Reflect and Synthesize

The Faculty Development Center (FDC) works together common threads from faculty discussions, the FDC’s assessment of literature on student engagement, and areas of institutional interest. Connecting engaged learning to institutional priorities, this analysis of student evaluations, feedback from faculty, and new priorities for faculty development, including a focus on teaching and learning.

Recent scholarly focus on engaged learning has created a need for a new way of thinking about how to engage students in their learning. "The purpose of this paper is to reflect and synthesize the literature on engaged learning and to propose a model for faculty development that can be used to assess and improve centers for teaching and learning.

Foster Student Ownership of Learning

We seek to develop our students’ intrinsic motivation while also understanding how to engage them in learning. By creating an environment where students feel that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to move forward, we can encourage them to participate actively in their learning. This environment includes creating a culture of inclusiveness, where all students feel welcome and supported.

Build Relationships and Communities

Research shows that students learn best when their learning is social and collaborative, and students who feel a sense of belonging are more motivated to participate and succeed. We work to create relationships—both instructor to student and student to student—and to promote a sense of collective identity and belonging among students.

Create a Network of Opportunities

We strive to help faculty become aware of the many services and opportunities available to them, and to develop partnerships with the faculty, learning communities, and other stakeholders.

Promote Inclusion Through Active Learning

We believe that great things happen when students work together to become leaders, innovators, and thinkers. By creating a culture of inclusion, we can help students develop the skills they need to succeed in today’s world. This includes providing opportunities for students to work in small groups, collaborate on projects, and engage in active learning experiences.

Create, Workshop, and Vet

After drafting five central principles of engaged learning, the FDC worked with the institutional priorities and the faculty to develop a platform for supporting engaged learning across the institution.

Align Center Activities with Principles and Share with Stakeholders

• Focus principles in technology trainings and webinars
• Update and restructure center’s website and communications to prioritize elements of engaged learning platform
• Consider new programming to further underdeveloped areas of the platform
• Re-center workshop offerings around principles of engaged learning, create new materials for individual consultations
• Use principles to guide them in regular meetings, such as learning communities and teaching faculty meetings
• Use principles to explain center’s priorities to various stakeholders (faculty, academic partners, committees, department chairs, deans)

Institutional Outcomes

• Increased participation in FDC programs (RTC)
• Broad representation of faculty development: formation of a new working group for sharing student and faculty opportunities and resources
• Enhanced faculty engagement with academic partners and campus resources: creation of annual faculty networking event designed to address the principle Create a Network of Opportunities
• Broadening of collective learning values across the institution: new draft of University Core Values now includes language directly from or inspired by the engaged learning principles

Future Plans and Closing the Loop

• Assessment: FDC’s planned assessment for 2018 will evaluate the various impacts of these principles on instructor teaching practices and attitudes.
• Teaching: Tools: To provide example insights learned from RTE conversations, the FDC’s consultations and workshops, and other institutional committees and learning communities into a useful handbook of effective teaching practices, organized by these 5 principles.
• Closing the Loop: edit principles to incorporate ideas of current interest in RTE, such as student success, civic engagement, and transparent teaching.

Reflect

Leverage faculty expertise and interest in engagement, use learning community conversations as laboratory for developing ideas

Synthesize

Bring together teaching and learning literature, assessment data, individual and institutional knowledge, & institutional priorities

Workshop

Draft principles collaboratively, drawing on language introduced in faculty learning communities

Align

Solicit feedback from invested faculty, learning communities, academic partners, and academic leadership

Share

Use principles to inform center’s priorities and new programming; update materials to highlight and enhance these principles

Distribute principles to faculty and use principles to explain center’s priorities to stakeholders

References