NAU Teaching Academy ’12–’13
Brief Summary of Engagement

**Background:** In the fifth year of the NAU Teaching Academy, thirty members (including the board of ten President’s Distinguished Teaching Fellows) met monthly during this year. This summary of engagement synthesizes members’ annual reports about their involvement in Academy events and activities during 2012-13. Individual members’ reports are available in the Office of the Provost.

**Major Academy Activities:** Members of the Teaching Academy took the lead on planning the second, campus-wide Teaching Day ("Collaborations & Communities") held during the week prior to the start of spring classes. A majority of the members served on planning teams for their college-based conversations or as discussion leaders during a campus lunch. The feedback on the Teaching Day pointed to the value of interdisciplinary conversations among faculty within colleges and across campus.

This provides a glimpse of some of the work the Academy engaged in during 2012-13 as it relates to three goals in the Mission/Goals document developed when the Academy was established.

**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 report they

- Held monthly teaching conversations within the Academy
- Led roundtable conversations about teaching with new university faculty members at orientation and at a one-day teaching retreat
- Revised individual course designs to build in student use of technology, to institute group work and more discussions, and to strengthen student engagement
- Hosted classroom visits from graduate teaching assistants
- Developed learning resources (a design studio, online tutorials, lab work)
- Examined assumptions about teaching/learning that influence classroom practices
- Made a film of students talking about what “engagement” means to them and used this to generate discussion during Teaching Day
- As departmental leaders, planned and convened discussions of teaching
- Offered two Dream Courses: “Architecture, Landscape, and Preservation” (Tom Paradis) and “Technology, Mind, & Brain: Using Technology to Thrive in a Wired World” (Michelle Miller)
- Undertook an interdisciplinary study-abroad course design and development of a study-abroad course assessment system
- Convened a departmental Teaching Showcase

**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 report they

- 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
• Were invited to present work related to teaching at national and international conferences, attended conferences on teaching and reported back to Academy members on conference proceedings,
• Were invited to join the editorial board of a professional journal on college teaching
• Undertook classroom-based research projects on the impact of teaching practices—designed studies, collected data, and shared results in professional settings

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 report they
• Represented the Academy on key university committees addressing pedagogy and student success
• Were leaders for campus-wide initiatives on teaching
• Contributed to planning the new faculty orientation and the development of the “Teaching at NAU” notebook
• Contributed to departmental leadership as chairs and participated in Academic Chairs Council
• Offered affiliate membership to those members whose terms were expiring and to past college Teacher of the Year award recipients
• Developed a public academic blog as a resource for teaching and learning (on topics of architectural history) that has developed a national/international following
• Mentored junior faculty within department and across disciplines
• Initiated planning for an interdisciplinary student conference

Professional Impact of Academy Involvement: Members cited the Academy as “a home place to grow professionally,” because of “being inspired” while “having colleagues to bounce ideas off of”; the Academy has improved my sense of community.” The opportunity to engage with each other was characterized as “stimulating,” “validating,” “invigorating,” and “enriching.” The Academy work “nourishes my passion” and “has focused my attention” on strengthening student “interaction for learning.”

Professional Development Fund Use: Academy members have used their funds to purchase materials to support teaching (books, videos, site licenses, software, hardware) for use in classes; for travel to national and international conferences that address teaching; for journal subscriptions and memberships; to purchase class support supplies (like lab equipment) for which there was no departmental money; to produce a DVD; to support research through funding transcription services; to develop web-design and programming skills. This funding “has impacted my ability to conduct research on teaching and learning as well as disseminate the results.”