Instructional Development and Instructional Research at UNLV

Executive Summary

April, 2014

Research

From August 15, 2013 to March 15, 2014, Mary-Ann Winkelmes consulted campus experts and providers of instructional development, deans and their executive committees, current members of UNLV’s teaching community and additional sources of information to determine the most salient strengths and opportunities for instructional development and instructional research at UNLV. Sources consulted include the following.

1. Transparency in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (data on students’ learning at UNLV and other US colleges, universities)
2. Instructional Development and Research online survey (287 respondents from UNLV’s teaching community, March 4-12, 2014)
3. Conversations with deans and executive committees in our colleges and schools (November 2013 – April 2014)
4. Final meetings of UNLV’s Consortium for Faculty Professional Opportunities members (May 22, 2013; June 12, 2013)
5. Instructional Research and Development Working Group planning discussions (February 2014 - ongoing)
6. 2008 program review report from UNLV’s former Teaching and Learning Center
7. National models, best practices at Tier I and other leading teaching/learning centers

Findings

The most significant needs/opportunities that emerge from the sources cited above are the following.

- visible, convincing, sustained investment in teaching/learning excellence, instructional development and instructional research, as an essential and integral piece of our Tier I effort
- a centralized location (website) where all of UNLV’s instructional development and instructional research resources are easily accessible to all members of our teaching community, regardless of their rank
- research findings about UNLV students’ learning, and implications for teaching research findings about UNLV students’ learning, and implications for teaching practices – particularly around University Undergraduate Learning Outcomes
- discipline-specific teaching advice from experienced, respected instructors who know the recent research on learning and teaching in the disciplines
- research groups for members of UNLV’s teaching community that focus on students’ learning in the disciplines (to pursue external grants and produce jointly-authored publications)
Existing instructional development providers and services on campus (including workshops, institutes, orientations) will enhance their impact and credibility by involving faculty more directly in collaborative programs that can measurably increase students’ success. Those programs will be available to all members of UNLV’s teaching community.

Mission
As a coordinated whole, UNLV’s instructional development and research services promote UNLV students’ academic success by advancing research-based teaching and learning practices across the campus and online. These services support the professional development of all members of the UNLV teaching community through a program of research, consultation, events and resources.

Values
Instructional development and research services are:

- **research-based**
  We promote teaching practices that are grounded in research on students’ learning in higher education contexts. In addition, we conduct research on our own students’ learning in order to identify and encourage teaching methods that enhance our students’ academic success.

- **responsive to the needs of UNLV’s teaching community**
  A wide variety of faculty and academic professionals teach and advise UNLV students. Our services and resources are designed to support their work, and rely on their feedback to stay current and relevant.

- **supportive of teaching and learning in a Public, Minority-Serving, Tier I University context**
  We support UNLV’s teaching community in their work to offer an educational experience that promotes values that are essential to the future of US higher education:
  
  - teaching and learning that is accessible and responsive to an increasingly diverse, high-achieving group of students;
  - opportunities for students to engage in learning from leading-edge (research) innovations at their university;
  - learning experiences that enhance not only our students’ personal success but also the economic and societal vitality of the region;
  - knowledge and skills recognized by employers and national organizations and enumerated by our University Undergraduate Learning Outcomes. (2013 Employer Priorities report, Lumina Foundation Degree Qualification Profile, Association of American Colleges and Universities Essential Learning Outcomes)
  - leading-edge innovations in the ways we research and implement teaching/learning practices that promote innovative thinking in academic disciplines.
Providers
Appointed by the provost, the Instructional Development and Research Working Group comprises leading campus experts and providers of resources and services. The group convenes monthly (beginning February, 2014) to coordinate basic services and high-impact, large research and development initiatives.

Instructional Development and Research Working Group
The group convenes monthly (beginning in February, 2014) to coordinate basic services and high-impact, large research and development initiatives.

Jennifer Fabbi, Associate Dean, Library
Dan Gianoutsos, Assistant Dean, Academic Success Center
Sunny Gittens, Executive Director, Office of Civic Engagement & Diversity
Chris Heavey, Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Director, General Education
Gayle Juneau-Butler, Executive Director, Academic Advising
Mark Kasselhut, Office of Information Technology
Anne Mendenhall, Assistant Director, Online Education
Bill Speer, Director, Mathematics Learning Center and Professor, College of Education
Kendall Hartley, Associate Dean, Graduate College and Associate Professor, College of Education
Paul Werth, Chair, Faculty Senate and Professor of History.

Teaching Academy Faculty Fellows will be invited to coordinate discipline-based instructional development and research activities.

Faculty Mentoring Fellows will be invited to coordinate mentoring groups and other mentoring activities.
Comprehensive directories of instructional development and research services to be posted on the Executive Vice President and Provost’s website include the following main headings (bulletied), each with multiple subheadings:

**On Campus Services for Teaching Development and Instructional Research**
- Academic Advising Resources
- Academic Career Development Resources (and Faculty Development Leave)
- Calendar of Events
- Consultation
- Diversity and Teaching/Learning
- Grades and Rosters
- Graduate Student Advising
- Graduate Student Teaching Support
- Learning Outcomes (University Undergraduate Learning Outcomes)
- Mentoring Groups for Faculty, Instructors, Academic Professionals
- Mentoring and Training Postdocs
- Online and Hybrid Teaching at UNLV
- Orientation for New Faculty/Instructors
- Research on Higher Education Teaching and Learning at UNLV
- Students who need help
- Technology and Teaching at UNLV
- Workshops and Webinars for faculty/instructors
- Writing Groups for faculty, instructors and academic professionals at UNLV

**Online Resources for Teaching Development and Instructional Research**
- Academic Career Advice Library, Inside Higher Ed
- Best Teachers' Resources, Kenneth Bain
- Best Teaching Practices: Summaries, Vanderbilt Center for Teaching
- Clicker Resource Guide, Science Education Initiative, U of Colorado and UBC
- Conflict in the Classroom
- Diversity and Inclusive Excellence in Higher Education
- Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness
- Journals on Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
- Listserv conversations about teaching and learning in higher education
- Materials and Modules for Teaching
- Mentoring Guidelines: Best Practices for Faculty Mentors and Mentees
- Multicultural Teaching and Learning:
- Newsletters/newspapers on Teaching and Learning
- Online and Hybrid Teaching: Best Practices
- Peer Review of Teaching Project
- Research Review Papers on Teaching/Learning
- Teaching Tips and Guides
- Team Based Learning Collaborative
- Troubleshooting