

The WMU Office of Faculty Development Statement of Philosophy

This is an especially demanding time for the professoriate, as we are challenged by “changing expectations, multiple demands, and issues of new knowledge and skills, globalization, competition, accountability, multiculturalism and the influence of technology” (Newman, Couturier & Scurry, 2004 as cited in Sorcinelli, Austin, Eddy & Beach, 2006, p. 157). Faculty are being asked to strengthen our teaching and research, transform our instructional practices to fit a learning-centered rather than a teaching-centered paradigm, to work with increasingly diverse students (racially, ethnically, generationally, and academically). In addition, we are being asked to employ new teaching and learning technologies in meaningful ways, and to create more sophisticated measures of student success (Sorcinelli, et al., 2006). To meet shifting expectations for which we may not be fully prepared, faculty need academic support and professional learning opportunities.

Institutions are facing increased competition and tightening of resources, at a time when we are called upon to be more responsive to industry and society needs and expectations. In this dual context of change and constraint, universities require committed, energetic, and effective faculty members who can respond to multiple expectations, engage in revenue-producing activities, and maintain the highest level of quality in our work (Sorcinelli, et al., 2006). Providing institutional support for faculty members facing changing contexts and new demands is a key strategic choice for institutions striving to excel in challenging times. As Sorcinelli et al. (2006) conclude from a national study of faculty development, “colleges and universities committed to high productivity and quality will be well advised to situate faculty development at the center of their institutional planning” (p.27).

The WMU Office of Faculty Development is guided by the philosophy that the most effective faculty development serves as an institutional change lever by aligning with institutional priorities as well as faculty interests in intentional and transparent ways. It not only addresses the needs of faculty in the present but also anticipates future needs through environmental scanning; introduces cutting edge, research-based approaches to teaching, assessment of learning, and leadership development; and engages in scholarship that can guide future programs.

In serving faculty development needs, the Office of Faculty Development is guided by the philosophy that sustained, collaborative, approaches to supporting faculty change are the most effective, and that faculty development should take a holistic view of faculty roles and work life. This philosophy is evident in the programming approaches the center uses, and in the content of program offerings. It is reflected in the mission of the center, its goals, the outcomes it strives to achieve, and the ways it assesses those outcomes.

The WMU Office of Faculty Development Mission and Goals, Objectives, Programs, and Assessment

The mission of the WMU Office of Faculty Development is to foster a culture of faculty work at Western Michigan University that promotes student success, faculty growth and vitality, and institutional excellence. The Office will achieve this mission through collaboration with various institutional units and programming and to achieve the following goals:

Provide leadership and support for **innovation** in teaching

Sustain the **growth** of faculty across the career span and across disciplines

Develop **leadership** capacity across all levels of the university, and

Support and engage in **scholarship** that extends the knowledge base in these arenas

Provide leadership and support for innovation in teaching

As a student-centered research university, Western Michigan University continually seeks to improve the learning experiences of its undergraduate students. Research (e.g., Beach, Henderson & Famiono, 2007; Beach & Cox, forthcoming; Cox, 2001; Henderson & Dancy, 2007) suggests that instructors need extended collaboration and support to explore innovative teaching approaches and to integrate those new ideas with our own unique preferences, instructional situations, and skills. Traditional faculty development approaches (e.g., isolated workshops, brown-bag series, and “one-shot” opportunities) may generate interest among faculty in student-centered teaching innovations, but do little to help faculty build the knowledge and skills to actually innovate in our classrooms (Beach, Henderson, & Famiono, 2007; Emerson & Mosteller, 2000; Sorcinelli, Austin, Eddy & Beach, 2006). The sustained collaboration and support at the heart of “high-impact” faculty development is designed to help instructors at all levels (board appointed faculty, adjunct and part time faculty, and graduate students) develop the skills necessary to implement powerful pedagogies in our teaching. Regardless of whether courses are face-to-face or on-line, large or small, powerful pedagogies emphasize strong instructional design that maximizes student engagement (Kuh, Pace & Vesper, 1997) and emerges from a belief that teaching and learning must be student-centered (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999; Trigwell & Prosser, 1996). Such teaching plays a critical role in the WMU commitment to increase student success.

OFD programming will:

- Explore the development and learning of millennial college students and other contemporary learners
- Challenge faculty ideas of teaching and learning
- Examine various research and theory based approaches to college instruction
- Support the implementation of new and innovative approaches by instructors

Assist faculty in assessing our instructional practice and using that assessment to refine our teaching approaches

Programs:

Powerful Pedagogies

E-teaching Endorsement and Master E-teacher Community

Blended Learning Seminar

Faculty Learning Communities on Active and Collaborative Teaching, General Education, and other topics

Faculty travel to teaching-related conferences

Outcomes:

Increase teaching efficacy – in face-to-face, blended, hybrid, and online teaching environments

Increase faculty engagement in new and innovative teaching approaches and authentic student learning assessment strategies

Increase the number of faculty engaging in teaching that incorporates the highest levels of Bloom's Taxonomy

Increase student engagement in learning through faculty teaching practices

Increase student centered teaching, decrease faculty centered teaching

Increase the development and use of faculty self-assessment beyond student rating forms

Sustain the growth of faculty across the career span and across disciplines

Significant research has pointed to the need for socialization and support of new faculty (Austin, 2003; Baldwin, 1990; Boice, 1991; Rice, Sorcinelli, & Austin, 2000; Sorcinelli & Austin, 1992), the need to help mid-career faculty keep current and interested in teaching and research (Baldwin, Lundsford & Vanderlinden, 2005) and the need to support the continued engagement, productivity, and satisfaction of experienced and senior faculty (Bland & Bergquist, 1997; Camblin & Steger, 2000). In addition, significant research indicates the need to support future faculty, that is, to help graduate students prepare for our faculty careers (Austin, 2002, 2003; Gaff, 2002; Golde, 2000; 2005; Golde & Dore, 2000, 2001; Rice, Sorcinelli, & Austin, 2000). No career stage of faculty should be neglected if WMU wishes to retain the best new faculty and maximize the vitality of all faculty (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). Particularly in tight economic times, the significant investment WMU makes in hiring faculty and graduate student instructors should be augmented with the support to help faculty at all career stages be strong and engaged contributors to the whole university community.

Likewise, different disciplines have differing conceptions of teaching and learning and of best approaches for instructional change (Beach, Henderson, Finkelstein & Larson, 2008; Henderson, Beach, Finkelstein & Larson, 2008). Faculty development programming that treats faculty as a monolithic group can be seen as irrelevant, particularly to faculty in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines. Effective approaches to faculty development need to offer opportunities to contextualize teaching and learning within particular academic disciplines. It is

important that the Office of Faculty Development support disciplinary efforts to help faculty improve our teaching.

OFD programming will:

- Provide orientation and ongoing socialization for faculty new to WMU
- Support the development of graduate student instructors
- Encourage the development of new teaching competencies for experienced faculty
- Partner with and seek guidance from multiple faculty groups on campus to serve the needs of faculty at all career stages
- Provide matching funding, consultation, and leadership for college, department, and program specific faculty development initiatives

Programs:

- New Faculty Orientation
- New Faculty Seminar
- Senior Faculty Learning Community (developed from the results of the Millennial Student Task Force)
- “Preparing Future Faculty” and graduate student instructor development
- Departmental and Unit Professional Development Fund

Outcomes:

- Increase satisfaction and retention of new faculty
- Increase teaching and research competencies of new faculty (by lessening “start up” time and stress)
- Increase engagement of experienced faculty in innovative teaching
- Increase satisfaction of experienced faculty
- Increase teaching competencies of graduate student instructors
- Increase “marketability” of graduate student instructors
- Increase engagement in faculty development of traditionally “low engagement” disciplines

Develop leadership capacity across all levels of the university.

Part of Western Michigan University’s mission is to provide leadership in teaching and learning through participation with diverse perspectives in a responsive and ethical community setting. Johnston and Westwood (2007) identify a number of challenges in universities that require enlightened leadership: revitalizing and energizing colleagues to meet the challenges of tough times; the academic role as an agent of change; and ambiguity arising from having academic and non-academic personnel in leadership roles within the same organization. Changes in the policy environment of higher educational institutions also lead to changes in academic conditions, including: longer hours; pressure to publish; more administrative tasks; and loss of collegiality (Knight & Trowler, 2001). To respond to these challenges, the Center for Faculty Excellence seeks to promote leadership competencies for faculty, staff, chairs and

administrators (Ramsden, 1998). Leadership development is particularly critical to mid-career faculty development as faculty grow into new roles (Baldwin, Lundsford, & Vanderlinden, 2005).

OFD programming will:

Help faculty, administrators, and staff collaboratively explore leadership from various perspectives and levels within the university

Challenge faculty and university staff to explore our own leadership potential and to see themselves as leaders

Support the development of leadership competencies in faculty, staff, chairs, and administrators

Programs:

Academic Leadership Academy

Chair development

Partnerships with professional associations and organization that foster leadership opportunities for WMU members

e.g., Hosting of MI-ACE Women's Network Annual Conference – 2010/2011

Outcomes:

Increase satisfaction of faculty, administrators, and staff members with our roles in the university

Increase the understanding of different sub-cultures, priorities and functions across the institution among faculty, staff, chairs, and administrators

Increase the competencies of faculty, staff, chairs, and administrators to lead effective meetings, supervise subordinates, work with multi-unit teams, and manage projects.

Support and engage in scholarship that extends the knowledge base in these arenas

There is a wealth of knowledge in the scholarly literature on what constitutes good teaching (e.g., Angelo, 1993; Beach, Henderson, Finkelstein, & Larson, 2008; Felder & Brent, 1996, Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 1991, 1998; McKeachie, 1990; Menges & Austin, 2001; Menges & Weimer, 1996; Weimer, 2002). There is also significant literature on best practices in faculty and professional development for universities (Sorcinelli, Austin, Eddy, & Beach, 2006). Too often, however, centers for teaching and learning or faculty development do not have the leadership or resources to serve as a nexus for research on teaching and learning, assessment, or instructional change. It is a primary goal of the WMU Center for Faculty Excellence to serve a leadership role on campus in the ongoing investigation of college-level teaching and faculty development practice. The center will do so by fostering quality Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) (Boyer, 1990; Felder, 2000; McKinney, 2007), in collaboration with the UASC and other campus entities, as well as collaborating on original, funded research. The center will also serve, long-term, as a leader in scholarship that addresses change strategies for and assessment of faculty development.

OFD will:

- Support the development and implementation of SoTL across disciplines in the University
- Support the recognition of the importance of SoTL as valid and valuable research
- Conduct original research on instructional change strategies that can be implemented at WMU and other institutions
- Conduct original research on the assessment of faculty development outcomes

Programs/Projects:

- SoTL workshop and research (in collaboration with the UASC, Institutional Effectiveness, and the Graduate College)
- Active and Collaborative Learning FLC SoTL project (Beeson, Gabel-Goes, Kelaher-Young, Moser, & Weideman)
- E-teaching faculty identity research (Anderson, Horvitz, Beach & Decker – in progress)
- STEM Instructional Change (HSD, REESE I, REESE II proposal, PIRE proposal – Henderson, Beach, et al.)
- Teacher Beliefs (Kelaher-Young & Beach)

Outcomes:

- Increase presentations and publications of WMU faculty -- increasing institutional recognition as a leader in scholarship
- Increase in grants and contracts for teaching and learning related research at WMU

Assessment

In support of WMU's obligation and commitment to meet the accreditation criteria of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association (in particular Criterion 3 regarding student learning and effective teaching), The Office of Faculty Development will assess the impact and effectiveness of the faculty development programming proposed here. Assessment will include:

- tracking the needs and interests of instructors for development experiences, as well as participation in all programs;
- implementation, where appropriate, of pre-tests and post-tests of knowledge gain and attitude change regarding teaching and learning topics;
- collection of "products" and "artifacts" produced from participation in faculty development activities (e.g., revised syllabi reflecting new approaches to teaching and learning; new student support materials, websites, and Blackboard modules; outcomes of data collection and analysis within classes measuring student learning), and
- follow-up data collection from participants regarding changes in our teaching practice.
- A peer review of programs in Year 3 by an external faculty development expert

Such assessment activities will serve the Office's aim to "research and implement new faculty development strategies and techniques to foster enhanced teaching and learning" as well as provide the university with evidence of teaching effectiveness and improvement. Such assessments will also

contribute to the Office's aim to take a leadership role in developing stronger assessment of the outcomes of faculty development nationally and internationally.

An annual report of the faculty development activities, our assessment, and our outcomes will be prepared and disseminated to the university community.

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