FACULTY FOCUS

Special Report

Best Practices for Training and Retaining Online Adjunct Faculty

Featuring content from

DISTANCE education Report

A MAGNA PUBLICATION

Best Practices for Training and Retaining Online Adjunct Faculty

Becoming a new faculty member is seldom easy. Whether the instructor is simply transitioning to a new university or stepping into the classroom for the very first time, there are questions large and small that arise every day about policies, procedures, techniques, and technologies. For online instructors, many of whom teach only part-time, this sense of disorientation is made even more difficult by their off-site location and the growing list of tools and technologies they need to learn in order to create a rich learning environment.

These challenges are a major concern, not only for new faculty members but for the college as well. The institution has invested significant time and resources in the recruitment and hiring process. To lose online instructors due to a difficult transition or inadequate support would be a waste of time, effort, and resources, not to mention the potential impact on course quality.

This *Faculty Focus* special report contains 12 articles pulled from the pages of *Distance Education Report*. The articles feature best practices from colleges and universities who have solved the training and retention puzzle and come up with innovative approaches to ensure their online instructors are trained, connected, and supported throughout their teaching experience.

Here's a sample of some of the articles you will find in *Best Practices for Training and Retaining Online Adjunct Faculty:*

- Giving Part-Time Online Instructors What They Need
- The Virtual Faculty Lounge: Providing Online Faculty Development for Adjunct Instructors
- Eight Facts to Know About What Bothers Your Distance Education Faculty, and What Keeps Them Coming Back
- Jump Starting Faculty into Online Course Development
- A System for Managing Online Faculty
- Tips for Designing an Online Faculty Workshop

This special report will provide you with the best practices you need to improve the training and retention of your online faculty.

Christopher Hill
Editor
Distance Education Report

Table of Contents

Giving Part-Time Online Instructors What They Need 4

Training Online Adjuncts the Florida Way 5

The Virtual Faculty Lounge: Providing Online Faculty Development for Adjunct Instructors 7

Getting By With a Little Help from One's Friends: Mentoring Program Boosts Faculty Retention 9

Tips for Designing an Online Faculty Workshop.....10

Eight Facts to Know About What Bothers Your Distance Education Faculty, and What Keeps Them Coming Back 12

Training 60,000 Faculty to Go Online 14

Jump Starting Faculty into Online Course Development.....16

A System for Managing Online Faculty 18

How to Train and Maintain Your Distant Faculty 20

Development on Demand: Professional Enhancement Resources for a Geographically-Diverse Faculty 22

Designing a Certificate Program for Preparing Faculty for Online Teaching and Hybrid Course Development 23

DISTANCE education Report

Volume 9, Number 2 January 15, 2005

Secure Website Improves Faculty Recruitment, Development and Retention

By Judy Dahl

Any tool that helps distance education administrators with the important tasks of recruiting, developing and retaining high-quality faculty is worth a second look. Especially if the tool improves faculty administration without a huge cash outlay or a major technology investment. A tool developed at Anne Arundel Community College, Maryland, does just that.

"It's not a novel idea," says Richard Cerkovnik, Ph.D., department chair of physical sciences at Arundel, of the secure website he and colleague Lynn J. Tracey, Ph.D., associate professor of chemistry, developed. "It's an electronic version of asking faculty, 'Can I have your course materials?'."

A curriculum management system

The site, which Cerkovnik calls a curriculum management system, provides current and prospective faculty with a paperless, dickless way to share teaching resources and materials. In addition to course outlines, instructor notes, lectures, course activities, quizzes and tests, the site includes advice from previous instructors and cautions (such as common student mistakes to watch for in a chemistry lab). Faculty use of the site is voluntary, and Cerkovnik asks them to update course materials each semester.

Originally developed to give adjunct faculty remote access to course materials—for both face-to-face and distance education courses—the system is yielding significant benefits.

Recruitment

"We recruit adjunct faculty who have full-time jobs," says Cerkovnik. "They don't always have time to come to campus for interviews." He gives prospective faculty access to the secure Web site via a generic password, and even before the interview process begins, candidates can review curricula and teaching resources.

"It shows them what kind of support we'll have in place for them, and that they won't have to create courses from scratch," says Cerkovnik. Arundel is able to attract high-quality candidates with this electronic look at its support system, and eliminating the need to set up on-campus interviews—at least in the initial recruitment phases—speeds the process.

Viewing Arundel's online curriculum management system not only familiarizes candidates with the college's academic resources, but gives them an idea of its culture. This helps administrators conduct more informed interviews, and also lets candidates assess whether Arundel would be a good fit for them.

Development

Once new faculty are on board, the curriculum management system facilitates their training and professional development. "I can direct new faculty to the Web site instead of handing them a bunch of paper," explains Cerkovnik. "They can review the material, then we can discuss it." In previous attempts to eliminate paper, Arundel administrators tried disseminating curricula and teaching resources via e-mail or disk. "With e-mail, we filled up people's in-boxes, and there was just too much volume to use disks," says Cerkovnik.

The secure Website gives adjunct faculty background information about Arundel, informs them about appropriate teaching methods and student assessment methods, and conveys course goals and objectives. The site

continued on page 6

In this issue

In the News: Study finds indications of strong growth in demand for online courses; more from Sloan "Entering the Mainstream" Study 2

Quality: Course quality and instructor workload 4

Resources: ED-MEDIA 2005: 8th Annual Innovations conference — League for Innovation in the Community College Conference 5

Faculty Development: Team of online learning experts help faculty teach 8

Giving Part-Time Online Instructors What They Need

By Christopher Hill

There are many benefits of employing part-time instructors to teach online: they can relieve the instructional workload of full-time faculty; they can provide expertise that is not available within a program; and they can help keep program costs manageable. Along with these potential benefits, relying on part-time online instructors creates new challenges, including high rates of instructor turnover.

When an online learning program relies heavily on part-time instructors, a high turnover rate could negatively affect course quality and increase faculty development costs. This is why retaining good part-time online instructors is a priority at Humber College's Open Learning Centre, where 90 percent of online courses are taught by part-time instructors.

Ruth Hickey, director of the Open Learning Centre, provides centralized support for online instructors in an otherwise decentralized institution. Hickey works with academic program coordinators to identify which courses will be offered online. (Currently there are approximately 200 online courses that have been developed for online delivery, and 130 to 150 of these are offered each term.)

Hickey encourages each department to identify its online faculty as early as possible, which enables the Open Learning Centre to begin working with these instructors before the term begins.

"I send out a welcome letter to each online instructor, reminding them of the services that we have in the Open Learning Centre that can make this teaching experience positive for them because in a lot of cases, online faculty feel that the focus is on making sure that the student is happy and that no one is really there for them," Hickey says.

Each online instructor is assigned a specific staff member (according to academic area), which provides a single point of contact for each instructor.

Compensation

Because Humber College is decentralized, part-time instructors' pay varies among the different academic programs. Some are paid hourly and some are paid according to the number of students they teach. "There's a lot of work involved with teaching online. That's the hardest part in retaining faculty—the fact that initially it looks like you're not getting paid for what you do because you spend so much time fumbling around with the technology," Hickey says.

The goal of the Open Learning Centre is to support faculty and provide the services needed to allow them to "focus on the content and teaching their online courses so they don't have to deal with the nitty-gritty technical support for the students, such as navigation." Hickey says. "I think by providing that type of service, the faculty aren't so overwhelmed. Teaching online is very time consuming and if you add that component to delivering the content, you're basically doubling their workload, and who wants to work with an organization when their workload has doubled, and they're not being compensated for it?"

Although fair compensation is important, some instructors are motivated by other factors. "There are a lot of faculty members who know that online learning is hot and it's the thing they need to get into. A lot of faculty do it to try to get into teaching full time, and if they show that they're interested in using the technology, they feel that makes them more attractive as candidates for full-time positions. But ultimately, in order to retain the faculty, we're trying to make the experience less frustrating and as positive as possible for them with limited resources," Hickey says.

A faculty community

Like students in an online course, when instructors feel like they are part of a community, they will likely stick around, Hickey says. To create a sense of community, the Open Learning Centre invites part-time online instructors to campus events such as course showcases and faculty development opportunities. (Most of the part-time online live near the Humber's Toronto campus.)

An important part of creating this sense of community as well as improving instructors' technology skills is the WebCT clinic the Open Learning Centre offers. After completing this clinic—Hickey recommends that all online instructors complete it before teaching online—instructors can take part in an ongoing threaded discussion about online teaching techniques with other instructors who have completed the clinic. "We try to build a sense of community [online], realizing that they're not necessarily

PAGE 5 ▸

FROM PAGE 4

on campus a whole lot. You have to utilize the technology in terms of building that sense of community the same way you do in your online classroom," Hickey says.

Timely support

The Open Learning Centre's website includes information that can help instructors manage their courses, but sometimes there is no substitute for individual attention from a support staff member. As the number of courses grows, providing this support will be a challenge. "Because of our large number of courses, our resources are grown, but not at the same rate [as our online course offerings]. Our biggest challenge now is to make sure that our resources are set up in a way that our instructors can actually access them," Hickey says.

Providing instructors with the support they need likely will help retention, but the need for support does not end even after they have taught online for a long time, Hickey says. "You're always going to need to do that little bit of handholding, even with experienced online instructors because technology changes so much."

Training Online Adjuncts the Florida Way

By Christopher Hill

Florida Community College Jacksonville (FCCJ) is an online institution that employs only adjunct faculty. Since they ventured online, they have developed a system for training their adjuncts, building community among them so that they train each other, and building a sense of professional spirit among them. Kim Hardy, Dean of Instruction and Student Success at FCCJ, recently explained to Distance Education Report some of the more effective tools in their adjunct program.

1.The orientation program. Every new adjunct that's hired is required to go through an online orientation program, taught by an FCCJ mentor. FCCJ trainers built the orientation class in BlackBoard. It includes six to 10 modules and it talks to the new adjuncts about some of the administrative tasks and other technical functions they are responsible for.

2. The mentor program. The mentoring program was designed for any new online instructor. Adjuncts are automatically assigned a mentor. FCCJ has a lead mentor who is a fulltime faculty member, with about ten other adjunct mentors. There is a mentor for each discipline area. Each new hire is matched with a mentor. The mentor has access to the mentees classes, so they can judge the help that the mentee may need. This relationship lasts for a semester but if the new adjunct wants it for a year they have that option.

Every new adjunct that's hired is required to go through an online orientation program, taught by an FCCJ mentor.

Lead mentors are instructors who are teaching full-time online, and they coordinate the adjuncts. The regular online mentors for each discipline are selected based on their performance. "They are really good enthusiastic instructors, who wanted to get involved and who wanted to help. We tried to pick out ones so that we'd have one for each different discipline," Hardy says. The mentors were paid a stipend depending on how many mentees they were assigned, but with funding cuts Hardy is not sure the program is going to be able to do that any more. FCCJ is looking at how they might be able to revise the program to compensate for that.

3. Certification program Another thing new faculty are required to do is go through a certificate program. That was created by FCCJ's professional development office. Subjects covered include how to build an online course, online pedagogy, how to use BlackBoard, introduction to multimedia, how to do Podcasts and wikis, and more.

At the end of the program they get

PAGE 6

FROM PAGE 5

a certificate and a small salary increase. Mentees then have to serve as a mentor to a new adjunct.

4. Electronic newsletter This goes out twice a semester. It serves a community-building function, containing news of adjunct achievement and other news briefs. It alerts adjuncts to events and opportunities. "That's something else that helps us keep in touch with each other," says Hardy.

5. Live webinars For the last two years FCCJ has done webinars using Elluminate for adjuncts at the time of the school's fall convocation. They use it to welcome the adjuncts and offer useful advice. Some of the webinar is live, other portions prerecorded. There is a question and answer period.

6. V-Compass FCCJ has a communications and information forum in BlackBoard called V-Compass. Instead of sending adjuncts a stream of e-mails reminding them of various things, they have created V-Compass as a clearing house for information. Discussion boards are set up so if adjuncts need to talk to other instructors, if they need resources in their subject, if they need to know some administrative policies or if they don't know how to use something in BlackBoard, they can discuss those issues. All the webinars are on V-Compass. There are also interactive tutorials, online demonstrations and videos. Adjuncts can go on V-Compass any time. Adjuncts are encouraged to go online and answer each other's questions, to support each other , to post resources for each other, and get involved in mentoring each other, either officially or unofficially.

Hardy tells a story: "I was on our V-Compass Forum the other day and there was an instructor, I don't know where he was but he wasn't here, and he was having a hard time trying to figure out how to do something in BlackBoard. We have an administrator monitoring this but before she could even respond, a couple of adjuncts jumped in and said, 'I haven't exactly done this but here's what I think'. And another person jumped in and said, 'Yes but you need to do this and that; and they were all in there helping each other."

Discussion boards are set up so if adjuncts need to talk to other instructors, if they need resources in their subject, if they need to know some administrative policies or if they don't know how to use something in BlackBoard, they can discuss those issues.

7. Online workshops and videos. Short two or three minute demonstrations on how to do specific operations in BlackBoard are made available online to students and faculty.

8. Quality assurance. The dean of FCCJ's online program decided it was time to focus on quality. Because this was going to look at how FCCJ evaluated adjuncts as instructors, he wanted to make sure they all had a voice in the creation of the evaluation system. In a move typical of FCCJ philosophy, he created a forum in BlackBoard and invited all adjuncts who were interested in creating a new quality assurance program to take part in it. Every week for eight weeks he did a video cast with them, talking with them on a different topic--courses, discussions, quality in assessments, and so forth. When FCCJ put this new quality assurance into place, the adjuncts felt like they had a stake in it, some ownership. People felt like they had a say in how this quality assurance was going to be implemented.

9. The resources page FCCJ has a page where adjuncts post different resources that they come across. The mentors contribute.

Guiding Philosophy

The guiding philosophy from start to finish at FCCJ is peer-to-peer communication. Hardy believes that it's one thing to get input or direction from an academic superior or an administrator. It's another to hear suggestions from peers. "It's not so much you're telling me what to do, but instead here is a suggestions from a colleague. I think that helps a lot," says Hardy.

"Let's use the resources we have," says Hardy. "We have some great instructors here. They're the ones who will be able to help our new instructors really acclimate to this environment and help them with a lot of their questions that could be answered not just by our administrators here but also by our fellow adjuncts."

The Virtual Faculty Lounge: Providing Online Faculty Development for Adjunct Instructors

By Jennifer Patterson Lorenzetti

More and more, Ohio's two-year colleges are turning to adjunct instructors to teach their courses. These instructors bring a wealth of real-world experience and subject-matter expertise to their time in the classroom. However, they often lack the knowledge of pedagogical and learning theory that their full-time counterparts may have obtained as part of their preparation to teach, or in subsequent faculty-development opportunities. Further, the adjunct population is typically a busy one, with demands from full-time jobs, making it difficult to take time out during normal business hours for continuing education.

If lack of training in pedagogical theory is a typical weakness of adjunct faculty, it is very likely that these instructors know it. Not only can a lack of training in this area on the part of adjunct faculty have a negative impact on student retention, it can also contribute to adjunct-faculty attrition, as these otherwise skilled professionals feel underprepared to successfully deal with a classroom of learners. Helping adjunct faculty address these training needs will help ensure that students receive a better education and that valuable, part-time faculty members are inspired to continue to bring their expertise to the college.

Helping adjunct faculty address these training needs will help ensure that students receive a better education and that valuable, part-time faculty members are inspired to continue to bring their expertise to the college.

This is the problem that Cathy Bennett, associate dean of Learning, Information Services, and Technology for Belmont Technical College (BTC), has been confronting for several years. Working with a committee of former adjunct instructors, BTC has devised a Virtual Faculty Lounge that allows adjunct instructors to access training and resources any time of the day, whether they are on or off campus.

Providing resources for theory and practice

An adjunct faculty member is introduced to BTCs Virtual Faculty Lounge in a mandatory orientation during the instructor's first term. At that time, the instructor is introduced to the Blackboard system that serves as the shell for the Lounge and is granted access to it through a personal account.

The Lounge contains a variety of materials that the adjunct instructor will need, ranging from the highly practical to the more theoretical. For example, Bennett notes that many forms the institution uses may be difficult for the instructor to access during off-hours, when the instructor is able to visit campus. Therefore, the committee that made recommendations for the Lounge's content insisted that practical resources such as forms be made available for download.

Additionally, the Lounge is filled with resources to help adjuncts learn more about pedagogical techniques. "Two-year college faculty are often content experts, not education experts," Bennett says of these part-time faculty. As such, adjuncts can bolster their classroom and teaching skills by working through the information found in the Lounge.

BTC provides support and guidance for adjuncts as they continue their education, as well. Adjunct faculty are typically observed in their classroom by the department chair or a member of the college's administration, who assesses the instructor in areas including class organization, presentation, student/faculty relationship, professional competence, content, interaction, and active learning. These visitors might make note of some areas the adjunct instructor could strengthen, such as encouraging class discussion or understanding learning styles. Or, the adjunct may identify an area that he or she would like to improve. "Someone can suggest, or an adjunct can self-select," says Bennett of this teaching-related training.

PAGE 8 ▸

FROM PAGE 7

This assessment leads to the construction of an individualized learning plan. The learning plan includes recommendations in four major areas:

- classroom organization and processes (including time management, classroom management, syllabus development, course preparation, class processes, and computer/software use);
- content presentation (including lecture/presentation techniques, communication skills — verbal, nonverbal, and written — professionalism, and subject knowledge);
- fostering learning (including brain-based learning, active learning, constructive feedback and evaluation, developing students' lifelong learning skills, and fostering responsibility); and
- learning environment (including cooperative learning, learning communities, learning and teaching styles, developing and communicating high expectations, and supporting diversity).

Each area can include a specific recommendation for additional training that the instructor can pursue with the help of the Virtual Faculty Lounge.

At the end of the additional training, the instructor is assessed again, with the expectation that he or she has integrated the new information into the classroom approach. "We hope they expand and grow as educators," Bennett says. One way that this growth can be objectively measured is by eligibility for promotion. Adjunct faculty at BTC move from the ranks of instructor adjunct, assistant professor adjunct, and associate professor adjunct, up to professor adjunct, based on a variety of criteria. While part of a faculty member's eligibility for promotion hinges on formal education and degrees earned, total experience in the field, as well as number of terms as an instructor, the faculty member may also complete certain modules from the Virtual Faculty Lounge as part of demonstrating readiness for the next level.

A third type of information housed in the lounge is a result of other professional development opportunities that the adjunct instructors may not have been able to attend. For example, Bennett tells of a presentation by the Ohio state attorney general held during a professional development session for full-time faculty that addressed federal privacy regulations. BTC secured permission to post the PowerPoint presentation to the Virtual Faculty Lounge, where faculty members could access it at their convenience.

Securing a physical space

Although the Virtual Faculty Lounge is, by definition, located in cyberspace, while delivering online and on-demand learning to adjunct faculty, BTC felt that it was also important to link the lounge to a physical space. This follows the recommendation from the committee of former adjuncts, turned full-time faculty, who made suggestions for the program. "It [couldn't] be just virtual; it had to have a physical piece," Bennett says.

For the physical piece, BTC selected the Learning Resources Center/Library. The library proves to be the ideal place to serve as an on-campus base for the Virtual Faculty Lounge. One benefit is the extended hours held by the library, which means that adjunct instructors can visit at a wide range of times to log on to the Virtual Faculty Lounge. Other materials and tools the instructor may wish to utilize are also available through the library, and library staff serve as support to help instructors use the resources, such as integrating PowerPoint presentations into their lectures. This lends a human component, as well as physical resources in support of the virtual tool, The Lounge.

Recommendations for working with other institutions

When it comes to supporting adjunct faculty, Bennett sees no reason why individual institutions should go it alone. "There is no reason you can't partner with other institutions," she says. She notes that BTC is beginning some early cross-institutional dialog about ways to adapt the Virtual Faculty Lounge for use with other institutions. One proposal involves collaborating with other institutions to offer a multi-institution, adjunct-orientation course; another proposal suggests opening a Virtual Faculty Lounge that would serve more than one institution, using the Ohio Learning Network's (http://www.oln.org/) open-source pilot project. Both ideas are in the earliest stages of gauging interest, but already it is easy to see how such a resource could include information and training of use to adjunct instructors at a variety of colleges across the state or across the country. ●

Getting By With a Little Help from One's Friends: Mentoring Program Boosts Faculty Retention

By Jennifer Patterson Lorenzetti

Becoming a new faculty member is seldom an easy transition. Whether the instructor is simply transitioning to a new university or stepping into a classroom for the very first time, there are questions large and small that arise every day about policies, procedures, techniques, and technologies. For the online instructor, this sense of disorientation is only made more difficult by the faculty member's off-site location and the necessary technology that can seem as much a communication barrier as a communication tool.

This is a major concern, not only for the new faculty member but for the university. The institution has invested significant time and resources in the recruitment and hiring process, and it will continue to make investments in training and retention. To lose a faculty member due to a difficult transition would be a waste of time, effort, and the faculty member's potential.

Florida Community College at Jacksonville is well aware of these challenges. The college offers a variety of distance learning programs delivered through online, blended, CD-based, and telecourse platforms, serving approximately 25,000 enrollments online in the 2004-05 academic year. Each semester, FCCJ offers some 450 sections of online courses, taught by 100 full time faculty and 200 adjuncts.

The typical new faculty member with a question usually believes that the question must be posed to a new boss, a daunting prospect that causes many questions to go unanswered.

Although approximately two-thirds of the virtual adjuncts reside in the state of Florida, many are not local to Jacksonville and therefore cannot easily visit campus to resolve problems or get to know other faculty and staff. To help smooth the road for these "virtual adjuncts," FCCJ has developed a mentoring program designed to ease transitions and improve faculty retention.

A Safe Place for Questions

Steven Huntley is a professor based in FCCJ's Kent Campus and the lead mentor for the Virtual Mentoring Program. He explains that the mentoring program is designed to encourage questions and avert problems for adjunct faculty in their first semester teaching for FCCJ.

The mentoring program employs ten mentors scattered around the country, each one a seasoned FCCJ faculty member representing a specific academic discipline. As the college hires new faculty, they are assigned a mentor from their discipline.

The mentor makes initial contact with his or her assigned mentee, establishing time frames for contact throughout the semester. The pair exchange contact information and set a schedule for checking in with one another, with at least two contacts required each semester. However, Huntley finds that the adjuncts typically desire contact much more often.

Huntley believes that this result is due mainly to a general comfort level with the mentor that may not exist for the typical new faculty member in an academic department. The typical new faculty member with a question usually believes that the question must be posed to a new boss, a daunting prospect that causes many questions to go unanswered. This is especially true of the software questions that often plague a virtual instructor adjusting to a new system.

"The mentees have a place to go. They have a safe place to confide in…they are more likely to ask questions," says Huntley. It is this safe, non-threatening relationship that is at the heart of virtual faculty retention for FCCJ.

PAGE 10 ▸

FROM PAGE 9

An additional responsibility for the mentor is to help head off problems that often arise for new faculty members, proposing solutions before the problem becomes too large. For example, online courses are usually constructed with events that are time-based, such as an exam that must be completed by a certain time or a bulletin board that will be accessible for a certain number of days for a required contribution. Even with the best of intentions, links fail, instructions are unclear, and students find themselves frustrated attempting to fulfill the requirements of the course.

Experienced faculty like Huntley know to check in on time-sensitive tasks, ensuring that links are active and checking email to see if students are having problems. By checking in early, faculty can fix problems before they become course-wide difficulties. A new faculty member, however, may not think to do this. "New faculty may not be in tune. They may not know to check in when their students are logging in," says Huntley. By stepping in early in the term, the mentor can help the new faculty avoid problems and have a successful result.

But what of questions of independence of the new faculty member, and the traditional power of the faculty to teach as they see fit? "It's not so much a challenge to academic freedom, but to see how things are working," says Huntley. For this reason, the mentors do not try to prescribe teaching methods. "We don't advocate mentors get involved [in pedagogy]," says Huntley. Instead, the mentor may at most choose to ask a well-placed, probing question about the intention and expected outcomes of a particular approach. The intention, however, is not to limit academic freedom but to offer help when it can be most effective. "The earlier the mentor is involved the more receptive [the adjunct]. We want to help them," says Huntley.

An Effective and Efficient Approach

A mentor's life can range from idle to busy, depending on the demands of hiring for a given semester. In one recent semester, some 40 new faculty members were hired, meaning that each of the 10 mentors averaged four mentees per person. However, simple averages may not tell the story, since mentees are assigned by the mentor's academic discipline. Therefore, even in a relatively active semester, some mentors may not have mentees, while some may have a full dance card. For the coming Fall semester, with enrollments flat or slightly declining, FCCJ may hire only half that number of new faculty.

An additional responsibility for the mentor is to help head off problems that often arise for new faculty members, proposing solutions before the problem becomes too large.

Each mentor with an active mentee load receives a flat fee each semester for serving as mentor, along with an additional amount for each new mentee. The amounts are modest, each ranging in the low hundreds of dollars. This fee is for an unspecified amount of work, as FCCJ does not mandate the number of hours the mentor spends with each mentee, only that regular communication take place.

The relationship does not end when the semester does. Although no further formal contact between mentor and mentee is suggested or mandated, the new faculty member may look first to his or her old mentor when a question arises. And all faculty in the mentor's discipline, including the new ones, receive regular communications from the mentor about what is going on in that area.

In sum, Huntley calls the Virtual Mentor Program "an effective, efficient way to train new faculty." Assigning faculty mentors to new faculty, with a nominal compensation amount, is much more cost effective than hiring a full time staff member to handle the same duties. And, more importantly, new faculty at FCCJ begin their work with a non-threatening relationship with an accessible mentor who sets the tone for a career that is hopefully long and successful. ●

Tips for Designing an Online Faculty Workshop

By Jennifer Patterson Lorenzetti

What is the best way to train and support a beginning online faculty member? At some colleges, the only option is on site training held on the campus over a day, a weekend, or a period of days during the summer. These on-site workshops, while potentially very effective, commit the faculty members to time, travel, and often inflexible scheduling. However, Berkeley College, with campuses in New York and New Jersey, has designed an online faculty workshop and set of training and support tools that ensures that online faculty are never far away from the assistance they need.

This is not to say that Berkeley College has neglected its on-site training and supporting online information components. Before designing the online faculty workshop, the college already offered an online teaching tutorial; on-site beginning, advanced, and instructional design workshops and open labs at all campus locations; WebEx conferencing; online peer mentoring by discipline, an online faculty recourse center, and a variety of personnel to support faculty training. The center of all of this activity is Mary Jane Clerkin, coordinator of online faculty support.

Clerkin explains that Berkeley has always made use of adjunct professors to teach some of its online courses, but many of its online instructors are actually on site and teaching campus-based courses as well. Scheduling is a concern for these faculty members, who range from busy new professors to even busier department chairs who may not be able to carve several hours or days out of their schedule for face-to-face training. However, all of them are used to finding information online.

- **Tip:** *Remember that although not all online faculty will be physically located off-campus, that doesn't mean they will have a great deal of available time for face-to-face training. Online training can be a good solution to varied and busy schedules.*

Clerkin notes that the college piloted an online workshop two quarters ago, with just seven faculty members as participants. This initial group liked the training, so the college made a two-week workshop for beginning online instructors available. The team is now working on offering courses for advanced faculty and for instructional design.

Although the beginning instructor's workshop is billed as a two week endeavor, the actual amount of time that completion will require depends on the individual faculty member's technical expertise. The course is replete with resources, including the textbook that complements the course. The text offers an excellent companion website and a link for beginning online teachers.

- **Tip:** *Berkeley College uses Teaching Online: A Practical Guide, by Susan Ko and Steve Rosen, as a text and companion web site.*

One set of links available to the course participants is a listing of resources addressing current thinking about pedagogy. Links in this section include ones to Quality Matters, Merlot, and the Sloan-C Consortium.

The online faculty workshop also includes several videos to personalize the information and allow campus experts to talk about their own experiences. "We have lots of videos of experienced online professors who share their best practices," says Clerkin. Other videos are from the director of the library, the director of the help desk, the director of the academic support center, the instructional designer, students, and Clerkin herself.

- **Tip:** *Videos can be a good way to personalize online training and to allow the participants to get to know the resource personnel they will need to be successful.*

The online workshop also includes an online faculty resource center, which features tools and resources that faculty likely will need. This includes a faculty handbook, a checklist for a successful course created by the dean, and a section on academic integrity.

The online faculty resource center is conceived as "a place where faculty can share," says Clerkin. For example, all faculty meetings are held online through a section of the resource center dedicated to discussions. This section also includes discipline-specific discussions for faculty in certain subject areas, and an option for voice discussions. There is even room for faculty-initiated interaction projects; for example, one faculty member has asked to run an online book club, so that discussion area is now found online.

- **Tip:** *Allow faculty the chance to personalize online space in order to keep them coming back. An online book club or other non-work interac-*

PAGE 12 ▸

FROM PAGE 11

tion may make them feel more at home online.

The site also includes a number of forms that the faculty members will need as they do their work, such as progress reports. "All they have to do is click to take any one of those forms," says Clerkin. Additionally, the site lists the various upcoming conferences that faculty may be interested in attending, a feature that is additionally nice because of the generous amount of grants Berkeley College makes available to its faculty for attendance at these events.

- **Tip:** *Put all of the forms and information your faculty will need online in easily downloaded formats, so that they can be accessed at all hours from any computer.*

The site is filled with models and best practices. One section includes sample courses in a variety of disciplines, which allows participants to view a successful course and learn what aspects they might adopt for their own. There are also many sets of directions and instructions for using common tools, like Blackboard.

Finally, the online faculty workshop requires the participants to demonstrate competence with practical applications. Each participant is asked to complete certain tasks, like posting a comment, to show their readiness to teach online. At the end of course completion, they are sent certificates of completion to show that they successfully navigated the course.

- **Tip:** *Just as you would have tests and assignments for students in an online course, consider having assessment activities for participants in an online training workshop, so that they may demonstrate mastery of the materials.*

Clerkin and Berkeley College intend to keep upgrading the online faculty workshop so that all faculty continue to have the tools they need to be effective in the online classroom. "It is important that faculty have access to all new materials," Clerkin says. For example, Blackboard, which the school uses as its course management system, has new portfolio features that the faculty need to understand in order to make use of them.

Clerkin and the college intend to keep developing workshops to help faculty stay current in their field. An advanced workshop and one on instructional design are expected to be available by the beginning of the year.

Eight Facts to Know About What Bothers Your Distance Education Faculty, and What Keeps Them Coming Back

By Christopher Hill

When Jennifer McLean, director of instructional technology and distance learning for the Pennsylvania College of Technology, looked through the existing literature on distance education, she found many studies and articles addressing the needs of students and how to retain them. Unfortunately, she found few mentions of studies of the faculty experience, and here she saw a gap that impacted her work as a distance learning administrator. "More and more faculty are working totally remotely," she says. "Is that an isolating experience? What does that mean for faculty retention? What do they need and how can we support them?"

McLean undertook a study using a Delphi panel of distance educators, asking them about their causes of stress and satisfaction with their jobs and allowing them to discuss their opinions online in a sort of conversation. The findings are important for any distance learning administrator to understand and address to create happier faculty.

Stressor: Student Interaction

McLean's first finding was that distance learning faculty "didn't experience more stress than other faculty members, but from different sources." Much of this stress came from working with students who are not prepared to

PAGE 13

FROM PAGE 12

study online, and then attempting to remediate these students in an asynchronous environment. Faculty cite stress originating from "the reality that much of the remediation they are providing should have been provided earlier in the student's academic career," McLean writes in a paper for the Distance Learning Administration conference, "Forgotten Faculty: Stress and Job Satisfaction among Distance Educators."

Stressor: The Rolling Presence

Distance learning administrators often emphasize students' desire to have rapid responses to their email messages and chat room postings, but this can be very stressful for the faculty member. "Students assume you are sitting at your computer 24/7," says McLean. This perception is known as the "rolling presence," and it causes faculty a great deal of anxiety when they do decide to log off for an evening or a weekend. McLean tells of one faculty member who checked her email while at her daughter's wedding, so concerned was she that a student's question would go unanswered. If our society as a whole suffers from the "always on" phenomenon that makes professionals tote their Blackberries along on beach vacations, the pressure is even more intense for the faculty who work with students who expect them to be available at any time.

Stressor: Perfectionism

Further complicating the pressure to respond immediately is the fact that faculty as a group tend to be "fairly perfectionistic," McLean says. This self-imposed stress can lead them to berate themselves for not living up to the 24/7 expectations of their students, and the pressure to be available all day, late into the night, and over the weekend can be very wearing for a faculty member and his or her family.

Non-Stressor: University Pressures

Although distance learning faculty experience a good deal of stress from interactions with their students, some of the typical stresses faced by traditional faculty members are often not a consideration. For example, distance learning faculty are often not held to the traditional triad of expectations of teaching, research, and service, and so they do not experience the stress that results from juggling these demands.

Additionally, they do not feel bound by expectations for social interaction or even for earning a good evaluation. Many of the faculty in McLean's study report that they rarely see a performance evaluation and really do not care to. They are also extremely unlikely to look to the university for social interaction, so don't expect these faculty, even the locally-based ones, to hang out in the department lounge or eagerly anticipate the holiday party. "They don't perceive themselves as part of the university as a whole, and they don't feel left out," McLean says. In fact, this population seems to delight in being "out of sight, out of mind," or "flying under the radar," two phrases that came up repeatedly in the study. "They don't feel alone; they like it that way," says McLean.

This fierce independence can have some serious implications for distance learning administrators and department deans who may try to reach out to their distance faculty, only to find a lukewarm response. However, certain other university populations are seen as tremendously important by the distance faculty. When asked about their interaction with colleagues, McLean reports that her study populations did not "talk about their discipline or their deans; they talk about tech support. That is their link to the university."

Satisfaction Point: Independence

The faculty who elect to teach online are often a very independent group that views themselves primarily as teachers. "The faculty who are drawn to distance education are even more independent" than the traditional faculty member, says McLean. "They self-select into this, so they may be better teachers," she notes.

Even though they recognize the stresses that can come from relative isolation and pressure to meet unrealistic student demands, they are generally happy with the life they have elected. "They perceive the trade-off as well worth it," McLean says, noting that faculty describe their jobs as "satisfying and challenging."

Uncertainty: Knowledge of Colleagues

A point of low satisfaction among faculty members was knowledge of their colleagues. For example, a pair of questions asked the participants to rate the degree to which their colleagues were boring or lazy, and the participants admitted they did not know these people well enough to respond.

This lack of personal connection extends up the hierarchy. "One panelist didn't even know who [his] supervisor was," says McLean, who notes that distance faculty often simply receive a teaching assignment from the department secretary. This lack of interaction can create mistaken impressions, such as when campus based colleagues assume distance faculty are on something akin to a permanent vacation.

Uncertainty: Equitability of Pay

Finally, faculty in McLean's study had a difficult time assessing the fairness of their pay. Although many of the participants were quite experienced faculty members at the end of successful careers, which muddied perceptions about the availability of promotion opportunities, there was a feeling that the ratio of pay to workload may not accurately reflect

PAGE 14 ▸

FROM PAGE 13

the amount of effort distance learning requires.

Lesson: Know Thyself

One obvious benefit of McLean's study is the opportunity for faculty considering distance learning to measure their own preferences against known stressors. For example, faculty should assess their own level of social engagement needs to determine how well they will deal with the independence or isolation. They should also realize that it is difficult to remediate students in the distance environment, and "it is very easy to get pulled under the wheels of rolling presence," McLean says. She recommends faculty set boundaries, as "the burn out factor is the greatest threat to productivity."

The information should also be quite useful for distance learning administrators who hope to understand the stressors and uncertainties among their faculty and help them manage them. McLean recommends communication and support to help these distance faculty feel a part of the university as a whole. Just don't expect them to show up at the next department meeting. ●

Training 60,000 Faculty to Go Online

By Christopher Hill

John Whitmer and his @One (pronounced at-one) group had to teach 60,000 faculty how to operate online. That's the total number of faculty and staff in the whole California Community College (CCC) System — all 110 schools and 72 district offices.

The @One Project is a technology training and support program for the faculty and staff of the CCC system. Their charge is to make it easier for CCC faculty and staff to learn how to use technology to enhance student learning. @ONE's programs provide training, online resources and support for free — or at a very low cost — thanks to funding from the California Community College Chancellor's Office.

Scaling Up Training

Before the @One project, the California Community College System had tried to address its training needs with four peripatetic trainers going from one school to the next. The idea behind the @One Project was to use distance education and distributed learning technologies in order to reach a much larger audience — the entire system. "Your reach is very limited if you're going to stay on the ground," says Whitmer. "In a state as big as California you're not going to get too far."

@One has a core staff that does all the administrative work: logistics and coordination, planning and pedagogy, marketing, outreach, registration, and evaluation. But all the technology and production work is outsourced. @One's preferred outsourcing suppliers are other chancellor's office projects, where @One can largely get what they need for free. The most important of these services is access to CCC Confer, the California Community College version of Horizon Wimba, the e-conferencing solution. CCC Confer allows users to set up a web portal that presenter and participants both log on to. The presenter can show PowerPoint slides or even their own desktop (so participants can see any other application running on the presenter's computer in real time). There's also a chat window, a white board, a polling tool and other interactive functionality. The video is accompanied by a phone bridge so that the presenter and the participants can call in to an 866 number and converse. "That's one of the biggest tools for us and that's how we're reaching several thousand people per term," says Whitmer.

@One offers a variety of different types of training. One of their basic formats is the desktop seminar — short 45 minute presentations with 15 minutes of Q&A. The desktop seminars cover everything from the very basics — how to make PDF files — t advanced desktop applications like Excel, PhotoShop, PowerPoint, and Flash.

Lately, many of the seminars have moved beyond strictly technological skills, into pedagogical issues, featuring training in online instruction, effective evaluation skills and detecting plagiarism.

Whitmer concedes that 45 minutes is not a lot of time to do all this training. Responding to this fact, @One has developed the most popular of these desktop seminars

PAGE 15 ▸

FROM PAGE 14

into series, allowing the subject to be explored more deeply.

The next level of @One instruction support is asynchronous online classes, from three to six weeks long. Whitmer describes them as standard online classes, with course content online, each module with a discussion forum, often with multimedia elements.

It's in designing their online courses that @One staffers really call on their outsourced support. "We have people all over the state who are instructional designers," Whitmer says – "Very talented people whom we work with on a contract basis."

Though @One doesn't have trainers or instructional designers on staff, they do have a set of production standards. "We have a design guide that we use," says Whitmer. "We have a look and feel. We have a template. We have other standard policies and features for our classes. We have it all standardized, but we don't use a designer."

Using System Resources

The resources of the CCC system also provide Whitmer and his group with subject matter experts to teach the online courses. They have several ways of locating potential instructors. They can advertise on a system-wide listserv; the @One staff also knows many people who have worked in the CCC system capable of teaching a course. And sometimes they recruit talented students — CCC faculty or staff — from the classes. Says Whitmer, "Drawing on the resources and the talent and the knowledge that's already in our system has been one of the biggest factors in our ability to do this on a budget, and provide really a very rich and robust content."

@One teaches general topics to faculty and staff — Online teaching, multimedia, technology-enhanced instruction. But @One has another audience as well — the "techies" as Whitmer calls them — and they present a different challenge. The technologists in the CCC system are only taught face to face, not via distance learning. "Techies can't get away," explains Whitmer. "We could not do the techie training online because if they're in front of a computer they're working, and the only way they can get training is to actually get them out of the office. We'd been very successful in getting to everybody else but the techies, and we would talk to them and they would say 'Nice class, the technology looks good but I can't participate. Because my choice is to learn something new or fix a server.' And we never won that battle. So we provide them all face-to-face training."

Reaching thousands

Over the course of the last four years @One training has reached almost 12000 people. Last year alone @One reached 8022 people. That number breaks down this way: 1019 through face to face training; 1259 through online courses; desk top seminars 3262; video on demand 953; the other 1500-plus group is made up of people who choose self-paced materials. Self-paced materials are similar the online classes — sometimes it's the same content — but repurposed so that learners go through at their own rate. There are no activities and no discussion.

Evaluation

@One does point-of-service evaluation at the conclusion of all of their events – a formative ongoing evaluation process with a core set of questions that are asked with every service so that they can do comparisons across services. "What we've found," says Whitmer, "is that the more personalized service, the more connection, the more individualized attention someone gets, the higher they rate the service." He adds that this is not just in response to obviously related questions like how good the facilitator was, but also to seemingly unrelated questions like "How well did the content meet your needs?" "That gets a much higher rating if we have more one-on-one activity," Whitmer says. In @One's evaluation data people are happier and more satisfied, and get a better learning experience, if they have a facilitator helping them through.

In the immediate future, @One is planning a conference — the Online Teaching Conference – for the summer of 2007 It will be a standard two-day conference format, with a projected attendance of about 300. But, in line with @One's mission, they have their eyes on the 60,000 strong CCC audience. So they've decided to stream the whole conference while they hold it face-to-face "We call it a hybrid event," says Whitmer. "We're going to be webcasting the keynote speakers that'll go straight out to the Internet. Also, for some of the breakout sessions we'll be using CCC Confer and offering those as interactive sessions. The people in the audience will be there but we'll also have a virtual audience that can hear the presenter in real time, that can ask questions and interact. There will be no charge for virtual attendees. We'll open it up to the whole educational system." And so the @One Project continues its mission. ●

Jump Starting Faculty into Online Course Development

By Christopher Hill

Most distance education administrators know that there's going to be a certain amount of hand-holding involved when they're trying to get faculty members to produce their first online courses. On the other hand, at the Center for Teaching and Learning at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), they get 12 novice professors to produce 12 new courses in 90 days – and like it. Terri Tarr, Director of Instructional Design and Development and Rhett McDaniel, Director of Instructional Technology, explained to Distance Education Report how IUPUI's "Jump Start" program works.

IUPUI had decided they wanted an online degree option to offer commuter and non-traditional students. But they had a problem with faculty. Says Tarr, "The faculty was saying, yes, we'd like to develop the courses but we don't have the expertise, we don't want to spend the time learning how to develop them, we really want to focus on teaching, and so on." "They just got lost," says McDaniel of the professors. "They didn't know where to start, they didn't know how to start. They didn't know what a course looked like online."

It was in response to this that Tarr and McDaniel began to develop the Jump Start program. The idea was two-fold. One) Have the faculty members work collaboratively and two) surround them with a team that would give them all the support they needed. The Jump Start team includes an instructional technology consultant, an instructional design consultant, production support, a librarian to help them connect to online resources, and a copyright management office.

The Jump Start team includes an instructional technology consultant, an instructional design consultant, production support, a librarian to help them connect to online resources, and a copyright management office.

The instructional technology consultant from IUPUI's Center for Teaching and Learning helps the professors explore some of the possible technology options. The instructional design consultant helps the faculty member determine objectives for the course, and decide how to organize the content. The designer helps them think through issues like creating interactive exercises, or establishing a social presence online. They can help them decide what sort of assessment they're going to use to gauge the course's effectiveness.

Digital Media Services (DMS), IUPUI's in-house production facility, is another key part of the team. They are the people who will assemble and produce the finished course. Once the course has been designed, the faculty member, the instructional designer, and the IT consultant get together and create a plan the DMS will be able to use to create the course.

The Jump Start process

The heart of the Jump Start Process is an intensive four-day week where the faculty members work on developing a prototype model for their course.

Day 1: Tuesday Eight to 12 faculty members gather, first for a series of workshops on the basics of online course design. They then meet with their support team. They'll see examples of previous Jump Start courses . People from Digital Media Services (DMS) come in and "sort of put the parameters around what's possible," as McDaniel says. Together with the professors, the DMS people develop a work plan, sitting down with a calendar to plan their work for the next 90 days.

Day 2: Wednesday The next day, the faculty members become familiar with online course development guidelines, and begin to develop their syllabus. Multicultural teaching strategies are discussed. The professors are introduced to the key concepts in intellectual property, and they work with librarians to learn about connecting to online resources. They finish defining their goals and objectives for their courses. They're introduced to different web interface options, and start thinking about what kinds of interactivity are available to them.

PAGE 17 ▸

FROM PAGE 16

Day 3: Thursday The group identifies best practices for online teaching. At this point the professors begin to look at their course as a whole. They decide how it will be structured -- by unit, chapters, weeks, subject area, topic, etc. They pick out a representative section to focus on. As the days proceed, the professors are having less and less facilitated time and are spending more and more working independently on their own courses.

Day 4: Friday By Friday the professors are deep into designing their prototype. They start developing a plan for assessing course effectiveness. They'll finalize a work plan for the next 90 days to complete their course. They turn in their design document to DMS, who will have a prototype built. Faculty members share their course design and view other faculty projects.

Once all the prototypes are created, the faculty members come back in the summer for a prototype showcase, where they present their prototype modules to each other and describe their projects. Over the summer they continue to work with their team. The team is led by one of the instructional designers who is designated as project manager. The professor develops course content and reviews it via e-mail with the project manager. By the beginning of fall term, the course is ready to go.

The impact of a Jump Start

The main aim of Jump Start week is to have the professors actually develop fully a section of their course. This does a number of things. It makes the professors feel less overwhelmed at the outset, giving them the sense that they've gotten a handle on the process. It also gets the faculty thinking concretely about the course – what content they will need to write, where they will need to build in interactivity, graphics they will need, and so on. "Once they see that first module and they have a design for it, and DSM creates it so they can see it, it's a lot easier for them to visualize the rest of the course," says Tarr.

Once all the prototypes are created, the faculty members come back in the summer for a prototype showcase, where they present their prototype modules to each other and describe their projects.

One factor that helps the Jump Start process work is money – professors receive a $5000 stipend for creating their courses. But most faculty actually enjoy the process as well. "Jump Start week is really, really intense and if it were not fun people would not be interested in coming," says McDaniel. His assertion that Jump Start week is fun is borne out by the growing number of applications they get. "More than we can handle," says Tarr.

Tarr says that what makes this intense week work is that the professors are taken out of their routines – they're away from their offices and away from their phones, away from people who drop in for a chat, away from their computers. "They are given the luxury of having time set aside to work on that project," says Tarr.

The program has been so successful that Tarr and McDaniel can now envision a time when it won't be needed. "When it was first created there was a strong need to help faculty create online courses -- they were really lost," she says. Now, she thinks the need may be becoming less pressing, although she thinks that the model they have created of production support for faculty will continue to be valid.

One of the directions McDaniel and Tarr want to go with Jump Start is to put more and more of it online. On their last Jump Start cycle they consciously put more material online and had the professors do some preparatory work online as well. They plan to do more of this that the faculty members will experience more of the student viewpoint online.

Jump Start has had an institution-wide impact. The courses created out of the process have now spread out into many of the schools and departments of IUPUI, and Jump Start courses have been used as models by other departments. "[Jump Start] has had a ripple impact on the institution," Tarr says. "In that way I think it's done a wonderful job." ●

A System for Managing Online Faculty

By Kathleen Vail

Managing faculty is one of the big challenges in online education. It is especially difficult when a program uses adjunct professors to teach many of its classes. Norwich University in Northfield, Vt., has developed a system of training and monitoring online faculty for its online master's degree programs that allows it to take advantage of using adjunct faculty while minimizing the problems associated with off-campus teachers.

Norwich's faculty management program investigates potential instructors during recruitment, provides clear expectations and extensive training before they teach, and close monitoring during the course.

"We make sure we screen our faculty to make sure they aren't overloading by taking on a teaching position at Norwich," says John Orlando, associate program director for Norwich's masters of Information Assurance (MSIA) program. "We emphasize that you will put in 15 to 20 hours per week online. You'd better have that time available."

Off-campus caveat

Most of the online courses in the masters program are taught by adjunct faculty, who are, in large part, working professionals in addition to their teaching duties "We do require them to have teaching experience," Orlando says, "but we want them to have practical experience in the field. A majority have a full time job somewhere else. Most are vice presidents or managers."

The advantages to using adjunct faculty in online learning programs are many. Off-campus teachers, often from the business world, are more comfortable with the independent style of work demanded by online courses. The university can also take advantage of choosing teachers from a wide variety of backgrounds, experience, and qualifications. Orlando says this is particularly pertinent to the MSIA degree program -- information security being a new field, where there are few academic experts to be found. Finally, adjunct faculty can be removed from their positions more easily than tenured professors.

Norwich's faculty management program investigates potential instructors during recruitment, provides clear expectations and extensive training before they teach, and close monitoring during the course.

However, off-campus status can pose problems. First among them is that the teachers may feel more like independent contractors than part of the university. They don't necessarily feel they represent the institution, even though they do, of course, to their students. If they are detached from the school or if they become unhappy with something going on in their course, they are more likely than full-time faculty to complain to their students.

"When we've run into problems in the past, it's when faculty got busy or were traveling. They didn't realize that when there's a lot more things impinging on their time, it draws you away from your class," says Orlando. "We make sure they understand the time commitment. Faculty is the first connection to students. If they are not actively involved, we will lose students."

Norwich's online faculty management program allows the school and students to enjoy the benefits of using off-campus faculty while minimizing the problems they present.

Recruitment

Orlando and his staff use a three-part process to recruit faculty: resume reviews, phone interviews, and reference checks. That's in addition to content knowledge and teaching experience. Most preferred is someone with online teaching experience. Newcomers to online teaching tend to take a couple of classes to adjust, including making the lifestyle adjustments necessary to be available to their students when required.

Candidates are fully briefed on what they're expected to do. They also are asked about their business travel schedule, in case there is a conflict with the school's schedule.

Training

Training and support is essential for

PAGE 19 ▸

FROM PAGE 18

online adjuncts. Online tutorials are helpful, and should be accompanied by clear instructions on where teachers can go for technical questions.

New hires also learn about the quirks of online communication. For first-time faculty, that can be a hurdle, says Orlando. "There are certain things that are very different. You have to be very conscious of how you interact with students. A lot of face-to-face communication is non verbal. That doesn't come out in e-mail. They can be misinterpreted. We have to watch our faculty in terms of their interaction." E-mails can sound harsher than intended, because they are not accompanies by non-verbal cues, he says.

In addition to online instruction, Orlando and his staff have extended phone sessions with the new faculty, filling them in on the history and culture of the university.

A way to overcome the "consultant mentality" among adjunct faculty, according to Orlando, is to create a community of support among online teachers. The faculty can use a listserv to post problems and discuss solutions. Norwich has a "virtual campus" for faculty, with lists of campus events and information about the online programs. Serious problems can be staved off by creating a sense of belonging among adjunct faculty. Orlando says good will can be spread by methods as simple as sending faculty a university wind-breaker or sweatshirt.

Grading is another aspect of training. On-campus faculty members differ in their grading, of course, but they are a known quantity. First-time adjunct faculty may not know how to grade or may not know the expectations or standards of the university. An addition factor is that adult students tend to want more detailed information about grading. To address these concerns, Norwich gives new faculty grading rubrics and examples of various levels of coursework. Some might see this as micromanaging, but Orlando says that the faculty members almost universally appreciate it.

Monitoring and accountability

Faculty members have clearly outlined expectations. Instructors must answer student questions within 24 hours, and return graded work within three days of submission.

A way to overcome the "consultant mentality" among adjunct faculty, according to Orlando, is to create a community of support among online teachers. The faculty can use a listserv to post problems and discuss solutions.

They are closely monitored. "We have to make sure our faculty knows, if they have taught before, that they will be monitored much more than they are used to," says Orlando. "In a face-to-face classroom, they are on an island. But in an online class, everything they do is saved. E-mails, grades, notes are saved. They have to get used to this. It can be a change for some teachers who want complete autonomy. But we can't allow that. We have to make sure standards are upheld."

Norwich uses a lead instructor system to monitor faculty. Lead instructors, chosen for their experience and proven teaching ability, are mentors to the other faculty members. They solicit the instructors in their group for their opinions and ideas. The lead instructors are required to provide the program director with weekly reports of suggested improvements.

"The lead instructor model is the best way to go," says Orlando. "In a small operation, you would have the program director monitor faculty. But as you get bigger, you must spread out the layers of responsibility. We have 1,000 students; the class sizes are capped at 15, and our average is 13. You get about 80 or 90 faculty. And we have plans to grow beyond that. If we didn't have efficient systems, it would reach the breaking point."

Students also prove to be good monitors of quality. A lot of what we hear is from students," says Orlando "If there's a problem, students notify us directly. Adult students are good about demanding value from their education."

Managing online faculty and adjunct faculty can be a challenge, Orlando says, but Norwich's carefully structured recruiting, training, and monitoring program is well worth the effort. ●

How to Train and Maintain Your Distant Faculty

By Christopher Hill

One condition of distance education is that at many institutions the instructors are not on campus. These telecommuters, or teleworkers as they are referred to at Canada's online Athabasca University, are convenient but can pose administrative dilemmas. The lack of contact with colleagues and with the institution can lead to isolation, and drifting out of the main currents of technological and pedagogical innovation. Distance faculty may not be aware of the degree of presence they need to have in a course, and may effectively just "sit them out," not contributing appropriate levels of input to the course. Isolated teachers can also find that they have missed opportunities for professional advancement, not being surrounded by colleagues and associates who can train them in the pedagogical application of new technologies. The missed professional development opportunities may eventually frustrate them, interfere with their career development, and cause them to leave the institution.

Canada's Athabasca University functions with the aid of over 80 "teleworkers"— professors who teach from their homes. Dr. Heather Kanuka, holder of the Canada Research Chair at Athabasca, conducted a survey of their distance faculty (eighty-five percent of whom reported a home office as their primary work environment) to get some suggestions for ways to respond to these problems.

The purpose of this study was to gather data for direction on how to provide regular training and continuous learning to telecommuters. Kanuka and her associates were able to identify practices to create regular learning, community-building and professional development opportunities. Her research has shown that many of these issues can be ameliorated by contact between colleagues, with the most effective contact being activities that involve regular training and continuous support.

Distance education programs, and expecially an entirely distance education institution like Athabasca must be committed to staying on the technological edge. But the isolation of the professors keeps them slipping off. "So many of the faculty weren't really growing in the way that they should have been, especially for an online university. This was a problem that could have the potential to be huge," says Kanuka. "When you're working in your home, you're not talking to people down the hall, you're not as likely to go to our Friday seminars on new things in technology. It's an issue that I think all universities need to step up and have a look at."

"Obviously the same thing is happening at many traditional on campus schools with distance ed programs," Kanuka says. "More faculty are teaching online courses and working from home in isolation and not keeping up and not going to any of these activities."

Understanding the distance faculty experience

Distance education is all about removing barriers for students, especially the barrier of isolation from teachers and colleagues. But faculty face barriers and isolation, too, Kanuka says. Fifty percent of Athabasca faculty are teleworkers, and these form a large and vocal constituency for more professional development.

Most of the people Athabasca hires come from traditional universities. As the school increased its faculty, it didn't spend a lot of time bringing them up to pedagogical speed. There are orientations but most of them aren't sustained and most of them don't require any credentials or evidence that the faculty member has actually learned anything; and they're usually voluntary. "Also, in distance education most faculty don't have the experience to draw on, to think wow I had a really great distance ed instructor so that's how I'll start," Kanuka says. Most faculty just try to apply what they know in traditional education. What is indicated is good solid orientation for each faculty member.

No solutions?

"I used to work in the faculty development teaching and learning center in the prior on-campus university I was at," says Kanuka. "And many of the activities that were very successful there were totally flopping here. We couldn't round up people and even though we have tons of technology here at AU, everything you can imagine, we're just not getting anybody. Even if a group of ten had shown up we would have been delighted but we weren't even getting that." They tried conference calls to introduce them to Elluminate. "It's

PAGE 21 ▸

FROM PAGE 20

probably better now but we had connection problems and so the voice quality wasn't very good and that turned off the faculty."

The idea that worked

Kanuka and her associates proposed the idea of a major September orientation where Athabasca would pay for all teleworkers to come into Athabasca. Athabasca would pay for transportation, hotel rooms, food, and drink. And to the survey group's surprise, most of the faculty came. At that time there were about 80 to 82 faculty members and about 60 came "which was simply amazing for us," Kanuka says. While they were there, the faculty attended two days of professional development concurrent sessions.

While they were all there, Kanuka's group asked them why they came. The answer was simple--it was paid for. It was a two-day outing and they really wanted to get together. "One thing that was really striking is that as human beings we're pretty social and you can forget about the importance of socializing," says Kanuka. The other important factor involved was a developing sense of connection to the institution. "Your faculty are your most expensive and valuable resource and there's no institutional loyalty when you're that disconnected," says Kanuka. One ironic drawback to Athabsca's teleworker policy, which they used to attract faculty, was that there's a higher turnover because of decreased institutional identification. "They really wanted a sense of belongingness. Which was something we seemed to have lost in our teleworker policy."

Kanuka's survey made it clear that the faculty wanted face to face activities. The professional development weekend made it clear they wouldn't do it unless the institution paid for it. It cost Athabsca $11,000 to throw their weekend meeting last year. This year they are anticipating an outlay of $15,000. The Athabasca administration came to the conclusion that spending this kind of money on their faculty was worth it. If they were going to offer teleworker options to get faculty on board, then they should probably spend some money to keep them there, went the reasoning.

First the socializing, then the technology

Another challenge was getting the faculty on board with new technology. "We needed to tell them not just about the 'what' but the 'why'," Kanuka says. The faculty had to be convinced that it was not just technology for technology's sake, but that there was a pedagogical grounding for the use of the new technology. The survey indicated that faculty weren't very interested in new technology but if it increased their effectiveness as instructors they would make the effort to attend training sessions. The lesson seems to be that to keep faculty up to date you have to focus on the pedagogy, and why the technology supports more effective pedagogy. But to do so in face-to-face environments.

Faculty requests for help

What do the faculty themselves feel they need help with? According to Kanuka's survey:

- The majority of faculty said that they needed to know how to deal with difficult students in an asynchronous environment.
- They needed help with how to use diverse instructional methods online. That includes everything from asynchronous to synchronous, paced and self-paced.
- Motivational strategies: Athabasca has the typical issues with online attrition. Faculty are very concerned with this and don't really know how to keep and motivate their students in ways that are truly effective.
- Help with the learning management system (Moodle).

What to try next

The faculty felt that these two days of sessions told them things they didn't know about, that they were provided with useful information. But they also had a chance to socialize with each other. And a lot of talk was shared among them--"This is what I had to deal with and this is how I solved it," as Kanuka says. "I think in our next one we'll have more of that informal socializing because that's valuable as well." Athabasca might also try using synchronous technology with invited experts.

One option Athabasca can't choose is mandatory training. The canons of academic freedom as well as the faculty union wouldn't permit it. Says Kanuka, "They have the right with our teleworker policy to work entirely at home but we know this is not necessarily good for them or for the institution. This is a problem and we've identified it as a need to sustain early training."

Right now Athabasca's best choice is optional training. This was favored by 93 percent of the faculty on the survey. But training costs money, and the administration has to agree to spend it. "We're not a private for-profit institution but we are built on a cost recovery model so finance is an issue," Kanuka says. "I look at it like, would you buy a car and not maintain it? That's kind of what we do with our faculty, we hire them and we don't maintain them. A car gets run down and things happen. I think the maintenance is well worth the investment."

Development on Demand: Professional Enhancement Resources for a Geographically-Diverse Faculty

By Emily Donnelli, B. Jean Mandernach, and Amber Dailey

The American university is no longer confined to a singular campus location, presenting new challenges for providing accessible professional enhancement resources to faculty. As universities expand their reach via satellite and online campuses, drawing in new student populations, faculty become more dispersed and also more diverse in their professional development interests and needs. With physical access to faculty limited or absent all together, faculty enhancement professionals must conceive of creative and non-traditional outreach methods. This article reports on one university's success creating a faculty enhancement series to reach faculty dispersed across 42 campus locations.

Park University, founded in 1875 as an independent, liberal arts, four-year co-educational institution, is one example of the expanding American university. Park University began experimenting with various modes of distance education in the mid 1960s. In the late 1990s, after successfully establishing several satellite "Campus Centers" across the country, the University offered its first course facilitated entirely online. Both modes of distance education achieved great success: Park University now has 42 Campus Centers in 21 states in addition to an online program that supports 7 undergraduate and 4 graduate degree programs, with over 10,000 enrollments in each of five, eight-week terms. Like many institutions across the country, Park University retains is "home" campus in Missouri, where all administrative offices reside, include the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL).

Challenged by Faculty

In keeping with the University's goal of functioning as "one university" and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning's mission to provide faculty enhancement resources to all faculty, the Center's administrators—three faculty members on the home campus, each working on partial release time—faced a daunting challenge. This challenge was not only geographical, however, but cultural as well. Removed from the context of the flagship campus, distance faculty members are not immersed in the history and liberal arts culture embodied by the physical location, often making it more difficult to communicate and model expectations for academic content and rigor. Moreover, those faculty members who are solely online faculty are not in daily physical proximity to colleagues with whom they can share resources and experiences, removing them from the valuable daily life of an academic department.

To address this dilemma, the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at Park University created a new faculty development vehicle, Development on Demand© specifically designed for the professional development of faculty at a distance. Development on Demand© provides satellite campus administrators and individual faculty members with high quality presentations and resources, either via CD or provided online, on various teaching and learning topics. These topics are chosen based on the results of an annual faculty interest assessment.

Development on Demand

The primary use of Development on Demand© is in a workshop setting facilitated by the satellite campus academic administrator. Recognizing that these academic administrators have limited time and resources to facilitate faculty development workshops, the centerpiece of each Development on Demand© is a multipart, audio-narrated presentation, created with AuthorPoint®. In a detailed guide, the facilitator is provided with group activities and discussion questions to use as segues between each part of the presentation. These opportunities for participant involvement are designed to tap the expertise and experience of faculty and to provide them opportunities to generate and share new classroom applications. As these faculty do not have ready access to the types of informal exchanges typical in traditional academic department settings, the Development on Demand© discussions are designed to accomplish this dialogue. Printable .pdf files of

PAGE 23 ▸

FROM PAGE 22

relevant scholarly readings, as well as presentation handouts, are also included on the disk to allow the facilitator to leave materials with the participants. A certificate of completion recognizes faculty participation in the workshop and can be presented in their annual retention and promotion portfolios.

A participant and facilitator evaluation form round out the resources provided as part of Development on Demand©. Comprised of Likert-scale and open-ended qualitative questions, these evaluations serve as a primary mechanism for the Center to judge the program's effectiveness. Results from the first Development on Demand© cited comprehensiveness of resources and ease of use as the primary strengths of the program. The presentation's combination of theory and practical application appealed to the participants, and the facilitators touted the convenience of the AuthorPoint®-generated presentation, which required no technology training or special software to launch. Considering the current popularity of high-tech approaches to faculty development—webinars, satellite conferencing, etc.—the assessment of Development on Demand© indicated its effectiveness as a low-cost alternative to reaching geographically-dispersed faculty.

As more and more institutions segregate distance programs from their traditional, daytime counterparts, faculty become more and more dispersed, both physically and culturally. Faculty development programs designed to reach all faculty, while difficult and sometimes costly to implement, are essential mechanisms for unifying faculty and ensuring quality across instructional modalities. The Park University Development on Demand© initiative serves as one example of how an institution can provide critical professional enhancement resources to a geographically-diverse faculty for relatively little cost beyond CD copying and mailing (or the posting of resources online). The Development on Demand© approach ensures that all faculty at an institution, regardless of their location, can benefit from the same content and quality of resources. When faculty can unite through shared professional development materials and experiences, the gap is lessened among them, both geographically and culturally, resulting in a greater sense of shared institutional identity.

Designing a Certificate Program for Preparing Faculty for Online Teaching and Hybrid Course Development

By P. Michael Carter, M.Ed

The growth and success of online courses over the last several years and recent faculty interest in offering hybrid courses at Pima Community College (PCC) have stretched campus training resources to capacity and caused the institution to look for additional ways to meet demand. As a result, a new PCC certificate program has been designed to train and prepare faculty as well as offer professional development opportunities for faculty growth.

PCC, a multi-campus community college district, offers more than two-hundred fully online course sections per term and creates new online courses and programs each year with a team of instructional designers and campus faculty working in the Center for Learning Technologies (CLT) at the Community Campus. The addition of online sections each year drives the need for progressively more trained faculty to teach them. In addition, over fifty new hybrid courses are in development by faculty across the district with many more hybrid courses and sections being planned for. This has increased the demand for training in hybrid course development and delivery from these and other interested faculty.

Demand for training

Several CLT instructional design staff helped to train and support a core

PAGE 24

FROM PAGE 23

group of faculty preparing to develop and teach their own web-hybrid courses based on a model course design. However, recent demand for additional trainings and planned growth for hybrid offerings have created a strain on training resources. One full-time faculty trainer manages a combination of face-to-face and online training to prepare faculty for online teaching and online course mentoring and the staff instructional designers are engaged in building new online courses and programs. To help meet these increased demands for training and to offer professional development incentives for faculty, a certificate program was developed in Online Development and Delivery.

An examination of expected faculty learning outcomes from the college's online, hybrid, and online mentor training activities and benchmarking activity of 16 external institutions offering similar training or programs was conducted. These institutions represented five community colleges, ten universities, and one organization serving multiple universities within a state system.

Core competencies for faculty and essential program elements were identified and incorporated into the development of the certificate. The institutions were examined for the following elements:

- funding type (public or private)
- classification (2 year community college or 4 year university or other)
- program name
- if the program was optional or not for faculty from that institution to take it in order to teach online and/or hybrid classes
- number of hours of training (if applicable)
- number or credits or CEUs awarding for completing the program
- the cost to the participant or, conversely, if a stipend is awarded for program completion
- whether the program was internal (only) or marketed/open to the public
- if training on an LMS (learning management system such as WebCT, Blackboard, other) was part of the program

One full-time faculty trainer manages a combination of face-to-face and online training to prepare faculty for online teaching and online course mentoring and the staff instructional designers are engaged in building new online courses and programs.

- if the participant was placed in an online (or hybrid) course as a student as part of the program
- how the program was conducted: face-to-face, online, or both (hybrid)
- if participants were either given printed training materials and/or texts or had to purchase them either from the institution or online
- comments, where applicable, including the web site describing the program and its elements.
- core faculty competencies

Core faculty competencies for course development were identified from PCC and benchmarked institutions and included:

- Identify characters of adult learners and their learning styles and preferences and apply this knowledge to the development of online materials and activities.
- Apply basic principles of curriculum design to course content and activities intended for the online environment.
- Construct online course materials and activities from an instructional design model.
- Develop online activities that include learner-centered instruction and active learning.
- Develop content for online presentation that meets web design and accessibility standards.
- Using office productivity software and an html authoring tool, create instructional content for web presentation through a LMS.
- Perform file management and organization procedures required to place materials online in a LMS.
- Discuss how to meet copyright requirement for the online learning environment.
- Create learning content and learning and assessment activities using LMS tools.
- Describe quality measure used in the preparation and revision of course materials and activities for the online environment.

Core competencies for online course delivery were identified from PCC and benchmarked institutions and included:

- Discuss and demonstrate appropriate instructor characteristics and skills for the online environment.
- Demonstrate the provision of support and facilitation of learning for students accessing online materials and activities.
- Recommend and demonstrate appropriate instructor activities for setting up the online learning environment.

PAGE 25 ▸

FROM PAGE 24

- Discuss and demonstrate best practices used in conducting communication, learning, and assessment activities online with adult learners.
- Describe and demonstrate how to meet accessibility requests and needs in the online environment.
- Use PC and online tools to check student work for academic dishonesty including cheating and plagiarism.
- Discuss and employ online tools used to assess student performance and satisfaction as well as course quality and success.
- Perform practice online course revisions and updates based a new term offering and changes in course and instructor information.

Core competencies for using the college's learning management system included:

- Demonstrate LMS navigational and system information tools for student and faculty use.
- Demonstrate the effective use and management of LMS communication tools.
- Select and use appropriate tools for student assignments and presentations.
- Demonstrate competence with LMS tools used to create and manage student assessments and to provide student feedback.
- Apply LMS tools for file management and organization.
- Demonstrate proficiency with LMS course management tools to effectively manage a course before, during, and at the end of the term.
- Utilize virtual library resources within the LMS.
- Select and/or modify instructional content and web pages for LMS delivery.

- Effectively utilize LMS tools to place and deliver course content and activities.

Based on these criteria, a certificate program was constructed with the following components. Each course bears credit and consists of lecture and lab. The curriculum is set regardless on the mode of delivery i.e. fully-online, hybrid, or traditional:

1. Required courses (plus one elective):

Development of Online Course Materials and Activities
Online Delivery of Course Materials and Activities
Learning Management System Tools

2. Elective Courses:

Multimedia in the Online Environment
Technology Survival Skills for the Online Environment (counts as one-half of elective)
Online Course Mentoring (counts as one-half of elective)

In summary, PCC's need to increase its training capacity and the need for additional professional growth opportunities and incentives drove the development of a new certificate program in Online Development and Delivery. Existing internal training structures and information from obtained from external benchmarking provided the basis for the construction of the new curriculum.

P. Michael Carter, M.Ed., Educational Support Faculty and WebCT Faculty Trainer, Center for Learning Technology, Pima Community College.

Create, Implement, and Manage Your Distance Education Program

Dedicated to online learning programs, from the "big picture" to the nuts and bolts.

With every issue, *Distance Education Report* brings subscribers the latest news and views about online learning…case studies, best practices, analysis from our experienced editors and key contributions from your peers nationwide. Twice monthly, it delivers valuable insight on creating, implementing and managing distance education programs.

***Distance Education Report* helps you:**

- Increase program effectiveness
- Boost student retention
- Gain faculty buy-in
- Stay current with best practices in course and program structure
- Comply with federal access guidelines
- Advocate effectively for distance education

A must-read publication for:

- Distance Education Administrators
- Technical and Academic Staff
- Faculty and Faculty Development Staff

You'll find articles in every issue of *Distance Education Report* containing valuable insights and practical advice to move your program forward. Topics cover such subjects as:

- Online instructional design
- Faculty training
- Program management and budgeting
- Building support for distance education programs
- New technology and new media
- Student retention
- Ethics
- Library services online
- Course evaluation

Exceptional Value!

24 issues only $419

Ask about multiple-copy subscriptions. Available in print, online, or both. Choose the online version of *Distance Education Report* and enjoy these extras:

- Free access to our full archive of back issues!
- Convenient search capabilities!
- Easy login to your subscription wherever you have a Web connection!

Share this newsletter with your entire staff with a Group Online Subscription. Contact *sales@magnapubs.com* for more details.

Submission Guidelines:

Please review the author's guidelines at our website or contact the Editorial Department at *editor@magnapubs.com* or (608) 227-8120.

Don't miss another issue subscribe today! Visit *www.magnapubs.com/distanceeducation*

Magna Publications, Inc.
2718 Dryden Drive
Madison, Wisconsin 53704
USA

www.magnapubs.com