In this poster, we share information from our faculty development programming for online educators, and our lessons learned from our 5+ years of offering ongoing faculty development that continues to engage online instructors over time.

The Challenge

- Online Teaching Skills - Online teaching requires a mix of technical skills and pedagogical skills specific to online classrooms.
- Lack of Instructor Experience as Online Students - Online education is new enough that most instructors didn’t take online courses as students.
- Stigma of Online Education - The field of online education faces stigma and questions about the quality of the education and teaching.
- Event Accessibility - Online instructors are located across multiple time zones and generally don’t come to campus, and therefore have little to no access to in-person communities, teaching and professional development. In addition, online education opens up adjunct teaching opportunities to professionals who may not have considered teaching due to other responsibilities, thus online instructors may also have limited availability for meetings and professional development.
- Professional Isolation - Adjunct instructors often report feeling isolated, which can be exacerbated when teaching online.
- Growth in Online Education - As online education grows, the need to develop more online instructors with high-quality technical and pedagogical skills is also growing.

The Solution

- Customized Faculty Development Institutes, Series, & Intensive Workshops:
  - Complementing other professional development opportunities →
  - Providing information and practice to stay abreast and knowledgeable of current online pedagogical trends and new technology updates
  - Providing virtual support and opportunities to develop leadership and teaching skills
  - Scheduling in the evenings & recorded for geographically dispersed faculty & staff who have other full time positions
- Building community with teaching teams and connection with the School by celebrating accomplishments & milestones, modeling & practicing online community-building activities, and creating a shared experience.
- Honoring instructors and teaching associate’s investment of time by:
  - Curating online teaching pedagogy & CSSW online policy updates in a digestible format
  - Creating sessions with targeted & streamlined content, including sharing professional and academic resources
  - Providing a convenient open line of communication with administration
  - Providing opportunities for teaching associates to develop into instructor roles by:
    - Continuing to develop their skills & knowledge around online education
    - Encouraging them to present, which develops their expertise and comfort with online teaching.

Lessons Learned

- Online faculty need customized training to:
  - Develop and sharpen their online teaching and online community-building skills
  - Stay up to date with technology
  - Provide a venue for discussing and learning about challenges, innovations, and ideas that are unique to online classrooms
  - Learn from and build upon each other’s ideas
  - Provide instructors with experience as online learners
- To develop professionals into future online instructors for a growing online program, customized training is required
- Commitment to online faculty development can elevate the reputation of an online program
- Online faculty development can demonstrate a program’s commitment to quality for students
- Administrators can provide additional benefits beyond the learning and community: Document learning via digital badges, which can be shared on social media, generate conversation about benefits of online education, help participants feel pride in their accomplishments & contribute a sense of professionalism as online educators. Digital badges also include printable certificates
  - Provide free continuing education units for professional licensure
  - Schedule sessions during evenings with fewer classes in order to increase participation, and allow for make-ups by watching and writing reflections on recordings of sessions they miss
- Ask for participants feedback about their satisfaction & about desired future topics

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Citations and further info: