NAU Teaching Academy ’11-‘12
Brief Summary of Engagement

Background: In fourth year of the NAU Teaching Academy, twenty-eight members (including the Board of eleven 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 2011-12.

Major Academy Activities: Members of the Teaching Academy took the lead on planning a campus wide Teaching Day, “Conversations on Teaching at NAU.” A majority of the members served on planning teams for their college-based conversations or as discussion leaders during a campus lunch on interdisciplinarity or in general campus workshops in the afternoon. The feedback on the Teaching Day was overwhelmingly positive, and the responses from faculty continued throughout the spring semester.

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 of the Academy:

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

- Conducted monthly teaching conversations within the Academy during fall semester
- Led roundtable conversations about teaching with new university faculty members at orientation and at a one-day teaching retreat
- Revised individual courses and piloted new teaching strategies including in large classes: using assessment of student learning to influence selection of teaching approaches, instituting group work and more discussions, strengthening class interaction
- Reported on teaching innovations to Academy members and to departmental and college colleagues
- Hosted classroom visits from graduate teaching assistants
- As departmental leaders, initiated discussions of teaching
- Revised and designed courses to be responsive to new work on teaching and learning
- Began planning “dream courses”
- Initiated planning for 2013 Teaching Day (tentatively January 10, 2013)
- Planned to reinstitute Century Club for faculty teaching classes of 80+ students

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
Were invited to present their work related to teaching at national and international conferences, attended conferences on teaching and reported back to Academy members on conference proceedings,
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

- Represented the Academy on key university committees addressing pedagogy and student success
- Were leaders for campus-wide initiatives on course design and delivery
- 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
- Contributed to departmental leadership as chairs and participated in Academic Chairs Council
- Opened membership to Affiliates whose Academy terms are expiring and to past college Teacher of the Year award recipients
- Followed up on the April 2011 list of campus recommendations made in response to a request from the Provost
- Planning for a summer meeting with the President, Provost, and Vice Provosts for a discussion of the implications of NAU’s changing contexts for teaching and research

Professional Impact of Academy Involvement: Members cited the Academy for “building a sense of a community of people who are passionate about teaching,” and for “helping provide more energy for the hard work we do in the classroom.” They cited their colleagues as “inspirational,” and because of this characterized membership as contributing to “replenishment,” “reflection,” “rethinking,” and “valuing how I think of my own teaching.” The “collaboration” and “professional exchanges” of the meetings and projects (specifically Teaching Day) led a number of Academy members to express their appreciation for the “incredible opportunity” to work with colleagues from a wide range of disciplines.

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 and memberships, for professional books to support teaching and research, to support travel to present papers on teaching, and to purchase class support supplies (like lab equipment) for which there was no departmental money.