References


For the 2013/2014 academic year, the Faculty Development Committee will oversee the Program (but eventually, a Program Coordinator will be selected). The Committee will be responsible for:

- Identifying Community Facilitators to lead the group.
- Reviewing and approving the budget requests of the Community Facilitators and expenditures of participants during the year.
- Serving as primary contact for Program-specific questions and concerns.
- Meeting with the Provost’s office to discuss and assess Program.
- Reviewing applications and making recommendations to the Provost for the Program Coordinator (to serve Fall 2014-Spring 2016) in Fall 2013.
FACULTY LEARNING COMMUNITY PROGRAM
AY 2013/2014

The Faculty Development Committee (FDC) will administer three FLCs in the 2013/2014 academic year, one for incoming faculty, one for those teaching quantitative skills and a third which is to be determined. Each of the FLCs will have eight to ten participants, and will be led by facilitators from the faculty who are responsible for organizing and coordinating meetings and gathering the necessary group materials. The FDC will develop a set of general guidelines and suggestions for the activities and operations of the communities.

- **New Faculty Learning Community (NFLC)**

“New Faculty” is defined as any incoming or existing full-time RWU faculty with three years or less teaching experience. The New Faculty Learning Community provides a forum for new faculty to develop their teaching approaches, interact and learn from members across the University, and receive mentorship.

- **Quantitative Teaching Learning Community (QTLC)**

The goal of this initiative is improving teaching in quantitative subjects across disciplines. In the first year, the QTLC will identify specific learning outcomes such as: (1) Integrative and project based learning; (2) Exhibiting quantitative learning measured by the ability to transfer prior knowledge to unfamiliar contexts; and (3) Learning critical problem solving skills. The QTLC will engage in developing delivery techniques for improving quantitative learning not only across disciplines, but also across multiple levels (freshman through senior courses). During the academic year, the QTLC will engage in a pilot study with participating faculty implementing specific techniques in their courses to determine the effects of the techniques with respect to specific learning outcomes. The QTLC will synthesize best practices to obtain a common set of techniques and learning outcomes that can be assessed through a synergized rubric across all quantitative disciplines.

Participants in the FLCs will receive a stipend the equivalent of one-hour of course overload per semester to spend on teaching-related resources and events. Further details about the management and administration of these funds will be provided at the time of the awards.

Community facilitators/leaders will be given one course release per academic year. All the community leaders for the 2013/2014 academic year are expected to:

- Meet at regular intervals (perhaps once a month) with the FDC or a representative of the Committee.
- Disseminate results of their communities to the University, and provide suggestions/feedback to the FDC at the end of the year
effective teaching (in the form of student evaluations, peer evaluations, scholarship of pedagogy, or letter of support from his/her department Chair). Applicants must have at least four years of teaching experience at RWU. Each Coordinator serves a term of two academic years, but may be selected for another term after going through the application process again.

Applications are submitted to and reviewed by the Faculty Development Committee of the Senate who will make recommendations to the Provost. Applications for Program Coordinator will be solicited during the Fall of the second year of the incumbent Program Coordinator.

Coordinators will be compensated by one course release and a stipend (to be announced).

• **Community Facilitators/Leaders**

Each FLC is led by a community facilitator (usually the person(s) who proposes the FLC) who works with participants to create a curriculum that addresses the specific needs of the group. The responsibilities of the facilitator include:

- Soliciting participants for the community.
- Presenting a budget for materials for the community (of up to $1000 for the year) by July 1.
- Planning and organizing the workshops, including confirming speakers and garnering necessary materials.

Ideally, community facilitators for the upcoming school year will be identified by the end of the Spring semester. They will receive one course release per academic year.

**PARTNERSHIPS**

The FLC Program will collaborate with relevant units across campus, including (but not limited to):

- Senate Diversity Committee.
- Instructional Technology.
- Learning Communities Program.
- Community Engagement/Experiential Learning.
- General Education Program.

These collaborations may be in the form of organizing single workshops/seminars for communities (in cooperation with community facilitators/leaders), or designing faculty-led, year-long communities around their topics (as approved by the Program Coordinator and the Faculty Development Committee)
engage in dialogue with each other. They are generally between two and three hours long.

The social gatherings are unstructured leisure time that allow group members to interact with each other in informal settings. These can be in the form of “happy hours” after each workshop, and/or a dinner party at the end of the Fall and Spring semesters. The FDC will develop a set of general guidelines and suggestions for the activities and operations of the communities.

Each community accommodates eight to ten participants who are selected based on alignment of interests with the FLC. Community members receive the equivalent of one-hour of course overload per semester, which they may use throughout the year to fund teaching-related activities and materials, such as books and conferences. Further details about the management and administration of these funds will be provided at the time of the awards. All funds must be spent within the academic year that the participant is involved in the FLC.

In addition, each FLC will be allocated $1000 for materials and $1000 for food and beverages. The Office of the Provost will provide all funds for the Program.

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

The FLC Program is faculty-led, so all positions within the organizational structure will be filled by current, full-time faculty at RWU. The major positions are Program Coordinator and Community Facilitators/Leaders.

- **Program Coordinator**

The entire FLC Program is led by a Program Coordinator. The responsibilities of the Program Coordinator include:

  o Deciding the FLCs and community facilitators for the year.
  o Meeting regularly with community facilitators to identify Program initiatives and issues.
  o Reviewing and approving the budget requests of the community facilitators, and expenditures of participants during the year.
  o Forging relationships with other units on campus.
  o Market the general Program to the faculty.
  o Monitoring budgeting and equipment needs for the Program.
  o Meeting regularly with the Provost office and Faculty Development Committee.
  o Serving as primary contact for Program-specific questions and concerns.

The Program Coordinator is selected through an application process in which interested parties submit a letter of interest highlighting suitability, and evidence of
FACULTY LEARNING COMMUNITY PROGRAM

MISSION AND PURPOSE

The FLC Program at Roger Williams provides cross-disciplinary forums that promote effective pedagogy and scholarship through mentoring resources, programs and dialogue. Its aim is to advance faculty professional development (with specific focus on college teaching), and work with faculty to cultivate an institutional climate that promotes professional advancement, and values diversity and excellence in student learning.

Objectives

The main objectives and outcomes of the program are:

• To create communities that foster the sharing of teaching, learning and research experiences.
• To create awareness of multi-disciplinary perspectives and approaches to teaching and scholarship.
• To encourage the incorporation of new elements (such as community engagement, instructional technology and information literacy) into the classroom experience.
• To foster inter-unit relationships on campus.
• To encourage collaboration and collegiality.
• To provide mentorship for faculty.

CURRICULUM

The Program comprises of up to three communities operating concurrently throughout the school year (September to May). These communities can be issue based (that is, constructed around a specific topic or need), or developed around a particular cohort in the University (such as new faculty, faculty approaching tenure, or international faculty). To ensure that the FLCs remain organic and relevant to the teaching and scholarly needs at RWU, themes for the communities will be solicited from the faculty body. In order to address as many needs and/or cohorts as needed, a FLC is expected to run for one year, but may be renewed for a second year depending on demand and interest among faculty.

FLC activities comprise mainly of workshops/seminars and social gatherings. The workshops or seminars are held monthly, and may be organized around speakers or reading materials. Though the nature of the workshops will largely depend on the specific group and its manifest needs, the ideal workshop will comprise of ample time for community members to share, brainstorm, problem-solve, and generally
INTRODUCTION

The following is the Faculty Development Committee's proposal for the organization and implementation of a Faculty Learning Community (FLC) Program at Roger Williams University. A Faculty Learning Community is a yearlong formal program that organizes seminars, workshops and social events that address the pedagogical, scholarly, and professional needs of the faculty. Establishing a FLC Program at Roger Williams will address a long-standing need and request from faculty to create a space within which faculty can nurture and develop their teaching skills, and receive mentorship in all areas of faculty professional development. This Program will not replace existing faculty development programs (such as the Fall Faculty Conference and the New Faculty Orientation), but rather will supplement and expand them by providing long-term faculty development activities.

The FLC Program being proposed is part of the larger institutional vision for a Teaching and Learning Center at RWU, which will consolidate units related to teaching and pedagogical development across the campus. It will house, among other things, a teaching center for faculty, as well as a learning center for students, and instructional technology. The FLC Program will be one of the many programs offered in the teaching portion of the Center.

The proposal is organized in two parts: The first part outlines the general program, including its curriculum, governance and administrative structure. The second section presents details for the pilot Program to be implemented in the 2013/2014 academic year.
Proposal for the Creation of a
Faculty Learning Community Program at Roger Williams University

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