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Future Goals and Actions of Faculty Development

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This paper has demonstrated that there is a vital role for campus teaching and learning centers to play in a fluctuating educational landscape, and encourages the collection of more systematic and meaningful assessment data to demonstrate the contribution and future value of this work. Changing demographics, the galvanizing effect of information technologies, dwindling resources, and what we continue to learn about learning all impact the daily work of the campus. The synergy between faculty, faculty development, and student learning can drive institutional culture in promising ways. Faculty development, done well, is adaptive, and designed to instigate expert learning and stimulate student success. The best faculty development assumes faculty can improve their teaching practice (and seek to do so), and strengthens faculty capacity to improve student learning outcomes. Equally encouraging, teaching centers that can productively engage a majority of faculty in teaching development can establish a campus culture of teaching excellence.
Institutional Commitment to Teaching Excellence

The goals of the twenty-first-century teaching and learning center are, by necessity, interconnected and fluid, embodying rapidly shifting roles for faculty, students, and the institution. All are impacted, and each impacts the others. What would future goals look like? What actions make centers of teaching and learning necessary, if not critical, in a changing higher education ecosystem?

We suggest the following three goals, which can activate the promise of faculty development in effecting student learning called for in this paper. They are aspirational. While these goals are dependent upon institutional mission and scope, they directly respond to several critical needs raised throughout this paper, needs that affect the majority of American colleges and universities: the need to establish a culture of teaching excellence, the need to improve instructional quality at scale to reach all students, and in order to do so, the need to make professional faculty development accessible to all faculty. In short, these goals attempt to reach all learners—be they students or colleagues.

GOAL 1: PROFESSIONALIZE UNIVERSITY TEACHING PRACTICE THROUGH PROFESSIONALIZED FACULTY DEVELOPMENT, WITH THE GOAL OF REGULARIZING TEACHING QUALITY ACROSS THE ACADEMY

Faculty developers have played a significant role in training new faculty to teach. Over the past 30 years, professional development programs for graduate students have been established at research universities that produce the PhDs who will go on to instruct students at American colleges and universities (Border 2011). While most universities require some amount of TA preparation for teaching, the extent of the training varies and is heavily weighted to the initial semester of teaching. Concurrently, future-oriented teaching preparation, such as certificates and “Preparing Future Faculty” programs, have surged over the past 20 years. Over 75 American universities now offer teaching certificate programs for their graduate students (von Hoene 2011); a number that will need to increase given that there are 355 doctoral universities and 741 master’s colleges and universities that award graduate degrees in the United States (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education 2016).

As laudable as these programs are, most are voluntary, and not all doctorate-granting institutions offer them. International faculty coming from doctoral programs abroad may not have access or experience with teaching best practice on American campuses. For academic positions at teaching-intensive institutions such as comprehensive state universities, liberal arts colleges, and community colleges, graduate students may be asked to demonstrate teaching outcomes described in Chapter 2 of this paper as part of an interview process or teaching portfolio; however, this practice is variable. Further, many instructors, particularly faculty who teach professional or workforce development courses, come from the private sector. While they bring professional and clinical experience, these instructors may not have had the opportunity to develop formal teaching skills.

Institutions, working with their teaching centers, have a responsibility to ensure that all faculty are taught how to use evidence-based teaching practices, which in turn produce known impacts on student retention and completion rates (see Chapter 5). We recommend that research universities align their certificate programs for graduate students with the outcomes
laid out in Chapter 2 and that all graduate students intending to teach in higher education be required to complete such a program. We also recommend that teaching centers similarly align their new and early career faculty development programs with these outcomes. These alignments would be coupled with ongoing professional development in teaching at all institutional types where PhDs are hired.

This call for increased attention to teaching quality is not new (Boyer 1991; Fairweather 1996, 2002), but has become more pronounced in recent years alongside calls for institutional accountability. Thought leaders William Bowen and Michael McPherson, in Lesson Plan: An Agenda for Change in American Higher Education (2016), write: “we are persuaded that higher education should professionalize the ‘teaching corps’ much as many universities professionalized research staff following World War II and the explosive growth of sponsored research that accompanied it” (124). Research has social and economic value, but so, we are learning, does good teaching (Brown and Kurzweil 2017).

Faculty development itself, perhaps reflecting the lack of standardization attached to teaching that Bowen and McPherson point out, has not yet been codified professionally. This reflects a young field. In 2006, faculty developers reported a concern about the regularization of the profession; regularization is defined here as the creation of graduate programs to prepare faculty developers, a theory of change and developmental model specific to the field, and the identification of a set of core competencies expected of entry-, mid-, and senior-level professionals. Eleven years after this study of the membership of the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network (Sorcinelli 2006), their concern remains (Beach et al. 2016). This matters, as teaching and learning centers are asked to fill in for incoming faculty who may not have had access to professional development in developing teaching skill, detailed above.

Faculty developers are naturally linked to the professionalization of instruction. They hail from and are a product of the academy. They have been socialized into teaching via particular disciplines and programs. Their varied experiences will all impact the type and kind of faculty development offered on a given campus. Expert faculty developers are “meta professionals” (Candy, Crebert, and O’Leary 1994; Candy 1996), used to directing learning organizations (centers), and absent a requirement that college teachers be prepared to teach, must often lead from the middle in developing teaching practice.

Faculty development is at a juncture where expounding a defined body of knowledge, formal pathways to the profession, and consensus on what constitutes research in this area can take the field forward. Other higher education professions such as institutional research, research (Research Administrators Certification Council), student affairs, and professional and continuing education have developed professional practice standards, competencies, or hallmarks to guide their work. Atul Gawande (2009, 2011), in his discussions of codes of professionalism in learned professions such as medicine, architecture, and law, demonstrates that these disciplines have concretely articulated expectation of skill, trustworthiness, and disciplinary practices. For example, in medicine, such competencies are well-defined minimums that must be achieved in order for a resident to advance.

In higher education, faculty who become faculty developers are judged to be good teachers. Evidence of skill is typically based upon the developer’s past performance in the classroom as a faculty member. While there is an established body of literature on how people should teach, implementation of these findings—how faculty developers design and assess faculty development programming—is not standardized. For example, as demonstrated in Chapter 3, there is
currently no standard assessment framework for determining the impact of faculty development center efforts. Faculty developers should not have to do this on their own. The profession can define how it supports directors seeking to institutionalize teaching culture.

For new faculty developers especially, there should be an expectation of programming and assessment competencies, that is, the ability to use principles of andragogy to structure programming, to assess programming (see Chapter 3), and to keep up with a burgeoning literature typically found outside the director’s original discipline. Moreover, it is not uncommon at comprehensive universities and community colleges for faculty to lead a center for a short period before returning to the home discipline. Short-term and part-time directors will struggle to influence teaching success at the scale called for in this paper. For this reason, some centers may be better served by funding full-time administrators who can devote their full attention to gaining competencies in program design that results in changes to teaching practice and improvement of student learning.

**GOAL 2: ENLARGE THE INFLUENCE OF THE FACULTY DEVELOPMENT CENTER AS AN INSTITUTIONAL PLAYER ON CAMPUS**

Faculty development centers often act as unique agents to organizational change (Austin and Sorcinelli 2013; Grupp 2014). Schroeder et al. (2010) suggest that a majority of directors spend substantial time engaged in larger institutional initiatives that advance the quality of teaching and learning. Developers can take a stronger leadership role within the institution and expand
their repertoires to include change management (Austin and Sorcinelli 2013; Cook, Kaplan, and Monts 2011; Gappa, Austin, and Trice 2007; Grupp 2014; Schroeder et al. 2010).

To make the case for the teaching center as institutional player, many faculty developers will be asked to think and work at scale. The individual support model common at many teaching and learning centers is arguably less ideal to influence broader organizational outcomes (Brown and Kurzweil 2017); for example, closing the achievement gap. Kezar and Gehrke (2015), in their study on STEM pedagogical reform, demonstrate that so-called communities of transformation—multiple networks of faculty working on common practice—had the power to address both individual faculty need and to create substantive curricular change. Such campus networks will be necessary if faculty development is intended to reach all faculty, in cases where curricular reform may be desirable/necessary, or if universities intend to reach largely “nontraditional” student bodies (see Introduction and Chapter 5). This work cannot happen without intensifying collaboration efforts. Kezar elsewhere calls increasing collaboration in higher education “an imperative” (Kezar and Lester 2011). How teaching centers (original innovators of FLCs and other communities) convene large teams and build organizational capacity for instructional improvement aimed at student success requires additional attention and practice. Recent scholarship on teaching in higher education points directly to the need for a coherent set of conditions that enhance faculty intrinsic motivation to join (Bensimon 2007; Merriam and Bierema 2014; Wlodkowski and Ginsberg, forthcoming). Scaled efforts may feel new; of 900 faculty surveyed, respondents were suspicious of “alignment” attempts between the department and institutional needs (Kezar, Holcombe, and Maxey 2016).

Farsighted centers and developers are envisioning larger units of change as these impact student learning: networks that have a multiplier effect and assist in making space for the larger community. In the past, centers have hosted multiple year-long faculty learning communities of eight to 15 faculty members (Richlin and Cox 2004); increasingly they include large campus networks, faculty teams in the process of developing student cohorts, instructional improvement through lesson study groups, departmental action teams, and so forth (Corbo et al. 2015). For example, departments with so-called gateway courses—required, lower-division courses featuring multiple sections—might view these less as discrete units than as an opportunity to work with colleagues to vertically and horizontally align, integrate, and deliver a master course with shared outcomes for better learning, especially for courses with high rates of noncompletion (see Chapter 3 for the discussion of FIU’s scaled math initiative). Teamwork is a powerful mode of learning for everyone (Barkley, Major, and Cross 2014), and collaborative learning projects and assignments are a demonstrated high-impact process (Kuh 2008). What is good for students is also effective for faculty; faculty understanding of collaboration also has important implications for student learning. Relative to individual work, cooperation also improves student learning outcomes. “Belonging” is foundational to taking risks to improve instructional practice. Creating an effective learning environment means devising ways to reach the new majority of students within a new paradigm of collaboration and inclusion.

Chapter 3 demonstrated that investing in scalable quality instruction can be a lever to drive improved student outcomes and increased institutional efficiency. To position faculty development centers as direct participants in institution-wide decisions that impact student learning (e.g., program review, academic support, and accreditation), and in institution-wide bodies involved in the assessment of student learning, centers should be included and called upon as regular institutional supports (as are offices of institutional research and assessment). Faculty developers are in a special position to deliver hands-on programming to program
review and accreditation committees, to make connections between the art of teaching and program impacts. Centers are able to promote instructional expertise within and across departments and programs, and to connect instruction with evidence-based student learning, with particular emphases on enhancing motivation and learning outcomes among historically underserved students. Indeed, there are strong connections between faculty development and improvements in instructional quality (Styron, Michaelsen, and Styron 2015). As shown in Chapter 3, investing in scalable quality instruction can be a lever to drive improved outcomes for all students and increased institutional efficiency.

Another opportunity for faculty development centers is to harness the influence that information technology plays in both pedagogy and center workflow. For some time, faculty development leaders have argued for centers to work with faculty to enhance technological literacy as this supports student learning; faculty development leaders also support housing academic technology units such as media labs within the centers (Lee 2010). What centers of teaching and learning often do more effectively than IT centers can, is showing faculty how to use emerging technologies in pedagogically effective ways and, in certain contexts, what technologies to avoid using. This move is not without challenges. Learning technologies groups do their work very well, and IT center budgets and personnel lines typically outflank those of faculty development centers. (Why is beyond the scope of this publication.) But are separate units for teaching and technology either faculty-centered or cost effective? Does housing these apart improve teaching quality? In reality, a faculty technology need is often a teaching need. Combining teaching and technology centers would reach faculty at a single point of need. Housing technology either within or adjacent to a teaching and learning center would also privilege teaching, a missional activity.

Overall, centers are most directly collaborating with technology centers, at the college level with deans, with libraries, and with assessment offices (in that order). Some collaboration with centers for service learning, writing programs, offices of diversity/inclusion, and graduate schools/TA development also occurs (Beach et al. 2016). Some centers even collaborate with faculty development centers on other (feeder) campuses. These integrated and cooperative models reflect a model that can be used by other centers in being proactive to a campus’s needs.

The future of faculty development is best contextualized within challenges to higher education, operating under fiscal constraints, changes in student demographics, emerging technologies, and expansions in faculty work roles, and in a growing culture of accountability. Centers are also subject to scrutiny and will be called upon to demonstrate their efficacy. Faculty developers must be ready to demonstrate programming impacts on both student and faculty learning. The hard work of assessment can also move the field forward by making a case for the primacy of teaching practice.

Actions

- Scale faculty development by designing programming that impacts multi-section curricula or large numbers of students, using a course, department, or program as the unit of measure.
- Position the center as a campus collaborator in accreditation, program review, and related campus-change assessment efforts.
• Privilege teaching and learning centers as the first point of need for faculty.
• Consider relocating campus IT training units adjacent to or within teaching and learning centers, to both privilege university teaching and to create a single service point for faculty.
• Consider providing train-the-trainer models of support for staff, e.g., advisors, student affairs personnel, and others; these staff are influential and often underutilized, especially on under-resourced campuses.

GOAL 3: SUPPORT THE TEACHING DEVELOPMENT OF DIVERSE FACULTY USING COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES, AND DIVERSIFY THE FIELD OF FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Chapter 2 of this paper identified the role that the faculty developer plays in equipping faculty with knowledge and skills critical to improving teaching practice, including the development of inclusive and ethical learning environments (22). Goal 3 of this chapter extends inclusive practice to the teaching and learning center itself, which should strive to accommodate rapidly increasing numbers of contingent faculty, as well as diverse faculty.

Every center of teaching and learning tries to respond to and support faculty members and their goals for teaching development across the career span. Such assistance has helped tens of thousands of colleagues, building out relationships that slowly grow a campus culture of collaboration. Individual consultation remains one of the top approaches used by teaching centers to provide service, and studies on the efficacy of the approach found a statistically significant and positive connection between consultative feedback offered by centers and teaching effectiveness scores (Finelli, Pinder-Grover, and Wright 2011). Smaller networks and communities of practice have also provided a sense of community and accomplishment. The faculty learning community, an approach, pioneered by faculty development experts, are one example of using a collaborative model to improve practice with demonstrated positive outcomes in a number of areas related to better teaching and enriched student learning (Richlin and Cox 2004).

But do we reach everyone? One concern is the limited access that non-tenure track (NTT) faculty have to professional development. Contingent faculty are a substantial and growing population, if not the majority on many campuses, yet adjuncts report limited access to professional development programming (Eagan et al. 2014). Meanwhile, NTT faculty teach a majority of mission-critical undergraduate courses on many campuses. There is some early evidence that first-year students learn more from their NTT instructors, and that contingent faculty are better at working with disadvantaged students (Figlio, Schapiro, and Soter 2015) than their tenured counterparts. Contingent faculty numbers are only expected to grow (American Association of University Professors n.d.; Taylor 2017). Centers of teaching and learning should plan to reach this dynamic population using different modalities; for example, by offering professional development online (see Chapter 5 for discussion of institutional responsibility for NTT professional development).

The rise in NTT faculty teaching across the majority of American colleges and universities signals a generational shift in faculty roles. On many campuses, community remains an unmet
need (Kezar, Holcombe, and Maxey 2016). Despite a significant body of research on the benefits and relevance of groups that collaborate for personal fulfillment and scholarship, as well as examining and improving instruction, most faculty still spend most of their time working alone. Faculty labor remains qualitatively different from most other professions (Bozeman and Gaughan 2011). Consensus is low on how to move forward. Kezar, Holcombe, and Maxey (2016) surveyed 1,500 faculty and administrators on the changing roles of the professoriate and found strong agreement on the need to restore professionalism and ways to do so—including increasing emphasis on importance of teaching and adoption of Boyer’s (1991) broad definition of scholarship—but low perceptions of agreement and feasibility of change.

Centers understand the role that collaboration plays in fostering community; literature is rich with the influence of groups on adult learning (e.g., faculty learning communities). The study of the power of cooperative learning is particularly illustrative for faculty who seek a sense of belonging: a meta-analysis of 375 relevant experimental studies in which research participants varied in age, economic class, and cultural background (Johnson 2003) and several other peer-reviewed studies (Johnson and Johnson 2012, Johnson and Taylor 2006; Barkley, Major, and Cross 2014) support the finding that when adults learn cooperatively, they tend to develop supportive relationships—including relationships across sociocultural and linguistic groups. Cooperative learning about teaching creates an environment in which learners can construct and extend their understanding, receive interpersonal feedback about how well they are performing in the classroom, be held accountable by their peers to practice and learn procedures and skills, and develop a “voice” (Rendón 1994) to validate their own learning.

Cooperative learning is especially beneficial for diverse faculty bodies. Collaboration yields unexpected benefits for women, faculty of color, and NTT members, many of whom continue to struggle with “belonging” in the academy (Gutiérrez y Muhs et al. 2012; Zambrana et al. 2015). Faculty of color, increasingly the face of their students on many campuses, report isolating and unwelcoming work environments (Zambrana et al. 2015), and say they must work harder than colleagues to be taken seriously as scholars (Eagan et al. 2014; Gutiérrez y Muhs 2012). Women in higher education continue to wrestle with these issues, as well as tenure challenges (Meyers 2012).

The benefits of collaboration normalize behavior and influence practice. High-quality mentoring often occurs in such communities (Kezar and Gehrke 2015). Kezar and Gehrke’s STEM study (2015) found that female faculty reported statistically significantly greater benefits resulting from their participation in such communities compared with their male counterparts. In a second longitudinal study, mutual mentoring networks in research and teaching attracted 40 percent of all full-time instructional faculty on one campus, with women and faculty of color overrepresented (Yun, Baldi, and Sorcinelli 2016). Female faculty are more likely than their male counterparts to participate in faculty professional development.

(Diverse) faculty will continue to seek out such networks. Faculty developers have a privilege and a duty to help foster community here. Ironically, the demographics of faculty development are largely white, female, and aging. Like the professoriate itself, the field lacks diversity. Given the likely large number of retirements among faculty developers in the next decade, the demographics argue for a careful consideration regarding the career path into the field and attention to expanding the diversity of faculty developers (Beach et al. 2016). It remains for the profession to advocate for the critical roles that contingent and diverse faculty play in contributing to the university.
Developers can also combine this pressing need for community with culturally inclusive programming support that extends to students; for example, remediating pedagogical relationships and including culturally inclusive pedagogy in coursework (Dowd and Bensimon 2015). It is telling that many faculty report feeling unprepared to address diversity-related conflict in the classroom (Dowd and Bensimon 2015; Eagan et al. 2014), at a time when students are entering college in hugely diverse numbers (Musu-Gillette et al. 2016). Higher education is racially polarized. Here is an opportunity for centers to craft programming on this timely issue—to also “teach for diversity” (Adams, Bell, and Griffin 2007).

Faculty remain the principal constituency charged with fulfilling the instructional mission of the academy. They are finally responsible for achieving standards of excellence and student success. Faculty work in cohorts produces results at scale, focuses on what is best for students, and is cost-effective (Brown and Kurzweil 2017). In fact, it is precisely diverse collaborations that can bear the most fruit (Nelson 2014). Communal practice often clarifies and helps to make explicit unexamined connections between teaching effectiveness, faculty identity, student need, and institutional mission.

**Actions**

- Design and assess mentoring networks and mutual mentoring programs that reach women and faculty of color.
- Develop and assess programming and outreach specifically for contingent faculty, now the dominant teaching population at American colleges and universities (see Chapter 5 for discussion of institutional commitment to contingent faculty).
- Attract, develop, and support networks of faculty and administrators of color to engage and help to shape the work of faculty development (see Chapter 5 for further discussion of institutional commitment).

**CONCLUSION**

There is a vital role for campus teaching and learning centers to play in achieving student learning outcomes and, more broadly, institutional effectiveness. With student learning at the heart of higher education, what could be more important than educating and supporting the faculty who are charged with teaching those students? Faculty development centers are positioned to do just this, but to date have failed to develop a set of unifying principles within the profession that would garner necessary support from institutional leaders and address some of the most pressing needs facing higher education today. To these issues, we put forth and provided the evidence for three aspirational goals:

- Professionalize teaching practice through professionalized faculty development, with the goal of standardizing teaching quality across the academy.
- Enlarge the influence of the faculty development center as an institutional player on campus.
- Support the teaching development of diverse faculty, and diversify the field of faculty development.
REFERENCES


