NAU Teaching Academy ’10-’11
Brief Summary of Engagement

Background: In third year of the NAU Teaching Academy, twenty-five members (including the Board of eight 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 2010-11.

Major Academy Activities: Academy members concluded the 2009-10 year by having a July conversation with the President, Provost, and Vice Provosts on the range of impacts the budget circumstances are having on the university priority of increasing student success.

Mid year the Provost held a follow-up conversation with the Academy and invited them to submit a series of recommendations to her on responses to the changing budgetary contexts as they impact teaching, research, and learning. The development of these recommendations was the focus of the spring semester Academy work.

As a part of the recommendations, the Academy identified a series of projects for themselves for the upcoming year. The intent is that small groups will take lead roles on different tasks to better utilize the Academy members’ expertise and strengthen its impact on campus.

This summary represents some of the work of the Academy engaged in as it relates to three goals in the framing document developed in the initial year:

Mission-related Goal #1: The Academy aims to advance teaching and learning practices that support meaningful engagement and deep understanding by learners.

In addressing this goal, member/s

- Continued the Century Group, a series of monthly conversations for faculty who teach large enrollment classes (of 100 or more) and led by President’s Distinguished Teaching Fellows
- Formalized recommendations about ways to achieve the university goal of increasing student success through support for teaching and research—many of these recommendations grew out of Academy conversations over the past years
- Initiated and conducted monthly teaching conversations within the Academy during fall semester
- Developed podcasts on teaching topics and made these available through the Academy webpage
- Led roundtable conversations about teaching with new university faculty members
- Engaged in program redesign projects
- Initiated a writing project aimed at using members’ insights in a collection of brief essays that will be available to campus
- Revised individual courses and piloted new teaching strategies
- Reported on teaching innovations to Academy members and to departmental and college colleagues
Mission-related Goal #2: 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 and to the new faculty handbook, “Teaching at NAU”
- Published articles on teaching in professional journals and developed book proposals and manuscripts
- Attended conferences on teaching, presented at these conferences, and reported back to Academy members on conference proceedings,
- Analyzed and discussed the implications of a survey of first and second year faculty on their NAU experiences, specifically related to teaching and their additional needs for support, and administered a follow-up survey
- Undertook classroom-based research projects on the impact of teaching practices

Mission-related Goal #3: The Academy aims to foster teaching that enhances student learning and stewardship through community involvement (campus, local, national, and global). In addressing this goal, member/s

- Initiated a college-wide learning community on teaching
- Represented the Academy on key university committees addressing pedagogy and student success
- Took leadership positions in community organizations that influence learning and teaching
- Contributed to planning the new faculty orientation and the development of the “Teaching at NAU” notebook
- Developed a list of proposed Academy projects for the upcoming year, each with a focus on campus impact

Professional Impact of Academy Involvement: Members cited the Academy’s “positive and stimulating environment,” where faculty are “engrossed by and committed to teaching as both an art and a craft” and as leading to the following: “This year I am struck by the importance of pedagogy.” “I have benefitted from the mentoring...” “[I have become] more self-conscious about my teaching practices.” “I am honored to be a part of such a dynamic group of faculty who are not only concerned about student success, but who are concomitantly dedicated to research that enhances understandings of substantive issues in specific disciplines and teaching in general.” “We are in a strong position to speak thoughtfully and passionately to both faculty and administration.”

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