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Enhancing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at Georgia Southern University: the Impact of the Faculty Learning Community Program on Participating Faculty

During the past years, an increasing number of Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs) have developed throughout the U.S. In 2003, there were 308 FLCs at 132 institutions. In the fall of 2006, the Center for Excellence in Teaching (CET) at Georgia Southern University (GSU) has initiated a FLC Program and 87 faculty members formed twelve FLCs. Some goals of the program are building a university-wide community, emphasizing that teaching is serious intellectual work and encouraging scholarly teaching and the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL).

Evidence suggests that effective learning communities have important benefits for students and faculty. Thus, evaluating FLC Programs as a whole and the impact of FLCs on attitudes and beliefs about SoTL, in particular, becomes critical. To assess the effectiveness of the FLC program I developed a theoretical framework based on Kirkpatrick's four levels: reaction, learning, behavior and results. The model allows studying these levels in three different contexts: the individual, the group and the community consistent with principles of authentic assessment.

Individual end-year reports, interviews with facilitators and mid-year and end-year case reports serve as a data source for analysis. The mid-year case reports are already collected. Individual end year reports and end year case reports will be distributed to participants in April and individual interviews will start April 1. Data will be collected by May 15 and qualitative and quantitative data will be analyzed and summarized by July 1. Implications of the FLC program on SoTL will be discussed (including the analysis of specific questions on SoTL from the end year reports) and results written into a manuscript.

Objectives of the session

- a. Present the evaluation model for the FLC Program 2006-2007 at GSU
- b. Present the findings from the evaluation of the FLC Program
- c. Analyze the impact of FLC program on SoTL attitudes and beliefs among participating faculty

Attendees can expect to experience and learn about

1. Faculty Learning Communities and the FLC Program 2006-2007 at GSU
2. The evaluation framework used to assess the effectiveness of the FLC Program 2006-2007 at GSU
3. The impact of FLC participation on SoTL attitudes and beliefs among participating faculty a long way to come.

SoTL Commons Conference November 1-2, 2007
Georgia Southern University
Statesboro, GA