

**Learner-Centered Education Program  
Arizona Board of Regents  
Attachment A  
INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FORM**

Proposal Title: Tri-University Collaboration on Learner-Centered Practice: Creating Learning Communities Among Faculty and Students

Institution: The University of Arizona Dept./Unit: University Teaching Center

Multi-Campus/University Projects  
(check other campuses or universities participating) List other participating agencies:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ASU Main	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UA	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ASU East	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UA South	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ASU West	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NAU	_____

*Briefly describe the program and the development plan.*  
The intent of the project is two-fold: (1) to develop a critical mass of faculty who will engage collaboratively in the study of learner-centered instructional practice, apply what they learn, assess the impact of what they learn, and share their learning with other faculty and graduate teaching assistants, and (2) for those faculty to develop and implement an LCE advocacy plan for each of their campuses that will ultimately bring faculty and institutional culture to actively embrace more learner-centered approaches to college education.

**Funding Category**  
Indicate a primary (P) and, if applicable, secondary (S) funding category:

Professional Development <u>P</u>	Program or Course Development/Modification <u>S</u>
LCE Research _____	Improved Assessment of Learning Outcomes <u>S</u>

**Authorizations**  
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**Official Authorized to Enter into Contractual Obligations**

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## **Tri-University Collaboration on Learner-Centered Practice: Creating Learning Communities Among Faculty and Students**

### **Abstract**

The primary goal of this project is for the three state universities to collaborate in a learning community comprised of ten faculty and one graduate student from each institution, to accomplish three major objectives: 1) exploring, identifying and implementing learner-centered teaching strategies in a minimum of 60 classes in the Spring 2006 and Fall 2006; 2) applying existing classroom assessment models and techniques to determine which instructional approaches best produce the desired learning outcomes; and 3) developing a faculty development process model through which the continued exploration and implementation of learner-centered instructional practice can expand to become commonplace in higher educational environments in which the lecture method still dominates. Secondary goals include:

- increasing the use of learner-centered instructional strategies and understanding how learner-centered instructional strategies enhance student learning;
- increasing faculty use of classroom assessment techniques to determine the effectiveness of their instructional practices;
- stimulating dialogue on each campus and among campuses to gain insight about what factors would increase both the faculty's implementation of learner-centered instructional strategies and the use of classroom assessment strategies in the tri-university system.

This project builds on two ABOR LCE grants, the first awarded to the three universities in Spring 2002, the second awarded in Spring 2004. These grants provided opportunities to demonstrate that the faculty initially involved in learning and implementing learner-centered instructional and assessment strategies experimented enthusiastically with learner-centered strategies, collaborated effectively at all three state universities, saw positive results in their students, and have continued to embrace LCE principles in their teaching, as reported to ABOR, by invitation, at the September 25, 2003, board meeting.

The intent of the current project is to continue in developing a critical mass of faculty at the three institutions who will engage in the study of learner-centered instructional practice, apply what they learn, assess the impact of what they learn, and share their learning with other faculty through workshops, mentoring, web-based materials, at their own and each other's universities. They will also develop a plan to promote learner-centered instructional philosophies and practices in their own departments and colleges. This will ensure broader institutional commitment to and wider adoption of learner-centered instruction and assessment strategies within our state university system.

We request funding of \$100,000 for the third phase of this project in recognition that transformative change in long-standing instructional practice is a major challenge that cannot be accomplished in a semester or two.

### **Identification of Need**

Patricia Cross and Thomas Angelo (1993) state in Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers that, "Faculty have an exceptional opportunity to use their classrooms as laboratories for the study of learning and through such study to develop a better understanding of the learning process and the impact of their teaching upon it." (p. xiv) LCE, characterized by direct involvement of learners, deeper understanding of content, and retention of skills readily transferable to life and work, provides a rich environment for students and teachers to engage in continuous monitoring of student learning. The recent national LCE initiative has certainly engaged some faculty, administrators and academic professionals in dialogue and institutional visioning. However, a coherent approach for wider adoption, implementation, and assessment of learner-centered instructional practices has not been undertaken within the university system in Arizona. A multi-university learning community committed to studying, implementing, assessing, and sharing the impact of learner-centered instructional strategies on student learning will stimulate wider commitment to LCE in the same way that faculty "early adopters" help to inspire other faculty in the use of technology as learner-centered instructional tools.

Reviews of faculty development endeavors nationally conclude that 1) faculty development efforts are the most effective in resulting in changes in instructional practice if they are led by faculty, and 2) the most beneficial aspect of faculty development experiences are the interactions and collaboration with other faculty. Whereas research in the higher education faculty culture is often collaborative, teaching has traditionally been an insular and isolated experience. This explains faculty members' enthusiasm about faculty development programs that provide a community of scholars or a collaborative approach in which common instructional issues and challenges can be discussed freely and where shared insights are accepted and appreciated. Therefore, supporting faculty in a collaborative learning community in which they will develop and implement specific working models of learner-centered teaching practice and assessment is critical. Additionally, testing a faculty

development process for expanding the implementation of LCE in post-secondary classrooms is a viable project to operationalize the vision of a learner-centered state university system.

Currently, the three state universities target faculty development efforts through the University Teaching Center at The University of Arizona, the Center for Learning and Teaching Excellence at Arizona State University, and the Faculty Development Program at Northern Arizona University. The only formalized collaboration between these units is our collaborative work on the previous tri-university ABOR LCE Retreats. Faculty members, for the most part, have been “out there” engaging in isolated and individualized efforts. Moreover, although many current faculty development efforts focus on improving learning, most individual faculty, following the lead of higher education itself, do not systematically assess the impact of these efforts on learning and learners. Thus, in addition to teaching strategies, this project aims to provide faculty with assessment techniques and tools that will provide insights into and evidence of enhanced student learning. In Cross and Angelo’s (1993) experience, implementing assessment techniques “makes faculty more systematic and sensitive observers of learning in the classroom, and the opportunity to discuss their observations with colleagues leads naturally to questions and tentative theories about teaching and learning.” (p. xiii-xiv)

Forty-five faculty from the three state universities participated in the first round of our project and forty participated in the second retreat. We seek funding for the third round, in which we will bring thirty new faculty together who have not attended the Retreats in the past (plus three graduate teaching assistants, teaching center/faculty development program faculty, and academic professionals from each of the universities). UA and ASU will include participants from Sierra Vista and ASU East and West in their groups of participants. Each campus will also include undergraduate students in the on-campus activities to the extent possible; undergraduates will participate indirectly by providing feedback in classes. Project participants will work together to formalize the elements of LCE practice and assessment and to refine the faculty development model explored in the first two rounds to provide a process for infusing instructional practices at their respective universities. Additionally, more specific strategies will be identified to use in teaching large classes and small classes. This was repeatedly requested from faculty in the evaluation of the second retreat.

The project will provide all participants with materials and resources about learner-centered instructional practice (what it is, how to implement it through innovation and collaboration) and classroom assessment (how to get started using it, and the insights it provides in understanding the complexities of learning). Given typical faculty teaching loads, we estimate that approximately 60 new classes and 3000 students will participate in learner-centered classroom environments at the three institutions in 2005-06 as a result of a third round of the project. These classes and students will be in addition to those taught by faculty who participated in the first and second round of the project (for estimation purposes we used a class size of 50, but we speculate the number of students will be much larger as we include faculty who teach large general education courses).

This project supports the Learner-Centered Education Initiative as a professional development opportunity designed to prepare faculty to implement principles and strategies of LCE practice and assess them in learning environments with specified learning outcomes. The first and second round provided some specific models for instruction and assessment that any interested faculty member can tailor to their own learning environment. Links between various instructional methods and the learning outcomes they promote will continue to be clearly identified and actively distributed during the third round. In addition, as a result of their learning faculty are poised to share their insights and findings with other faculty as well as instructional units within their own university and across the state university system.

### **Technical Needs**

A database will be further developed to continue capturing findings. A longitudinal process for collecting data about LCE at our universities was created from the two previous ABOR LCE Retreats. Faculty will be supported by the Learning Technologies Center at the University of Arizona in the creation and/or use of instructional technology tools as needed for the learner-centered strategies they choose. Specific materials will be provided to all participants including Cross and Angelo’s Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers (1993), Huba and Freed’s Learner-Centered Assessment on College Campuses: Shifting the Focus from Teaching to Learning (2000), and Svinicki’s Teaching and Learning On the Edge of the Millennium: Building On What We Have Learned: New Directions for Teaching and Learning (2000). If needed, an in-house assessment consultant will be used in designing aspects of assessment of the overall project.

## Work Plan

<b>Date</b>	<b>Project Goal</b>	<b>Objectives</b>
April 2005	Selection	Identify and select 10 new faculty from each university.
May/June/July 2005	Planning	Faculty development units at the participant universities work with each other and with second round participant faculty to develop the content and process for the third round.
August 2005	Initial learning community meeting	<p>Learning community convenes in Flagstaff for a two-day meeting in August to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learn LCE strategies, and then identify specific strategies that participants will explore and implement in their Spring 2006 classes.</li> <li>2. Explore and select appropriate assessment models for measuring student outcomes.</li> </ol>
August–December 2005	Preparation Sharing	<p>Participants refine their work plan and prepare materials for use when classes begin in January 2006. Use technology (active web site, possibly teleconferencing) to support inter-university collaboration such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sharing reports of participants' experiences are making.</li> <li>2. Identifying challenges and possible solutions.</li> <li>3. Providing peer support.</li> </ol>
November – December 2005	End of Fall Semester Work Report Meeting	Convene in Tucson (two days) to report on the results of fall semester work and share and critique plans for implementation of learner-centered principles in Spring 2006 classes.
August 2005 – May 2006	Individual Institution Activities	<p>Participants at each university:</p> <p>Attend and lead regularly scheduled 1 ½ hour meetings to discuss progress and problems. Invite other interested faculty and graduate students to attend.</p>
May 2006	Dissemination	<p>Participants from both rounds meet in Tempe (one day) to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Present and discuss results of following LCE principles in their classes.</li> <li>2. Plan an open forum to be hosted at each campus at which they will discuss what they have learned with interested faculty, graduate students, and administrators.</li> <li>3. Develop a working model for advocacy of LCE on each campus.</li> </ol> <p>Participants will be encouraged to publish their experiences and outcomes in appropriate discipline specific journals.</p>

**Key Personnel**

Terri Riffe, PhD, Director, University Teaching Center, The University of Arizona

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Other key staff members will be drawn from each unit listed above. Faculty and graduate teaching assistants will be selected by each university once the project is funded. A diverse representation of disciplines will be targeted in order to facilitate the broadest campus impact on students and to initiate dialogue across many departments and colleges.

**Expected Results and Outcomes**

At the individual faculty level, the expected outcomes of this collaboration are (1) making more faculty aware of LCE strategies and techniques, (2) active experimentation with and implementation of learner-centered education in classes, and (3) knowledge and implementation of LCE assessment practices. Formative and summative evaluation of the program will be conducted in three areas: institutional outcomes; impact on faculty teaching practices, and impact on student satisfaction and achievement.

Emphasis will be placed on comparing faculty teaching practices before, during, and after participation in the formal program. One particular question to be addressed involves polling past and current participants in order to understand what impediments may work against long term adoption of LCE teaching practices in order to find institutional strategies to foster long term change. A qualitative study will examine formative assessment activities of individual faculty as they engage in the cycle of planning, implementing, revising, and documenting what they learn from this process about their own teaching as it relates to student learning outcomes.

For students, special items related to LCE practices will be incorporated in the standard end of term teacher-course evaluation process. These data will help gauge impact on students as well as provide participating faculty with data about the impact of LCE in their courses.

Thus the overall evaluation strategy of the program will be two tiered: a strong emphasis on studying outcomes and at the same time, systematic monitoring of the program to provide on going feedback to the program staff to guide their work with faculty.

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Arizona Board of Regents  
Attachment A

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FORM

Tri-University Collaboration on Learner-Centered Practices: Creating Learning Communities Among Faculty and Students

Proposal Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Institution: Arizona State University Dept./Unit: CLTE

Multi-Campus/University Projects

(check other campuses or universities participating)

List other participating agencies:

- ASU Main       UA
- ASU East       UA South
- ASU West       NAU

Briefly describe the program and the development plan.

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Funding Category

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Professional Development P      Program or Course Development/Modification S  
LCE Research \_\_\_\_\_      Improved Assessment of Learning Outcomes S

Authorizations

Project Director

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Learner-Centered Education Program Arizona Board of Regents Attachment A INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FORM

Tri-University Collaboration on Learner-Centered Practice: Creating Learning Proposal Title: Communities Among Faculty and Students Institution: Northern Arizona University Dept./Unit: Faculty Development Program

Multi-Campus/University Projects

(check other campuses or universities List other participating agencies: participating)

X ASU Main X UA  
X ASU East X UA South  
X ASU West X NAU

Briefly describe the program and the development plan.

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Professional P Program or Course Development/Modification S  
Development  
LCE Research Improved Assessment of Learning Outcomes S

Authorizations

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