of new online courses and the awarding of the Online Instruction Certificate. Additionally, the CTL will support year three faculty who are compiling their portfolios as application for tenure at LCCC. A schedule of professional development opportunities to be offered in the Fall 2014 semester is being jointly developed between the CTL and the Center for Learning Technologies. The CTL will again partner with Academic Standards in the effort on program modifications, academic program reviews, and the general education core development.

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 New Faculty Learning (NFL) project will:
 - a. engage all new faculty in a year-long course designed to ease their transition to working at LCCC; and,
 - b. engage all second-year faculty in the development of online instruction competencies and the completion of the Online Instruction Certificate through a year-long course presented in a hybrid learning environment.

Participation in the NFL project will be mandatory for all first and second-year full-time, permanent faculty. Each year of the project represents an annual milestone in the path to tenure at LCCC.

In addition to the NFL cohorts, the CTL is committed to:

- a. providing support to the third-year faculty who are preparing their professional portfolios; and,
- b. providing optional brown bag support sessions to the group of eight 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 large group exists and must be addressed.

2. The Continuous Improvement Academy (CIA) will focus on offering professional development opportunities to all faculty 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. One element of the Continuous Improvement Academy will be a faculty reading group which will meet virtually to discuss selected texts that address effective teaching. For the 2014-15 school year, faculty will read *Teaching Unprepared Students* and *The Heart of Higher Education*.

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 Desire2Learn. Prior to the start of the Fall 2014 semester the CTL held an optional Saturday training day, affording all interested adjunct faculty the opportunity to engage in conversation about teaching best practices, and to receive supplemental instruction in using D2L. 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, and assisting Academic Standards with curriculum review, program modification, and the development of the general education core.

The Center for Teaching & Learning Project Team developed several instruments to assess the work of the CTL in 2013-14. 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 NFL project, celebrating the expertise of current LCCC employees, and connecting the chosen texts to classroom practice. The CTL will continue to gauge the effectiveness of the CTL initiatives through the following assessments:

1. Anecdotal feedback collection at all face-to-face sessions of the NFL project.
2. Anecdotal feedback collection at all monthly meetings of the CTL membership.
3. Mixed methods survey of the NFL participants in December 2014 in order to assess the effectiveness of the NFL project.
4. March 2015 survey of year-one faculty to collect feedback on the year-one experience in order to refine the structure of the project for the coming year.
5. Qualitative survey of the NFL participants in May 2015 as final reflection of the project.
6. Collection of feedback from participants at all professional development workshops.
7. Faculty survey in April 2015 to prioritize professional development offerings for the 2015-16 academic year.
8. Weekly conversations amongst the CTL leadership to assess progress towards the goals of the Center 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 and the objectives of the VPAA.

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 Instructional Consultants assisting the CTL. There is one Instructional Consultant position in each of the four schools of the College. Responsibilities associated with this position include delivery of at least two professional development opportunities per semester, active participation in curriculum review and common course assessment development, 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 NFL project and the In-Service Conference Day. This includes six lunches, the Fall Welcome, and seven meetings of the NFL cohorts (2013 and 2014). The budgeted amount for this item in FY2014 was \$1,274; the anticipated increase reflects the simultaneous participation of two cohorts in the NFL project.
4. **Supplies and Materials** reflects the cost of providing the required texts to the NFL project and the Faculty Book Club as well as an amount set aside as a contingency.

The CTL operating budget for FY2015 is outlined below.

**Center for Teaching & Learning
Operating Budget FY2015**

SALARIES		
8120	Faculty - Part Time	16,800.00
TOTAL SALARIES		16,800.00
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS		
8610	Retirement	2,362.92
8620	Social Security	1,285.20
8630	Health Insurance	0.00
8633	Retiree Health Insurance	100.80
8650	LTD Insurance (benefitted positions only)	0.00
TOTAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS		3,748.92
PURCHASED SERVICES		
9210	Contract Services	1,600.00
9311	Registrations	0.00
9320	In State Travel	0.00
9330	Out of State Travel	0.00
TOTAL PURCHASED SERVICES		1,600.00
SUPPLIES & MATERIALS		
9110	Educational Supplies	1,500.00
9120	Office Supplies	0.00
9764	Contingency Reserve	1,500.00
9770	Miscellaneous Expenses	0.00
TOTAL SUPPLIES & MATERIALS		3,000.00
TOTAL		25,148.92

Project Timeline

The CTL project for FY2015 began on August 12 when the CTL conducted two days of training for all faculty interested in teaching the newly required college success course, COLS 1000. On August 15 the CTL introduced the New Faculty Learning project to the 2014 cohort of eleven faculty and conducted D2L training for this cohort as well. The CTL hosted an adjunct boot camp on August 16, and assisted with developing and delivering the Fall 2014 In-service through the week of August 18. The planning for these pre-semester activities began in Spring 2014. Their successful execution reflects the commitment of the CTL leadership and demonstrates the feasibility with which this project is proposed.

The New Faculty Learning 2014 cohort will meet monthly for a total of ten sessions, concluding on May 8, 2015. The NFL 2013 cohort will begin their work on the Online

Instruction Certificate on September 5, 2014 and will conclude their year-two experience in early May. The Fall 2014 In-service was the first all-campus professional development opportunity of FY2015. The CTL anticipates offering workshops through the Fall semester, delivering the Spring 2015 In-service, and offering additional workshops in the Spring 2015 semester. The CTL leadership served on Academic Standards throughout summer 2014 and will continue this involvement throughout the 2014-2015 academic year. The CTL membership (see Project Team) will be established and a monthly meeting schedule for all CTL members will be developed at the start of the Fall 2014 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 and expects to complete that degree in Spring 2015. 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 Melissa McAllister, Assistant Director. Melissa was a member of the CTL task force, served as CTL Co-chair in 2013-14 and she is actively involved in important initiatives at LCCC. She is an English as a Second Language (ESL) and Education Instructor. She has served as the advisor to the International Student Association and on multiple committees. In 2012, she joined the Instructional Design team at LCCC and focused her efforts on offering professional development opportunities where instructors could share their best practices for engaging students in the classroom. Melissa received her Master's in Teaching ESL and Applied Linguistics from Georgia State University and her Bachelor's in International Studies from Emory University. She is currently studying for her PhD in Curriculum & Instruction at the University of Wyoming. Her research interests include investigating how to ease the transition from pre-service teacher to full-time teacher and improving reading comprehension for non-native speakers.

Additional membership includes one faculty representative from each one of the schools (Instructional Consultants), 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. 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 2014-2015 includes:

- Damien Kortum, School of Arts and Humanities
- Jonathan Carrier, School of Math and Science, Albany County Campus

- Geoff Green, School of Health Science and Wellness
- Maggie Swanger, Ludden Library
- Janice Cheever, Division of Workforce Development
- Les Balsiger, Center for Learning Technologies
- Tim Kochery, Center for Learning Technologies
- Dr. Jose Fierro, Vice President Academic Affairs

References

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- 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.