

Center for Academic Excellence

Year End Report
2014-2015 Academic Year

This academic year, the Center for Academic Excellence continued to explore new ways to offer professional development opportunities to the faculty and staff at Millersville University. Traditionally, the CAE has mostly offered stand-alone, face-to-face sessions on specific topics of interest. Over the last two years, however, the CAE has worked to extend faculty engagement and participation over longer periods of time with the hope of having more impact.

Faculty Learning Communities:

In the Spring 2013, the CAE offered its first Faculty Learning Community built up on the book *Seven Research Based Principles for Smart Teaching*. Faculty Learning Communities are unique in that the group engages with a selected topic over the course of several weeks during the semester. For instance, during AY 2013-2014, the CAE supported three more FLCs focusing on different topics (sustainability, innovative teaching, visible learning). During this academic year, the CAE continued its support of FLCs across campus. In Fall 2014, Dr. Jeff Adams led a FLC that read and discussed *The Making of a Scientist* with a dozen science and math faculty. Dr. Carrie Smith and Dr. Oliver Dreon led two separate FLCs that discussed *How College Works*. Across the three FLCs, over 35 faculty members participated in these groups this academic year.

MU Levels Up:

During the Fall 2014 semester, the Center for Academic Excellence offered a game-based professional development activity examining gamification in education. The activity lasted for a full week and involved faculty participating in both online and face-to-face environments. Designed as a game, more than 20 faculty members from across campus “competed” to accrue points and successfully complete ten challenges that taught the principles and application of gamification in education.

Paperless Campus Day:

Designed to support the reduction in paper usage across campus, this daylong event held in September 2014 involved over 25 faculty from the different colleges on campus. The event examined ways to create paper-free assignments and strategies to incorporate online grading in classes. While the event was one in a host of supporting activities designed to reduce paper consumption across campus, statistics from the Fall 2014 semester shows some of the impact of these efforts. Paper consumption across campus was reduced by 47% from Fall 2013.

Camp IDEA:

This week-long event is a joint program offered through the CAE, Instructional & Technology Support and the Associate Provost for Academic Administration. Over the last academic year, over 25 faculty members attended Camp IDEA where

strategies for incorporating innovative instructional methods and assessment strategies are taught. Camp IDEA is offered in January and May each year.

Lancaster Learns:

Planned as a collaborative activity with seven other institutions of higher education in Lancaster County, Lancaster Learns was created to promote quality teaching and learning by building capacity for evidence-based pedagogy and learner-centered instruction. Over 120 faculty from participating institutions attended the daylong event with 8 Millersville faculty members presenting sessions. Dr. Shaun Cook, assistant professor of Psychology, served as one of the plenary speakers during the event. In addition to the presenters, more than 15 Millersville faculty members attended the event in February 2015.

Professional Development sessions:

The CAE facilitated 26 face-to-face sessions this academic year, which was less than the 60 offered last year. Several factors led to this reduction in programming. First, more effort was placed on engaging faculty in long-term professional development activities. Second, the CAE has traditionally partnered with the Office of Academic Advisement to plan a series of sessions in the Fall and Spring semesters. Those sessions were not offered this academic year. Lastly, following survey data from previous years, faculty felt that too many sessions were held each semester and that the CAE should offer fewer sessions to encourage more attendance at individual sessions. Last academic year, over 448 attendees participated in CAE-sponsored events, with an average of 7.46 people attending each session. This year, 283 attendees participated in CAE-sponsored sessions with an average of 10.88 people attending each session.

In addition to these face-to-face sessions, the Center offers “Monday Morning Mentors” through a subscription service through the Teaching Professor. These short, online sessions were available on-demand each Monday and over 185 faculty members attended one of the 30 online mentor sessions offered through the academic year.

While the number of face-to-face sessions declined, the overall reach of the CAE is consistent with past academic years. This can be attributed to continuing to explore additional engagement opportunities for faculty. For instance, a trial recording face-to-face sessions and offering the on-demand through MU Video was conducted this spring. 18 people attended the face-to-face session on Supporting Economically Disadvantaged Students. Over 20 people have viewed the recorded version of the session that is available on MU Video. Exploring additional opportunities for using video will be examined in the 2015-2016 academic year.

Faculty Perceptions of the Center for Academic Excellence:

Looking at the data from the year-end survey that was sent out in May 2014, the events offered by the CAE are valued by staff both for their professional development and for their connection to the campus community.

