

Faculty Learning Communities FAQs

You are invited to explore this background information about Faculty Learning Communities (FLC) and then discuss potential uses of FLC with ACET staff. Roberta Ambrosino will call to make an appointment to discuss your ideas.

The Academic Center for Excellence in Teaching is pleased to offer a workshop designed to prepare interested faculty members to facilitate faculty learning communities. We need your help identifying faculty who may be interested in facilitating an FLC.

What is a faculty learning community?

A group of 8-12 faculty members

- Who work together for a minimum of 10 hours during each semester for two semesters
- Whose focus is on an issue(s) related to improving teaching and learning
- Who represent different disciplines
- Who are self-directed

Why develop FLCs?

- To improve teaching skills
- To improve teaching environments
- To improve student outcomes
- To share knowledge, skills, and ideas with colleagues

UTHSCSA Mission Statement

The mission of The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio is to serve the needs of the citizens of Texas, the nation, and the world through programs committed to excellence and designed to ... educate a diverse student body to become excellent health care providers and scientists. <http://www.uthscsa.edu/op/mission.asp>

What are the outcomes of an FLC?

- Implement at least one new or improved teaching strategy
- Improve teaching and learning outcomes at UT Health Science Center
- Develop a culture of collaborative partnerships among faculty

Who may participate?

- Any full-time or part-time UT Health Science Center faculty member with a passion for teaching
- Faculty hired within the last two years are especially encouraged to join
- An FLC will benefit from diverse faculty perspectives on teaching challenges and successes.

What are the participants' responsibilities?

- Attend a series of small group discussions about teaching and learning
- Assist in developing FLC goals
- Develop individual goals and objectives

What are the facilitators' responsibilities?

- Bring teaching wisdom and experience to the effort
- Provide opportunities to cause change in the teaching and learning environment

- Listen to issues, challenges, and opportunities brought up by FLC participants and from others and then communicate the issues and opportunities to other faculty and to administrators
- Find and direct human and social capital, sometimes in unexpected ways such as discovering talented colleagues, encouraging new teaching procedures, and opening windows of opportunity for change

Assessment

Accreditation agencies now look more closely at effective faculty development support offered by institutions. Assessment provides evidence of success when a strong case for continued funding and support is needed. FLC assessment can be used in accreditation reports. A mid-year and final evaluation and report in addition to evaluations of each seminar provide evidence of success and ways to improve various aspects of the community. Pre- and post-community syllabi are collected to illustrate changes inspired by FLC participation. Each participant selects a focus course and prepares a course mini-portfolio for their focus course (Cox, 2008, p.183).

Imagine a Faculty Learning Community in your Department/Division

Here at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio we believe that teaching and learning matter. Faculty Learning Communities are a sustained opportunity to set and achieve goals in a collegial, community atmosphere. Typically, the budget for an FLC is minimal and can be adapted to your needs.

The Academic Center for Excellence in Teaching will train your facilitators and serve as program coordinator. Call today to start making arrangements or just to find out more.

References

Cox, M.D. (2008). *Faculty learning community: Program director's handbook and facilitator's handbook* (5th ed.). Oxford, Ohio: Miami University.

UT Health Science Center at San Antonio. (2009). *Office of the President, Mission Statement*. Retrieved April 7, 2009, from <http://www.uthscsa.edu/op/mission.asp>.



SHP 2008-2009 Faculty Learning Community on Critical Thinking