

Teaching and Learning Executive Summary

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BACKGROUND

Teaching and learning for community college students is a multi-faceted commitment to student success, credential completion, and matriculation to four-year institutions. Specifically, teaching and learning encompasses faculty awareness of the role that equity and access in instruction and student learning holds, incorporates universal design elements in course design and delivery, and is complementary of student success initiatives delivered by both academic and student affairs.

Teaching and learning is also inclusive of faculty professional development, by providing institutional support for faculty to develop evidence-based practices that are essential to student success and credential completion. Teaching and learning is at the core of institutional identity and student success and is often supported within an institution, as well as through external partnerships with organizations like the North Carolina Great Teachers Seminar and Achieving the Dream (ATD).

In the fall of 2018, the Dallas Herring lecture was delivered by Dr. Karen Stout, President and CEO of Achieving the Dream (ATD). Stout's lecture entitled, ["The Urgent Case: Centering Teaching and Learning in the Next Generation of Community College Redesign"](#) was a call-to-action for community colleges to develop a culture of teaching and learning excellence. In the spring of 2019, the Belk Center began

collaborating with ATD to leverage the work of teaching and learning. Within the context of future collaboration with, and support of, the North Carolina Community College System's Student Success Center, a cohort of institutions was identified for a case study.

There is a lack of access to comprehensive data about North Carolina teaching and learning details, initiatives, and resources. To address this, several institutions across the state were identified as excellent candidates for a comprehensive evaluative case study that explores existing institutional teaching and learning initiatives, while assessing the opportunity for faculty development in this area. We selected institutions that reflect several key identities:

- » geographical locations within North Carolina that represents rural towns, as well as midsize and large cities;
- » institution size, reflective of the enrollment diversity with North Carolina;
- » history or emergence of an existing professional development center for teaching and learning; and
- » the number of part-time faculty/adjuncts in comparison to full-time faculty.

PROJECT CONTEXT

Six community colleges were visited during the 2019-2020 academic year: Durham Technical, Lenoir, Catawba Valley, Wilkes, Forsyth Technical and Central Carolina.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

1. Catawba Valley
2. Central Carolina
3. Durham Technical
4. Forsyth Technical
5. Lenoir
6. Wilkes



Conversations with 214 college employees, including 130 faculty, were held over 15 days, for a total of 64 hours of collected audio data. The 130 faculty include full-time and part-time or adjunct faculty representing curriculum and career and technical education (CTE).

The campus visits and conversations informed us of a few key takeaways; we share them in the following 6 themes: **Culture, Leadership, Communication, PD Examples, PD Recommendations, and Wish Lists.**

THEME #1: CULTURE

- » At many community colleges, teaching and learning is not universally defined, yet examples of teaching and learning that were shared with us included the art of pedagogy, characteristics of the classes offered, and technical standards.
- » The role and value of faculty is the clearest role on each community college.
- » North Carolina community colleges are invested in student success. At each community college students shared examples of mentoring, academic and holistic support from faculty and college staff to help prepare them for careers and baccalaureate transfers.
- » Faculty and staff are committed to professional development in support of student success. This commitment is supported by each community college's president as well as senior leadership, and is illustrated by professional development workshops, a college journal, a new faculty orientation and mentoring program, and through financial commitment to support faculty participation in external professional development.

THEME #2: LEADERSHIP

- » Teaching and learning leadership is most effective when connected to current classroom opportunities, with a faculty led advisory board used to maintain relevancy of the center's work.
- » Faculty and staff shared their appreciation for attention on learner-centered improvement for multi-generational learners, curriculum and CTE students.

THEME #3: COMMUNICATION

- » Clearly articulated connections among teaching and learning initiatives and existing strategic plans are necessary for student success.
- » In scenarios where professional development hours are required, faculty do not see the connections between professional development requirements, performance reviews or institutional effectiveness initiatives.

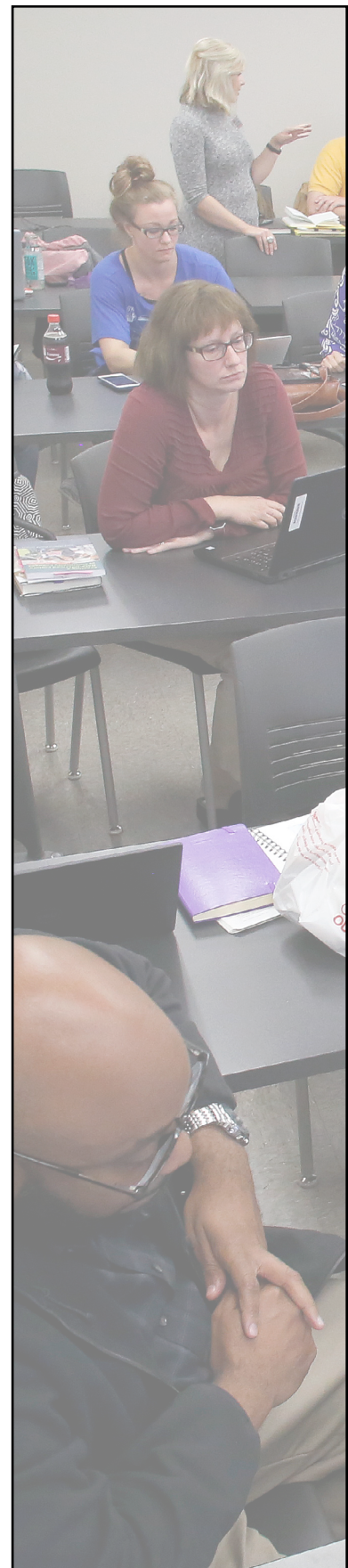
THEME #4: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLES

- » Faculty professional development initiatives and mentoring for new faculty were identified as valuable resources for new and veteran faculty. A great example of this is the T3 program at Forsyth Technical Community College.
- » At Central Carolina the Center for Academic Excellence's faculty advancement initiative presents an opportunity for all faculty to apply for financial support for professional development.
- » Over the course of 3 semesters the Scholarship for Teaching and Learning (SoTL) at Durham Technical Community College presents an opportunity for full-time faculty to identify an area for change in their classes, create an intervention, and publish their research in the College's Learning Matters journal.

THEME #5: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Increased and targeted professional development for existing faculty, such as teaching multi-generational learners, and inclusion of equity in course design was recommended.
- » Professional development focused on teaching strategies, in face-to-face, and distance learning/remote/online courses was repeatedly requested.*

**Note, the campus visits were completed before COVID-19's impact on instruction was clear.*



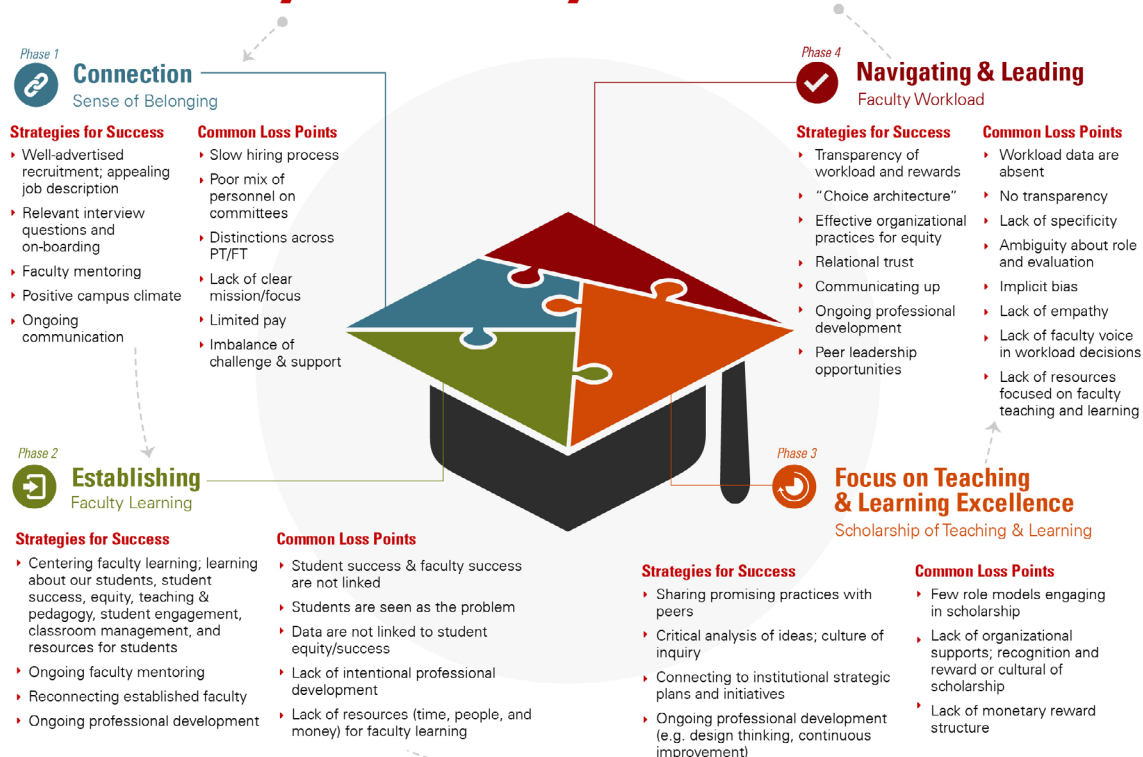
THEME #6: WISH LISTS

- » Professional development for college leaders organizing and delivering professional development for faculty, to evolve to meet faculty needs and support the college's student success goals.
- » Appropriately support part-time/adjunct faculty with professional development and work space resources that encourages engagement with students and the college outside of the classroom.
- » Financial support for full-time and part-time faculty to attend national and industry specific professional development.

Faculty Pathways

Just as many community colleges are adopting guided pathways for students so that they have structured, coherent programs that align with their educational and career goals, faculty must also have paths forward that align with their career aspirations. The types of professional development faculty need as they begin their careers are different than what established faculty need. The Faculty Pathway to Excellence is a model loosely based on the Completion by Design Loss Momentum Framework. This model suggests a pathway for faculty and identifies the strategies for success as well as loss points over a faculty career. We have provided this model to the community colleges in our teaching and learning project as each college considers faculty experiences from connecting to the institution during onboarding to leading faculty initiatives as an established faculty member.

Faculty Pathway To Excellence®



Jaeger, A. J. (2017, September). Focus on faculty: Loss momentum and the faculty role. Invited keynote for Completion by Design North Carolina. Raleigh, NC.



Considerations for the North Carolina Student Success Center

Driven by the data and analyses from the six case study visits, the Belk Center offers the following considerations for the North Carolina Student Success Center upon which we can build additional collaborative work:

- 1.** Advisory boards are a promising practice for Centers for Teaching and Learning, and encourage faculty participation in creating and delivering teaching and learning professional development for faculty that teach students in curriculum, CTE and dual enrollment settings. Modeling this at the state level affirms the value of recommendations and feedback from stakeholders.
- 2.** Establish a teaching and learning network with an annual or semi-annual gathering with topical deliverables, and where institutional mission, and purpose are exchanged among persons leading teaching and learning at each institution. Each teaching and learning leader that we worked with echoed the need for their own professional development and opportunities to share evidence-based practices with teaching and learning leaders throughout North Carolina.
- 3.** Prioritize the professional development of part-time/adjunct faculty as an immediate need for student success. Overwhelmingly, part-time/adjunct faculty do not have prior training in teaching strategies, pedagogy, student success initiatives, and assessment and outcomes. Establishing support to the community colleges in this effort is timely and critical to the shift to remote learning, and it's influence on student success.
- 4.** Explore collaboration with the North Carolina Network for Excellence in Teaching, Great Teachers, and other related teaching initiatives in the state. During our campus visits, faculty commonly shared the importance of using existing faculty talent within North Carolina to deliver professional development.
- 5.** In concert with the possibility of regional efforts for teaching and learning professional development, organize and publish the calendar 6 to 9 months in advance to give college leaders maximum time for planning.
- 6.** Explore how to provide support to community colleges in need of assistance in quantitative evaluation and data analysis on professional development assessment measures.

Coronavirus Teaching & Learning Resources for Community Colleges

Resources for Community Colleges

<https://belk-center.ced.ncsu.edu/covid19/>

NC State Belk Center YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxH-FyzD1gBVOW5Vqtnu0BA>