



Program Review Response  
2018-2019

In Spring 2019, the Teaching and Learning Forum (TLF) participated in its first program review since its creation in 1992. The primary purpose of the review was to identify actionable ideas and opportunities for continuous improvement within the contexts of 1) programs and services; 2) resource allocation and infrastructure, and 3) organizational structure. The impetus for this review was three-fold. First, institutional growth and disciplinary changes have led to increased expectations for faculty development, faculty development research, and online course offerings, which have dramatically changed the face of teaching and learning. Yet, within the past 27 years, there have been no changes in the TLF organizational structure, even with increasing demands from growing numbers of faculty, especially adjunct faculty. Second, faculty/professional development continues to grow and develop as a discipline and as such, the TLF seeks to explore possible avenues for improvement in order to meet the professional development needs of faculty in the coming years. Finally, the TLF has never engaged in a strategic planning process. Thus, this review provided an avenue by which to gain insights and directions for more mindful and deliberate decision-making in our strategic planning process.

In light of these purposes, the review team addressed the following guiding questions:

1. In light of our mission, what are the TLF's strengths? Where are there opportunities for improvement? What specific opportunities and challenges should the TLF be aware of?
2. How well do TLF resources, infrastructure and organizational structure support its work? What resources does the TLF need to fulfill its mission?
3. How well aligned are the TLF's collaborative relationships with its mission? What relationships need to be strengthened, reassessed or clarified in order to better meet faculty development needs?
4. How well does the TLF provide meaningful evidence of the impact of its work? What recommendations for improvement would you suggest?
5. How does the TLF compare to similar units at peer institutions in terms of resources, infrastructure and organizational structure? What recommendations do you have for improvements to the current structure or a restructure of the TLF?
6. Given the mission and vision for the university and the TLF, what should be the top priorities/areas of focus for the TLF in the next 5 years? In the next 10 years?

An external review team consisting of Susan Shadle (Chair), Boise State University; Jason Pickevance, Salt Lake Community College; Adam Johnston, Weber State University; Christy Call, Weber State University; and Ty Naylor, Weber State University; visited WSU and met with approximately 55 campus personnel (considered to be stakeholders in the TLF) on February 25th and 26th, 2019 to review the TLF.

## Strengths

The TLF appreciates the strengths that were identified by the Review Team. The Review Team noted the strengths within the three domains identified in the ACE/POD Teaching and Learning Center Matrix<sup>1</sup>. Each domain is described using the language from the document followed by language from the Review Team in (parentheses):

### Organizational Structure

- Leadership (Effective Director)  
It was validating to receive feedback about the strength of the director and the staff. The director has made numerous efforts (such as attending faculty development trainings and conferences) to become more well-versed in the discipline of educational development in order to provide effective growth experiences for faculty. As a result of those efforts, she has redesigned existing events and introduced new programs that align with national trends and best practices for educational development.
- Staff Expertise & Preparation (Dedicated Staff)  
The TLF staff is a dedicated group of people who work together to meet the needs of the campus community. They are invaluable in planning major events and running the day-to-day operations of the office. Recognition of these efforts is appreciated.
- Institutional Placement (Supportive Administration & Faculty Governance Structures)  
Administrative support through the Provost's Office has enhanced the ability of the TLF to be more responsive to faculty needs and requests. Having an associate provost whose main focus is on faculty development has been extremely valuable in moving forward the work of the TLF as well. Additionally, we appreciate the support of Faculty Senate and the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee (TLA) as we strive to provide meaningful and effective educational development experiences for our faculty.
- Collaborations (Campus Connections and Relationships)  
We also value the collaborations we have been able to cultivate with other campus entities. These collaborations have allowed us to share resources as we strive to provide meaningful faculty development opportunities.

### Resource Allocation and Infrastructure

- No Strengths Listed  
Resource allocation and infrastructure is an overarching domain of practice that refers to the extent "to which an institution funds and locates teaching development, and the ways in which a center for teaching and learning designs programming for the campus" as a means of determining its centrality. It encompasses the sub-domains of budget, location & space, staffing, online resources and communication. Sadly, there were no strengths that fell within this domain.

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<sup>1</sup> American Council on Education (ACE) & the Professional Organization Developers Network (POD) (2018). *A Center for Teaching and Learning Matrix*. ACE & POD.

## Programs and Services

- Engaging and Effective Events

We pride ourselves on what we perceive as our signature events, namely the New Faculty Retreat, the Adjunct Retreat, and book groups. When taken as a whole, these events involve a good portion of the WSU community and provide opportunities to address innovative teaching and learning issues.

- Programs

We were pleased to see that Communities of Practice and the SOTL Scholars program were identified as programmatic strengths as well. We would like to expand these programs to reach larger, more diverse audiences.

## Challenges and Areas for Improvement

The review team also identified various challenges and areas for improvement. These suggestions follow the same format as above with each area described using the language from the ACE/POD Matrix followed by language from the Review Team in (parentheses). Challenges and areas for improvement are not mutually exclusive, as evidenced by them being listed in multiple areas based on the detailed feedback associated with the areas of the matrix.

## Organizational Structure

- Mission, Vision, and Goals (There is a need for clarity about TLF's mission and focus).

The mission and vision statements were created three years ago by the TLA committee, yet have not been revisited or publicized in any systematic way following their creation. The mission and vision were posted on the TLF website, but no further communication regarding the statements were publicized beyond that. It may be useful to revisit the mission and vision statements in an effort to strengthen their alignment with other campus priorities.

- Institutional Placement (The TLF structure is confusing).

We agree with the confusing nature of the TLF structure, although we were surprised that many of our academic deans were not aware of the difference. We too, are concerned about the ambiguity that could result because of unclear and/or competing priorities between the TLF and the TLA Committee.

## Resource Allocation and Infrastructure

- Staffing (There are many needs, but limited TLF capacity).

Of concern with staffing is the notion that the TLF is already being asked to do more than it can handle given its structure and available personnel. We feel the effects of limited staffing almost on a daily basis. Many stakeholders acknowledged that the TLF is stretched to do what is already on its plate. Either the TLF needs to cut back on its offerings or we need to explore strategies to build capacity so that the TLF can be more responsive to the developmental needs of faculty.

- Communication & Reputation (The TLF communication strategy is not as effective as it could be).

We also agree with the challenges we face with communication. We plan to work together as a TLF staff to address this problem and improve our overall marketing initiatives and individual event advertising efforts.

#### Programs and Services

- Scope (There are many needs, but limited TLF capacity).

We are very concerned about the scope of programs and services offered to our faculty. Of utmost concern to the director was that only one stakeholder "group" mentioned the notion of professional development around issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. In the past, the TLF has assisted with campus efforts to provide development opportunities around this initiative, yet we believe that the TLF should take a more central role in addressing these issues as they present themselves in academic settings, especially given the institution's focus on student and faculty success.

- Reach (Breadth of faculty involvement is limited).

We also agree with the challenges of involving faculty at all levels of their academic careers. We encourage all faculty to participate in our programs and services, yet we seem to attract the same faculty at many of our events. Strategizing about how to involve a wider variety of faculty members in our programming efforts may prove useful as we move forward with strategic planning efforts.

Pursuant to the recommendations provided by the Review Team, we have developed a program review action plan to address their suggestions as outlined in the table below. We appreciate that those interviewed expressed support for the TLF's ability to "elevate conversations about pedagogy", and we would like to continue along that track.