Supporting Academic Continuity by Building Community: The Work of a Faculty Development Center During COVID-19

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In the initial rush to remote instruction during COVID-19, educators focused on technologies to ensure academic continuity and relied on instructional technology teams to teach them how to use them. Soon after, instructors turned to educational development professionals for more comprehensive help to rethink face-to-face pedagogy to fit the affordances and constraints of online teaching. Historically, our Faculty Development Center (FDC) had focused primarily on pedagogical support for face-to-face classes. During the crisis, we needed both to re-envision our work to support remote instruction and distinguish our work from that of our instructional technology colleagues. We also needed to re-evaluate our work in two other areas of our mission: pedagogical research and assessment of student learning outcomes. We recognized that a key goal of our FDC's work provided a guiding principle in the new situation: to build faculty community around teaching and learning. Although faculty needed instruction and solutions for teaching online, they also needed a venue to think through the existential change in their teaching practice and the multiple challenges and choices they faced. In this paper, we discuss our three-pronged approach to build a vibrant, virtual faculty community: provide a sense of continuity through our offerings and services; prioritize program content to meet immediate needs; and promote complementarity between our support and that of instructional technology. Our efforts resulted in significantly expanding our reach, renewing the culture of inquiry around teaching among our faculty, and refining and reinforcing our role as complementary to, but distinct from, instructional technology.

Introduction

Scrambling to create effective remote learning opportunities for students during COVID-19, educators across the nation initially focused on technologies and tools to ensure academic continuity. Record numbers of instructors relied on instructional technology teams to teach them how to use these technologies. Yet, many teachers found themselves needing more comprehensive help as they sought to rethink face-to-face pedagogies to fit the affordances and constraints of remote instruction. Many of these instructors turned to educational developers in teaching and learning centers, seeking support and sustenance for the pedagogical shift.

At some institutions, faculty development support and instructional technology support are integrated into one unit (Beach et al., 2016). At our institution, however, the Faculty Development Center (FDC) is administratively separate from the instructional technology unit (IT) with different reporting structures and distinct responsibilities. Prior to COVID-19, the IT unit managed and supported faculty use of the learning management system, provided programming for hybrid and online learning, and enabled work involving learning analytics. Historically at our institution, online courses were mostly concentrated in specialized graduate programs, and the majority of courses were conducted face-to-face. Our FDC focused its programming primarily on sharing evidence-based approaches for face-to-face instruction, including ways to use technology to enhance learning. Our work was also conducted primarily face-to-face though further enhanced virtually by robust website resources. Our mission included support for institutional teaching effectiveness, pedagogical innovation, the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), and assessment of student learning outcomes (Figure 1).

A primary goal of our FDC's work has always been to cultivate effective, inclusive teaching practices by creating a community around teaching and learning (Hodges & McDermott, in press). As our IT colleagues undertook the herculean task of training faculty to teach online, we realized that those faculty also needed space to think through how to adapt their teaching philosophies to a virtual environment. We in the FDC needed to re-envision our faculty community for the virtual world (Eib & Miller, 2006; Sherer et al., 2003) and help faculty integrate technology and pedagogy in new ways. During this sudden transition, we considered: What support did faculty need to implement emergency remote instruction? What would faculty need as we moved forward together into an educational landscape that may rely

on continued online learning? How could our FDC offer support that was distinct from, yet complemented and extended, that of our IT colleagues? At the same time, we needed to reimagine our support for pedagogical research and assessment of student learning outcomes for the new situation. How could we motivate faculty to continue these efforts during the strain of transition, recognizing that lessons learned and shared from such work could be vital to responding meaningfully to students' learning challenges?

Figure 1:
The Faculty Development Center's Areas of Responsibility
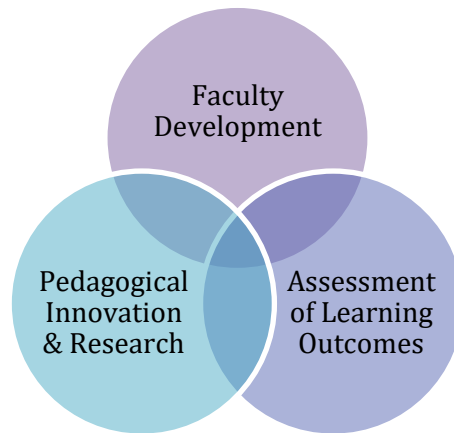
Our FDC explored these questions, knowing that the transition to online teaching can catalyze change in faculty beliefs and goals for their teaching (McQuiggan, 2007, 2012). Thus, even as we confronted the challenges of such a cataclysmic shift to remote instruction, we were being offered an unparalleled opportunity to reach faculty. We recognized that the FDC provided both a bridge between the pedagogies of face-to-face and remote instruction and a community of practice to support that crossing (Lave & Wenger, 1991). We discovered to our delight that our new world of remote workshops, observations, and consultations sustained our community and expanded our reach. The lessons we learned from our experience both inform our work

going forward and provide valuable insights for other teaching and learning centers, as we discuss below.

Building Community to Address the Challenges in COVID-19

During the rapid switch to remote instruction, we revisited our faculty development approach—not only the "how" of doing things but also the "what" and the "why." Focusing on building community is always important when promoting faculty development in teaching and is particularly key when fostering learning in online teaching (Eib & Miller, 2006; Lackey, 2011; Palloff & Pratt, 2011). Thus, we designed all our programming in the COVID era to encourage faculty to connect and share their concerns and successes.

Our community-building approach addressed a critical need at the beginning of remote instruction—one that our IT colleagues were less able to meet. In the midst of instruction and solutions for teaching online, faculty also needed a venue to think through the existential change in their teaching practice and the multiple choices they faced (Hodges, 2020). They craved opportunities to process their questions and frame their concerns. Early in the transition to remote instruction, faculty developers nationally suggested providing occasions for faculty to relax and commiserate together through virtual (webcasted) social hours. Our version of these sessions invited faculty to gather and connect by sharing both professional and personal challenges and successes. We also capitalized on one of our existing formats, our Bring Your Best Idea series, to create an opportunity for faculty to talk about balancing teaching and self-care. Although these sessions were much less structured and directed than others, they played at least three important roles in our programming by:

1. Initiating community building among faculty in the new teaching situation,
2. Emphasizing our ongoing support and presence despite the new format, and
3. Assessing faculty needs, allowing us to focus our programming.

We encouraged faculty to attend our virtual programming and join our community of support by following three guiding principles: provide a sense of continuity or normality through our offerings and services; priori-

tize program content to focus on immediate needs; and promote complementarity between our support and that provided by IT. We discuss each of these approaches below.

Providing Continuity

During the chaos of the push to remote instruction, we provided avenues for normality through regularly scheduled programming as appropriate. We reviewed each planned program through the lens of the current situation to ensure that it was purposefully applicable. This appraisal resulted in our reconfiguring some programs for the virtual format without any adjustments to content or objectives, such as a new faculty book discussion and celebrations for faculty completing faculty learning communities or certificate programs. In other cases, we had to rethink our programming based on newly emerging faculty priorities. We also continued to offer our midterm feedback and observation services, as well as general consultations on all aspects of teaching. As we transitioned to virtual formats and re-evaluated the role of our work, we faced additional decisions on format, timing, materials, framing, and constraints, as described below.

Deciding on the "How" for Continuing Programs and Services

In the early stages of the COVID-19 crisis in the U.S., institutions like ours closed temporarily (typically over Spring Break) with the thought that they might be able to reopen in a short time. During this ambiguous time, our FDC considered how best to respond to faculty needs. Drawing on work of other centers, we quickly created a webpage of resources for remote instruction that encouraged faculty to "Keep on Teaching." We soon supplemented this page with one focused on online assessments ("Keep on Grading"). We cancelled programs that could not be re-envisioned on short notice or did not fit an immediate need and began to consider our choices for programming as the campus moved to an indefinite era of closure.

As we pondered our virtual options for programming, we faced a difficult decision shared by many faculty for their courses: Should we be synchronous or asynchronous? We chose synchronous web conferencing to enhance the community experience and allow faculty to share their ideas and successes with their colleagues through live conversation. In our initial synchronous meetings, we could see and hear how much faculty appreciated the

opportunity to reconnect and how being together re-energized them, as evidenced in such chat comments as: "Joining you all is great self-care for me because it keeps me connected to career/profession and that's what I need most!"; "I am inspired by all my colleagues who are working so hard to adapt and think about the students"; and "It was great seeing everyone and knowing that I am not alone in this!" After live programs, we often provided related resources asynchronously by curating faculty suggestions into tip-sheets and providing materials on our website and via email.

Allowing Flexibility in Timing for Programming

Given our choice to offer synchronous sessions in the spirit of maintaining normality and community, we then faced the challenge of determining what timing was best given the myriad constraints faculty faced. Our traditional, face-to-face programming had typically been offered at noon to allow faculty to share lunch and take advantage of our campus-wide "free-hour" when no classes were scheduled. Initially, we decided to continue this practice, given that a number of faculty were meeting with their regularly-scheduled classes synchronously. We also experimented with later afternoon sessions. Although registration was still greater for noon programs, faculty reached out to us to note conflicts and request access at different times. We addressed this challenge by holding multiple sections of the same programs.

Our decisions on format and timing resonated with our faculty, and we found to our gratification that many of our sessions rapidly filled. Depending on the nature and timing of each program, we adjusted to high demand by either increasing the registrant cap or by offering a second identical program on a different day and time of the week. We also began distributing recordings and chat transcripts so all faculty could access the resources from the programs.

Providing Materials and Resources for Programs

Several of our popular programs pre-COVID were based on pedagogical book discussions. This format helped us engage faculty with evidence-based teaching practices via a venue readily appreciated by academics. The FDC purchased the books for participants, and faculty appreciated having the texts to use as future references and to lend to colleagues. But during remote instruction, faculty did not have easy access to their office bookshelves, and the FDC could not purchase books for them. We adapted by reaching out to book authors in our professional community who graciously shared pre-

publication PDFs for chapters we would be discussing, enabling us to continue these sessions (Felder & Brent, 2016; Nilson & Goodson, 2017). As participants sought tested solutions to the challenges they were facing, they expressed appreciation for this extended educational community. Eventually, our institutional library was able to purchase e-copies that allowed unlimited access for our faculty.

Holding book chapter discussions allowed us to continue a popular branch of our programming while also reducing the time needed to plan and prepare for these sessions. This consideration was especially important to keep the workload manageable for the FDC staff as we increased our offerings in response to the crisis.

Continuing and Re-Envisioning Services

Prior to the transition to remote instruction, our FDC conducted midterm feedback services and observations for faculty in the physical classroom. When teaching moved online, we knew these services could be invaluable in providing instructors with feedback on their efforts and needed to continue—but how could we best accomplish the goals we had for these services in an online venue?

Our midterm feedback service pre-COVID-19 had typically involved visiting face-to-face classes and collecting student feedback from groups in real time. Some of the FDC staff had earlier experimented with a virtual option, using Google forms to collect feedback from student groups online during classes, still in real-time. With the move to remote instruction, we built on this prior experience to support faculty in collecting and compiling students' anonymous feedback asynchronously. In this case, feedback was solicited from individual students, and we lost the advantage of students sharing their ideas in peer groups. To handle the challenges of scale, we offered Likert-scale questions for classes with over 50 students; this format allowed us to analyze a large amount of data and still respond in a timely manner. Faculty seeking midterm feedback from 50 or fewer students could elect either the Likert-scale questions or traditional open-ended questions. These changes enabled us to continue to provide faculty both with a mechanism for collecting students' views during this critical time and our help in interpreting those perspectives.

Likewise, we reconceptualized our observations to include review of faculty's recorded classes and their course websites. The two-dimensional nature of the virtual world and the somewhat disembodied feel of the online classroom posed challenges both for faculty in their teaching and for us in

our observing. In a sense, however, given that historically FDC staff were more familiar with the physical classroom, we had the vantage point of viewing these sessions through a novice's eyes, like the students, while offering the expert's perspectives on improving the experience.

Continuing but Reframing Discussions on Assessment

Our FDC provides support for assessment of student learning outcomes for individual faculty, programs, and the university as a whole. Prior to COVID-19, we had planned our usual Leadership in Teaching series—a series that taps into our community of faculty and administrators who are working on program-level outcomes assessment and connecting student learning outcomes data with institutional data. When our campus closed, we re-examined these sessions in the light of immediate challenges. We reconceptualized one of our formal, data-sharing assessment sessions into a Bring Your Best Idea program, which allowed us to target immediate assessment challenges, build community support, and work together to identify immediate solutions. We applied the principles of flexibility and adaptability to our assessment-related programming and focused on the more pressing goal of helping faculty create authentic assessment approaches, temporarily stepping back from the more challenging, data-informed workshops we had created previously.

Our back-to-basics approach allowed us to tap into some fundamental challenges of course design as faculty re-examined their courses for the online environment. We found that one of the most difficult pre-pandemic concepts for faculty—outcome alignment—became a focal point for many of our participants in the pressure to design online courses. In an early online book-based session, we discussed course coherence and the importance of creating course maps to explicitly demonstrate for students the alignment between outcomes, assignments, and assessments (Nilson & Goodson, 2017). Some faculty wondered whether this level of guidance constituted "hand holding" and might prevent students from taking the initiative to make these connections for themselves. Other participants disagreed: They cited the reading and other research to persuade their colleagues about the benefits of clarifying structure and emphasizing alignment of all elements of the course to the outcomes. For example, faculty noted that leaving certain connections for students to make might be less equitable for students with weaker prior preparation. Others pointed out the high cognitive load students were expe-

riencing during remote instruction. They suggested that by making basic aspects of the course clearer, such as learning outcomes and course organization, we were freeing up students' mental resources for disciplinary work such as interpreting text and problem solving. Thus, the community discussion initiated a theme of connection through alignment and coherence that became common ground across the programs we offered.

Supporting SoTL in a Time of Change

Prior to COVID-19, our FDC fostered a vibrant community around SoTL, manifesting both in a monthly discussion group of interested faculty and through individualized support for projects. We have two goals in our work with faculty around SoTL: to encourage faculty to undertake studies of their practice and to support the faculty who do. We work with faculty on all aspects of their projects including study design, analysis and interpretation of data, and communication of results. Given the pressures of the sudden leap into remote instruction, it was difficult to encourage faculty to seize the situation as an unparalleled research opportunity. This challenge was evident in the conversation during the first SoTL discussion group we held not long after the shutdown. We found that faculty were still focused on immediate needs, i.e., the "how to" questions of instruction rather than the "what works" or "what is" or "what's possible" questions of SoTL (Hutchings, 2000). The discussion provided continuity and cultivated our community, but it did not catalyze faculty involvement in SoTL.

Although beginning a SoTL project seemed daunting during this time, faculty who were already involved in SoTL faced different challenges and opportunities. In the semester leading up to the COVID-19 crisis, several new SoTL projects had been launched. Following the sudden campus closure halfway through the term, SoTL research teams were faced with the decision either to continue or indefinitely suspend their projects. In most cases, implementation of research interventions and subsequent data collection could be completed within an online environment, but teams faced the challenges of the unpredictable effect of the crisis on data and the interpretation of the potential findings. Ultimately, these teams felt the benefits of research continuity outweighed the risks, and the novel circumstance provided a natural opportunity to investigate complex phenomena in teaching and learning. In nearly all cases where SoTL research teams chose to continue their projects, a few modifications to protocols or measurable variables allowed researchers to probe the impact of COVID-19.

Several projects were especially poised to capture important data in the new learning situation. For example, in one study, a group of faculty in the sciences and math had just initiated a SoTL project on students' use and understanding of learning objectives and how that affected their course performance. Although the research protocol had to be slightly reimagined to move one exercise from face-to-face to online, the project allowed the researchers to capture this opportunity and examine possible shifts in students' study habits during the transition. Likewise, a university-funded project that started that same spring looked at how faculty implementation of five specific evidence-based practices impacted student achievement in five introductory science and engineering courses, courses with historically high rates of failure and withdrawal. A pre- and post-survey on student study habits and constraints had already been planned as part of this project. Fortuitously, the team was able to revise the post-survey to capture students' specific constraints and perceptions with the switch to remote instruction.

Other SoTL projects exemplified the perseverance of faculty in the face of changing circumstances and the value of community in supporting this work. One such project integrated various aspects of our support by embodying evidence-based teaching, SoTL, and bridging assessment of learning outcomes with learning analytics. The faculty member was studying the effects of a new, intermediate math course aimed at addressing a fundamental disciplinary skill. A key component of this course design involved students working collaboratively in groups on hand-written exercises designed to address specific cognitive skill development in math. Thus, the faculty member had to negotiate the challenge of forming and managing virtual groups and find technological solutions that allowed students to write math together. Though the FDC had to postpone a session that showcased how this SoTL project bridged institutional data analytics and course-level learning data, we actively supported the continuation of the project through the entire semester. As a longitudinal, multi-semester study, we will have the opportunity to reflect on how data trends correlate with pre- and post-COVID course design.

As we faced the challenges associated with continuing our programming and services, similar to our faculty audience, we endeavored to identify key learning outcomes and adapt our sessions to model both flexibility and authenticity. We listened to faculty conversations during our sessions to identify key needs and relied on follow-up faculty feedback to inform our future choices. To some extent, the work was trial-and-error, and as we saw shifts

in faculty needs or response to programming, we adjusted our plans accordingly, as the next section illustrates.

Prioritizing Content

During the discussions in our online faculty programs, beginning with our virtual social hour, we were able to catalogue the most prevalent challenges faculty faced. These commonly voiced difficulties drove our decisions on the creation of programming. Not surprisingly perhaps, the switch to remote instruction highlighted anew several recurring themes in effective pedagogy, whether face-to-face or online: connecting and supporting students, engaging and motivating them, and finding ways to assess students' learning meaningfully while holding them accountable for acting with integrity. To meet these needs, we either adapted past programs originally intended for face-to-face instruction or created new programs designed specifically for remote instruction.

Revising Old Programs to Meet New Needs

Several of our traditional programs, targeted for primarily face-to-face instruction, were equally important in online courses. For example, prior to COVID-19, we routinely offered programs on active learning, encouraging faculty to adopt this evidence-based practice in ways suitable to their discipline and their teaching goals. Although this pedagogical approach originally arose to address issues in face-to-face instruction (Bonwell & Eisen, 1991), it has become an important element of online pedagogy as well (Nilson & Goodson, 2017). We were able to adapt some of the content from our former programs and combine it with a panel discussion in which two faculty shared how they incorporated various active learning approaches in an online platform. We began this session with a brief overview of the research on the value of active learning approaches in promoting learning whether online or face-to-face and connected those ideas to the Community of Inquiry model for online instruction (Garrison et al., 1999). The faculty panelists then elaborated on ways they engaged students in active learning synchronously in breakout groups via our learning management system and asynchronously in discussions using tools such as VoiceThread. Balancing theory with practical advice in a community of colleagues helped participants reflect on both the "why" and the "how" of these choices.

Responding Through the Creation of New Programs

In addition to reframing our formerly face-to-face program topics to address the transition to online teaching, we also gathered ideas for programs new to our portfolio. For example, in recognition of the need for more visual communication for students in online instruction, we created a popular session on the graphic syllabus—an alternative, engaging format for this pedagogical staple (Nilson, 2007). This session also allowed us to highlight the need to make all online materials accessible and help faculty find efficient ways to do so. In response to this session, faculty created or revised graphic syllabi and shared their results with the FDC.

A particularly timely yet challenging programming topic arose from faculty requests: trauma-informed pedagogy. Designing such a program posed special challenges for us given that none of our staff had counseling or disciplinary backgrounds that prepared us for these discussions. We thus planned the program to be based on several readings and provided guided, structured questions to keep the discussion focused. We asked how faculty helped students develop their self-regulation skills and manage the stress and trauma they were experiencing. Faculty discussed ways that they balanced providing structure with offering flexibility and support. For example, they shared how they conferred with students on scheduling assignments and virtual meetings, commiserated with them on the difficulties of the situation, checked in on them regularly and communicated with them frequently, and used specific pedagogical approaches (e.g., group work) to build community and provide support. Faculty raised additional questions about whether we risked over-emphasizing the pandemic, which led to a rich and robust discussion. We curated resources from our planning that provided faculty with additional support on this demanding but critical aspect of their teaching.

Balancing Community Building
with Providing Guidance and Content

Given the priority our FDC placed on community, all of our programs prior to COVID-19 were interactive, and many were entirely discussion-based. For example, our past book discussions were open-ended where faculty could discuss whatever personally resonated from the reading. How-

ever, when using this same approach to conduct our first virtual book chapter discussion session, we found that faculty drifted from the topic and conversation dwelled on challenges unrelated to the reading. In subsequent feedback, many attendees noted that they wanted more structure and more focus on the intended topic. In response, we drew on the research on online teaching to make informed changes and shifted our online approach to model the Community of Inquiry framework (Garrison et al., 1999)—emphasizing not only the building of community (social presence) but also providing some guidance (teacher presence) and focus on content (cognitive presence). We adopted the practice of providing slides to activate prior knowledge, ease the cognitive load, summarize key concepts, and scaffold faculty discussion of ideas. Faculty responded positively to this format, and it helped focus the discussions not only on sharing challenges but also on proposing evidence-based solutions.

As faculty voiced their interest in further pursuing pedagogical choices and our FDC responded with respectively aligned programming, we built a community of trust and shared goals. Further, our faculty's willingness to be open with their successes (through resources such as graphic syllabi) as well as their vulnerabilities (through conversations on difficult topics) indicated the community connection and growth. We strove to sustain this growth by adapting our approaches to be responsive to the needs of online learners.

Promoting Complementarity

At the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, we faced a dual marketing dilemma. Prior to the switch to remote instruction, the roles of our FDC and IT had occasionally been confused by faculty who had not used either of our services regularly. This situation was exacerbated during remote instruction as faculty turned to both units for aid. Clarifying our FDC's respective role was paramount given the high demand for support services so that neither the FDC nor IT became overwhelmed and faculty received the help they needed. More critically, however, given our FDC's historical emphasis on face-to-face instruction, we confronted the question of how to collaborate with our IT unit and yet cultivate a distinctive role for our FDC.

Dealing with Confusion in Unit Roles

During remote instruction, FDC programs focused on helping faculty redesign their face-to-face pedagogical plans and practices to be effective

online. While we often discussed the affordances of technology tools for achieving these goals, it was the purview of the IT unit to provide step-by-step training on use of tools. Despite this distinction, we continued to notice that many faculty conflated the FDC with the IT unit. Frequently, faculty asked for hands-on training or support for different tools, and we referred them to the IT unit training and support resources and staff for more information.

Although we did not discover an easy solution to resolve faculty confusion, we found that this conflation sometimes worked to our advantage. Faculty sometimes returned to FDC staff to think through how to infuse newly-learned technologies with their own teaching philosophy and pedagogical approaches. We worked one-on-one with faculty to create these confluences and help them build online learning opportunities that resonated with their disciplines and teaching philosophies. When faculty shared these efforts in our workshops, our community offered additional insights, examples, suggestions, and even caveats to help everyone move forward successfully.

Cultivating Distinction Within Collaboration

Our IT colleagues were best suited to be the first responders in the first moments of crisis. Prior to COVID-19, some of our instructors had not yet used the learning management system and others were familiar with only the fundamental tools. Many faculty did not know how to do web conferencing, for example. As the IT team hastened to do face-to-face training in the few days' warning before the physical campus closed, our FDC pondered how to support IT and maintain our distinctive purpose. After the campus closure, the university formed a special task force that included units key to planning and incentivizing faculty development for the massive move to remote instruction, and both IT and our FDC contributed to those conversations. In those sessions, we were able to demonstrate support for our IT colleagues while gleaning ideas for distinct niches we could fill. As an example of our collaboration, we took action when some members of the task force noted that aspects of the FDC and IT unit websites on remote instruction seemed contradictory. In response, we did a content analysis and revised our language to be more consistent.

In addition, we joined the first round of the formal IT training course, and one of our staff co-facilitated the session on assessment. During those webinars, we realized that instructors needed additional context and framing for the pedagogical choices they confronted. To address this need, we purposely

planned a book chapter discussion that engaged faculty in thinking about coherent online course design (Nilson & Goodson, 2017). Faculty appreciated the text-based focus of the discussion and enriched the conversation with examples from their own practice. We designed other programs to target obvious gaps in emphasis in IT sessions, for example, how to motivate students online and how to take a trauma-informed approach to pedagogy. We found that faculty needed a community space to cull through the options, collaborate on what could work for their courses, and commiserate on the overwhelming conversion workload.

This process of collaboration and differentiation highlighted one of our FDC's prominent strengths: its focus on community around teaching and learning. Our programming was discussion-based and learner-centered, which promoted connection and collaboration among our faculty. Our sessions were not framed as training but as forums for collegial conversation and even debate. During this crisis, our community provided technological novices a much-appreciated oasis from the unfamiliar terrain of online tools and allowed them to reconnect in the common ground of pedagogy.

The Community Response

We succeeded in our efforts in building a virtual community, if measured by the record attendance at our online programming after the transition and the sustained use of our services such as observations and consultations during the spring. Almost 500 distinct faculty (out of a total of about 800 full- and part-time faculty) attended programs or used our services, almost 200 more than the previous year, and over 150 of those were new to our programs or services (based on the past three years). During the first four months of the transition, our resource tip-sheets were viewed or downloaded almost 500 times, and our webpages addressing remote instruction were viewed over 900 times.

These findings were especially meaningful given that our FDC is not responsible for teaching faculty to use the technology tools necessary for online instruction. Many of our faculty community were also spending time with our IT colleagues in webinars and consultations to learn how to use the learning management system and web conferencing tools. Our data showed that faculty were eager for the discussions of pedagogy and student learning provided by our FDC. We provided a virtual connection and a community of practice for instructors to process not only what they were learning but also what they were experiencing and feeling in this trying time.

Enduring Lessons Moving Forward

As we move into the next academic year and all its uncertainties, we recognize that the switch to remote instruction created a clarifying moment for our FDC. The transition both confirmed our FDC's valuable role in cultivating a community around teaching and provided us with new directions for moving forward. One enduring lesson of practical import was the ability to extend our reach to faculty, especially adjunct faculty and those at our secondary campus, through virtual programming. In the past, the FDC had only briefly explored virtual options for interacting with faculty because of workload issues. Prior to COVID-19, neither FDC staff nor many faculty were particularly familiar with web conferencing platforms, so offering online programs would have involved a steep learning curve for us all. The obligatory switch to remote work diminished the inertia barrier to instituting web conferencing. Going forward, even when we return to our physical campus, we can enhance our capacity and extend our reach by continuing to offer both synchronous and asynchronous virtual programming. We anticipate that returning faculty will recognize the value of these venues and recommend them to their new faculty colleagues.

A second key lesson was a new perspective on our FDC's distinctive ability to complement and extend the work of our IT unit. Prior to remote instruction, our FDC's work focused almost exclusively on pedagogical support for face-to-face or hybrid teaching. The instructional technology team supported faculty in adopting best practices for online instruction and the use of technological teaching tools. However, during remote instruction, because of workload demands and cultural differences between our units, the IT team was less likely to provide open venues for exploration and elaboration of instructors' teaching philosophies, pedagogical choices, and practical experiences online. Our FDC offerings enriched faculty learning about online teaching by providing the evidence behind practice, cultivating reflection on practice, and fostering communication about practice with colleagues. Thus, by clarifying our role in supporting online teaching, we can expand our future contributions in ways that refine and deepen the work of IT.

Finally, an essential enduring lesson of this time was the power of a FDC's community in addressing the needs of a rapidly changing and emotionally fraught era in teaching and learning. The undercurrents of faculty and student stress that occasionally emerged during prior face-to-face program-

ming became raging torrents during COVID-19. Suddenly, our FDC provided a haven for faculty to share not only their approaches but also their burdens. In our sessions, faculty commiserated with one another, offering solace as well as advice. Together we considered challenges, offered interpretations, and developed responses to address the eddies of our particular context. As the crisis continues, and in its aftermath, this community around teaching and learning will help faculty navigate the changing landscape of higher education.

Conclusion

As our FDC adjusted its work during remote instruction, we re-envisioned our existing communities of practice for the new virtual environment and sought to help new members connect with this community of support. Doing so required us to follow both effective principles for faculty development as well as those that guide meaningful online instruction. Such principles included capitalizing on the experience of the participants, making content relevant to their needs and interests in the moment, and being responsive to participants' feedback. These efforts resulted in a renewed sense of participation in a culture of inquiry around teaching among our faculty, a significantly expanded reach of our programming and services, and a refinement and reinforcement of our role as complementary to, but distinct from, that of our IT colleagues.

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