

Center for the Advancement of Teaching Strategic Plan

Overview

Presented below is a set of fifteen goals that is designed to direct the work of the Center for the Advancement of Teaching (CAT) for at least the next five years. During the 18-month strategic planning process, the members of the Strategic Planning and Implementation Group identified five areas that they believe constitute the whole of CAT. These areas are: communication, facilities and resources, funding, programs, and staff. What follows are goals associated with each of these five areas, along with one or more tasks for each goal that are designed to enable CAT to reach the goal.

In June 2005, the strategic plan was distributed to department chairs and CAT's Faculty Advisory Group for review and comment. When the University re-opened in January 2006 following Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent flooding, CAT staff immediately began revising the strategic plan in light of the post-Katrina conditions. The principal changes made to the plan include revising the timeline and placing a handful of goals on hold indefinitely; we substantially changed Goal 6 from "Seek funding for current and anticipated Center personnel" to "Seek funding to rebuild CAT staff."

The revised plan was made public again in March 2006. Subsequently, a few changes were made based on feedback we received from Xavier's Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. We continue to make minor changes as we fine-tune the plan.

-- September 2006

Communication Goals

Goal 1: Work collaboratively with other University programs and centers (e.g., Center for Undergraduate Research, Office of Environmental Education, Information Technology Center, Center for International and Intercultural Programs)

Comments

CAT's success at advancing the art and science of teaching and learning is dependent, in part, on its ability to maintain and promote dialogue among the various University programs and centers that support faculty work in teaching, scholarship, and service.

Timeline

By **March 15, 2005**: Survey program and center directors to determine interest in meeting regularly to discuss common interests, opportunities to collaborate, etc. STATUS: In December 2004, a survey was sent to members of the Administration and program and center directors to determine their interest in and possible purposes of such meetings. There was unanimous and strong support for having such meetings.

By **May 1, 2005**: If there is sufficient interest, convene at least one meeting of program and center directors to discuss purpose, goals, frequency of meetings, etc. STATUS: Meetings were held in February and April 2005.

Ongoing: Maintain collaborations with other University programs and centers that support faculty work in teaching, scholarship, and service. STATUS: Launched in April 2005, the Council in Support of Faculty Work, consisting of the leaders of CAT, Service Learning, Distance Learning, International and Intercultural Studies, Across Curriculum Thinking and the Center for Undergraduate Research continues to meet regularly and is currently sharing information about each center or program with the intention of finding ways to better coordinate our respective programs and events. In September 2006 a workshop on service learning, co-sponsored by CAT and Service Learning, was being planned for the fall semester.

Goal 2: Develop means for effective reporting of CAT activities to stakeholders

Comments

CAT's success at advancing the art and science of teaching and learning is dependent, in part, on its ability to share information with the entire Xavier community. An annual report, periodic presentations at University Academic Assembly, and a current and easily navigable website are means of sharing this information with the Xavier community.

Timeline

By **May 1, 2007**: Identify the kinds of information about CAT that stakeholders wish to have in an annual report. Establish a draft table of contents. STATUS: [pending]

By **August 1, 2007**: Send the annual report to stakeholders and publish the full report on CAT's website. STATUS: [pending]

Ongoing: CAT staff will continue to brainstorm ways to make our work and what we offer known to our stakeholders.. STATUS: In April 2005, Todd Stanislav gave a presentation before the University Academic Assembly in which he provided an update on both the strategic planning efforts and the discussions held in November 2004 about ways in which the Center can better serve and support new faculty members.

Facilities and Resources Goals

Goal 3: Maintain and improve CAT facilities

Comments

Since its inception in 1994, CAT has been fortunate to provide most of its staff members offices that are safe, comfortable, and secure. As equally important, CAT provides its staff with state-of-the-art technology and all Xavier faculty members access to facilities that allow them to be creative, productive, and effective in their work, both within and outside of the classroom.

CAT is committed to providing all of its staff members a safe, comfortable, and secure work environment, while also continuing to provide state-of-the-art facilities for faculty.

Objective 1: Arrange for the creation of a safe, comfortable, and secure office area for the Lab Manager in the Student Laboratory (Library, room 532B)

Timeline

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent flooding, CAT's Laboratory Manager position was cut. Given this and because the University has so much rebuilding to do, we will put this objective on hold indefinitely.

Objective 2: Analyze survey data from faculty and students regarding CAT's electronic classrooms (Library, rooms 501, 502, 532A, and 532B)

Timeline

This work was largely handled by our instructional designer, whose position was terminated following Hurricane Katrina. Consequently, this objective is on hold indefinitely.

Objective 3: Provide assistance to the University in general and the Information Technology Center in particular regarding the design of additional electronic classrooms.

Timeline

By **March 15, 2006**: Initiate dialogue with the Information Technology Center about ways in which CAT may provide assistance in designing additional electronic classrooms. STATUS: Todd Stanislav contacted Cathy Lewis, Vice President, Office of Technology Administration, in early March 2006 offering CAT's assistance in designing electronic classrooms. He also made available to Ms. Lewis the data CAT has obtained from surveying faculty and students who use CAT's electronic classrooms.

Ongoing: Maintain dialogue with the Information Technology Center regarding the design of additional electronic classrooms. STATUS: In September 2006 Acting Director David Lanoue began a dialog with Cathy Lewis, the Director of ITC, on way that CAT and ITC may collaborate.

Objective 4: Provide state-of-the-art technology in CAT staff offices, faculty workroom, production room, and conference room.

Timeline

By **July 1 of each year**: CAT staff will review the state of technology resources in CAT offices, faculty workroom, production room, and conference room. As appropriate, a plan for purchasing needed technology will be drafted and implemented. STATUS: CAT staff discussed this at its regular staff meeting on June 20, 2005. Some needed resources will be purchased immediately. Others, while important, cannot be purchased at this time due to budgetary constraints.

Goal 4: Provide more pedagogical resources in CAT and on the CAT website

Comments

CAT is committed to advancing the art and science of teaching and learning. One means to this end is to provide faculty with access to journals, books, and other resources related to teaching and learning.

Timeline

By **August 1, 2005**: Develop a Blackboard course for faculty titled, "Teaching & Learning Forum." See Goal 9 for further details. STATUS: The prototype Blackboard site is up and running. In fall 2006 we plan to link it to one or two workshops, inviting faculty to go to the site for reading materials per-workshop, and then return to it for electronic discussion, post-workshop.

By **September 15, 2005**: Consider providing a public record of project reports. STATUS: In January 2006, CAT staff decided to place this task on hold indefinitely.

By **March 15, 2006**: Discuss developing the CAT Education blog. STATUS: CAT staff began discussing this in earnest in mid-March 2006. STATUS: This is on hold because we decided to connect it to the Inquiry Initiative, which is on hold.

By **April 1, 2006**: Crosslink our Inventory Index to Links, the CAT Education blog, and other content on the CAT website. STATUS: [pending]

By **April 1, 2006**: Make the external newsletter feature of the website more prominent. STATUS: [pending]

By **June 1, 2006**: Sort the content of our inventory (e.g., books) into subgroups (e.g., assessment, teaching methods). STATUS: [pending]

By **June 1, 2006**: Create separate webpages for each of the journals in the inventory. STATUS: This was completed almost a year early! See <http://cat.xula.edu/journals/>

Ongoing: Develop a public web interface for the resources and other information collected by faculty in association with Goal 9, Objective 1. STATUS: In March 2006, we completed this task. For more information, see Goal 9, Objective 1.

Funding Goals

Goal 5: Provide substantially more release time for faculty

Comments

Several current CAT initiatives such as the Technology Infusion Projects Initiative, Rich Media Projects Initiative, and Communities Initiative require that faculty have at least a one-course reduction in their teaching load for one semester. This reduced teaching load permits the faculty to devote the requisite time and attention to plan, develop, implement, and assess the work they do in these initiatives. Given the current limits in funding, we are not able to provide release time to most faculty who participate in these initiatives. And rarely have we been able to provide faculty more than a one-course reduction for one semester.

We have found, however, that most projects would benefit substantially from faculty having more time to devote to the work. For most of these projects, even providing the minimum release time would lead to higher quality products, greater positive effects on teaching and learning, and broader exposure to the academic community and general public. Some projects, particularly those associated with the Rich Media Projects Initiative, would benefit tremendously if faculty had a greater amount of release time available to them.

Given the fiscal obligations and limitations of the University, it is unrealistic at this point in time to expect that the University will underwrite additional release time. Thus, the funding must come from outside the University.

We note, incidentally, that grant proposals, which CAT prepares or participates in writing, could be used to achieve this goal and Goals 6 and 7.

Timeline

By **October 1, 2006**: Identify a source of funding to which a proposal will be submitted specifically for the Rich Media Projects and Technology Infusion Projects initiatives that will support release time over and above what we have provided faculty during the past three years. STATUS: [pending]

By **December 1, 2006**: Submit a proposal. STATUS: [pending]

Ongoing: Submit at least one concept paper or proposal to a potential funding agency each year. STATUS: [pending]

Goal 6: Seek funding to rebuild CAT staff

Comments

We lost three staff members in October 2005 as a result of the financial situation the University faced in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. In discussions among CAT staff in January 2006, we recognized that rebuilding our staff is an important goal.

Timeline

By **May 15, 2006**: CAT staff will identify which positions are in most need of being filled. A timeline for filling those positions will be established. STATUS: CAT staff discussed this at its May 3, 2006 meeting. We will begin a search immediately for an Administrative Assistant, who will also assist the Center for Undergraduate Research and faculty in the Languages and Philosophy departments. The staff agreed that the other positions that are needed to enhance our work are an Assessment of Learning Specialist and a Teaching and Learning Specialist. The staff will begin planning for a search in fall 2006 to fill one of these positions. STATUS: In July 2006 a new Administrative Assistant, Mrs. Olivia Crum, was hired. In September 2006 ads for a permanent CAT Director and an Assessment/Learning Specialist were designed.

Goal 7: Seek funding for current and future programs and initiatives

Comments

The University continues to provide a great deal of support – both financial and other – to CAT. The support it provides does not, however, pay for a significant proportion of CAT's programmatic costs. Over the past seven years, the University has underwritten approximately 5% of CAT's total programmatic costs. The remaining 95% has been provided by grants from foundations.

This situation will likely continue long into the foreseeable future. Thus, CAT must work continuously and aggressively to obtain the funding it needs to support the initiatives and programs that advance the art and science of teaching and learning.

Again, it is worth noting that grant proposals that CAT prepares or participates in writing could be used to achieve this goal and Goals 5 and 6.

Timeline

By **October 1, 2006**: Identify a source of funding to which a grant proposal will be submitted to support CAT's programs and initiatives. STATUS: [pending]

By **December 1, 2006**: Submit a proposal. STATUS: [pending]

Ongoing: Submit at least one concept paper or proposal to a potential funding agency each year. STATUS: [pending]

Program Goals

Goal 8: Develop a program of services for faculty seeking to improve their teaching, learning, and assessment

Comments

CAT has a long and rich history of working with individual faculty and groups of faculty through its workshops, initiatives, and projects. We recognize the need for an expanded program of one-on-one services that meets the varied needs and interests of faculty. Thus, CAT will develop new services that will advance the art and science of teaching and learning. Examples of the types of services for individual faculty include:

- Videotape Your Teaching (with an optional analysis service)
- Classroom Observation
- Small Group Instructional Diagnosis and other Mid-term Evaluation Methods
- Test Design (essay and multiple choice)
- Active Learning Techniques
- Writing To Learn
- Dealing with Student Incivility and Other Disruptions to Teaching and Learning
- Using a Student Response System
- Using Movie Clips in the Classroom

Timeline

By **August 15, 2005**: Develop a mechanism for prioritizing, promoting, supporting, and assessing these services. STATUS: Our new One-on-One Consultation Services

(<http://cat.xula.edu/services/>) is ready. Several faculty members have graciously volunteered their time and expertise, a brochure has been printed, and the web pages constructed. We need only spend a little more time discussing the assessment aspect of these services. In March 2006, CAT staff identified this as an important goal to continue striving toward. But during this first academic year post-

Katrina, which extends from January to August 2006, we believe it is overly ambitious to achieve this goal before Fall 2006. Thus, we have adjusted the timeline.

By **October 1, 2006**: Identify faculty and staff experts to assist in providing these services. STATUS: [pending]

By **November 1, 2006**: Design and distribute marketing materials (e.g., print and web). STATUS: [pending]

Goal 9: Communicate and encourage practical application of research and new knowledge in teaching and learning from diverse disciplines

Comments

There is an ever-increasing amount of research on teaching and learning, from new findings about the human brain and learning to studies that examine the effects on learning of different methods of teaching. CAT believes that faculty should have easy access to this research and knowledge; it also wishes to provide opportunities for faculty to discuss this research and incorporate the resultant new knowledge into their work.

Objective 1: Develop and promote a means for providing faculty easier access to this research

Timeline

By **June 1, 2005**: Identify faculty members who will assist in compiling resources related to the scholarship of teaching and learning. STATUS: Two faculty members will be working during the summer months to compile these resources. One person will compile a broad set of resources, while the other will identify 7-9 scholarly papers that will be used in the fall 2005 Seminar on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, the first phase of CAT's Inquiry into Teaching and Learning Initiative.

By **August 1, 2005**: Develop a Blackboard course for faculty titled, "Teaching & Learning Forum," that will provide a venue for faculty to examine and discuss research and new knowledge in teaching and learning. Link the course and its content to as many CAT and other events as feasible (e.g., new faculty orientation, workshops, brown-bag discussion, national teaching and learning conferences). Use the course in conjunction with the Fall 2005 New Faculty Orientation. STATUS: The prototype Blackboard site is up and running. We will unveil this for new faculty the week of August 8-12, making available information and handouts for their August 15th Orientation.

By **April 15, 2006**: Review the resources that were compiled during summer 2005 and, if appropriate, establish a new timeline for achieving this goal. STATUS: In late March 2006, we learned of three online lists of journals that publish research in teaching and learning. We reviewed the lists and decided to add links on the CAT website to two of the three. These links can be found at:
<http://cat.xula.edu/scholarship/journals>

Ongoing: Once developed, promote use of these resources. STATUS: [pending]

Objective 2: Establish workshops, brown-bag discussions, initiatives, and projects that give faculty opportunities to discuss the research and incorporate this new knowledge into their work

Timeline

By **October 1, 2006**: Identify at least one workshop or other event for each of the fall 2006 and spring 2007 semesters in support of this objective. STATUS: In September 2006, CAT in conjunction with Service Learning is planning a workshop. At the same time, CAT is arranging to send representatives from Xavier to two upcoming conferences given by the Collaboration for the Advancement of College Teaching.

Objective 3: Hire a new CAT staff member who has expertise in assessment, and teaching and learning theories and practices

Timeline

By **October 1, 2006**: Conduct a national search for an Assessment of Learning Specialist and a Teaching and Learning Specialist. Fill one of the two positions. STATUS: In September 2006, the ad for this position is being written.

Goal 10: Support faculty in the use of technology through a focus on best practices and emerging trends

Comments

Technology continues to occupy a significant place in faculty teaching and scholarship. It, therefore, behooves us to promote and support uses of technology that are based on well-reasoned theory and practice. Meanwhile, CAT desires to continue serving the Xavier community by encouraging and supporting creative and experimental uses of technology.

Timeline

By **November 15, 2006**: Provide technology-related services associated with Goal 8 (see above). STATUS: [pending]

Ongoing: The appropriate CAT staff members will attend at least one technology-related conference or symposium each year and participate in appropriate professional organizations. STATUS: Bart attended the "Share, Share Widely" conference in New York City in May 2005.

Ongoing: Ensure that CAT's online tutorials remain current and review link lists. STATUS: Bart updated the links list in February 2006.

Ongoing: CAT will sponsor at least two technology-related workshops (one each semester) that include information on best practices and emerging trends. STATUS: For fall 2006, a workshop on "Using the New Orleans Wiki" is being planned.

Goal 11: Provide opportunities through workshops and roundtable discussions that will assist faculty in documenting and describing the value of their work, including participation in CAT activities, for purposes of evaluation

Comments

We believe it is useful for faculty members to describe and document the work they do in teaching, scholarship, and service. CAT will continue to offer opportunities for faculty to learn about how to achieve this.

Timeline

By **August 1, 2006**: CAT will include at least two workshops or roundtable discussions (one each semester) in the 2006-07 workshop calendar. STATUS: [pending]

Goal 12: Continue to review, assess, and improve existing programs, initiatives, and resources

Comments

The future success of CAT to advance the art and science of teaching and learning is dependent, in part, on rigorous, thoughtful, and continuous assessment of all aspects of its programs. As one important means of assessment, CAT will establish a team of Xavier faculty and staff to conduct a review of a different CAT program, initiative, or resource each year, thereby creating a review cycle. At the conclusion of the review,

the Review Team will submit a report of its findings and recommendations to CAT and CAT's Faculty Advisory Group; the latter will have the opportunity to respond to the report. CAT will review and act upon the recommendations of the report

Timeline

By **August 15 of each year**: CAT staff will identify a program or initiative to be reviewed. STATUS: [pending; we decided to begin this timeline with August of 2007, at which time we will have a new permanent Director and an additional staff person.]

By **September 1 of each year**: Invite members of the Advisory Group to participate in the Review Team. STATUS: [pending]

By **October 1 of each year**: CAT staff will meet with the Review Team to discuss the process and timeline for completing the review. STATUS: [pending]

By **March 1 of each year**: The Review Team's report will be submitted to CAT and CAT's Faculty Advisory Group. STATUS: [pending]

By **June 1 of each year**: CAT will respond to the report and any recommendations submitted by the Faculty Advisory Group. The response will be posted on CAT's website. STATUS: [pending]

Goal 13: Systematically examine the link between CAT activities and student learning, and integrate what is learned from this into improving the work of CAT

Comments

Pre-Katrina, we wrote:

It is imperative that CAT staff know the extent to which CAT's programs succeed in fulfilling its mission to advance the art and science of teaching and learning. As one means to know this, CAT staff will work closely with selected faculty involved in projects to examine their effects on teaching and student learning using scientific methodology and rigorous assessment. The effects of the projects on teaching and student learning will be tracked beyond the time period of the projects themselves. The findings will be used to improve the work of the Center.

Now post-Katrina, we still believe that this is an urgent and important goal. Our best chance at achieving this goal rested largely, however, with a staff member whose position was cut following Hurricane Katrina. Unfortunately, the current staff have neither the expertise nor the time that is required to thoughtfully, systematically, and successfully examine the link between CAT activities and student learning. We hope in the very near future to hire such a staff member who will manage this work.

Timeline

This is on hold until we have an opportunity to hire a new staff member who will assume responsibility for achieving this goal.

Staff Goals

Goal 14: Develop or acquire expertise in areas of need: (a) assessment of CAT programs, and teaching and learning; (b) theories and practices of teaching and learning, (c) faculty development

Comments

CAT recognizes the importance of assessment as the means for measuring the extent to which it advances the art and science of teaching and learning. Our recognition of the central role of assessment is based, in

part, on our experience implementing various initiatives and projects. In addition, members of Xavier's Administration have stressed the importance of assessment, as did two consultants who visited CAT in July 2004. Finally, and not to be overlooked, are the questions that members of the Academy and the general public have asked about the effectiveness of higher education. Clearly, assessment has become an integral part of the entire educational process.

For these reasons, the Strategic Planning and Implementation Group identified hiring a person with expertise in assessment and teaching and learning as its top priority.

We also recognize that the Director of CAT and, as deemed appropriate, the faculty-in-residence and other CAT staff need to have a broad and deep knowledge of the faculty development profession. This knowledge will undoubtedly enable the Director and others to provide leadership to the University in matters concerning faculty work in general, and teaching and learning in particular. Moreover, this knowledge will contribute to CAT's success at advancing the art and science of teaching and learning.

Objective 1: Hire a new CAT staff member who has expertise in assessment, and teaching and learning theories and practices

Timeline

By **October 1, 2006**: Conduct a national search for an Assessment of Learning Specialist and a Teaching and Learning Specialist. Fill one of the two positions. STATUS: [pending]

Objective 2: Acquire expertise in faculty development

Timeline

By **September 1 of each year**: The Director and, as appropriate, other staff, will share with CAT staff a plan to increase their knowledge of faculty development. STATUS: As of September 2006 we have no permanent Director, so this objective is on hold.

By **January 15 of each year**: Provide an update at a CAT staff meeting on the progress toward this goal. STATUS: [pending]

By **May 1 of each year**: All aspects of the plan will have been implemented and the outcomes disseminated via CAT staff meeting, forum, brown-bag discussion, or other appropriate means. STATUS: [pending]

Goal 15: Hire or appoint an assistant or associate director.

Comments

This goal is on hold indefinitely.