

Quarterly Evaluation Report  
Center for Teaching & Learning  
December 31, 2013  
Kari Brown-Herbst

## **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 is directly linked to improving instructional effectiveness at LCCC and was awarded funding for FY2014 through the Innovation Funds Program.

## **LCCC Strategic Plan**

The LCCC Strategic Plan outlines four distinct strategic goals that will serve to guide the work of The College through year 2020. While the activities of the CTL are inherently tied to LCCC's desire for excellence and dedication to student success and are therefore supportive of each of The College's goals, the work of the CTL is most closely related to goal 1 and goal 3.

Goal 1 of the LCCC Strategic Plan calls for a redesign of The College's programs and services so that they are better aligned to meet the needs of all learners. An important component of that redesign will be processes that assess and assure the quality of our curriculum as we continuously work to improve instructional effectiveness. The Co-chairs of the CTL serve as Coordinators to Student Learning Assessment (SLA), a subcommittee of Academic Standards, and are actively involved in curriculum review through the MCOR process, program modification approval through Academic Standards, the development of scoring rubrics for the LCCC institutional competencies, and the planning of in-service opportunities to engage in work towards common course assessments.

Goal 3 of the LCCC Strategic Plan articulates The College's commitment to establish a culture of continuous improvement. Specifically, strategy B identifies the CTL as an important mechanism in the development of a world-class teaching staff. In this regard the Strategic Plan has directly shaped the initiatives of the CTL particularly the New Faculty Learning (NFL) cohort project which is a required faculty development commitment for all new faculty, the sponsorship of ongoing professional development opportunities for all those who teach, and support for portfolio development and defense as faculty members work towards tenure at LCCC.

## **CTL Project Team**

Kari Brown-Herbst, CTL Co-chair, Melissa McAllister, CTL Co-chair, Jonathan Carrier, Instructional Consultant, Damien Kortum, Instructional Consultant, Valerie Millsap, Instructional Consultant, and Robert VanCleave, Instructional Consultant

## Project Follow-Up

Per President Schaffer's funding announcement, the budget for the CTL was revised as follows:

### Center for Teaching & Learning Operating Budget FY2014

<b>SALARIES</b>		
8120	Faculty - Part Time	<u>25,692.00</u>
<b>TOTAL SALARIES</b>		<b>25,692.00</b>
<b>EMPLOYEE BENEFITS</b>		
8610	Retirement	3,388.77
8620	Social Security	1,965.44
8630	Health Insurance	0.00
8633	Retiree Health Insurance	154.15
8650	LTD Insurance (benefitted posit	<u>0.00</u>
<b>TOTAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS</b>		<b>5,508.36</b>
<b>PURCHASED SERVICES</b>		
9210	Contract Services	1,274.00
9311	Registrations	0.00
9320	In State Travel	0.00
9330	Out of State Travel	<u>0.00</u>
<b>TOTAL PURCHASED SERVICES</b>		<b>1,274.00</b>
<b>SUPPLIES &amp; MATERIALS</b>		
9110	Educational Supplies	1,898.00
9120	Office Supplies	0.00
9764	Contingency Reserve	3,000.00
9770	Miscellaneous Expenses	<u>0.00</u>
<b>TOTAL SUPPLIES &amp; MATERIALS</b>		<b>4,898.00</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>37,372.36</b>

## Project Time Line

In January 2014 the CTL will sponsor the Faculty In-service, which will involve collaborative work with the LCCC institutional competencies, an overview of the curriculum review and MCOR process, collaborative opportunities with common course assessments, and a faculty panel presentation on Complete College Wyoming. The CTL will also provide the logistical support to the ten faculty members making TED-like presentations. The NFL 2013 cohort will meet on January 10, 2014 and will continue to meet monthly through May 2014 per the course syllabus. The Continuous Improvement

Academy will offer a minimum of six professional development opportunities through the Spring 2014 semester.

### **Progress to Date**

In its funding proposal the CTL identified six overarching goals that would guide the work of the Center. Those goals 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

Progress in each of these areas can be assessed in light of the four initiatives of the CTL; the NFL Project, the Continuous Improvement Academy, the Adjunct Boot Camp, and Assessment.

The NFL 2013 cohort has met monthly since August. Each NFL session has been guided by readings and assignments, faculty have been expected to engage in online conversations around pedagogy and teaching philosophy, new faculty have hosted a CTL Co-chair in a peer observation period, and LCCC professionals from Human Resources, the Ludden Library, and Student Services have presented to the cohort. All activities associated with the NFL 2013 project have occurred on time per the course syllabus. A similar meeting schedule has been announced for the Spring 2014 semester and those activities will begin with a luncheon on January 10, 2014 at which the cohort members will have an opportunity to meet with President Schaffer, Vice President Fierro, Vice President Hay, and LCCC Foundation staff Lisa Murphy and Brenda Laird.

The Continuous Improvement Academy was formally introduced on October 3 when VPAA Dr. Fierro announced the names of the Instructional Consultants who would work with the CTL as School representatives. On October 8 the CTL released the schedule of faculty-led workshops for the Fall 2013 semester and on October 9 the CTL invited faculty to join the online book club. In October and early November, the CTL Instructional Consultants offered seven workshops. Each workshop was offered on two different dates and times to maximize opportunities for faculty attendance. Some workshops were offered on the Albany County Campus, and some of the workshops

were recorded and archived for review by faculty who were unable to attend the live sessions. Twelve faculty members joined the online book club that was also facilitated by Instructional Consultant Damien Kortum. This club brought faculty together in an online conversation about the book *What the Best College Teachers Do*. Participation was fairly strong initially, but it tapered off at the end of the semester. Ways to sustain participation will be considered carefully for Spring 2014. Finally, the CTL provided support for a workshop upon Arshi Nisley's return from the College Reading and Learning Association conference and also provided support to Dr. John Sanford who shared his expertise on Action Research with those faculty members completing that requirement of their LCCC Continuing Contract Portfolio. While all of these activities fell within the Fall 2013 semester as was proposed, there was a considerable delay in getting them scheduled and consequently they were offered in fairly tight succession and announced without much advanced notice. Perhaps this is a reflection of the newness of the CTL initiative and the logistical hurdles that need to be climbed in the kickoff of a large project. The CTL Co-chairs were able to begin the workshop planning process for the Spring 2014 semester in November and anticipate releasing that schedule of offerings before the end of January 2014.

The CTL was not included in planning for the Fall 2013 In-service for adjunct faculty. Consequently the Adjunct Boot Camp did not take place as planned. The CTL was invited to assist with the adjunct orientation and was able to make a short presentation on the goals of the Center as well as introduce new adjuncts to the resources available on campus to facilitate their teaching.

The CTL Co-chairs devoted considerable time in the Fall 2013 semester to continuing the work of the SLA subcommittee. This work began in August with a review of the records in relation to the MCOR process, the work on Institutional Competencies, and the development of rubrics to assess those competencies. The Co-chairs lead Fall 2013 In-service sessions on the rubric revisions, and curriculum mapping. In September the Co-chairs presented a comprehensive look at the status of the MCOR project and proposed a revision to the MCOR timeline to VPAA Dr. Fierro. As of December 20 the Co-chairs had received all MCORs scheduled for submission as announced in September 2013. Throughout the semester the CTL Co-chairs worked with a group of volunteers to finalize the Institutional Competency Rubrics that were shared with all faculty in December. The finalization of these instruments lays the groundwork for the development of common course assessments that will be started in January at the CTL-lead Spring In-service.

### **Budget Flow**

The expenditures and remaining balance for the CTL are detailed on the following page.

**Center for Teaching & Learning**  
**Budget Status Report for period ending 12.31.13**

	allocated budget	expenses	unexpended balance	reference
<b>SALARIES</b>				
Faculty - Part Time	<u>25,692.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>25,692.00</u>	
<b>TOTAL SALARIES</b>	<b>25,692.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>25,692.00</b>	
<b>EMPLOYEE BENEFITS</b>				
Retirement	3,388.77	0.00	3,388.77	
Social Security	1,965.44	0.00	1,965.44	
Health Insurance	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Retiree Health Insurance	154.15	0.00	154.15	
LTD Insurance (benefitted positions only)	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	
<b>TOTAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS</b>	<b>5,508.36</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>5,508.36</b>	
<b>PURCHASED SERVICES</b>				
Contract Services	1,274.00			
08.19.13, Fall Inservice		190.00		Sodexo #4631
08.22.13 Fall Welcome		60.00		LPO#87764
08.22.13 Fall Welcome		93.28		LPO#87764
09.20.13, Session 2		22.80		Sodexo #4800
10.18.13, Session 3		34.20		Sodexo #4874
11.22.13, Session 4		34.20		Sodexo #4944
12.13.13, Session 5		<u>136.00</u>		Sodexo #5077
		570.48	703.52	
Registrations	0.00	0.00	0.00	
In State Travel	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Out of State Travel	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	
<b>TOTAL PURCHASED SERVICES</b>	<b>1,274.00</b>	<b>570.48</b>	<b>703.52</b>	
<b>SUPPLIES &amp; MATERIALS</b>				
Educational Supplies	1,898.00			
The Joy of Teaching		481.37		LPO#87764
What the Best College Teachers Do		680.76		LPO#87764
The Courage to Teach		<u>650.19</u>		LPO#87835
		1,812.32	85.68	
Office Supplies	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Contingency Reserve	3,000.00			
Dinnerware		33.43		LPO#87764
Affirming Diversity		<u>110.60</u>		LPO#87835
		144.03	2,855.97	
Miscellaneous Expenses	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	
<b>TOTAL SUPPLIES &amp; MATERIALS</b>	<b>4,898.00</b>	<b>1,956.35</b>	<b>2,941.65</b>	
<b>GRAND TOTALS AS OF 12.31.13</b>	<b>37,372.36</b>	<b>2,526.83</b>	<b>34,845.53</b>	

## Discovery and Continuous Improvement

The CTL Co-chairs are engaged in a continuous cycle of evaluation and reflection. Paramount to evaluating the impact of the CTL initiatives are the Co-chair Conversations which were held on a weekly basis throughout the Fall 2013 semester. This dedicated time allowed for a regular assessment of progress towards the goals of the Center, as well as a collective review of feedback received and an identification of needed improvements and/or change. In order to evaluate the work of the CTL in relation to other initiatives at The College the CTL Co-chairs met twice monthly with Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness Dr. Kim Bender. These conversations were instrumental in informing Dr. Bender of the assessment projects underway at LCCC and opening those projects to his expertise. The CTL Co-chairs also met twice a month with VPAA Dr. Fierro in order to continue communication with him regarding the status of the CTL initiatives and to assure alignment between the work of the CTL and the objectives of the VPAA. Twice during the Fall 2013 semester the Co-chairs were invited to receive feedback from the academic deans during their regular meetings. The CTL has a dedicated email address accessible to all users on the LCCC mail distribution, as well as an active course shell in Desire2Learn through which feedback is encouraged.

In addition to receiving feedback from the academic deans in the fall semester, the Co-chairs sought feedback from the Instructional Consultants informally as workshops for the Continuous Improvement Academy were held throughout the semester. Although the workshops were not well attended, the participants shared with the Instructional Consultants and co-chairs that the workshops were helpful. This feedback will be formalized in the Spring 2014 semester.

The area with the greatest area for discovery and continuous improvement is the New Faculty Learning 2013 Cohort. This particular initiative of the CTL is brand new with an emphasis on scholarly reading, discussion, and community building. Throughout the Fall 2013 semester, the Co-chairs received feedback on the NFL 2013 project from the ten new faculty members at LCCC. Initially, faculty expressed concern that they were being forced to do something "extra" that did not really relate to their job. We corrected this belief at the September meeting by reiterating that all of the work being asked of new faculty with the NFL project was building towards their portfolio. Furthermore, faculty not associated with the NFL project questioned its purpose and the workload. The co-chairs worked to clarify the purpose for these faculty members and share how this project, in particular, should help their new colleagues adjust more easily to LCCC. Lastly, there was confusion that new faculty members would receive a reduced load for their entire probationary period. This was also clarified and explained that the work expected as a result of the NFL project was balancing the course release of three credits per semester in their first year only.

In order to gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of the NFL 2013 project, a survey was developed with 12 Likert-type items, one demographic question regarding course load, and two open-ended questions to gather qualitative feedback. The Likert-

type items and their means and standard deviations can be found in the appendix. The Likert-type items were attempting to understand the perceptions of the new faculty with regard to the various components of the NFL 2013 project using a five-point scale with 1 indicating the lowest agreement and 5 indicating the strongest agreement with the statements. The anonymous survey was developed using Survey Monkey and distributed via an email link. Eight of the ten new faculty members completed the survey.

Of the eight faculty members that responded, three taught more than 12 credits in the Fall 2013 semester, and the remaining five taught more than 12 credits in the semester. A mean scale of the 12 Likert-type items was developed. A mean score of 3.99 (SD=.39) was calculated indicating that the eight faculty members agree that the NFL 2013 project is helping them become better instructors and feel like they belong to the LCCC community.

The qualitative information is interesting as well. Some responses to the question, "What did you like best [about the NFL 2013 project]? were: the Friday sessions, the freedom to discuss classroom issues without feeling judged, getting to know people outside my department, and the Bain text. When asked "How could NFL 2013 be improved?", very interesting suggestions were offered. Faculty wanted more information about security and the student code of conduct very early in the semester, as opposed to well into the semester. Faculty also wanted more information about benefits. And, for the Co-chairs, the most surprising request was for more "tips" on teaching. This was surprising because the Co-chairs have tried to approach the sessions as facilitators since we have many experienced instructors in this cohort. The feedback from this question, in particular, have given the Co-chairs ideas for how to structure the remaining sessions of the year as well as ideas for next year's cohort of new faculty.

Perhaps not innovative, but certainly critical for project continuity are the practices adopted by the CTL Co-chairs. The commitment to establishing, and then protecting, a regular Co-chair meeting schedule has kept the CTL project moving forward. It has provided a regular opportunity to share responsibilities, to review progress toward goals, and to assure that communications and actions of the CTL are reflective of the mission and values that were established by the CTL Task Force in 2012. The regularly scheduled conversations with the AVPIE and the VPAA provide an important opportunity to frame the work of the CTL within the larger context of the entire institution which also serves as a check and balance of the efforts of the Center. Communications about or from the CTL are sent from a dedicated email address that is shared by the Co-chairs. This has helped to establish a clear record of the Center's work, as well as to identify the efforts as those of the CTL as opposed to the work of the individual Co-chairs. The published work of the CTL, to include email, is complete with the CTL mission as well as the approved CTL logo which helps to build the foundational existence of the Center.



## **Challenges to Progress**

While the first semester of the CTL has met with a number of successes, the project is not without its challenges. The NFL 2013 cohort project has been met with some resistance in regards to the time the project requires. Because the project was announced after the awarding of faculty contracts and the development of instructional assignments it was very difficult for the deans to honor reduced teaching loads for the newest members of the LCCC faculty. For the Fall 2013 semester this meant that some new faculty were granted the time to meet the requirements of the project, and some were not. This is likely the cause of missed NFL assignments, absences at NFL sessions, and a lack of participation in the online portions of the NFL project.

Additionally, the professional development opportunities offered by the CTL were poorly attended, with no session attracting more than five participants. The challenge remains to identify and then address the needs of the faculty in a manner that invites them to invest in the art of teaching. The progress made by the SLA subcommittee on the MCOR review is quantifiable yet that work was also filled with challenges. Despite a clear presentation to the deans in September regarding past-due MCORs, regular reminders and updated lists, the overdue reports simply trickled in and the collection of reports targeted for a September 30 submission was not actually completed until December 20. Progress on the mapping of the LCCC curriculum has been even slower with less than 20% of the courses actually mapped and very little support from the deans offered in this regard.

A further challenge for the coming semester is that Valerie Millsap, the Instructional Consultant for Health Sciences & Wellness, has decided to step down from her role with the CTL due to personal reasons. This is unfortunate because Val is well-regarded in the School of Health Sciences & Wellness and her longevity with the college added valuable institutional knowledge to the development of the CTL.

All of these challenges may be characteristic of new initiatives in general, and were perhaps heightened by the many changes underway as The College seeks to right its course towards continuous improvement. Perhaps it is also likely that the CTL will continue to be challenged in these ways until it becomes established as an integrated branch of The College, one with supported and enforced authority and responsibility to the development of excellence in teaching.

## **Next Steps**

As was indicated above the CTL Co-chairs are responsible for conducting the Spring 2014 Faculty In-service. Planning for this professional development began in October and the In-service will take place in early January. The In-service will re-introduce the MCOR review project, will identify those faculty members responsible for MCOR submissions in the semester, and will kick off the process of common course assessment. The NFL 2013 cohort will resume its monthly meeting schedule on January 10, 2014 and the CTL will offer support to the 2011 cohort as they finalize and then present their portfolios on January 31, 2014. The CTL will announce the Spring 2014 professional

development opportunities before February 1. The NFL Co-chairs will begin their work with Senior Instructional Designer Rebecca Reese on the development of an online teaching certification program under the direction of Dr. Fierro. Finally, the CTL Co-chairs will begin the development of a Professional Development Cycle proposal, also under the direction of Dr. Fierro.

## Appendix

Likert-type items measuring perceptions of NFL 2013 project effectiveness

<b>Item</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
1. I understand why am I asked to participate in the NFL 2013.	8	4.6250	.51755
2. I participated in all requirements of the cohort this semester.	8	4.0000	1.06904
3. The workload for the NFL 2013 was connected to my job responsibilities.	8	3.5000	.92582
4. The monthly Friday sessions are too long.	8	3.3750	.74402
5. The monthly Friday sessions help me do my job more effectively.	8	4.0000	.00000
6. The discussion boards help me prepare for the face-to-face sessions.	8	3.8750	.64087
7. The readings (e.g., books, articles) improve my instruction.	8	4.0000	.75593
8. The readings (e.g., books, articles) improve my interaction with my students.	8	3.8750	.64087
9. The reflection blog helps me think about how I can improve my experience at work.	8	3.7500	.88641
10. The observation by Kari/Melissa was helpful.	8	4.5000	.75593
11. The NFL 2013 helped me feel a sense of community with my cohort.	8	4.5000	.75593
12. I felt welcomed into LCCC as a result of NFL 2013 participation.	7	4.0000	1.15470
Valid N (listwise)	7		