

Online Course Improvement Program

*Improving the Online Teaching and
Learning Experience*



To: Shawna Arroyo, Manager Student Relations
From: Dr. Susan Bussmann, Instructional Innovation and Quality Unit, OCIP Director
Sandra Johnson, Instructional Innovation and Quality Unit, OCIP Coordinator
Subject: OCIP Year 4 Executive Summary
Date: August 21, 2013

The Online Course Improvement Program (OCIP) started in 2009 as a partnership between The Associated Students of New Mexico State University/Student Technology Advisory Committee (ASNMSU/STAC) and the College of Extended Learning (CEL). With the completion of OCIP's fourth year (Y4), the program has made progress in meeting its overall goal of supporting improvement in the quality of blended and online courses.

The purpose of this report is to provide the Student Technology Advisory Committee an update on the impact and progress of OCIP Both quantitative (data tracking) and qualitative measures (focus groups, surveys, and communications) inform the results of this report. Three major themes to emerge from the data are as follows: 1) OCIP is helping to address a faculty professional development need; 2) The One Year Plus Fellowship Program (1Yr+) is helping faculty improve the quality of their courses and teaching in all contexts; 3) Revised and improved blended/online courses are having a positive impact on students and their learning.

OCIP hosted 45 events from September 1, 2012 through May 30, 2013. Thirteen events were hosted in conjunction with the Teaching Academy such as Let's Talk Online Teaching and guest speakers. Eight events were hosted in partnership with the Canvas Support team. Forty-two of the events directly supported Quality Matters (QM) Standards. OCIP has organized the professional development workshops and presentations as well as the online professional development training course thematically around the eight research-based Quality Matters Rubric and Standards to ensure quality in blended/online course design.

For the One-Year-Plus Fellowship (1Yr+) there have been participants from all the six academic colleges. All levels of faculty (Prof., Assoc. Prof., Assist. Prof, etc.) attended OCIP professional development. This data indicates OCIP is of value to a wide audience of faculty members teaching online and blended courses.

For OCIP's 1Yr+, a more in-depth 16-month professional development commitment, 28 qualified applicants applied as compared to 22 qualified applicants for Y4. Sixteen main and six branch campus faculty were selected to participate in Cohort 4. Two applicants dropped the program within the first two months. Thirteen applicants completed the program in May, 2013 from Cohort 4. Out of a total of 64 1Yr+ Fellows, 42 (66%) have completed the program, 11 (17%) participants have partially complete the program and 11 (17%) participants have dropped out due to being over committed, health problems, or family emergencies.

As part of their commitment to the program, the 1 Yr+ Fellows are now giving back to the faculty community through peer mentoring and professional development. Their activities help meet the program goals of fostering peer interaction encouraging best practices in online learning and fostering a culture of quality for online courses.

On average, an estimated 1,085 students take the 13 revised 1Yr+(3) blended/online courses, which depict an increase in student impact from Y3 with an estimated 660 students. This is an increase in student impact of 17%. Feedback from the 1Yr+ Fellows indicates they are applying what they've learned to their other blended/online courses. When the numbers of students taking other blended/online courses taught by the 1Yr+ Fellow cohorts to date are factored in, the number of students taking improved courses increases to approximately 2,585.

Focus Areas for OCIP Y4

- Continued use of Canvas and the power of the learning management system for its ease of use, navigation and ability to include multimedia tools including video and podcasting.
- Improved communication with the 1Yr+ Fellows where we will continue to hold the orientation session, mid-year focus group, recognition breakfast, and follow-up sessions.
- Leverage the expertise of the 1Yr+ Fellows to build a peer-to-peer network of mentors for course reviews using the Quality Matters Rubric.
- Develop an internal framework to recognize a quality course.
- Support faculty teaching blended and online courses by providing a Summer Technology Camp.

Funding for Fiscal 2014

The long-term goal is to grow OCIP and the 1Yr+ Fellowship Program. With the securing of \$225K in Course Delivery Fees (CDF) for FY 2014, per the Deans and University Budget Committee recommendations, some progress has been made to secure stable and adequate funding for OCIP. However, securing CDF funding will need to be done annually for the foreseeable future. STAC support played an important role in supporting our unit's efforts to secure CDF funding support from the Deans and the UBD. Since STAC continues to co-fund the program, request for support will be submitted each year since a multi-year OCIP funding commitment cannot be supported by STAC.

Our goal is to make progress in securing adequate and stable resources for faculty professional development under the leadership of the Provost, Dr. Dan Howard. Ensuring quality for all courses regardless of method of delivery is the primary mission of the Instructional Innovation and Quality unit, Teaching Academy, and OCIP/1Yr+ Fellowship.

Sampling of 1Yr+ Fellows Feedback

How has your thinking about teaching changed?

- I think the greatest improvement in my online teaching was that OCIP gave me a professional, tested and reviewed framework, or structure, to build my course around. It also gave me guidelines, such as designing assignments and assessments around the learning objectives, offering multiple opportunities for learning the specific, measurable skills and learning tools to keep students engaged and active learners.
- **How has program changed your pedagogy?**
 - I feel more confident in my face-to-face teaching techniques for keeping students engaged and active in their learning; online is inherently more of a challenge, but I'm working on it, and having a program like OCIP behind me is a great professional resource!

How have you reduced the cost of course materials?

- I still use my textbook but am now providing all my resources online. Students no longer have to purchase extra components outside of the text.
- I am having students purchase a smaller text for concerning writing for less money and using online websites as part of my content for reading articles and literature.

Sampling of Student Course Evaluation Feedback

- I liked that we got to practice communicating professionally with our peers and I got to prepare for the work environment.

How clear were the course requirements in terms of what you were expected to learn in the course?

- It was easily accessible. I was able to maneuver through it with no problems. It was easy to find the assignments and what was required each week.

Availability of the instructor

- My professor gave very comprehensive feedback that included follow--up questions. This contributed greatly to my comprehension of the course material.

Would you recommend this course to others? 83% responded "Yes".

- I did enjoy the structure the class had online.