

# FIPSE GRANT: A CAMPUS OUTREACH TO ITS INVISIBLE FACULTY

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# **A CAMPUS OUTREACH TO ITS INVISIBLE FACULTY**

## **I. ABSTRACT**

The dual focus of the proposed project is two of the fastest growing populations in academe – non-traditional adult students and their off-campus instructors. Few programs provide adequate resources for the information, mentoring and assessment needs of off-campus faculty. When provided, these resources are unlikely to be grounded in adult learning principles. Rapidly increasing numbers of distance learners at university satellite locations are, therefore, ultimately disadvantaged by their instructor’s lack of information and reduced teaching effectiveness. In response, Central Michigan University’s College of Extended Learning (CEL) proposes a systematic, integrated program for the assessment, development and mentoring of its 600+ off-campus faculty. Over a three-year period, CEL will implement and evaluate a three component plan providing 1) a multisource faculty assessment battery able to measure faculty performance from a variety of functional perspectives; 2) a faculty-focused knowledge management portal on the CEL intranet offering the latest academic and program information, assessment results, pedagogical tips and techniques, and forums for informal discussion and knowledge sharing; and 3) a support network of faculty mentors who administer the knowledge management portal, oversee faculty training and development, and monitor assessment outcomes for more focused faculty coaching and remediation. These initiatives will be supported by clearly articulated teaching expectations derived from more than forty years of pedagogical research detailing best practices for adult learners. Given the explosive growth of off-campus college programs taught by part-time, off-campus faculty, the proposed plan provides a replicable, comprehensive answer to a nationwide concern for the learning outcomes of adult students.

# A CAMPUS OUTREACH TO ITS INVISIBLE FACULTY

## II. PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

### A. Need for the Project

#### 1. Problem Statement

As a consequence of a targeted focus on the needs of adult learners, many off-campus program administrators have lost sight of the pressing needs of their colleagues in the field – the “invisible” off-campus faculty (Gappa & Leslie, 1993).

Despite their direct relationship to students’ learning outcomes, a growing population of off-campus adjunct faculty will never meet their department chairs, know their fellow instructors, or set foot on the main campus. Instead, these part-time faculty are hired at a distance and oriented by regional staff who are expert at coordinating programs, but have no meaningful teaching experience.

Physically and functionally isolated from campus, many adjunct faculty lack information, assessment, and support essential to their professional role. Faculty communication and coaching, where available, are sporadic and rarely aligned with successful adult learning practices (Petrisko, 1999). Even occasional development sessions provide an insufficient replacement for on-going professional relationships between faculty and their main campus departments (Roueche, Roueche, & Milliron, 1995; Todd, 1996).

To provide quality instruction off-campus, adjunct faculty need convenient access to departmental information specific to the courses and programs they teach. They require an interface with other faculty to share best practice knowledge and classroom experience so that faculty teaching the same types of courses can benefit from each other’s expertise. In order to monitor and improve their teaching abilities, faculty need multisource assessments and trained mentors to provide performance feedback from a variety of perspectives. Most importantly, off-campus faculty require consistent performance standards based on principles empirically proven to maximize learning among adult students.

More than 40 years of pedagogical research has shown that best practices for teaching adult learners differs from techniques best suited for traditional campus students. Correspondingly, duplication of on-campus teaching methods and assessment protocols is insufficient for promoting the highest teaching standards off-campus. To maximize learning outcomes among off-campus students – many of whom are female, minority and work full-time – educators must develop a new faculty system that consistently promotes standards proven to optimize adult retention and learning.

The resulting system should account for the unique needs of geographically dispersed off-campus faculty. To design this system, a university must leverage assessment, mentoring and communication to create a new academic culture centered on maximizing adult learning.

## **2. Institutional Progress and Commitment**

Central Michigan University brings the best of campus to its off-campus adult learners through the College of Extended Learning (CEL). During its 29-year history, more than 46,000 students have graduated from CEL's degree completion programs. Today, CEL offers accelerated format classes to more than 18,000 students annually and offers full off-campus degrees at the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral level. Through its outreach to many urban areas and military installations, CEL ranks 11<sup>th</sup> of 100 colleges and universities nationwide in the granting of graduate degrees to minority students (Black Issues in Higher Education, 2000) and specializes in the education of non-traditional, working adult students.

CMU employs over 600 off-campus instructors annually. Of these instructors, 0.5% hold bachelor degrees, 27% masters degrees, and 72.5% have terminal degrees in their fields. Approximately 22% of these faculty are affiliated with universities spanning the country including the University of Maine, George Washington University, Texas A&M, the University of Nebraska, Colorado State University, Arizona State University, San Diego State University and the University of Hawaii. Positions held by these faculty include adjunct professor, associate professor, assistant professor, full professor, department chairperson and dean.

At present, CMU's academic programs off-campus serve a student population that is 60% female and 40% ethnic minority. Most students are over 30 years of age with dependent children. Of these adult

students, approximately 70% are enrolled in graduate programs, representing the fields of business, education, technology and public administration – all of which lead to higher paying jobs and better professional opportunities.

To maximize benefits for this often underserved population of adult students, CMU has sought instructors who are both academics and current career professionals in their fields. As industry leaders, these career professionals provide academic training, insider knowledge and industry connections needed to elevate the career potentials of their students. While hiring these faculty has achieved important strides for CMU's female and minority students, it has also increased the number of part-time, adjunct faculty with unclear expectations for their teaching performance and no convenient means of connecting with a distant on-campus department. To rectify this situation, CEL has spent the past few years refocusing its attention on its approximately 600 off-campus faculty and engaging their participation in creating meaningful solutions.

To mobilize all constituents, CEL used national focus group discussions and qualitative surveys to facilitate a university-wide discussion of its off-campus faculty's most burning issues. A Task Force led by Dr. Lana Ivanitskaya and supported by the Associate Dean of the College and the University's Academic Advisory Council reviewed more than 649 suggestions contributed by a variety of university professionals, including the off-campus faculty themselves, and established "*communication and articulation of college teaching and learning standards*" as a top institutional priority (to see an executive summary of the final report, visit [www.cel.cmich.edu/cral/cralintro.pdf](http://www.cel.cmich.edu/cral/cralintro.pdf)).

In an immediate response, the Task Force engaged the college research office to review more than 40 years of scholarly research to uncover a list of best teaching practices for adult learners. The result was a seminal document titled, "Maximizing Learning," that articulated performance expectations for the role of off-campus faculty in the teaching and learning process and specified instructional behaviors linked to improved learning outcomes among adult students (see Appendix 10, [green copy](#)). "Maximizing Learning" was discussed and shared with all adjunct instructors, faculty mentors and

academic departments, many of whom expressed the need to make this document a “cornerstone of CEL’s academic activity.”

Since its debut, “Maximizing Learning” has galvanized previous faculty support efforts made by individual project teams into one comprehensive movement. With the support of faculty, staff and leadership from across CMU’s academic community (see “Letters of Support” in the Appendices) individual teams are now working together as a taskforce and have achieved the following progress toward a comprehensive faculty support system:

1. *Completed* - Articulation of teaching and learning best practices for off-campus faculty and their students (see Appendix 10, [green copy](#)).
  - Maximizing Learning
  - Maximize Your Learning
2. *Completed* – Instruments for a comprehensive faculty assessment battery grounded in course objectives and standards articulated in Maximizing Learning (see Appendix 12, [yellow copy](#)).
  - Student End-of-Course Survey
  - Instructor End-of-Course Survey
  - Instructor Professional Development Report and Self-Reflection on Instructional Effectiveness
3. *Completed* – Mentors identified and functioning in all geographic regions where CMU operates; first draft of mentor manual composed (see Appendix 11, white copy).
4. *Established* – Annual faculty orientation and development meetings
5. *Established* – Faculty handbook distributed to all new faculty
6. *Established* – “On Target,” a quarterly publication for all off-campus faculty offers program-specific and CEL news, faculty recognition and faculty member profiles.
7. *Established* – On-going assessment of off-campus academic programs and student learning outcomes that are shared university-wide through CMU’s Center for Research on Adult

Learning (an annotated bibliography of recent reports is available at [www.cel.cmich.edu/cral/reports-completed.pdf](http://www.cel.cmich.edu/cral/reports-completed.pdf)).

8. *Initiated* – Re-design of off-campus faculty recruitment, selection and re-approval systems; consultant hired, meetings have been held with campus academic departments and off-campus faculty have participated in a discussion of appropriate faculty credentials for specific groups of courses.

With several essential components initiated, established, or complete, CEL is poised to evaluate an integrated, comprehensive faculty support network that addresses many negative aspects of delivering academic programs at off-site locations.

## **B. Significance of the Project**

CEL has invested considerable resources in the identification of off-campus faculty needs and has drafted a systematic plan for targeted improvements in CMU's off-campus faculty systems. The elements of this plan offer a substantive, integrated solution to the needs of adult learners, their instructors and their academic institutions in this new era of lifelong learning. As evidence, several prestigious organizations have published our current findings to share with their member institutions.

A summary of "Maximizing Learning," was solicited by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) for an upcoming book detailing exemplary practices for adult learning focused institutions. "Maximizing Learning" was also presented at both the North Central Accreditation Association (NCAA) and American Association of Higher Education (AAHE) annual conferences. A similar document, "Maximize Your Learning," outlines CEL's academic standards for adult learners (see Appendix 10, [green copy](#)). Both documents are available online at <http://www.cel.cmich.edu/cral/>.

This early recognition testifies to the fact that any component of our plan could easily be adapted by another institution. However, CMU's large adjunct faculty pool, extensive off-campus program and institution-wide commitment to faculty issues provide a particularly robust test of an integrated faculty support system capable of generating more comprehensive solutions.

If funded, our project will provide an integrated new system of off-campus faculty support. The components of this system include: (1) a comprehensive multi-source faculty assessment battery facilitating stronger quality control of off-campus programs, identification of teaching strengths and weaknesses, and targeted training and mentoring opportunities, (2) a system of specially-trained faculty mentors focused on faculty training and assessment through face-to-face coaching and “cyber-mentoring” across the third project component - (3) an Intranet-based faculty knowledge management system designed to serve as mobile campus department complete with academic documents and information, assessment data, access to faculty mentors and collegial forum discussions. Together, these proposed components will raise the bar on quality academics by emphasizing the professional knowledge and support needed by off-campus instructors.

### **C. Project Design**

The primary goal of the proposed project is enhanced student learning, supported by improved instruction for CMU’s 18,000 non-traditional students enrolled in off-campus undergraduate and graduate programs. To achieve this goal, we have designed an integrated approach to supporting off-campus faculty that consists of the following component systems. The next section lists each project component and summarizes its goals, description and purpose.

#### **1. Faculty Assessment Battery**

**Problem:** *CMU’s off-campus programs have historically relied on end-of-course student opinion surveys as primary indicators of faculty performance. To provide the highest quality programs off-campus, on-campus departments, off-campus faculty and off-campus program administrators require balanced, sensitive assessments of faculty performance from a number of functional perspectives. These assessments must be based on standards that feed back to positive learning outcomes for students - the instructor behaviors empirically proven to maximize learning among non-traditional learners.*

**Goals:** Refine, implement and evaluate a faculty assessment battery that is grounded in best practices for teaching adult students, as specified in Maximizing Learning. Include assessments by students, mentors, administrators and the faculty themselves to offer a 360° view of faculty performance across all

functional faculty responsibilities. Leverage a faculty knowledge management portal to achieve a selective sharing of assessment outcomes with mentors (interventions), administrators (quality assurance) and department chairs (faculty selection and re-approvals). Use assessment data to monitor and strengthen faculty's use of teaching behaviors empirically linked to enhanced student learning, as articulated in Maximizing Learning.

**Description:** CEL has already designed assessments for a revised Student end-of-course survey, an Instructor end-of-course survey and an Instructor report of professional development and self-reflection on instructional effectiveness. A fourth assessment by mentors, "Feedback to Faculty on their Course Outlines (Syllabi), is planned to complete the battery. Funding is requested to pre-test the battery on selected groups of faculty, solicit and incorporate suggestions from reviewers and design an assessment battery database for sharing results with mentors, administrators and academic departments. Another essential task required for the success of this assessment system is a thorough review and update of more than 300 Model Course Outlines from which off-campus instructors write their course syllabi. These outlines detail the primary objectives of each course and list course content, as suggested by campus content experts. Because instructor evaluations are directly linked to the course learning objectives, Model Course Outlines need to be reviewed for accuracy and relevancy before the new assessment battery is implemented. Moreover, the Model Course Outlines have not been adapted to non-traditional course formats (weekend, evening), prevalent in off-campus programs, although multiple successful models of such adaptations have been developed by off-campus faculty. The adaptation and revision of course outlines in accordance with adult learning principles is expected to increase teaching effectiveness, which in turn will result in better student learning. Another likely outcome of Model Course Outline revision will be an increased level of collaboration between content experts (main campus faculty) and experts in delivering CMU courses to non-traditional populations (off-campus faculty).

**Purpose:** The proposed assessment battery will give faculty a variety of perspectives into their performance and offer mentors needed data to provide targeted faculty coaching. Departments and faculty will benefit from the use of standardized criteria for selecting, re-approving and assessing faculty

performance. These standards will also provide a deeper sense of quality assurance in off-campus programs for all University personnel. Viewing the proposed project in its entirety, all proposed faculty support systems (mentoring, communications, faculty development and information sharing) will be driven by the outcomes of assessment and the standards of best practices. Emphasis on targeting mentor support to faculty assessment results will lead to higher quality instruction for CEL's 18,000 adult students and, consequently, to better student learning outcomes.

## **2. Faculty Knowledge Management (KM) System**

***Problem:*** *Off-campus faculty have limited access to other off-campus faculty, on-campus colleagues and departmental information. Distance limits mentoring capability and collegial sharing of expertise and experience. There is no regular schedule instituted for the dissemination, review, or update of course of program materials.*

***Goals:*** Design an easily accessible Intranet resource promoting (1) collegial communication and pedagogical idea exchange for improved student learning outcomes; (2) improved access to information about individual courses and overarching academic programs to offer students the most relevant content; and (3) convenient access to teaching resources needed to maximize instructors' teaching time and reduce their administrative efforts.

***Description:*** Design a faculty-accessible desktop portal on the College Intranet offering (1) course-related data (Master Course Outlines, course syllabi, program goals and objectives, examples of class assignments), (2) training materials (subject-specific tips, pedagogical suggestions, worksheets for composition of effective syllabi), (3) information resources (links to library databases, course bibliographies, program/ departmental forms and documents) and (4) communication resources (instructor online forum discussions, links for contacting mentors, campus departments and fellow faculty, message boards, virtual faculty lounge for informal discussion).

***Purpose:*** Off-campus faculty gain improved access to departmental information and course-specific resources while on-campus departments are provided greater control over the currency and quality of departmental documents used off-campus. Online discussion forums, select hyperlinked email addresses

and faculty contributed teaching innovations promote on-going discussions between faculty and their leaders that enhance the quality of off-campus instruction. Selective access to assessment data allow mentors and administrators to track faculty performance and monitor adherence to best teaching practices articulated in “Maximizing Learning.” Mentors, who are most familiar with the needs of adjunct faculty, design and maintain the portal to offer faculty the most relevant information to enhance teaching performance.

### **3. Faculty Mentor System**

***Problem:*** Faculty mentors are presently available in all 20 states within which CEL operates and represent a subset of CEL’s most experienced and successful faculty. However, mentors are limited by time and distance in their capability to interact with faculty within and beyond their regions. At present, faculty mentoring is not aligned with faculty assessment, leading to fewer opportunities for targeted faculty coaching. Additionally, new faculty, who are most in need of mentors and collegial contact, are primarily oriented by administrative personnel.

***Goals:*** Refine the faculty mentor role to enhance the scope and efficiency of mentoring efforts for optimum instructor effectiveness. Integrate the role of mentors with the outcomes of the faculty assessment battery to provide more targeted faculty coaching and intensive interaction between mentors and weak or new faculty. Use the KM portal site as a vehicle for “cyber mentoring” over long distances using email, discussion forums, chat rooms and published teaching tips and techniques. Online and in coaching situations, establish mentors as the ambassadors for teaching behaviors and standards proven to improve learning outcomes among adult students, e.g. Maximizing Learning.

***Description:*** Support is requested for mentor training across the following program objectives: (1) train mentors in the application of principles and practices associated with the best learning outcomes among adult students (“Maximizing Learning”); (2) redefine the mentoring role to serve as a liaison between faculty and the campus department in terms of faculty assessment, support and training; (3) train mentors to apply common faculty coaching techniques, including classroom conflict resolution and effective

course design; and (4) establish a faculty KM portal site to allow mentors to provide coaching and information at a distance through the easily-accessed College intranet.

**Purpose:** Mentors will benefit by having several means of reaching their constituent faculty and their departments and will become a more active support presence among faculty in their region. Faculty will benefit by increased access to their regional mentors, both in person and online and more personalized mentor coaching based on their own assessment outcomes. Additionally, central involvement in CEL's new faculty KM portal site allows mentors to coach a large number of faculty at a distance through online publications and teaching suggestions, link to a distant faculty member in need of immediate assistance and serve as a functional liaison between off-campus faculty and their on-campus departmental colleagues.

## **D. Project Evaluation**

### **1. Project Evaluators**

The evaluation plan will be carried out by an independent project evaluator, Dr. David Whale, an assistant professor at CMU's department of Educational Administration & Community Leadership. Although not currently employed by the College of Extended Learning, Dr. Whale has first-hand knowledge of its systems and operations.

Given the complexity of the problem addressed by this proposal, an outside evaluation consultant will assist Dr. Whale with setting up project evaluation activities and later, provide advice and feedback toward the final evaluation report. Dr. David Leslie, co-author of the book, "The Invisible Faculty," has agreed to serve as our external evaluation consultant. Dr. Leslie's scholarship and expertise brings a thorough understanding of the needs of part-time faculty to the proposed project and offers a valuable source of fresh ideas from a source external to CMU. Dr. Whale and Dr. Leslie, as a collaborative evaluation team, will subject the proposed project to a rigorous analysis leading to a highly replicable model of institutional faculty support.

## 2. Project evaluation plan

Multiple evaluation methods were selected, consistent with the project's main goals and objectives. The evaluation will include both summative and formative components. The formative elements will include, for example, evaluations of the faculty/mentor development sessions, pre-testing of the assessment battery and the ongoing monitoring of the data it generates. Therefore, a faculty assessment battery will not only be a critical component of the proposed program but also a means to the program evaluation. Among other things, the assessment battery will measure the impact of the proposed program on students. Students will report on their instructors' utilization of adult learning principles and the facilitation of the course learning objectives.

Because assessment provides input into all other faculty development activities, an evaluation of the faculty assessment battery is warranted. The newly created assessment battery will be revised based on the pilot test results and reviewer comments. Is the content of an assessment battery broad enough to cover essential faculty behaviors, yet, specific enough to collect reliable data? How much agreement exists between different sources of feedback on faculty effectiveness, including mentors, students and self? What are the sources of disagreement? Content validity and reliability analyses will be conducted to evaluate the data gathered using each assessment of teaching effectiveness.

A direct measure of the project's impact on student learning can be obtained using a pre-post (baseline-intervention) research design or a design involving a comparison between control and experimental groups. For each of the studies mentioned above, CMU has a unique data collection opportunity in the MA in Education program where multiple cohorts of students (Counseling concentration) take standardized examinations and complete capstone research projects similar to a Master's Thesis. Exam scores and papers are available for a large number of students who graduated in the last three years. Since this program is offered in the cohort format, the students in any given cohort are exposed to the same instructors. It would be possible to measure their instructors' involvement in project activities and determine how student learning outcomes are impacted by off-campus faculty assessment, mentoring and development.

Mentoring is another aspect that contributes to the program's overall success. Mentor training is effective if mentors are able to transfer new skills and knowledge of adult learning principles from a training situation to actual problem-solving situations involving faculty who teach off-campus courses. Observations of mentoring sessions can serve as a means of evaluating mentors and mentor training effectiveness.

Integration of invisible faculty into the larger university community needs to be clearly evaluated in more than one way. Amount of integration, operationalized as number of faculty-initiated contacts with mentors, contribution to and utilization of the KM portal and faculty participation in university-sponsored professional development activities, will be recorded over a 3-year time span. A baseline will be established over the first six months of the project for estimating project impact. These objective measures of faculty integration can be supplemented with a survey of off-campus faculty that gathers data on their perceived connectedness to CMU academic programs, departments and other faculty.

### **3. Evaluation Timeline**

For specific project evaluation activities, see Year 1, 2, and 3 tasks listed in the Project Timeline (Appendix 3). Evaluation activities appear under a "Project Evaluation" heading.

### **4. Evaluation Final Report**

Timely and ongoing documentation of project activities is critical to the final reporting of evaluation activities and their results. Therefore, a project coordinator will be expected to provide administrative support to evaluators.

The final report will present statistics on faculty-mentor contacts, numbers of faculty who accessed the KM portal (including specific hits to various instructional resources, program/course objectives), numbers of faculty who contributed resources or ideas, and the intensity of the utilization of the interactive components of the KM portal (e.g., participation in asynchronous and synchronous discussions). It will also summarize the findings of the assessment battery validation study and provide a comparison of the post-intervention and baseline data on faculty-initiated contacts with mentors, contribution to and utilization of the KM portal, and faculty participation in university-sponsored

professional development activities. Most importantly, it will provide an analysis of (a) changes in student learning outcomes as a function of increased teaching effectiveness and (b) data on off-campus faculty teaching effectiveness, gathered using a faculty assessment battery. Linked to adult learning principles and learning objectives, the battery measures will come from multiple sources: students, mentors and faculty members themselves.

## **E. Project Dissemination**

### **1. Dissemination Audience**

The methodology and findings of this project will be of interest to a large number of public and private higher education institutions, particularly those that have multiple satellite campuses and deliver their academic programs to working adults. Therefore, our project dissemination strategy will target administrators, faculty and leaders from these institutions.

### **2. Dissemination Interest and Potential**

CMU has already begun the process of disseminating our early progress and accomplishments with fellow institutions. Between November 2000 and April 2001, we have shared the documents, “Maximizing Learning” and “Maximize Your Learning,” with over 90 institutions nationwide and were invited to present findings related to these projects at the annual conferences of the North Central Accreditation Association (NCAA) and American Association of Higher Education (AAHE, Faculty Roles). Faculty and administrators from over 60 institutions attended our NCAA presentation of “Maximizing Learning” and its implications for development of off-campus faculty. The popularity of our session connotes the urgency felt by many institutions in better supporting their off-campus faculty and confirms FIPSE’s ability to positively impact students and their instructors nationwide through its financial commitment to CMU.

In addition, the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning has accepted a summary of the “Maximizing Learning” methodology for publication in its upcoming book on Adult Learning Focused Institutions. In July 2001 we will present the second achieved milestone – the faculty assessment battery – to attendees of the AAHE Assessment Conference.

### **3. Project Deliverables**

We expect that the following project products and strategies will transfer to other educational institutions:

- faculty assessment battery, linked to adult learning principles and course objectives
- the methodology for designing compressed format Model Course Outlines that incorporate adult learning principles
- the design and content of the KM portal
- strategies for off-campus faculty involvement (e.g., online Special Interest Groups, pairing of new and experienced faculty), and
- the mentoring model (just-in-time, assessment-driven, centered on adult learning).

The final report will devote much attention to documenting the design of these project components and present relevant findings.

### **4. Dissemination Strategies**

To increase the number of institutions engaged in off-campus faculty development, we propose the following dissemination strategy:

1. Share documentation: make project documents available to other interested institutions to guide their thinking about design, implementation and evaluation of strategies for the integration of off-campus faculty into academe (e.g., design and evaluation of the faculty assessment battery, best practices to mentoring off-campus faculty);
2. Present to professional audiences: project director, mentors and faculty will present at five or more national conferences throughout the project's duration;
3. Publish research findings: project findings will be published in academic journals whose subscription is similar to the intended audience (e.g., *Adult Education Quarterly* and publications for university administrators);

4. Compose a query documenting the project in its entirety and submit this summary to appropriate academic book publishers;
5. Demonstrate systems in action: examine a possibility to hold a guided study tour (e.g., to CAEL members) or to organize our own Adult Learning conference, with a special focus on geographically distributed institutions and off-campus faculty.

Finally, project activities are expected to have an immediate impact on other educational institutions because a significant percentage of our off-campus faculty teach for other higher education institutions.

## **F. Project Management**

The following sections provide a high level summary of primary activities planned for the first three years of the proposed faculty support project. Detailed lists of major roles and their tasks by project year are presented in Appendix 3 (white copy).

### ***1. Year One Activities***

New personnel are hired and trained by appropriate CEL staff. Several teams collaborate to gather suggestions for the design of the faculty knowledge management portal on the CEL Intranet. The web designer begins the process of building online databases to hold information and a data entry operator begins uploading information. A faculty-focused Special Interest Group pilot tests the site and draws additional faculty participants.

The process of revising Model Course Outlines synthesizes the efforts of on-campus and off-campus faculty. The assessment battery is finished, pre-tested and shared with the university community. Suggested revisions are incorporated.

Mentors meet with academic department chairs and program directors for an informational, on-campus meeting and training seminar. Faculty orientation/ training/ development activities are planned and carried out by mentors and off-campus administrators throughout the year.

The Evaluator oversees the pre-test and revision of the faculty assessment battery. A plan is created to collect relevant data including measures of student learning, faculty integration and validation of the

assessment battery. The Evaluator gathers baseline data to compare increased faculty integration over time.

## ***2. Year Two Activities***

The faculty Special Interest Group is renewed and expanded to include more faculty participation in online discussion groups. Content Managers (faculty, mentors, administrators) oversee the review and revision of online documents. More content and assessment data is uploaded to the site.

Selective access to faculty assessment data is arranged for mentors, faculty, chairs and administrators. The remainder of 300 Model Course Outlines targeted for revision are updated and uploaded to the KM portal. Mentors share individual assessment results with faculty, review instructors' course outlines and pair experienced and new instructors for informal coaching. A second mentor meeting updates skills and facilitates planning of Year 2 faculty orientation/ training/ development sessions.

The faculty assessment battery is widely implemented and the quality of resulting data is evaluated. Normative data is collected for end-of-course surveys by program, center and course. The evaluator monitors the data collection process and collects baseline, control and experimental group data for assessment of student learning outcomes.

## ***3. Year Three Activities***

Maintenance of the portal is promoted by the regular review and upload of fresh and revised content and training of other CEL technical staff to administer the site. New faculty are incorporated in online Special Interest Groups and have proactive meetings with mentors and experienced faculty. Mentors' orientation/ training/ development meetings focus on new faculty and those regions where faculty have weaker assessment ratings. The evaluator's process of data collection continues relative to the assessment battery and comparisons of control and experimental groups. Data analysis of indices of teaching effectiveness, baseline data and objective measures of faculty participation are completed and added to a final project report.

## **PROJECT PERSONNEL & PARTICIPANTS**

**Project Director.** The Project Director (Dr. Lana Ivanitskaya) was the leader of the Maximizing Learning initiative for over 20 months. She planned project activities, conducted needs analysis, called meetings and facilitated a university wide discussion of Maximizing Learning documents and the assessment battery. Since the earliest stages of the Maximizing Learning project, she met with faculty, department chairs and administrators to discuss appropriate responses to off-campus faculty concerns and needs.

Dr. Lana Ivanitskaya is an enthusiastic researcher with the ability to motivate, organize and lead multiple project constituents. As a director of a research unit, she led the effort to review 40 years of research on Adult Learning, which resulted in the articulation of expectations for faculty and students. Her past experiences (in corporate and educational settings) have established a record of her ability to design and implement a planned change in complex social and administrative systems. Specifically, Dr. Ivanitskaya gathered diagnostic information and facilitated organizational change (e.g., through assessment and executive coaching) in a large telecommunications company, a law enforcement agency and various university departments.

Dr. Lana Ivanitskaya occupies a unique organizational position, located on the crossroads of administration and academia, on- and off- campus faculty, campus departments and regional administrative offices. As an academic researcher, she needs to be impartial, while engaging instructors and administrators in assessment and programmatic improvement. The core aspects of her position, assessment and evaluation, are also the key components of the FIPSE proposal. The ties she established to on- and off- campus faculty, as well as the recognition and respect from her CMU colleagues, make Dr. Ivanitskaya a first choice for the position of the FIPSE project director. For a summary of Dr. Ivanitskaya's qualifications see Appendix 5 (white copy).

**Project Coordinator.** See a position description in Appendix 7.

**Web Designer.** See a position description in Appendix 7.

**A CMU evaluator and an evaluation consultant.** See an Evaluation section of the proposal and Appendix 8.

**A student worker.** The primary responsibilities of the student worker will be data entry in support of the following project activities: assessment battery, KM portal and project evaluation. During the first year of the project, the project coordinator and the director will train the student on data entry procedures. The director will also introduce the student worker to project participants in need of data entry assistance, such as project evaluators, mentors and a web designer.

**Academic Program Directors.** Although in-kind support was written for the involvement of directors of the largest CEL graduate programs, directors of all academic programs offered through CEL will be part of the project. Dr. Terry Rawls (Master of Science in Administration) and Sherene McHenry (Master of Arts in Education) will collaborate with directors from CEL's Undergraduate Programs and the Master of Arts in Humanities.

All academic directors will be involved in project planning activities through regular Academic Advisory Council Meetings (4 hours/month). They will continue to be engaged in mentor/faculty development activities through attendance at CEL sponsored regional faculty development meetings, as well as regular communication with instructors who teach in their programs. This successful routine for engaging academic program directors in redesign of faculty systems was established a year ago while drafting Maximizing Learning, Maximize Your Learning and the assessment battery.

For a short summary of Dr. Rawls' and Dr. McHenry's qualifications, see Appendix 9. A description of tasks fulfilled by program directors is presented in the Project Timeline, Appendix 3.

**CMU mentors.** A summary of mentors' qualifications appears in Appendix 6. Twenty-one mentors serve off-campus faculty and administrators in the West (Kansas City), East (Washington, D.C.), South (Atlanta), Metro Detroit and the Greater Michigan areas. Mentors are paid by CEL regional offices

at a rate of \$23 per hour for time spent responding to faculty concerns, reviewing course outlines and other activities specified in Appendix 11 (an East Region Mentoring Program example).

It is important to note that presently mentor roles vary significantly by region and are not completely formalized due to the recency of the mentoring system. By bringing mentors to campus we intend to achieve a sense of shared values and clarity in mentor roles. The refinement of mentor roles will revolve around Maximizing Learning, Maximize Your Learning and the assessment battery as key documents that articulate CEL's commitment to enhanced student learning. Mentor meetings will take place annually (years one and two) and result in the development of several seminars for regional off-campus faculty.

**CMU instructors.** Over 600 faculty members (10% on-campus faculty and 90% off-campus faculty) are employed each year to teach 2,000 CEL courses and these instructors will be the primary targets of the project's activities.

Gappa, J.M., & Leslie, D.W. (1993). The Invisible Faculty. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Petrisko, M.E. (1999). Faculty development for part-time faculty in workforce development programs. Continuing Higher Education Review, 63.

Roueche, J.E., Rouche, S.D., & Milleron, M.D. (1995). Strangers in their own land: part-time faculty in American community colleges. American Association of Community Colleges, Washington, D.C.: NCHE.

Todd, A. (1996, June). A paradigm shift: recruiting, training and developing quality part-time faculty. Paper presented at the Annual Teaching for Change Conference, Aurora, CO.

## **Additional Justification for the Web Development Component**

Because both parties agree that the web development component is critical to the success of the project and should be implemented as soon as possible, we ask FIPSE to consider funding the web developer position. We believe the Knowledge Management portal will provide an innovative use of the Internet to enable off-campus faculty to share in the same kind of information exchange from which on-campus faculty benefit but information that has been organized and adapted for their special needs. Below we provide a more detailed description of the proposed Knowledge Management portal and explain how it will be different from other online resources.

Current online faculty resources overall provide static blocks of information designed for on-campus faculty working with traditional 18-23 year old students. We conducted an extensive web search to identify faculty resources provided by various universities. These resources included faculty manuals and personnel policies (e.g., University of Washington) and materials generated by centers for teaching excellence (e.g., University of Maryland, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Providence College, Illinois State University). The latter included online resources for on-campus faculty who taught 18-23 year old full-time students. There were also plentiful resources for distance educators, covering such topics as online teaching and web course design. A search for “adult education” “adult teaching” and “adult educators” resulted in links to adult learning theory, adult literacy programs, as well as basic skills and vocational training programs. Relatively few resources were devoted to the issues of instructors who taught adult students enrolled in programs leading to a college or university degree. Most of these resources were located on sites maintained by community colleges and directed at faculty who lived in near proximity to the institution. For example, Honolulu Community College offers extensive resources on teaching traditional and adult learners (<http://www.hcc.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/teachtip.htm>)

Educational resources for instructors of adult learners at satellite campuses were, at best, scarce. Available resources ranged from the contents of file cabinets dumped online (e.g., handbooks, forms, etc.), local telephone/e-mail directories and links to other educational institutions to an online listing of educational theories and context-independent teaching tips. Therefore, these online resources can be defined as information repositories, providing little or no possibility of real interaction, discussion and exchange of information for the faculty who access the sites.

We proposed a very different approach to the development of online resources for adult educators. Partially, our efforts are motivated by the scope of the problems we face: geographical dispersion of individual faculty across the North American continent, their remoteness from the main campus and its academic departments, rarity of face-to-face contacts among faculty, existence of isolated pockets of knowledge (e.g., departmental, local, administrative) and the need to establish consistent standards for quality teaching and learning. The KM initiative we propose incorporates the creation of a knowledge sharing culture, breaking down the knowledge fiefdoms and recognizing the value of shared knowledge (Todd, 1999).

## **Characteristics of the Proposed Knowledge Management (KM) Portal**

We called it a “portal” because it centralizes information. The main purpose of the portal is to maximize adult learning within a context of community of practice that provides plentiful opportunities for communication and interaction, not only for downloading information. The knowledge management principles underlying our portal are described below.

Opportunities for knowledge discovery: An instructor new to adult teaching will be able to find answers to the most pressing questions, such as...

How do other instructors handle student plagiarism?

How is this course taught in other geographical locations?

What are some creative methods for approaching this particular subject?

How do other instructors handle student attempts to re-negotiate the number of course assignments?

How do my end-of-course ratings compare to other instructor’s ratings?

Knowledge sharing: Off-campus instructors’ experiences (best practices & lessons learned) will be continuously captured through discussion forums, special interest groups, the assessment battery, mentor contributions, etc. The captured experiences will be used for just-in-time access to others’ expertise and learning through dialogue. We want to capture something of the spontaneous verbal interchange on-campus colleagues share in hallways and offices as they discuss their ideas and experiences. In addition, the KM portal will offer improved ways of storing, sharing and distributing information. For example, instructors will be able to search for best practices relevant to the context and content of their teaching (captured as written comments in the end-of-course instructor surveys), as well as other instructors’ course assignments and course outlines.

Knowledge networking is defined as the application of social networking principles to increase the reach and effectiveness of knowledge transfer and learning. This will be done, for example, by selecting Special Interest Group leaders and nurturing faculty-mentor relationships. To establish on- and off-campus faculty collaborations, we will create an inventory of faculty research interests, skills and data collection needs. This will enable off-campus instructors who have access to data collection sites to collaborate with on-campus faculty on research projects.

Knowledge structure: We will create a database of context-specific (program, subject, class format) applications of adult learning principles. Instructors will receive online assistance with class design in relation to an academic program and master course syllabus. They will be able to create their course outlines using an online template with built-in quality check functions (e.g., were all required fields completed and was all required language used?) and suggestions for best practices.

Support knowledge: The design, monitoring and development of the KM portal will be assigned by content managers who will engage in the analysis of information/knowledge needs, facilitate discussions and initiate document revisions/updates. The portal will be linked to mentors and on campus departments (see Knowledge networking). Off-campus

instructors will be able to submit online requests for mentor assistance, contact faculty who currently teach this course and access departmental information.

## **Expected Outcomes**

The main outcome of the KM portal will be communities of practice, defined as “a set of relations among persons, activity and world” (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 98). According to Hildreth, Wright and Kimble (1999), the features of communities of practice include:

1. A sense of common purpose;
2. Creation of shared documents/ language that capture “soft knowledge”;
3. A need which is driven by the members themselves;
4. A strong feeling of identity;
5. Emergence of the distributed community of practice that gradually evolves from an initial informal contact between its members or from an official grouping;
6. Links developed to individuals in other locations who do similar work (e.g., on campus researchers);
7. Legitimation of group members that comes not from the group’s formal structure but rather from a community of practice’s social relationships: as members get to know each other, they are better able to judge the quality of information they receive.

Therefore, CMU believes that the proposed KM portal is indeed innovative and worthy of FIPSE funding. We expect it to provide a model for faculty development relevant to both CMU’s on-campus faculty and other institutions of higher education.

## **References**

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