Introduction and Overview

Xavier University of Louisiana, through its Center for the Advancement of Teaching (henceforth, the Center), has completed the first year of a three-year faculty development grant funded by The Bush and William and Flora Hewlett foundations. This report presents the activities and successes of the first year of this faculty development program. These activities and successes are described in the context of the program’s four aims.

As noted in the implementation proposal submitted to the foundations in October 1997, the faculty at Xavier University identified four faculty development needs. These include the need to:

1. promote the scholarship of teaching by creating a campus culture where teaching is made public, discussed, examined, improved, and rewarded;
2. implement a faculty development program that encourages and supports the use of technology in the classroom;
3. establish communities of faculty and students whose conversations are focused on specific teaching and learning problems and opportunities; and
4. establish communities of faculty and students engaged in research using information technology and other resources.

During the planning period, the faculty members recognized that the ultimate goal of any faculty development program, regardless of its specific aims, is to improve student learning. To this end then, Xavier University has implemented a faculty development program that includes workshops, travel grants, and the establishment of teaching, technology, and research communities.

The Director of the Center, Dr. Todd Stanislav, serves as the Project Director. The staff and faculty of the Center coordinate and manage nearly all grant activities. A Steering Committee comprised of the Center’s Director and Dr. Jonathan Rotondo-McCord, Faculty-in-Residence in the Center, and the members of the University Faculty Development Committee serves principally to review, on a competitive basis, the proposals submitted by faculty. The numbers of proposals submitted (and supported) in response to requests for proposals are found in Table 1 below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requests for Proposal Opportunities</th>
<th># Proposals Submitted</th>
<th># Proposals Supported</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communities of Faculty and Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Communities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Communities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology Communities</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Portfolio Working Group</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>36</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
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Table 1. Faculty development request for proposal activities funded by the Bush-Hewlett grant during the 1998-99 academic year.

During the 1998-99 academic year, grant monies also supported:
- costs associated with offering workshops, including presenters’ honoraria and travel expenses, open house events, and roundtable discussions;
- Center personnel and operating costs;
- faculty and student travel expenses;
- membership in faculty development organizations; and
- computer hardware and software purchases.

A financial report is found in Appendix I.

Last, three faculty members, including the Project Director and two members of the original planning committee, gave a poster presentation on the faculty development program that is funded by this grant. This presentation was made at the Creating and Sustaining Learning Communities Conference held in March 1999 and sponsored, in part, by the University of South Florida and the Fund for the Improvement of Post-secondary Education. The abstract of this presentation is found in Appendix II.

Several grant opportunities and activities are described in the Fall 1998 and Spring 1999 Center Newsletters found in Appendix III.

**Faculty Development Aims and Initiatives**

I. *Promote the scholarship of teaching by creating a campus culture where teaching is made public, discussed, examined, improved, and rewarded*

This objective was “jump-started” at the Fall 1998 Faculty Institute at which Dr. C. Ann Trower of Harvard University’s Graduate School of Education spoke to the faculty about her research on faculty employment arrangements. Dr. Trower’s presentation provided a context for breakout sessions, two of which were titled “The Scholarship of Teaching” and “Technology and the Changing Faculty Role.” As noted by Dr. Elizabeth A. Barron, Xavier’s Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, “(The faculty) responses indicate a particular interest in continued discussion of the scholarship of teaching and the infusion of technology into teaching.”
To continue the dialogue begun at the Fall Faculty Institute, the Center invited faculty to participate in two initiatives aimed at exploring the place of the scholarship of teaching at Xavier University. One initiative, the Course Portfolio Working Group, involved 11 faculty members from the Biology, Chemistry, Communications, Education, History, Mathematics, and Philosophy departments. Like teaching portfolios, which have been used extensively in teacher education, course portfolios are selective collections of an individual’s best or evolving work. Unlike teaching portfolios, however, course portfolios provide a window into the scholarly underpinnings behind the choices that are made when crafting and conducting a course.

This marks the second year of the Center’s support and promotion of course portfolio working groups. In the 1997-98 academic year, 27 faculty participated in two groups and were funded by a grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. Among the many important outcomes of these two groups were the papers presented by three faculty members at the Creating and Sustaining Learning Communities Conference held in March 1999. The abstracts of these papers are found in Appendix II.

The Center further promoted discussion of the meaning and practice of the scholarship of teaching by participating in the first year of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching’s Campus Program. This program offered a context for faculty discussion on the definition of “scholarship of teaching,” campus policies and practices that either support or inhibit the scholarship of teaching, and a plan to promote and support faculty scholarship in teaching. Lee Shulman, Carnegie president, defines “scholarship of teaching” as “. . . problem posing about an issue of teaching or learning, study of the problem through methods appropriate to disciplinary epistemologies, application of results to practice, communication of results, self-reflection, and peer review.”

Eight faculty members from five departments, including two department chairpersons, participated in the discussion group. Perhaps the most significant outcome of this year-long discussion was recognition of the need to provide an infrastructure that, in principle, models the infrastructure provided for traditional scholarship. The faculty group identified the following as necessary components of this infrastructure:

1. Models for designing and conducting classroom research;
2. A community of faculty meeting regularly to discuss the scholarly work they are doing;
3. Release time or stipends for those faculty who wish conduct research on teaching and learning;
4. Information on teaching journals and their publication guidelines; and
5. Information on opportunities to give papers on teaching at conferences and symposia.

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II. **Implement a faculty development program that encourages and supports the use of technology in the classroom**

This grant provided opportunities for faculty to improve their basic technology skills, as well as to develop technology projects for classroom use. The Center provided eight technology workshops and other related events, and two funding opportunities through requests for proposals. Information about technology workshops and discussions hosted by the Center is found in Table 2 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Technology Workshops and Related Events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 2-6, 1998</td>
<td>The Collaboration for the Advancement of College Teaching and Learning Virtual Conference</td>
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<td>November 3, 1998</td>
<td>Roundtable Discussion associated with the Virtual Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 5, 1998</td>
<td>Brown Bag Discussion associated with the Virtual Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 19, 1998</td>
<td>Introduction to Web Authoring workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 19, 1998</td>
<td>Building Interactive Web Sites workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 16, 1998</td>
<td>Basics of Web Design workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 22, 1999</td>
<td>Faculty Technology Showcase</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 6, 1999</td>
<td>Introduction to Web Authoring workshop</td>
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Table 2. Technology and related workshops during the 1998-99 academic year.

The aim to support faculty use of technology was more fully realized by using these grant funds to leverage additional funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. A Mellon Foundation grant awarded in October 1998 to Xavier and its Center for the Advancement of Teaching supports the use of technology in the teaching and learning process. Three additional technology workshops were offered as a result of the additional funding.

Additional documentation of the technology workshops and discussions found in Appendix IV includes:

- Minutes of the faculty roundtable discussion held in conjunction with The Collaboration’s Virtual Conference held November 3, 1998
- Evaluation summaries for:
  1. Introduction to Web Authoring workshop held September 19, 1998
  2. Building Interactive Web Sites workshop held October 19, 1998
  4. Introduction to Web Authoring workshop held March 6, 1999
- A flier for the Technology Showcase.
During the 1998-99 academic year, Bush-Hewlett grant funds supported four communities of faculty and students involved in technology projects. The title and description of each project and the numbers of faculty and students involved follows.

- **Music Technology and Teaching Community.** Five faculty members from the Music Department, including the chairperson and four students majoring in music participated in this technology community. The goals of this community were to gain familiarity with educational technologies, including software, and integrate appropriate technology into at least two music courses.

- **On-line Writing Lab—Department of Business Administration and Economics.** This project involved two faculty members and two students majoring in business administration. This community developed a Web site with information on various topics in business management and economics, and guidelines for writing essays in economics. This project can be found on the Web at [http://www.xula.edu/~jbautist](http://www.xula.edu/~jbautist) and at [http://www.xula.edu/~akukreja/Research/index.htm](http://www.xula.edu/~akukreja/Research/index.htm). This and other on-line writing lab projects (see below) provide an opportunity for Center’s staff to collaborate with the staff of Xavier’s Writing Center in assisting the faculty and students involved in these communities.

- **From Chalkboard to Keyboard: Adapting the Engineering Graphics Course to Today’s Technology.** This project involved two faculty members from the Physics/Engineering Department and two students majoring in physics. The community of faculty and students set out to incorporate the latest technologies as instructional tools and to redesign the current engineering graphics course by including industry-standard computing tools.

- **Chemistry Course Web Sites.** Two Chemistry Department faculty members proposed developing Web sites for Organic and Inorganic Chemistry courses. One of the sites can be found at [http://www.xula.edu/~scheng](http://www.xula.edu/~scheng).

Beginning in January 1999, eight technology communities of faculty and students were supported by grant funds. These projects will not be completed until December 1999. The title and description of each project and the numbers of faculty and students involved are provided below.

- **Creation of a Web Site in Medicinal Chemistry Using Students as Critical Researchers of the World Wide Web.** Two faculty members and two students from the College of Pharmacy engaged in a year-long project to create a Web site for use in four College of Pharmacy courses and that provides:

  1. criteria and guidance in evaluating the scholarly value of medicinal chemistry Web site; and
  2. create annotated links to such Web sites.

- **Implementation of the Web to Benefit College of Pharmacy Faculty and Students.** Three faculty members and two students from the College of Pharmacy developed a Web site that provided a means of evaluating pharmaceutical-related Web sites and that would be used in the pharmaceutical marketing class.

- **Computer Science Department On-line Writing Laboratory.** The development of a Web site with a style manual for computer programming was undertaken by two faculty and two students in the Computer Science Department.
On-line Writing Laboratory in Pharmacology and Medicinal Chemistry. This project involved the development of a Web site with information on writing conventions in Pharmacology and Medicinal Chemistry. Four College of Pharmacy faculty and two students are involved in this project.

Students as Critical Researchers of the World Wide Web: Assessing Available On-line Resources for the History of Psychology. Two Psychology Department faculty members and two students developed a Web site for use in the History and Systems of Psychology course that would provide students with tools to evaluate the quality of course-appropriate Web sites. The Web site can be found at http://www.xula.edu/~dhogue/survey.html.

Evaluation of World Wide Web Sites in the Fields of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology. In an effort to assist students in making informed decisions about information found on the Web, two faculty and two students have begun developing a Web site to be used in the new Molecular Biology and Biotechnology course in the College of Pharmacy.

Student Research and the World Wide Web. In an effort to assist students in becoming critical researchers of the World Wide Web, five Communications Department faculty and students are developing a Web site with information on browsing strategies, design effectiveness, and site content of Web sites related to the field of mass communications. The evaluation form created by this community of faculty and students can be found at http://www.xula.edu/~acrump/survey.htm.

On-line Writing Laboratory in Communications. Five faculty and students from the Communications Department have begun developing a Web site aimed at linking the field of communications, writing in the discipline, and technology.

Several other individual faculty technology projects were undertaken with support provided from a technology grant to Xavier University from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Xavier’s Center for the Advancement of Teaching is also implementing this faculty development technology grant.

III. Establish communities of faculty and students whose conversations are focused on specific teaching and learning problems and opportunities

Grant initiatives that addressed this aim include:
1. an orientation for new faculty;
2. a roundtable discussion for new faculty on issues related to student evaluations;
3. a Course Portfolio Working Group;
4. two communities of faculty and students involved in specific year-long teaching and learning projects; and
5. a case studies workshop.

The Center hosted the orientation for new faculty at the start of the Fall 1998 semester. The orientation offered new faculty an opportunity to discuss teaching and learning issues. One discussion titled “Starting the Semester” was led by Dr. Jonathan Rotondo-McCord, Associate Professor of History and Faculty-in-Residence in the Center. A
second discussion focused on the culture of teaching and learning at Xavier and involved six current faculty members. A summary of the evaluations of the new faculty orientation is found in Appendix IV.

Shortly after the new faculty received the results of their first semester’s student evaluations, the Center hosted a discussion for the new faculty on student evaluations. Several questions directed the discussion, including:
1. How should faculty respond to student evaluations?
2. What place do student evaluations have in the promotion and tenure process?
3. What perceptions do students have about the significance of the evaluations?

As noted previously in this report, the Center supported the work of eleven faculty members in the Course Portfolio Working Group. Because of its focus on student learning, the Course Portfolio Working Group is a community of faculty members whose conversations are focused on specific teaching and learning issues.

Two teaching and learning communities of faculty and students were established during the 1998-99 academic year and are described below.

- **Creative Writing Teaching and Learning Community.** This community of five faculty members from the English Department, one of whom was a visiting distinguished creative writing professor, and two students engaged in a project during the 1998-99 academic year with the following goals:
  1. strengthen teaching and student learning in the newly established creative writing minor;
  2. refine and develop the curriculum and teaching standards of the creative writing minor; and
  3. develop a course portfolio for Introduction to Creative Writing.

Three members of this community, including one faculty member and two students, gave presentations at the Annual Conference of the Associated Writing Programs held in Albany, New York in April 1999. A proposal submitted by this community to continue its work for a second year was recently approved for funding by the Steering Committee.

- **World Literature and World History Teaching and Learning Community.** Seven English Department and five History Department faculty members, and two students (one from each department) established a community of learners focused on:
  1. learning in the disciplines;
  2. contextualizing literature with history; and
  3. assessing learning in the World Literature and World History courses.

The Center hosted a workshop titled “Using Case Studies to Promote Meaningful Discussions and Active Learning in the Classroom.” The workshop presenters were Dr. Rita Silverman and Dr. Bill Welty, both of the Center for Case Studies in Education at Pace University. Twenty-two faculty members from ten departments attended the workshop. During the 1999-2000 academic year, three communities of faculty and students will incorporate case studies into the classroom (funding for a fourth community is pending). The title and description of each community and the number of faculty and
students involved follows. Copies of the workshop flier, request for proposals, and evaluation results are found in Appendix IV.

- **The Division of Education Institute of Case Studies.** Four Education faculty members (including the Division Chairperson) and four students plan to institutionalize the use of case studies in its undergraduate and graduate courses.

- **Case Study: “Letter from Birmingham Jail”**. This interdisciplinary and inter-institutional project will include two faculty members from Xavier (and the students in their courses) and two faculty members from the University of Wisconsin-Stout (and the students in their courses). The goals of this project include, but are not limited to:
  1. utilize the case study approach to promote meaningful discussion and active learning;
  2. provide a means for students of diverse and possibly differing backgrounds and points of view to engage in honest, open, and respectful dialogue with one another; and
  3. utilize electronic means of communication to promote meaningful discussion both between classes, as well as between universities.

- **Literacy Development.** Two faculty members from the Speech Pathology program of the Communications Department, two Division of Education faculty members, and four students will develop and implement strategies for the diagnosis and remediation of reading, speech, and language difficulties.

Two teaching and learning communities will begin in the 1999-2000 academic year. The projects to be undertaken by the communities are described below.

- **General Biology Teaching and Learning Community.** Four faculty members and students will coordinate a long-term, comprehensive effort to assist first semester biology students in developing note- and test-taking skills, and critical thinking abilities.

- **Creative Writing Teaching and Learning Community.** This teaching and learning community will continue working together for a second year. In its second year, the faculty and students will develop course portfolios for the Poetry and Fiction Workshops. The community will also continue to explore issues related to creative writing such as originality, critical sophistication, and ownership.

**IV. Establish communities of faculty and students engaged in research using information technology and other resources**

Two research communities were established in the 1998-99 academic year, including:

- **The Black Aesthetic and Beyond Research Community.** An interdisciplinary group of three faculty members from the African American Studies, English, and Philosophy departments and four students investigated questions of cultural identity and subjectivity at the intersection of literature, literary theory, philosophy, art, and history, beginning with the “Black Aesthetic” theory. Two members of this community (a faculty member and student) presented a paper on the research project
at the *Creating and Sustaining Learning Communities Conference* held in March 1999. A copy of the abstract of the paper is found in Appendix II.

- **The Interaction of Science and Theology in Alternative Medicine.** This interdisciplinary project involved two students and four faculty members from the College of Pharmacy, and the Biology and Theology departments. The focus of this group was the meeting point of science and medical care with religious beliefs and theological principles exemplified by Alternative Medicine. During the Fall 1998 semester, Xavier University and its Theology Department hosted a conference on *Religion and Science: Faith in Dialogue with Reason*. The John Templeton Foundation presented this conference.

To further promote faculty and student research at Xavier, three faculty members from the Biology, Political Science, and History departments began developing an on-line journal for student scholarship called *Internexus*. The goals of this group and the on-line journal are to:
1. promote scholar-student relationships with a distinct focus on interdisciplinary collaboration;
2. foster research and knowledge construction using information technology and other sources; and
3. provide faculty and students with opportunities to find new ways to look at information.

The draft of the *Internexus* home page is at [http://www.xula.edu/~cdoumen/CV/Internexus/FrameSet1.html](http://www.xula.edu/~cdoumen/CV/Internexus/FrameSet1.html).

**Assessment of Grant Activities**

The assessment of the work of the various teaching, technology, and research communities is the responsibility of the funded faculty and students. Additionally, each community is required to submit a progress report at the end of the first semester and a final report at the conclusion of the project. These reports are available in the Center.

A follow-up survey was sent to the participants of the technology workshops. This survey was designed to determine the extent to which workshop methods or ideas are incorporated into the faculty member’s teaching. The results of the survey are found in Appendix IV.

The Center hosted an Open House at the end of the Spring 1999 semester that provided an opportunity for the entire university faculty and administration to learn more about the projects funded by the Bush and Hewlett foundations faculty development grant. Following presentations by members of 14 of the 17 communities of faculty and students that were funded during the 1998-99 academic year, the Steering Committee met with just the faculty members funded by the grant. The Steering Committee and funded faculty members discussed various aspects of the management and implementation of the grant.
Conclusion

This first year of funding from The Bush and William and Flora Hewlett foundations has been an exciting year filled with new opportunities for faculty and students to learn in a context of shared commitments and inquiries. Several faculty comments found in the reports point to the unique learning opportunities afforded by participating in these communities. One member of the Course Portfolio Working Group wrote:

“One bit of irony is that this portfolio was completed because of the existence of a group, a course portfolio working group. Although the final artifact represented individual effort, it gained strength because of group discussions and presentation, along with the general knowledge that one was working with a group of like-minded people.”

And finally, one faculty member noted:

“… participating in a group to discuss teaching as a significant academic activity . . . overcame some of the traditional obstacles of documenting teaching effectiveness and of learning how to assess one’s own classroom efforts . . .”

These teaching, technology, and research communities, quite apart from the traditional classroom setting, have established new connections among faculty and students that build upon a rich culture of teaching, learning, and scholarship at Xavier University.