

Faculty Support/Development Final Report Outline

Charge: “Develop a set of recommendations for ways to support faculty success in first year courses.”

Recommendations

Please list your working group’s recommendations in prioritized order. State each recommendation succinctly in one to three sentences. For each recommendation provide a brief one paragraph description of the action your group is proposing.

1. Professional development and support for instructors

Pre-instruction: Compensate full, part-time, and grad student instructors to attend pre-semester orientations to teaching at UMaine held early enough to provide them time to learn about the University and prepare their courses with the services and systems available.

During instruction: Develop and support practices and protocols for formative peer support of first-year, large-enrollment classes designed to improve teaching rather than to inform tenure and promotion. Compensate all faculty teaching first-year, large-enrollment courses to participate in Communities of Practice/Faculty Learning Communities.

2. Sustained, structural support for efforts to improve teaching in large-enrollment, first year service courses

Commit resources so that faculty willing to convert first-year, large-enrollment courses to formats proven to be more effective for student learning can be assured that the resources they need will be available beyond the initial semester. This would include Maine Learning Assistants (MLAs) and TAs, Active Learning Classrooms (ACLs), instructional design support, communication and collaboration technologies specific to the demands of large classes, as well as assistance with the collection, analysis, and dissemination of learning data and related evidence. Beyond the first year courses, support for on and off-campus professional development for faculty focused specifically on teaching. For instance, schedule an event or regular time for all faculty to focused on professional development relating to teaching and learning. Support faculty travel and other methods for faculty to learn about teaching practices from other colleges and universities.

3. Increase TAs and MLAs for large enrollment classes and work with faculty to help make best use of them

Increase the number of MLAs and TAs in large enrollment first-year courses thereby reducing the student:teacher ratio and allowing for improved instructor-student and student-student communication. Provide support for training in instruction to all TAs and MLAs. In addition,

provide formal courses (and tuition support) and related support for all grad students to learn about pedagogy and assessment theories and practices. Assist and support faculty working with MLAs and TAs through the use of instructional designers, professional development opportunities, peer mentoring, and peer observations.

Background/Rationale (Limit 5 pages)

Please provide the background information needed to understand the rationale for your recommendations. In the charge to your working group you were provided a set of questions to consider as you completed your work. These questions can be used as a guide to this section of your report but you are not required to respond to each question.

Define terms:

High enrollment: many student distributed in few or many sections

Large enrollment: 50+ students in a course section

First Year Courses: 100 level courses with primarily first year students

Charge of the Faculty Support/Development Working Group:

1. Who are the faculty who teach first-year courses?
2. What can be done to help prepare faculty for teaching first-year courses?
3. What ongoing professional development can be made available for faculty who teach first-year courses?
4. What resources (i.e. technical, human) are needed to support teaching in first-year courses?

The faculty who teach high-enrollment first-year courses range from first-semester MA candidates to tenured faculty.

High-enrollment courses by instructor type (Fall 2015 - Spring 2018 combined)													
Courses	Total	Tenured faculty		Tenure-eligible faculty		Non-TTE regular		Non-TTE temporary		Other instructors		Graduate assistants	
		Sections	%	Sections	%	Sections	%	Sections	%	Sections	%	Sections	%
Low success rates*													
CHY 121	23	2	9%	0	0%	17	74%	4	17%	0	0%	0	0%
MAT 122	39	0	0%	0	0%	26	67%	13	33%	0	0%	0	0%

MAT 126	52	4	8%	2	4%	44	85%	1	2%	1	2%	0	0%
MAT 127	29	4	14%	2	7%	23	79%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
PSY 100	32	2	6%	9	28%	2	6%	19	59%	0	0%	0	0%
High success rates													
CMJ 103	124	0	0%	0	0%	5	4%	47	38%	1	1%	71	57%
ENG 101	227	3	1%	3	1%	11	5%	91	40%	1	0%	118	52%
HON 111	75	24	32%	5	7%	8	11%	32	43%	6	8%	0	0%
HON 112	66	18	27%	7	11%	7	11%	30	45%	4	6%	0	0%
MUL 101	12	12	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

**These data do not include graduate assistants involved in associated recitations or laboratory sections.*

Total numbers and percentages of the whole indicate the three largest categories are:

- Non-Tenure Track Eligible Regular
- Non-Tenure Track Eligible Temporary
- Graduate Assistants

For this reason, we propose that in addition to the professional development and material support for instruction available to tenured and tenure-track faculty on an ongoing basis, the **University also provides systemic and pedagogically targeted support for all instructors teaching high-enrollment first year courses, including grad student instructors, part-time instructors, and all non-tenured instructors.**

To do this, and given the population we need to serve, we recommend providing substantial professional development and support for instructors. Importantly, we recommend providing this before they teach UMaine classes as well as on an ongoing basis. Efforts provided prior to instruction would include dedicated time for instructors (new and returning) to get training about their course organization, the curriculum, available teaching technologies, and strategies. This teaching orientation would require compensation for all instructors (including graduate students), or modification of contractual start dates to require participation. In addition, we would need to schedule the training in concert with departmental and University wide orientations for new faculty.

Ongoing, coordinated support efforts for these instructors would insure that all are aware of and working towards the institutional values and goals of student success and retention in their course. In addition to coordinated workshops and training by CITL, the RiSE Center, The Rising Tide Center, Fogler Library, The Graduate School and others, we propose building a formal educational development program coordinate by CITL and other interested partners in the form of a Faculty Learning Community. This ongoing support will provide shared pedagogical, management and assessment strategies, incorporate teaching observations, video, and

reflections, and coordination of peer mentoring opportunities on working with technologies, classroom types, MLAs and other teaching variables.

The University needs additional measures of teaching effectiveness independent of the promotion, tenure or evaluation process to insure that faculty can develop and adopt new strategies. Practice and protocols for formative observations of teaching in first-year, large-enrollment classrooms, recitations and laboratory sections would become a normalized practice. These formative observations would then be integrated into the Faculty Learning Community, while recordings will generate a library of student-centered practices and practitioners on campus. These faculty also need financially supported opportunities to learn from education research on campus as well as from other colleges and universities.

To ensure that all instructors teaching first year large enrollment courses can take advantage of these resources and collaborate with one another, the University should schedule the large enrollment courses to ensure a shared block of time available to these faculty members. This shared time allocation could be later adopted campus-wide. Similarly, faculty large-enrollment first-year courses could benefit from course-release awards for pedagogical research and/or course development.

In the context of University's efforts to increase graduate enrollment, the University could address some of the needs for training TAs by funding PhD. candidates to serve as TAs prior to research funding and raise the prestige of TA awards (e.g. University funds teaching experience, grants fund research). [See Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate: <http://gallery.carnegiefoundation.org/cid/>]

In addition, to providing expanded professional development and support to faculty as well as compensating them for participating, the University needs to provide sustained, structural support for efforts to improve teaching in high-enrollment, first-year service courses as well as all other courses.

For instance, all instructors could take advantage of a standard, campus-wide reserved time for all faculty on campus to focus on professional development relating to teaching and learning. All faculty could also benefit from access to professional development resources focused on teaching that supported travel to conferences which had teaching-specific tracks.

Approaches to improving teaching that have a long history of research supporting them, including research and practice on the UMaine campus, demonstrate that engaging students in active learning via such strategies as flipped instruction, engaging undergraduates in research, project-based learning, as well as experiential and service-based learning results in positive teaching and learning outcomes. Two areas where the University has engaged in multi-year pilots, the Maine Learning Assistants (MLA) program and Active Learning Classrooms (ACL) provide good data on how to succeed. But they also demonstrate the needs to convert pilots into sustained practices with nuanced options (e.g. some portion of active learning classrooms would work well without much technology).

Specifically, converting the format of course from an under-performing format to an engaged, active format takes resources and work on the part of a faculty member. When those resources are available for a finite period (as is the case with MLAs) or on a semester-by-semester basis (as is the case with ALCs), faculty can be reticent to undertake the effort of changing their courses. Of course, making such resources available and highly effective on an ongoing basis will take coordination, training, management,

Other areas of structural support need to launch and sustain improvement to high-enrollment first-year courses include the University's ability to gather, analyze, and disseminate evidence (data) on learning and, most importantly, the impact on student success of variables such as MLAs, ACLs, pedagogical strategies, faculty support and preparation, faculty load, and more. Put briefly, the University now has admirable data about student backgrounds and academic preparation, but has little data on instructional practices or variables impacting teaching. Once gathered and prepared, students, faculty, academic advisors, departments, colleges, and the University can use such data to inform practices, approaches and behaviors.

Similarly, the University could modify approaches to such things as communication, collaboration, and scheduling tools, and information strategies specifically to support large-enrollment courses. For example:

1. Course-based email accounts and calendars to help faculty manage communication with 100+ students
2. 1-1 assistance planning and setting up Bb, clickers, etc.
3. Instructional Design work with faculty on courses
4. Services to support large group communication and collaboration
5. Focus on deliberate choices of platforms, publishers, and such so that faculty and students can focus on learning content and skills rather than mastering the nuances of multiple learning management systems, clicker platforms, scheduling platforms, etc.
6. Database of frequently asked questions with AI bots that filters and provides answers

Resource Information (optional)

Your charge did not include the development of an estimated budget needed to implement your recommendations. Nonetheless, if in the process of completing your work you gathered information about key resources needs (e.g., operating expenses, personnel, space, equipment, software), please include that information.

Personnel:

Full time educational development staff at CITL to aid with the pre-semester teaching orientations, FLC, teaching observation program, and additional supports described above for first year courses.

Full time coordinator for training and implementation of a campus wide sustainable MLA program.

Learning analytics coordinator for collecting, processing, and developing dynamic real-time data dashboards.