

## Faculty Development Center Report AY 2019-2020

This report documents the priorities and accomplishments of the Faculty Development Center (FDC) during the 2019 – 2020 academic year. It marks progress on several stated goals and looks forward to providing enhanced services and resources to academic and professional faculty. The report comments on efforts to foster the general well-being of faculty and students through pedagogical training and other events, mentoring, community-building efforts, and the provision of student support resources. The report also describes the FDC's participation in the SUNY-wide Community of Practice (CPD) devoted to system-wide professional development, COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning), and Online Education Resource (OER) outreach and education efforts. Finally, the report provides the results of the spring 2020 campus-wide FDC survey.

### **Overview**

This year, the Faculty Development Center (FDC) focused on self-assessment of its programs by refining its mission statement, writing a new strategic plan, and articulating SMART goals. The Advisory Board worked to create and deploy a campus-wide survey as both an instrument to gather information and a means of outreach for faculty and staff unaware of all the Center has to offer. Faculty continue to be primarily concerned with student well-being, with their own teaching, and their professional success under review. This year held popular workshops on grants and funding, some co-hosted by the Office of Sponsored Programs and a panel of successful faculty grant-writers. When courses went online in mid-March, 2020, due to the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), we helped to promote online/hybrid teacher training and provided resources. On our Instagram site, we have been celebrating faculty activities and achievements. We have also continued to involve student voices, talking about what happens in class, what students appreciate, and what they would like to see. The FDC consistently advocates for faculty needs and concerns. Thanks to the Advisory Board, we are able to work collaboratively to integrate new faculty into our campus and increase their retention by improving support and services. At least four faculty members availed themselves of our English language editing services. We foster a culture of communication and belonging as we reach out to our colleagues across campus to listen, offer opportunities for interdisciplinary conversation, and provide resources.

### **Events**

The FDC met an eager desire on the part of many faculty members to improve their teaching, so several of our events revolved around pedagogical forums. Our online teaching panels were particularly successful. Each semester, we host a student/faculty panel, *Continuing the Conversation: Anti-Racism in the Classroom and Beyond*. In the fall, about 75 community members attended, and in the winter, about 65 did, in connection with the Black Lives Matter at School week of action. Other major events included, *Intercultural Competency in the Classroom* with Eva Haug (Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences) and Hope Windle (SUNY COIL Center); Andrea Kantrowitz's *Drawing to Learn* series; Michael Asbill and Katie Hunt's *Transdisciplinary Idea Exchange*, in connection with the Sustainability Learning Community; a

*Global Goals Workshop* with Lisa Mitten and Andrea Varga; and Joshua Korenblat's think tank with *Viz for Social Good* on interdisciplinary opportunities for faculty to connect their students with international non-government organizations (NGOs). Zachary Bowman, Museum Educator and Frank Boyer provided two workshops on ways faculty across the divisions can bring their students to the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art. We also partnered with International Programs and Latin American & Caribbean Studies to bring Director Stephanie Black and her film *Life & Debt* to campus. For the entire list of AY 2019-2020 events, please see FDC events for fall 2019 and spring/summer 2020.

Book discussions on *What the Best College Teachers Do* (Ken Bain), *Teaching with Compassion: An Educator's Oath to Teach from the Heart* (Peter Kaufman), and *Written/Unwritten: Diversity and the Hidden Truths of Tenure* (Patricia Williams) were not well attended, but useful. We find that sharing introductions and particular chapters rather than entire volumes helps focus the discussion and facilitate participation for overburdened faculty members. Katie Hunt and Sarah Wyman's book discussion on *Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm's Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land* was particularly successful and will be repeated during the fall semester.

Despite multiple cancellations for weather, we had five well-attended Faculty Adventure Group off-campus outings to the Mohonk Preserve, Rosendale, Quercus Cooperage, Peterskill Falls/Minnewaska State Park, and Twin Star Orchards. Faculty and staff attended, typically in groups of 20-25.

### **Mentoring**

This year, each academic faculty member of the advisory board with a service obligation (11) agreed to mentor three of the new faculty members from the past two years. The effort was fairly successful. Only two board members availed themselves of the \$10 coffee date stipend, but many brought their mentees to our Faculty Tea and Coffee meetings, initiated by Helena Costakis in the School of Business. Our reciprocal mentoring program emphasizes listening carefully and the benefits enjoyed by both parties involved. Still, we would like to improve our mentoring techniques and clarify our goals for the program. We also need to recruit faculty mentors more widely. In October, 2020, the Director will meet with Ginger Jurecka-Blake (Human Resources, Diversity and Inclusion) to discuss possibilities for increasing our mentoring activities, including a training with our advisory board members and additional interested faculty. From an initial meeting with Ginger, we learned that mentors should be directed to find the mentee's vision and nurture that. The FDC will advocate for mentorship to be recognized by the administration on the annual report for personnel review.

We also plan to partner with Mark Rumnit and the Scholars Mentorship Program to help with outreach. The FDC could help recruit and train faculty mentors for SMP. This would also be an opportunity to increase our efforts to involve student voices and better define how to improve networks and connections across campus.

### **Early Career Faculty Support** and a sense of the SUNY system

On March 6 the FDC hosted a visit from Gwen Kay, President of the UFS Senate. She met with our President and Provost, our early-career faculty, and our new Presiding Officer, Reynolds Scott-Childress at our morning Faculty Tea and Coffee. This event provided an opportunity for

our early career faculty to learn about SUNY-wide faculty governance and topics of interest across the system, in the presence of our top administrators. Later, at lunch with faculty, Gwen fielded plenty of questions that helped situate SUNY New Paltz as an institution within the broader SUNY community. We discussed OER low-cost options for students, the rise of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion efforts, mental health support for students and faculty, religious holiday observance, Reappointment, Tenure & Promotion (RTP) guidelines, alternatives to the traditional Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI), General Education (GE) assessment models, and student advisement. Meanwhile, Gwen received almost hourly updates on the coronavirus contingency plan.

Under the purview of Faculty Governance, the Futures Committee was established and convened three times, hosted by the FDC. The plan is for untenured and part-time early career faculty to help create a vision for how the institution might move forward by identifying areas for improvement and setting goals such as advocating for lower course caps, advising loads, and longer review cycles for Lecturers after the first two reviews. The group has had a slow start, but they did have their first meeting with the President and Provost in which most of the discussion revolved around workload and support for part-timers.

### **Campus-wide Community-building**

In the fall, Zachary Bowman, Education Manager of the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art, and Sarah Wyman launched the *Reading Objects / Student Edition* ekphrastic creative writing contest and solicited student manuscripts in honor of faculty members Peter Kaufman (Sociology) and Pauline Uchmanowicz (English), recently deceased. Over 100 students entered the contest, and ten were chosen to present their written responses to works from the SDMA permanent collection in the Alice and Horace Chandler gallery on March 5. Many family members, faculty, staff, and students attended the event, just before the campus shutdown.

The FDC deepened key partnerships with the Sustainability Learning Community and the Black Lives Matter at School coalition that held its first two meetings at the Center. Alongside Black Lives Matter actions across the country and around the world, our faculty expressed an increased interest to understand the meaning of *diversity, equity and inclusion* and ways to reflect and honor these issues in their curriculum and programs.

### **Student support**

Faculty tend to be concerned about understanding and supporting New Paltz students. The Center for Student Success has offered workshops on Starfish and more general advising. Dr. Gwen Lloyd and the Psychological Counseling Center have held multiple workshops on *Supporting Distressed Students* throughout the year. Fifty-eight faculty and staff members were on the call March 26 when they focused on the impact of the COVID pandemic and the protests against police violence across the country and around the world. Faculty appreciate learning ways to support distressed students by understanding their pedagogical and emotional needs and how to provide resources. Jason Gilliland, Director of Veteran and Military Services, also brought students to speak with faculty and staff at a brown bag lunch: *New Paltz Veterans, What Should We Know?* The FDC website now offers additional resources to support students

in need, including information on the food pantry, Student Crisis Fund, and mental health guidance.

### **Coronavirus contingencies – sudden pivot to remote instruction**

Even before the abrupt and challenging transition to online teaching on March 12 due to the coronavirus pandemic, we were aware that regional needs, budgetary concerns, and technological innovations were pushing many of our classes, at least partially, into the virtual realm. According to Kate Bohan, Director of OIT, 25% of our faculty had never used Blackboard or other learning platforms, so the mid-March learning curve was steep. In collaboration with the Office of Instructional Technology, the FDC continued to offer virtual programming throughout the summer to support faculty in their teaching development. As far as resources for our sudden switch to online, the website offered a “teaching toolbox” of teaching tips and ways to foster community-building and communication in the virtual environment. We also provided curricular resources for teaching inter-cultural competency, diversity, equity and inclusion, and anti-racist pedagogies.

### **Faculty morale**

The FDC Advisory Board is concerned with financial burdens on faculty and high course caps that compromise their abilities to teach, carry out scholarship/ creative activities, meet service obligations, and otherwise thrive at our institution. Discussions with pre-tenure faculty revealed that a proportion of them still carry student debt; housing costs in our region are unaffordable for many; and child care costs, at approximately \$12,000+/year at our Children’s Center, can make raising a family particularly challenging (COVID-home-schooling aside). Financial inequities amongst the faculty members contribute to tensions and diminish efforts to build inclusive community. Manageable workloads, from advising, to class size, as well as travel funding, and access to leadership opportunities within departments, must be equitable to improve morale and shared management of the institution. The FDC continues to emphasize faculty advocacy through our shared faculty governance system and points faculty to the union for guidance and support with respect to benefit and financial concerns.

### **SUNY Community of Practice - Center for Professional Development**

Five faculty members or groups have submitted proposals and been accepted for the October Professional Development conference hosted by SUNY Cortland. Sarah Wyman served as a member of the planning committee, reviewed submission files, and will help coordinate the event.

### **COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning)**

Although we had no COIL projects this year, at least 5 of our faculty completed training through the SUNY COIL center and two have COIL projects planned for the fall, 2020 semester. Director Sarah Wyman served this spring and summer on the steering committee that developed the summer COIL Global Commons program, as an alternative to study abroad and an answer to the SUNY Chancellor’s call for *global learning for all*, now part of the SUNY strategic plan. The program adopted the United Nations Goals for Sustainable Development sustainability

framework, and our campus hosted SDG #11 Sustainable Cities & Communities and SDG #13 Climate Action. Two of our faculty members developed OER (Open Education Resource) curriculum for the program and a third faculty member taught as a *storytelling* facilitator. Students completed storytelling projects in collaboration with international community-based organizations or non-government organizations. It was an honor to participate in the launch of this ongoing program that provides students with a global outlook and empowers them to work for change.

### **Open Education Resources**

Librarian and advisory board member Stephan Macaluso has been instrumental in bringing the Open Education Resources (OER) initiative to our campus. He led an *OER Jam* event in April that introduced our community to opportunities and resources to help us meet the students' request (as per their Student Association Resolution) to lower textbook costs. Chris Albi and Catherine Herne, Chairs of the Academic Affairs committee of the SUNY New Paltz Faculty Senate, met with the FDC Advisory Board to solicit their input on a campus-wide survey on OER and other low-cost textbook options to reduce the financial burden on students. As graduate student assistant to the FDC, Miranda Cooper researched available low-cost OER resources for 21 departments/programs at SUNY New Paltz. She organized her findings into separate spreadsheets for each department so I could write to faculty and ask them to review and rate the materials. Through this process, we also informed faculty of the student governance resolution, of the SUNY UFS resolution on ethics relevant to OER use, and of our own Faculty Senate Academic Affairs committee's efforts to inform faculty about OER and other low-cost options. We now have a better sense of existing interest and participation. Miranda helped compile a database of useful materials that will position our campus to apply for OER funding so we can give stipends to faculty who use or create OER materials. Miranda discussed the project with OER campus leads Jason Wrench, Rich McElrath and Sarah Wyman as well as with the Lumen Learning representative Josh Baron and Mike Daly from SUNY OER. Because of this work, faculty are more aware of OER textbooks and course materials and of the importance of lowering costs to reduce the financial burden on our students.

### **FDC Survey**

Seventy-seven faculty members responded to the survey developed by Sarah Wyman and the advisory board. Overall, SUNY New Paltz has about 300 full time faculty and 300 part time faculty. Eighteen or nearly 1/3 of the respondents were early career faculty in their first-to-third year of employment. Nine adjuncts also completed the survey. Thirteen members of the School of Science and Engineering completed the survey (two in Physics, three in Engineering, and one in Biology). The main reasons stated for not participating in FDC events were overwork and lack of time. Although the response was not as robust as we had anticipated, we are developing a culture of using the Faculty Center to strengthen relationships and develop our faculty's professional skills and potential.

(Q2) *Why do you visit the FDC or participate in FDC-sponsored events?*

Most faculty (81%) visit the FDC in order to help build a community of teacher-scholars, to learn innovative teaching techniques, and to meet other faculty members. While assistant professors and librarians were equally motivated by these three options, instructors, lecturers and

adjuncts are particularly interested in learning teaching techniques. Members of LA & S and SSE were most enthusiastic about innovative pedagogies. Professional faculty (78%) mainly attend FDC events to better understand students and how to support them.

(Q3) *What have you found most beneficial as far as ways to support effective teaching?* Most (73%) Associate Professors / Librarians find faculty panels on online teaching innovations “very beneficial.” 50% of professors and librarians at all ranks found round tables on pedagogy “very beneficial.” 33% of adjuncts found them only “moderately beneficial.”

As expected, Assistant Professors / Librarians appreciate mentoring support as “extremely” (42%) or “very” (33%) beneficial as this practice has only been formalized for early career faculty for 1-2 years. Full Professors/Librarians seem to have no experience with or confidence in this practice, but then, only five completed the survey. Mentoring opportunities or support by mentors is particularly valued in the School of Education, Fine & Performing Arts, and SSE. Again, Assistant Professors / Librarians find professional consultations and teaching observations most beneficial and appreciate the FDC.

As a topic, Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) revealed a striking generational gap between early career Assistant Professor/Librarians, 71% of whom consider COIL information and training “extremely beneficial” in contrast to 100% of full Professor/Librarians who consider it “not at all beneficial.” However, a total of seven early career faculty answered that question and only two full professor/librarians. COIL opportunities are especially appealing to those in LA& S, School of Education, and F & PA.

In general, early career faculty are much more enthusiastic about FDC offerings, particularly when it comes to support for distressed students or learning about who our students are. The School of Education is most interested in learning about ways to support distressed student students, with 80% who say that these discussions have been “extremely” or “very” beneficial. 71% of Assistant Professors/Librarians said guidance on RTP and DSI procedures was either “extremely beneficial” or “very beneficial,” so we know to continue to provide this support. Early career faculty and adjuncts are fans of our book discussions and study groups, and this group appreciates writing groups and editing help. Book groups and discussions are no more than “moderately” beneficial, according to respondents from the School of Business, SSE, and the Library.

When it comes to interface with student support networks including our many partners on campus, Professional Faculty and Staff as well as librarians are especially appreciative. The early career faculty are most concerned with understanding our students through conversations with VMS, PCC, Title IX, etc. Many faculty members are not yet familiar with our *student voices* or faculty features on Instagram, so this is a place where we can reach out more actively. The School of Education is most supportive (100%) of our initiative to include student voices on our Instagram. Probably many faculty do not follow the FDC, but might be encouraged, once they see how many faculty accomplishments we feature as well.

Assistant Professors and part-timers enjoy our social engagement outings, yet librarians find such opportunities only “moderately” beneficial. It seems that the partnerships between the FDC and other campus organizations SDMA, BLM@S, Food Pantry, Sustainability Learning Community are not well understood or appreciated by those above the ranks of Assistant Professor/Librarian. We will need to work on explaining why collaboration and mutual support strengthen campus culture and help faculty feel more connected.

Most faculty and staff visit the FDC website to learn about events, to find online course development information, to find teaching resources, and professional review guidance. F & PA is especially interested in grants & funding info as well as resources for students. The School of Business visits the site mainly for online/hybrid course development information. The website could be even more carefully organized, now that the main categories have been determined.

As far as strategies for faculty development (Q7) early career faculty look to the FDC for “relief” and “recharging” whereas the majority (79%) of Associate Professors/Librarians seek “relief - to facilitate the work of active researchers.”

One of the most productive questions was (Q6) “which professional development resources would facilitate your research/creative activity and teaching?” While Instructors/Lecturers were most in need of developing instructional skills involving technology, Assistant Professor / Lecturers seek support for mentorship, grant-writing, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Opportunities for interdisciplinary partnerships are most important to those in LA & S and F & PA.

Ideas for growth. Professional consultation or teaching observations are only “moderately beneficial” according to the School of Business, but more valued in LA & S, F & PA, and SSE. We need to promote our editing services for those who do not speak English as a first language. Early career faculty request more guidance on research methods and one-on-one grant writing support. Across the board, faculty appreciate guidance on RTP and DSI. Senior faculty, especially librarians, can be recruited to run research method and HREB trainings. The Office of Sponsored Programs can highlight its presence and offerings. We will follow through on a request for a book discussion on *Small Teaching Online*. Providing desired mental health support for faculty/staff might be more challenging, but not impossible. We will deploy the survey again in 2022.