Positioning the University for the Future

Proposal Number

NASU (Section A) OSC Proposal 18

Proposal

Consolidate Faculty Instructional Technology Center and Learning, Teaching and Innovative Technologies Center.

Report

Faculty development to improve instruction is the foundation of instructional quality; and, instructional quality is integral to MTSU’s mission to provide a student centered learning environment to support student success. Effective faculty development programs keep faculty abreast of the evolving pedagogies within disciplines, best practices in education and emerging instructional technologies. During challenging educational and economic times, faculty development becomes even more important to maintaining instructional quality.

MTSU has a highly qualified faculty that excels in teaching and scholarship. However, the University’s rapidly changing student learning and faculty teaching profiles require a continuously renewed, concerted emphasis on faculty and instructional development programs. These programs must focus on preparing faculty to creatively adapt proven instructional methods and technologies to current curricula as well as to developing curricula and new teaching methodologies. Expertise in a discipline must be equated, in application, to the use of best practices in pedagogy and facility in the use of technologies to support instruction. The measure of success lies in the impact on student learning.

Support for instructional improvement on campus is provided through unique areas of expertise that are necessary to successful program delivery. These areas of expertise are found across division lines but are also directly related to the mission of the division in which they lie. Collaboration between these division assets to successfully deliver effective faculty development and instructional improvement programs draws upon the unique expertise and resources of each while optimizing the instructional support to faculty. Coordination is necessary to omit redundancies and to maximize efficient use of resources. To that end, this recommendation provides a collaborative structure between the divisions to support teaching and learning and facilitate the delivery of services.
Areas on campus that provide instructional support:

1. Academic Affairs
2. Information Technology Division / Faculty Instructional Technology Center
3. College of Continuing Education and Distance Learning (Faculty Services)
4. Learning, Teaching and Innovative Technologies Center

Current Instructional Support Functions/Services:

1. Academic Affairs (AA)
   a. New Faculty Orientation
   b. Faculty Leadership Academy
   c. American Democracy Project
   d. Civic Engagement Faculty Learning Community
   e. Instructional Development grants
   f. Learning Outcomes Project
   g. Faculty Mentoring Program
   h. Faculty Development grants
   i. Scholarship on Teaching and Learning faculty grants
   j. EXL (Experiential Learning/Service Learning) professional development

2. Information Technology Division (ITD) / Faculty Instructional Technology Center
   a. Data Center operation of hardware and software infrastructure for administrative and academic computing
   b. Network infrastructure
   c. Help Desk Support
   d. Technology based - Instructional design support (e-pedagogy for all types of courses)
   e. Alternative design – Instructional design support (hybrid/online courses)
   f. Training in the use of instructional technologies
   g. Software support
   h. Learning Management System (LMS) training and support – current system is Desire2Learn
   i. LMS System administration
   j. State-wide LMS collaboration
   k. RODP training
   l. System administration for digital resource repositories – i.e. iTunesU
   m. Multimedia design for instructional resources
   n. Instructional Web Site design
   o. Instructional programming and database design
p. Alternative delivery / communication support – SMS, chat, blog, wiki, synchronous tools, desktop videoconferencing, podcasting

q. Faculty incentives for technology integration (faculty grants and stipends)

3. College of Continuing Education and Distance Learning (CEDL)
   a. Faculty incentives for online, hybrid and correspondence courses
   b. Online course development peer evaluations
   c. Support for COI certification program

4. Learning, Teaching and Innovative Technologies Center (LT&ITC)
   a. 1st Tuesday Seminar Series
   b. Teaching Excellence Workshop Series
   c. eLearning Seminar Series
   d. Faculty Development Showcases

Recommendations

1. A divisional reorganization of services and staff is not recommended. A reorganization would negate the original intent of the LT&ITC – a partnership between two divisions to support the integration of best practices into instruction.

2. Increase alignment and coordination of faculty development and instructional support services to enhance these services for faculty, omit redundancies, and to maximize efficient use of resources through expansion of the LT&ITC partnership to include the College of Continuing Education and Distance Education (CEDL).

3. Establish an oversight group with a representative from each of the three identified areas (Academic Affairs, ITD, and CEDL) to meet regularly to set priorities, agendas, facilitate interdivisional communications and assess outcomes. This group along with LT&ITC staff will work collaboratively to provide the following collaborative instructional support functions/services:

   o Provide faculty development programs to support improvement in instruction via face-to-face and/or via alternative delivery
     ▪ Peer mentoring
     ▪ Faculty teaching and Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) research fellowships
     ▪ Peer collaborations regarding best practices via Faculty Learning Communities
     ▪ Instructional design support
     ▪ Assessment of learning
   
   o Support faculty research related to the scholarship of teaching and the acquisition of resources enabling faculty to conduct said research
   
   o Provide programming to support faculty research, including grant-writing, faculty and student research, etc. specific to SoTL focused research.
   
   o Seek and pursue grant funding for the Center and its initiatives.
- Develop and implement efficient delivery of faculty development programming in formats to serve large numbers of faculty
- Assess emerging needs to maximize faculty instruction.
- Create programming synergies with sister institutions/community colleges through faculty development collaborations
- Develop and implement incentive and reward structures for instructional improvement
- Develop incentives for department chairs to encourage/support faculty to engage in faculty development and instructional development programs
- Provide faculty development support for program accreditations
- Establish internal and external partnerships to develop and offer faculty development programs to meet department, college, and other academic program needs

This collaborative would bring the integrated resources and expertise across divisions to assure a cohesive, concerted and productive support structure for instructional improvement and innovation.