NAU Teaching Academy ’09-'10
Summary of Engagement

Background: In this second year of the Northern Arizona University Teaching Academy, fourteen members (including the Board of five President’s Distinguished Teaching Fellows) met monthly during the academic year. This brief summary of engagement synthesizes academy members’ annual reports about their involvement in Academy events and activities during 2009-10

Major Academy Activities: Academy members considered the vision, mission, and goals that had been formulated during the group’s initial year, and sought to align its initiatives to them. Some of the work of the Academy engaged in as it related to the three goals in the framing document:

- The Academy aims to advance teaching and learning practices that support meaningful engagement and deep understanding by learners.
  - In addressing this goal, member/s
    - Established a Century Group, a series of monthly conversations for faculty who teach large enrollment classes (of 100 or more),
    - Discussed ways to address the university goal of increasing student success in liberal studies and gateway classes,
    - Initiated and conducted monthly teaching conversations within the Academy,
    - Increased electronic resources available through the Academy webpage and established an Academy Vista shell,
    - Engaged in dialogue about teaching at NAU with graduate teaching assistants and new university faculty members,
    - Examined potential impacts of reduced budgets on the teaching/learning environment at NAU.
    - Played a key role in the a “Student Success Team” cadre of consultants to be matched with faculty colleagues
    - Engaged in class and program redesign projects

- The Academy aims to encourage integration of teaching and research including the scholarship of teaching and learning.
  - In addressing this goal, member/s
    - Contributed newsletter articles to the campus Graduate College Newsletter,
    - Published articles on teaching in professional journals,
    - Attended conferences on teaching, presented at conferences, and reported back to Academy members on conference proceedings,
    - Met with visiting speaker Stephen Preskill on topics related to leadership in teaching and scholarship,
    - Revised and distributed a survey of first and second year faculty on their NAU experiences, specifically related to teaching and additional needs for support.

- The Academy aims to foster teaching that enhances student learning and stewardship through community involvement (campus, local, national, and global).
  - In addressing this goal, members have added this to the initiatives list for potential podcasts, sponsored dialogues, and events.
Professional Impact of Academy Involvement: Members cited the Academy’s “thoughtful influence on my teaching,” as they implemented new or revised teaching approaches, undertook curriculum reviews and innovations, spoke in public settings about their teaching as well as with departmental/college colleagues, tested out and assessed new student projects, modified course syllabi, reflected on the relationship between teaching and student learning, wrote articles on teaching, presented papers on aspects of teaching, attended teaching conferences and teaching-related sessions at discipline-based conferences. “My engagement with the Academy has given me the opportunity to reflect [on] and assess my own teaching practice . . .” “The Teaching Academy has helped me to think about a wide range of teaching issues—from nuts and bolts pedagogical concerns to complex theory to ideas for future research and scholarship.” “I am experimenting with playing a quiet role as observer/listener rather than the primary motor of the conversation.”

Personal Reflections: “I have rededicated my commitment to incrementally improving my teaching . . . furthermore my writing has been influenced by my participation.” “It is gratifying to be involved with a group who is pro-student and who want to be involved in helping all students succeed.” “I have learned to think about student needs, especially in terms of addressing DFW issues . . .” “One interesting aspect of my involvement . . . has been to get to know some of the excellent faculty from other colleges and departments.” “My teaching philosophy and pedagogy have been influenced by my involvement . . .” “The group assembled is so creative, reflective and insightful. It’s been a true joy to learn from them all.” “The Academy is like a creative teaching think-tank.” “I did little outside of readings and meeting discussions. This was largely due to an unexpected increase in teaching load during both semesters.”

Professional Development Fund Use: Academy members have used their Academy Professional Development monies to purchase electronic equipment to support teaching and research, books “to update current courses,” videos for use in classes, for travel to national and international conferences that address teaching, for professional memberships and journal subscriptions, to support travel to present papers on teaching, and to purchase class support supplies for which there was no departmental money.

Plans for 2010-2011: Individually and collectively the Academy members seek to create podcasts on new topics, to enhance the Academy vista shell resources, to broaden the campus forum for the Academy to lead teaching discussions, to make an active contribution to service-learning/community-engaged learning and community outreach, to develop ways to mentor and support new faculty (including the development of a Teaching at NAU notebook), to become “more visible to colleagues in my own unit,” and to analyze and address the findings in the new faculty survey. “If we are to be ambitious in our aims, this [extra course load and service obligations] is a subject to consider.” “I hope the Academy will find ways to become a more widely available resource for other teachers on campus.”