Title:	Assessing the Need for Centralizing Teaching and Learning Services
Version:	1

Institution:	Lewis University	**Status:**	Completed
Submitted:	2014-03-28	**Category:**	1-Helping Students Learn

Timeline

Planned project kickoff date: 2014-03-28
Target completion date: 2014-12-01
Actual completion date: 2015-01-02

Project Detail

PROJECT GOAL
Describe this Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer

This action project will assess the need for a centralized teaching and learning center at Lewis University by measuring faculty and administrative perception of the need for such a center. The needs assessment measurements will include the perceptions of faculty and administrators on:

- The need for a center that focuses on teaching and learning
- The current teaching services that might be centralized in a center

- Additional teaching services that might be centralized in a center

REASON FOR UNDERTAKING THIS PROJECT
Describe briefly your institution's reasons for taking on this Action Project now -- why the project and its goals are high among your current priorities

Providing a distinctive and transformative educational experience for our students will require extraordinary teaching using innovative pedagogies and emerging technology to produce graduates that have the knowledge, skills and dispositions to have an impact on the complex issues in their communities. Additionally, examining the need for a teaching and learning center fits with the Strategic Vision to restructure and expand faculty development initiatives that will support a distinctive and transformative educational experience for our students. Restructuring current faculty pedagogy initiatives into a center for teaching and learning could allow for clear communication, more efficient and effective use of University resources, and articulated services to support distinctive student experiences.

ORGANIZATIONAL AREAS AFFECTED
List the organizational areas -- institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units -- most affected by or involved in this Action Project

The group most affected by the project is the faculty across the university, followed by the academic administrators.

KEY ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES
Name and describe briefly the key organizational process(es) that you expect this Action Project to change or improve

Lewis University does not currently have a center that is devoted to teaching and learning. Though faculty can currently access a number of services to support teaching, there is not a centralized resource. This action project will create a needs assessment instrument to help inform the scope and nature of such a center along with analysis of the data and recommendation for the creation of a center. This action project includes faculty AND administrative perspectives on the need for a center in order to make recommendations on the scope and nature of a center.

PROJECT TIMEFRAME RATIONALE
Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project (from kickoff to target completion)

The needs assessment survey should be developed, administered, and analyzed for a recommendation in eight months. The action project needs a collaborative team of individuals who are knowledgeable about teaching and learning in order to create a needs assessment that will provide valuable information. It will be important to the success of the project to have a large number of faculty and administrators respond to the needs assessment. This length of time should be adequate to achieve these goals, considering from past action projects, we have learned that some faculty are off campus for the summer and participation slows.

PROJECT SUCCESS MONITORING
Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing

The team will need to collaborate to develop a series of questions to gather information about the perceived need for a center for teaching and learning, as well as the services that a center would provide. The survey will be electronic and administered to all faculty and academic administrators. The team will announce the survey at all college and major committee meetings. The survey will be administered through university email and adequate time will be granted for faculty and administrators completion. We will monitor the responses and send reminders of the importance of participation and the goals of this action project as needed.

PROJECT OUTCOME MEASURES
Describe the overall "outcome" measures or indicators that will tell you whether this Action Project has been a success or failure in achieving its goals

The assumption is that considering development of a center for teaching and learning is an important step in moving Lewis University to be an outstanding, innovative and a regional leader in distinctive educational experiences. The needs assessment survey must be developed carefully to provide valuable faculty and administrative data that would clearly determine whether there is a need for a teaching and learning center. The success of this project could be threatened by a poorly developed needs assessment, which does not provide valuable data or if there is a substantially small number of respondents.

Annual Update

CURRENT PROJECT STATUS SUMMARY
(Please answer the following questions in the text box below)
General Project Status: _____ Completed _____ In-progress _____ Suspended _____ Reopened
Original Project Start Date: ____ / ____ / ____
Originally Projected End Date: ____ /____ / ____
Anticipated Completion Date If Not Completed: ____ / ____ / ____

Briefly describe the current status of the project.

Explain how this project relates to any strategic initiatives or challenges described in the institution�s most recent or soon-to-be submitted systems portfolio, if applicable

The General Project status is in progress

The original project start date was 03/28/2014

The originally projected end date was 12/01/2014

The anticipated completion date is 01/31/2015

In the spring of 2014, the committee charged with assessing the need for centralized teaching and learning services drafted a survey to determine the faculty perception of this center. This survey is very important because resources are scarce and must be allocated with care. Careful editing and revising of the survey occurred over the summer to ensure the results would accurately reflect the desired data. Currently, a second draft of the survey has been developed this past semester.

Examining the need for a teaching and learning center fits with the Strategic Vision to restructure, provide additional centers, and expand faculty development initiatives that will support a distinctive and transformative educational experience for our students.

The benefit of the project is that the University will have current data in order to make recommendations on the scope and nature of a center. The project will have been accomplished when a needs assessment document has been created, it has been administered to stakeholders, the data has been analyzed and recommendations have been developed.

ORIGINAL PROJECT GOALS AND DELIVERABLES
List the project goals as stated in the original project declaration along with the metrics/measures for assessing the progress for each goal

The AQIP Project sought to examine the need for a centralized center for teaching and learning at Lewis University. A needs assessment document (survey) will quantitatively measure faculty and administrative perception of the need for such a center by gauging:

- Faculty and administrative perceptions about the need for a center that will focus on teaching and learning
- Faculty and administrative perceptions about current teaching services that might be centralized in a center
- Faculty and administrative perceptions about additional teaching services that might be centralized in a center

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER THE PAST YEAR
Describe what has been accomplished with this project over the past year, specifically referring to quantifiable results that show progress. You may need to include a discussion clarifying how the original goals and anticipated outcomes may have shifted during the year

Over the past semester, the committee has met several times and an initial draft of the survey was created. Comments and suggestions were made to revise and improve the document and a second draft was developed over the past summer.

INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT
Describe how various members of the learning community have participated in this action project. Show the breadth of involvement by individuals and groups over the project�s duration, particularly during the past year

During the past year, the initial draft of the survey was shared with the University Faculty Development Committee, which has faculty representation from all four colleges (College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business, College of Education and College of Nursing) and the School for Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE). The survey will be deployed to all faculty and administration this fall to determine the need for a teaching and learning center and the scope of it.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

Describe the effect that this project has had on the institution, students, and others in the learning community. What has the institution learned that can be identified as a good practice to use in other aspects of its quality work or from which other institutions might benefit?

The initial effective practices in the development of the survey were collaboration between the colleges and faculty development. The anticipated effective practice would be the decision to have a teaching and learning center based upon the results of the assessment. The involvement and feedback from faculty and administration, prior to making decisions as a university that affect these stakeholders, would also be an effective practice.

ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES TO PROJECT SUCCESS

Describe the anticipated challenges that may be encountered in successfully completing the project or for institutionalizing the learning from the project�s goals

To determine the need for a teaching and learning center, via a survey, requires faculty and administrator participation. The timing and communication of the survey must be planned to solicit as much participation as possible. The University Faculty Development Committee recommended that the survey not be distributed last spring because of negative faculty attitudes over budgeting and other issues. Therefore, the survey will be distributed this fall and the results will be analyzed by the end of the calendar year.

PLANNED NEXT STEPS AND TIMELINE

In light of the project goals, current circumstances, institutional learning from this project, and anticipated barriers to success, list the next steps to be taken over the course of the next 12 - 24 months in order to complete or institutionalize the results of this action project. Provide a timeline for completing each next step

The second draft of the survey will be shared at the September meeting of the University Faculty Development Committee and the Special Assistant to the Provost, who oversees the work of the University Faculty Development Committee. It is anticipated that the survey will be distributed and the data reviewed by December, 2014.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, QUESTIONS, OR CONCERNS

Provide any additional information, inquires, or concerns that the institution wishes for reviewers to understand regarding this action project

None

Annual Update

The project has been completed.

A survey was developed by the Chair of the University Faculty Development Committee, who received feedback from the University Faculty Development Committee and the Special Assistant to the Provost, who oversees faculty development work. The survey was distributed on October 31, 2014 by email directly to full and half time faculty, academic administrators, and current adjunct faculty. Potential participants were reminded on November 7, 2014 to participate and the survey was open through November 14, 2014. Data reports were gathered on November 17, 2014 and shared with the University Faculty Development Committee and the Special Assistant to the Provost. Response rate was approximately 18%. Two-thirds of the respondents were full time, half time faculty or academic administrators. The other third were adjunct faculty.

The information collected from the survey has led to the success of this project by providing feedback to the key questions of whether a centralized teaching and learning center is needed and if so, how could the university shape this center to best serve faculty. The following bullet points provide data that the stakeholders were actively involved in this project and provided the necessary information needed to make an informed decision.

- *Eighty percent of respondents have attended the current May Institute sponsored by University Faculty Development and technology training presented by the Center for Academic Technology Solutions. These are both optional for faculty members, so the majority of people who responded seek out teaching and learning opportunities and are the stakeholders in the development of the Teaching and Learning Center.*

- *These stakeholders indicated that the top development activities faculty attend in their college or department are: 1) curriculum revision (68%); 2) technology training (66%); 3) program development (53%); 4) assessment training (52%) and 5) mentoring (52%).*

- *The top development activities that faculty attend off campus are:*

Almost 97% of faculty respondents attend conferences, while nearly 77% of them are presenters. 40% of faculty respondents have participated in either technology or pedagogical training

- *Results indicate that respondents consider the following items as the top three in importance to their professional development: 1) funding to attend or present at conferences (61%); 2) resources to support faculty scholarship/research (54%); and 3) teaching techniques for more effective learning (39%).*

- *Results indicate that respondents primarily use the following sources to learn new teaching, learning and assessment techniques: 1) publications in their discipline (24%); 2) conversations with faculty colleagues (27%); and 3) faculty development events (17%).*

- *Respondents agreed or strongly agreed that faculty development provided at the college level would allow each college to: 1) choose the topic that best fit their discipline (87%); 2) target resources to their specific needs (86%); and 3) have knowledge and access to experts in their field (84%).*

- *The major objective of this action project centered on whether there should be a centralized teaching and learning center. 82% of respondents indicated that they strongly agree or agree that faculty development provided through a teaching and learning center would centralize university support services. 79% of respondents thought it would reduce duplication of efforts, as well as maintain and support the center mission of the university as a teaching institution. Finally, 76% of respondents thought it would encourage interdisciplinary ventures and promote Lasallian education.*

- *Comments throughout the survey indicate strong support for a teaching and learning center, including such examples as 1)***collaboration** *("more collaboration and less territorial thinking", "university-wide sharing of resources for faculty development would help provide equal access and equity for department/colleges and reduce the silo effect that fosters misunderstanding and ill-*

will", "a center could improve consistency across programs and disciplines", encouraging interprofessional collaboration", a liberal arts university should be encouraging faculty to share ideas across disciplines"); 2) **resources** *("share best practices and to service as a resource for assessment practices", "resources to improve pedagogy", "new and resourceful ideas and technologies to promote learning efficiently and more completely"); 3)* **access to experts** *("best practices for student assessment and learning", "providing to access to expert colleagues across the campus", "referrals", "keep up to date and on the cutting edge using best practices in our classrooms") and 4)* **mentoring** *("resources to review syllabi for faculty", "renewal and innovation", "clearinghouse of ideas and possibilities that would provide opportunities for continual improvement, creativity, and innovation).*

Information from this survey, including what faculty consider to be important to their professional development, what university opportunities they have experienced, how they currently access new information about teaching and learning, and the many positive comments about the possibilities of a center, will help to shape the formation of a teaching and learning center.

UNSUCCESSFUL FACTORS
What aspects of this project would you categorize as less than successful?

We would have liked to have a higher return rate.