



Education
Advisory
Board

Community College Forum

Organizing **Faculty Development** at Community Colleges



Research Brief

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Community College Forum

Jennifer Hall
Research Associate

John Tannous
Research Manager

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	3
1) Executive Overview	4
Key Observations	4
2) Responsibility for Faculty Development	5
Offices	5
Staff	8
3) Available Opportunities.....	9
Required Professional Development	9
Other Professional Development	11
4) Costs and Funding.....	13
Departmental Funding.....	13
Grants and Benefits	14
5) Research Methodology	15
Project Challenge	15
Project Sources.....	15
Research Parameters	15

1) Executive Overview

Key Observations

Most institutions maintain an office (referred to in this report broadly as a teaching center) responsible for assisting faculty in developing their professional and instructional skills. These teaching centers do not provide funding for individual professional development but instead deliver group programming opportunities on campus. These offices attempt to provide a wide variety of professional development opportunities through seminars, lectures, and workshops. Generally, teaching center staff instruct these sessions or ask other staff members or faculty members to deliver these trainings. Very rarely, institutions invite external speakers to deliver talks or lead workshops.

The teaching centers of most profiled institutions range in staff size from one to five full-time employees. Larger centers are responsible for technology training and assistance (e.g., learning management system assistance) while smaller centers are responsible only for coordinating required pedagogical training (e.g., orientation, classroom management). In contrast, **Institution B** employs many more faculty development staff members through a networked system of faculty development units across the multi-campus institution. The six-campus institution maintains a professional development committee, a dedicated senior human resources staff position, a teaching center, and a faculty resource center at each campus. The college also benefits from resources provided through the state community college system, which provides additional professional development grants, workshops, and assistance. The college has an annual budget for professional development that is distributed to campus provosts, who may then distribute the funds as they choose.

Very few institutions maintain adjunct-specific opportunities; rather, faculty trainings and workshops are open to all faculty, including adjunct instructors, and institutions include adjuncts in all professional development trainings. Institutions increasingly offer weekend and evening training options to accommodate adjunct faculty schedules.

Two profiled institutions – Institution E and Institution B – require professional development beyond orientation and compliance trainings. These institutions require faculty to develop professional development plans that then guide their professional development trainings. Several institutions require faculty members to complete an online training course before teaching online.

Contacts prefer face-to-face delivery of professional development training, but agree that online trainings can reduce staff workload and save time for faculty members. Contacts believe that seminars and workshops with collaborative and social activities are most effective for content delivery. However, several institutions do contract with webinar delivery services or develop in-house webinars for common topics (e.g., sexual harassment refresher courses).

Please note that most center, program, and staff titles have been altered to protect institutional anonymity.

2) Responsibility for Faculty Development

Offices

Teaching Centers Provide Faculty Development with Human Resources Support

For community colleges, professional development refers almost exclusively to the development of teaching skills, since teaching is the primary mission of the institution. Although some institutions maintain leadership programs for department chairs, most other professional development focuses on teaching and instruction.

To that end, most profiled institutions maintain a teaching center dedicated to helping faculty improve their teaching. Although these centers have different titles, each center or unit works towards the same goal: supporting faculty members in developing excellent teaching skills.

At most institutions, the teaching center or unit primarily responsible for faculty development is distinct from the human resources division, though the staffs do collaborate to organize and present mandatory compliance trainings.



Distributed Faculty Development Responsibilities at Institution B

Institution B maintains a highly robust network of staff dedicated to professional development for faculty. The institution, which operates many campuses including a health sciences campus, benefits from several college-wide and campus-specific entities serving faculty development:

- An institution wide professional development committee composed of representatives from each campus meets regularly. These committee members determine professional development goals, suggest initiatives related to development, and communicate opportunities to their respective campuses.
- Within human resources, the position of Associate Director of Professional Development and Training is responsible for working with the faculty center to develop and promote professional development opportunities. The Associate Director also liaises with district and regional committees dedicated to professional development.
- The faculty center staff coordinate and host events to promote teaching excellence and development.
- The community college system also offers professional development opportunities such as grants, workshops, and guidance for campuses.

Teaching Centers Report to Either Human Resources or a Unit Responsible for Faculty or Students

The human resources department is generally responsible for delivering any mandated federal or state training. At smaller institutions with less robust faculty development offerings, the teaching center (which may be only one staff member) often reports to human resources.

Larger units that offer more robust faculty development opportunities are more likely to report to a unit with responsibility for faculty or student success. For example, the faculty center at **Institution E** reports to the Vice President for Student Development, and the faculty center at **Institution B** reports to the Associate Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer.

Contacts recommend considering center goals to determine reporting lines:

Courses Delivered by HR

- FERPA Training
- Sexual Harassment Training and Refreshers
- Discrimination and Harassment
- Code of Conduct

Benefits and Drawbacks of Center Reporting Lines

Reporting to Human Resources

- ✓ Requires minimal additional staffing
- ✓ Aligns professional development and required orientations and compliance training
- ✗ Instructional development not likely to become high priority of chief human resources officer
- ✗ Development trainings are not pedagogically focused

Reporting to Larger Division Responsible for Faculty or Students

- ✓ Demonstrates an institutional commitment to teaching and professional development
- ✓ Development trainings are pedagogically focused
- ✗ May require additional staff to meet needs beyond compliance training and orientation
- ✗ Unit leadership may not have capacity to oversee professional development



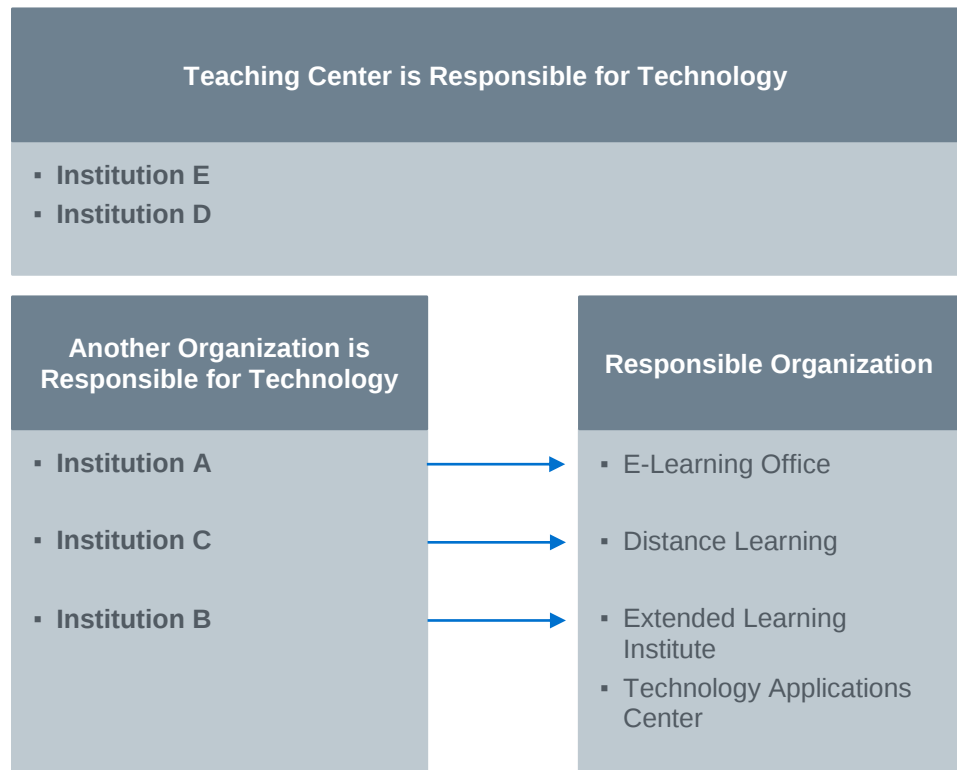
Staff Reductions Shift Reporting Lines at *Institution A*

Previously, the faculty center reported to the Vice President of Academics. However, budget reductions and reorganization required the unit to downsize to one full-time staff member. To simplify the delivery of professional development content, this staff member was reassigned to report to human resources. This transition was justified by the natural alignment of compliance training and professional development training.

Most Teaching Centers Do Not Train Faculty to Use Technology

Only two profiled institutions house technology training within their teaching center. At the profiled institutions, other organizations are responsible for technology training and consultations. Contacts at these institutions explain that while they will not teach a faculty member how to use the learning management system (LMS) they may advise on best practices for pedagogy in online learning. Similarly, they will not teach faculty to use PowerPoint, but may assist the faculty member in thinking about how to present information visually.

Responsibility for Technology Assistance



Discussions Reportedly Underway to Centralize Responsibilities from Campuses to Central Units or Institutions to District Offices

Contacts at multiple campuses and institutions report that responsibility for faculty and staff development is trending towards centralization into a single central unit or at the district level. Rather than administering faculty development from each institution, faculty development would be coordinated by a district staff for multiple institutions. **System F** already administers some faculty and staff development from the central office; contacts with the system report that the remaining responsibility will be soon coordinated at the district level to reduce redundancies and costs. Contacts explain that this consolidated system will require district staff to conduct trainings, workshops,

Professional Development in System F

System F operates a Human and Organization Development office. Staff members travel to each institution to conduct professional development trainings upon request. Currently, three campuses rely on this service more frequently than the **Institution E** campus, which maintains a staff dedicated to professional development.

and consultations at each individual campus through a combination of online trainings and campus visits.

Reactions to this trend are mixed; contacts believe that it will improve faculty development at institutions without robust structures in place, but will negatively affect institutions with strong existing faculty development.

Staff

Robust Staffing Allows Institutions to Mandate and Expand Professional Development

All contacts report that financial constraints and staffing size limit their ability to expand professional development programs and opportunities. In particular, reductions in staffing numbers may force institutions to dramatically scale back their programming. For example, budget reductions forced the teaching center at **Institution A** to dwindle from four full-time staff members (an executive director, a manager responsible for staff development, a manager responsible for faculty development, and a specialist) to two (an executive director and specialist). Following the executive director's departure, the center now consists of one staff member.

Unsurprisingly institutions with larger staffs are able to offer a wider variety of services. General trends aligned with staff size are shown below.

Comparison: Small Staff and Robust Staff

Large Staff	Small Staff
▪ Staff includes instructional technology and academic technology staff ▪ Staff maintain responsibility for technology-related training ▪ Institution requires some professional development beyond orientation and compliance issues	▪ Staff includes one or two generalists with responsibility for only professional development ▪ The department focuses on compliance and orientations ▪ There is no required professional development training

Professional Development Unit Staffing at Profiled Institutions

Staff sizes at Institution E and Institution D are bolstered by the responsibility for technical training. Centers with technical responsibility retain institutional technologists, instructional designers, or multimedia specialists.	Institution	Offices or Units with Faculty Development Responsibility	Number of Staff	Staff Titles
	Institution E	Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence	5	▪ Associate Vice President for Organizational Development ▪ Professional Development Officer (Staff) ▪ Instructional Technology Specialist I (Online Learning) ▪ Instructional Technology Specialist I ▪ Instructional Technology Specialist II (Online Learning)
	Institution A	Center for Academic Excellence	1	Specialist

Institution D	Center for Instructional Innovation	4	▪ Instructional Designer ▪ Multimedia Designer ▪ Coordinator ▪ Director
Institution C	Faculty Training and Development	1	▪ Director of Professional and Instructional Development
Institution B	Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence	10 (staff within the Center)	▪ Interim Coordinator ▪ Administrative Assistant ▪ Faculty Associate (3) ▪ Faculty Advocate (5)
	Center for Faculty Resources	Center sizes unknown	
	Staff within college HR		Associate Director Professional Development & Training

3) Available Opportunities

Required Professional Development

Professional Development Staff Host Required Orientations

All profiled institutions offer a faculty orientation. Institutions either require or strongly recommend that faculty attend these orientation sessions. However, institutions may pursue several approaches to orientation separately or in conjunction with another approach (e.g., both online and basic face-to-face).

Orientations are designed to introduce faculty to campus information and available resources. Orientations are generally co-sponsored by academic affairs and human resources.

Orientation Sessions

- Mandatory Sessions (e.g., sexual harassment)
- Navigating the College's Resources
- Teaching Support
- Information Technology
- Supporting Students

Types of Orientation Sessions

- **Mandatory Compliance Sessions:** Mandatory sessions cover topics such as sexual harassment or ADA compliance. Other mandatory sessions may provide employees with information about health insurance and benefits.
- **Navigating Resources:** Navigating resources sessions help faculty learn more about the support available, such as how to use the library, how to set up their computer, and how to access the learning management system.
- **Pedagogy and Teaching:** Topics may include classroom management, teaching with new technology, and managing workload.

Variant Approaches to Orientation Format

Online Sessions	▪ Adjunct faculty members at Institution C complete an online orientation that introduces them to the institution. This is supplemented by later face-to-face sessions. ▪ Institution A offers an online sexual harassment and FERPA training module.
Single Face-to-Face Session	▪ Basic face-to-face orientations consist of sessions led by human resources or teaching center staff members. ▪ Institution E offers a basic one-day orientation for new faculty.
Year-Long Program	▪ Institution B and Institution C require new teaching faculty to participate in year-long orientations that prioritizes exploration of multiple topics in an in-depth manner. At Institution B, new faculty meet once a month for professional development discussions. The meetings rotate between campuses.

Consider Requiring Certification for Online Instruction

At **Institution D**, faculty must enroll in an online teaching certificate program before they are able to teach an online course, and must complete a training on the learning management system, Instructure Canvas™, before using it in class. Faculty at **Institution E** must also complete an “orientation to online” session before teaching an online course.

Two Institutions Require Individual Professional Development Plans

Both **Institution E** and **Institution B** require faculty to meet annual professional development requirements. All newly hired **Institution B** faculty and all **Institution E** staff must develop a professional development plan.

Professional Development Plans



- **Skills to Develop:**
Faculty list the skills that they hope to develop during the following year, such as a **technical** skill, **classroom management** skills, or new **content knowledge** within their specialty.
- **Goals:**
Faculty select specific goals for pursuit, such as implementing a new **technology** or **pedagogy**, or improving **student learning** outcomes.
- **Education & Training:**
Faculty explain how they intend to reach their goals and gain their skills, which may include campus professional development trainings or further education.



Required Hours

8 Hours

All staff members at **Institution E** must complete 8 hours of professional development training each year.

Other
Professional
Development

Regularly Offer Optional Professional Development Seminars

All profiled institutions offer a variety of professional development sessions and seminars that help faculty develop their skills. These sessions are generally open to all faculty members, including adjunct faculty. Sessions generally focus on classroom and instruction skills. These sessions are held throughout the academic year and summer. Most contacts report that their teaching center offers around 50 trainings per year.

Institutions also offer annual or semi-annual events designed to focus on professional development. For example, **Institution D** hosts a Professional Development Week with workshops, seminars, and lectures led by faculty members and administrators. **Institution E** hosts a Professional Development Day, which involves seminars and trainings for both faculty and staff.

Most Popular Topics

- Pedagogy
- Time Management
- Classroom Management
- Collaborative and Active Learning
- Assessment

Types of Professional Development Training

	Seminars & Workshops	Seminars and workshops are the most common format for professional development training. Contacts believe that face-to-face training and discussion is important for “soft skill” topics such as pedagogy or time management.
	Lectures	More rarely, institutions may deliver content in the form of lectures without discussion. Contacts believe that lectures are most effective when led by a content expert such as a faculty or staff member in the field or external speaker.
	Webinars	Some institutions develop webinars for on-demand viewing, or contract with external companies to deliver webinars. Organizations like Starlink™ and the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development offer webinars for member institutions, which faculty can access independently.

Professional development sessions are most commonly led by teaching center staff. However, contacts believe this is not ideal; contacts suggest that as many sessions as possible should be led by content experts. In practice, this means that human resources staff lead compliance and legal trainings while faculty or staff members lead sessions within their field or research area.

Contacts agree that they would prefer to contract with visiting speakers or experts more regularly. However, contacts report that speaking fees, lodging, and travel costs limit their ability to regularly host external speakers.

Who Leads Professional Development Sessions?



Offer Training Weekends or Conferences for Faculty

Several profiled institutions offer annual training weekends or conferences that promote professional development for staff and faculty. Contacts explain that this is particularly important for adjunct faculty who may not be able to attend regularly scheduled faculty development events.

Several institutions also host annual convocations during which faculty members present on topics; many of these sessions include classroom management and instructional suggestions. Proposals for convocation sessions are submitted to the teaching center for approval.



Adjunct Conference at Institution A

Institution A hosts an annual Adjunct Conference. The event brings together all adjunct faculty for discussions and workshops. Sample sessions include Dynamic Presentation Skills, Legal Issues in Higher Education, and Dealing with Disruptive Students. This one-day event allows part-time faculty to network, learn from peers and experts, and develop their instruction and management skills. Last year over 400 adjuncts attended.



Pedagogy Conference at Institution B

The annual pedagogy conference offers faculty the opportunity to present topics related to their fields and classrooms; attending faculty select several breakout sessions and lectures to attend throughout the day. The two-day conference includes a keynote address by an external speaker addressing an important issue in higher education. The recipient of the annual Outstanding Teacher is also invited to address attendees. Last year over 750 faculty members attended the event, with over 100 proposals for breakout sessions submitted.

Contract with External Parties for Specialized Professional Development

Most institutions are unable to provide subject-area assistance for instructors in technical or specialized fields (e.g., allied health, workforce development) because most generalist teaching center staff lack relevant familiarity or funding to obtain external training. The relevant academic department bears responsibility for faculty certification or technical training.

For example, **Institution A** previously brought external specialists to train radiology technician faculty. Due to budget cuts in the teaching center, the center is no longer able to provide this type of training and the radiology technician training program is responsible for securing their own training.

The **Institution B** does provide an annual budget to each campus for professional development. At the medical campus, this budget may be used to fund professional development training with external partners, but the teaching center does not conduct any training or field-specific sessions.

4) Costs and Funding

Departmental Funding



Development Budget

\$500,000

Institution B allocates \$500,000 each year to professional development. Funding is allocated to each campus and to college-wide professional development initiatives.

Annual Budgets and Grants Fund Professional Development

Professional development activities and offices are funded primarily through annual budget allocations. However, some institutions rely on state or federal grants to support faculty professional development. For example Title III grants from the U.S. Department of Education help **Institution D** offer professional development designed to improve low-income student success. Similarly, **Institution C** receives funding through Title V funding, which helps institutions serve Hispanic populations, some of which is used to further professional development initiatives. Contacts strongly recommend developing an office or designating a staff person responsible for external grants and funding. External grant offices can help faculty identify and apply for funding that will support their development as instructors and academics.

Funding Professional Development Units



Annual Budgets

Annual budgets accounts for most of the institution's professional development budget. Professional development costs may be distributed through human resources or an academic administrative unit, depending on reporting lines.



Grants

Unlike annual budgets, not all institutions use grant funding for professional development purposes. However, two profiled institutions rely on grant funding to support professional development costs.



Collaborations

Teaching centers frequently collaborate with other departments such as human resources or student affairs; these collaborative partners often help fund professional development activities or events on campus.

Grants and Benefits

Academic Departments Fund Individual Faculty Development

Most institutions provide very little opportunity for faculty to pursue external professional development; contacts explain that conducting professional development in-house allows them to maintain low costs. Most institutions choose to invest in internal professional development that is applicable to a large section of faculty rather than providing smaller segments of the faculty with expensive external opportunities.

Instead, academic departments fund professional development for their faculty members. For example, a faculty member attending a professional conference would approach his or her department chair and inquire about available funds for travel and attendance. Most departments maintain small budgets for this type of professional development.

Most institutions do provide some form of tuition benefits for faculty members. Both **Institution D** and **Institution B** offer tuition benefits for faculty to complete courses related to their field.



Adjunct Grants at *Institution B*

Adjunct faculty at **Institution B** may apply for a \$1,500 grant to pursue a project related to teaching and their academic discipline. Adjuncts submit project proposals which are then reviewed by the selection committee. Twelve to 15 adjuncts receive the grant each year.

5) Research Methodology

Project Challenge

Leadership at a member institution approached the Forum with the following questions:

- Which office(s) is responsible for supporting and offering faculty development services (e.g., academic departments, human resources, center for teaching and learning)?
- What internal and external professional development opportunities are currently available to faculty?
- What internal and external professional development opportunities are available to adjunct faculty?
- How do institutions fund professional development activities?

Project Sources

The Forum consulted the following sources for this report:

- EAB's internal and online research libraries (eab.com)
- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (<http://nces.ed.gov>)

Research Parameters

The Forum interviewed administrators responsible for professional development at community colleges.

A Guide to Institutions Profiled in this Brief

Institution	Location	Approximate Institutional Enrollment	Classification
Institution A	Mountain West (City: Large)	36,000	Associate's--Public 4-year Primarily Associate's
Institution B	Mid-Atlantic (Suburb: Large)	52,000	Associate's--Public Suburban-serving Multicampus
Institution C	South (City: Large)	16,000	Associate's--Public Urban-serving Multicampus
Institution D	South (City: Large)	10,000	Associate's--Public Urban-serving Multicampus
Institution E	South (City: Small)	6,000	Associate's--Public Rural-serving Medium
System F	South	District Human and Organization Development Office	