Universal Teaching & Learning workgroup Recommendations

Rationale:

A consistent student experience is crucial to ensuring students stay on the path to their degree. In addition, all students are better served if universal design principles are normalized across the curriculum. In order to achieve consistency and universal access, and thereby improve student outcomes, the UT&L workgroup will focus on recommendations regarding policies and resources to shift our culture to focus on inclusive active learning student-centered modalities.

I. **Establish a Teaching & Learning Center:** In order to keep students on the path to graduation, it is essential that instructors (full time and adjunct faculty) have extensive resources, support, and ongoing opportunity for on campus professional development. Integrating professional development throughout the semester, especially on an as-needed basis, is an essential component in creating a student-focused instructional culture. To that end, we recommend that MVCC establish a teaching and learning center that has both an extensive website presence and physical infrastructure. The beginning of a website is already available at https://www.mvcc.edu/teaching/index.php, but this should be advertised and instructors should be highly encouraged to fully utilize these resources and contribute content suggestions. In addition, there is ample opportunity to create additional essential resources that will be housed in the teaching center. Some resources that are needed include:

   A. Instructional design and educational technology resources should be integrated into TLC

   B. Syllabus templates that are founded on universal design principles, and meet Middle States & SUNY requirements.

   C. Provide central technology support with instructional design procedures and resources for course design structure to create consistency in design and training faculty and content experts on the influencing adoption of new instructional technologies, with universal design of learning principles in mind.

   D. An electronic full-time & adjunct handbook with answers to basic questions about campus

   E. Online recordings of professional development activities

   F. Summaries of conference experiences, slides, resource materials, etc by employees

G. Produce online modules with badges for important areas of professional development, including student-centered pedagogy, metacognition, and other instructional strategies supported by current research.

H. Create a combination of modes, including virtual reality/online resources, face-to-face mixers (like brown bag lunches and evening presentations during the semester) for employee interaction and development

I. Provide centralized online information about who to contact for any type of instructional issue

J. Examples of TLC include:

1. https://researchguides.austincc.edu/facultytoolbox
2. https://www.geneseo.edu/tlc
3. https://suny.oneonta.edu/teaching-learning-technology-center
4. https://cpd.suny.edu/

II.   Revise professional development & annual review process:

A. Clarify and quantify the professional development requirements in the promotion process to specify a minimum amount and/or type of professional development required to reach the next rank.

B. Create online modules/badges for important areas of professional development including equity, diversity, universal design principles, as well as the following competencies based on Instructor Competencies by Klein et. al (p 24)

1. Communicate effectively.
2. Update and improve one's professional knowledge and skills.
3. Comply with established ethical and legal standards.
4. Establish and maintain professional credibility.
5. Planning instructional methods and materials.
6. Prepare for instruction.
7. Stimulate and sustain learner motivation and engagement.
8. Demonstrate effective presentation skills.
9. Demonstrate effective facilitation skills.
10. Demonstrate effective questioning skills.
11. Provide clarification and feedback.
12. Promote retention of knowledge and skills.
13. Promote transfer of knowledge and skills.
14. Use media and technology to enhance learning and performance.
15. Assess learning and performance.
16. Evaluate instructional effectiveness.
17. Manage an environment that fosters learning and performance.
18. Manage the instructional practice through the appropriate use of

technology.

III.   Supplemental Instruction:

An [extensive literature](#) survey is available for review.

A. Encourage greater collaboration between instructor and peer tutors, especially through joint trainings in the TLC

B. Create supplemental instruction spaces where faculty can hold office hours

C. Develop a process to embed peer tutors in classes, especially first year courses. These peer tutors should have:
    1. At least 1 semester of college
    2. Content instructor recommendation
    3. Meet minimum GPA requirements
    4. Attended specialized training at the TLC to learn to foster engagement in class

D. Explore making online supplemental instruction available by surveying students' experiences with Spring 2020. Current practice during normal terms is to require students to request online tutoring; evaluate adding the option in the existing tutor scheduling system.

IV.   Hiring practices:

Create a more equity minded and diverse culture using principles from ["Recruiting a More Diverse Workforce"](#) from Berkley, as well as other resources.

A. Carefully draft the job advertisement. Use appropriate and comprehensive Equal Opportunity Employment (EOE)/Affirmative Action (AA) language. It is recommended that our EOE/AA be rewritten to include best practices. For example:
    - *"The University of Washington is an Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity Employer dedicated to building a culturally diverse and pluralistic faculty and staff committed to teaching and working in a multicultural environment and strongly encourages applications from women, minorities, individuals with disabilities and covered veterans"*
    - *"LIGO is a family-friendly laboratory and strives to ensure everyone is able to achieve the work-life balance they desire. Employees have access to a wide range of benefits including a child-care assistance program. LIGO Laboratory is committed to being a welcoming place for everyone regardless of race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, age, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law."*
    - *"The University of Illinois at Chicago is deeply committed to a community*

of excellence, equity, and diversity and welcomes applications from women, underrepresented minorities, persons with disabilities, sexual minority groups, and other candidates who will contribute to the diversification and enrichment of ideas and perspectives"

B. Require hiring to include a diverse search committee-- a variety of genders, ethnicities, experience, and roles at the college. There should be at least 5 members on each committee in order to ensure diversity.

C. Each committee member should be encouraged to complete the Harvard Implicit Association Test prior to evaluating candidates. Screening Committee members should be aware of their biases and seek help to overcome them before evaluating the candidates. Various campus groups should create Blackboard and in person trainings:
   a. Human Resources
   b. Chief Diversity Officer
   c. Diversity council
   d. LGBTQ Workgroup
   e. WISE faculty group

D. Each committee member should complete training on how to be equity minded in a job search and how to find future colleagues that will also be equity minded.

E. Include the use of informal networks to advertise the position and broaden the recruitment pool. Partner with organizations that serve diverse populations in the local area to develop recruitment strategies. Organization examples:
   a. ACCES-VR
   b. Refugee Center
   c. Office of Mental Health
   d. CABVI
   e. Office of Criminal Justice
   f. Oneida County Probation Office
   g. Department of Social Services/Foster Care

F. Remove identifying information (such as names, location, etc.) from application materials to reduce bias as much as possible.
   a. Cornerstone may be limited, so explore technology used in hiring practices that will be able to remove identifying information.
   b. Remote interviews may be an option using Skype, Zoom, etc
   c. Riff Learning (an AI-based interview), although there are possible concerns of bias with AI programs so caution should be exercised.

G. Create and/or revise an onboarding checklist for Deans that is consistent across departments. This may be specific to job type (i.e. a checklist for adjunct onboarding, another for full time instructor, etc).
   1. Standardize the use of cultural orientations across the college's new employees. Integrate the meet & greet system currently used by some areas of Student Affairs & Human Resources, which enables new employees to meet a variety of people and resources in their first few

weeks at the college.

2. Ensure that each new full time and adjunct faculty is introduced to a willing mentor in their discipline or a closely related discipline. We encourage incentivizing mentoring by offering a badge for various levels of mentoring colleagues.

H. Resources:
- S. Dar and C. VanNamee's slides https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1temjl11wHrfKNwO268p0ldpeKqhuHVkxnESXRFu5eww/edit?usp=sharing
- Jerry Kang, Vice Chancellor of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at UCLA https://law.ucla.edu/faculty/faculty-profiles/jerry-kang/
- University of Iowa Recruitment Manual. Access Date: 1/13/20 https://diversity.uiowa.edu/screening-applicantscompleting-pre-interview-report

V.   Technology:

A. Create a consistent LMS shell that still allows for course specific flexibility. For example, each course should include the following buttons, which are required for all LMS courses, followed by a divider wherein individual instructors are able to customize their content below the divider:

1. Announcements
2. Email professor
3. My Grades
4. Syllabus
5. Course Modules

B. Evaluate the practicality and possible cost savings of switching to a different LMS that will provide a more consistent shell.

C. Withdraw alerts will be sent to instructors/SSAs (and/or require instructor signature) prior to a student withdrawal. It may be prudent to include a 48 hr delay after an alert is generated instead of an instructor signature. This would allow time for the instructor to reach out to the student and attempt to retain them.

D. Develop mid-semester anonymous surveys with results that are distributed to faculty during the semester. TLC staff can then help develop strategies to assist instructors during the semester, when help is needed the most.

E. Revise the existing course survey to focus more on critical instructional aspects. The survey should be done online so results are obtained in a more timely

manner, and administrative workload is reduced.

 F. Evaluate the possibility of a hold on grades until course evals are completed, or offer prizes/positive reinforcement for completion.

 G. Electronic Information Technology Accessibility (EITA) policy and procedure guidelines should be adopted fully.

VI. Syllabus Improvements

 A. All instructors in the SUNY system are expected to include the following items in course syllabi:
1. College name
2. Semester & year
3. Instructor information: name, title, email, phone, office hour information
4. Course name/date/time/room #
5. Course description
6. Course objectives
7. Prerequisites
8. Credits allocated
9. Outside work & hours - Represents additional student preparation hours in which students complete homework or other preparatory activities (for each lecture hour in class - 2 hours of outside work, for each lab hour - 1 hour outside work)
10. Delivery mode: Residential, blended, or full distance education
11. Assignments/quizzes/readings
12. Method of evaluation - What percentage will each item be toward a final grade?
13. Grading scale including completion requirements
14. Textbook and other required resources
15. Course policies related to the integrity of credit
16. Disclaimer statement (Such as: "The above procedures and policies are subject to change, in the event of extenuating circumstances...")
17. Required institutional statements (Office of Accessibility, Title IX, DGV, etc.)
18. Print/revision date

 B. Require Universal Design, including e-reader readability on all syllabi. It is acceptable to have one version that is not accessible and one version of the syllabus that is accessible.

 C. Random survey by administration of syllabi each semester to ensure compliance, and a system whereby suggestions for improvement can be sent via Deans to instructors. Suggestions may come from learning center staff, librarians, students, etc.

D. Evaluate the current institutionally required syllabi statements (accessibility, sustainability, DGV requirement, etc) and determine if they are needed any longer or need revision.

1. DGV requirement is being evaluated by the DGV committee, but a new statement for syllabi should be evaluated also.

2. Create a website listing all current syllabi statements, and include instructions for creating a shortened link and/or QR code for instructors to use on the syllabus. Updates to these statements should be submitted with a deadline well in advance of the faculty obligation period.

E. Create a tab in blackboard with all syllabus statements that is accessible to all students and instructors.

VII. Create classroom spaces conducive to student-centered teaching styles, such as cooperative learning spaces, active learning spaces, etc.

A. Full evaluation of classroom equipment (such as desks, projectors, projector screens, etc) to determine how to create environments conducive to student-centered learning.

B. Explore sound proofing options between classrooms, especially those that have white boards in adjoining classrooms on the same wall.

C. Ensure there is a concrete plan for maintaining classroom equipment regularly, especially projector screens and furniture.

VIII. Develop teaching principles campus-wide. Examples include [DCCC Guided Pathways one-sheet](#) and [Teaching Principles by Eberly Center](#). Principles should include:

1. **Effective instruction is inclusive.** To that end, all videos close captioned, all documents e-reader friendly, and universal design is required for all campus resources.
2. **Effective instruction is active and dynamic.** "Sage on the stage" methodology should be limited. Instead, students learn best when allowed to take risks, fail forward, and try again. Active engagement in the learning process is essential in all classrooms.
3. **Effective teachers know their subject area well and stay current in their field.**
   a. Effective teachers never stop learning; they are curious about their subject area and strive to instill a spirit of intellectual curiosity in their students. Teachers should demonstrate excitement about the course material.
4. **Effective teachers know their students and use this knowledge to inform course design and approaches in the classroom.**
   a. Effective teachers are aware of the diverse needs of their students; they design the classroom experience in a way that is accessible to all.

Effective teachers also stimulate interest in the subject matter by making course content relatable to the lives of their students. Learners must be actively engaged and challenged.

5. **Effective teachers are knowledgeable about the learning process and align learning objectives, assessments, and instructional activities**
    a. Effective teachers organize information in a coherent and structured manner; they articulate clear expectations about learning objectives, classroom policies, and create classroom activities to support those objectives. Assessments are designed as opportunities for students to demonstrate knowledge and skills articulated in the learning objectives.
6. **Effective teachers reflexively critique their practices and avoid falling into routine.**
    a. Teaching requires adapting and making changes when necessary to meet the changing needs of students.
7. One goal of teaching is to produce autonomous, self-directed learners who can apply their knowledge and skills in various contexts.
8. Teachers challenge students to reach their highest potential.
9. In summary, effective teachers:
    a. **Respect** diverse talents and ways of learning.
    b. **Knowledgeable:** have both breadth and depth of knowledge.
    c. **Engaging**: active involvement of the learner enhances learning, and it is the instructor's duty to ensure engagement is forefront in education.
    d. **Foster relationships**: Encourage contact between students and faculty. Interaction between teachers and students is the most important factor in student motivation and involvement
    e. **Encourage Excellence:** Clearly articulate and hold students to high standards based on established learning objectives. Create and maintain the support necessary for all students to achieve those standards.
    f. **Model Responsibility:** Students benefit from taking ownership of their education and teachers need to show them how to achieve that ownership.
    g. **Community**: Learning is enhanced in an environment of cooperation and reciprocity.
    h. **Communication:** Both teaching and learning are enhanced by descriptive and timely feedback. Critical feedback is important and should provide the student with an opportunity to apply it.
    i. **Growth**: Teachers need to continually reflect and adapt our courses.
    j. **Assessment:** Student performance should be sampled in a variety of settings and through multiple modes. Student partnership in the

assessment process is valued and encouraged and based on MVCC's principles of assessment. Faculty should use both formative and summative assessments to adapt their courses, teaching styles, and material.

k. **Collegiality:** teachers should actively participate in the college community

l. **Motivation:** teachers connect the relevance of their material to their students

References:

"*The Seven Laws of Teaching"* by John Milton Gregory,
https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/1852/30e4e5178e008aa81bf6342bd4f0223759a9.pdf

"Teaching Principles" by Carnegie Mellon's Eberly Center
https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/principles/teaching.html

Instructor Competencies: Standards or Face-to-Face, Online, and Blended Settings. James D. Klein, J. Michael Spector, Barabara Grabowski, Ileana de la Teja. 2004.