



AQIP PROFILES 2018



AQIP Criterion 3: Teaching and Learning – Quality, Resources and Support

Tri-C Faculty Take Yearly Steps to Further Their Professional Development

Cuyahoga Community College is in the business of educating students—and the essential job of providing that education belongs to the College’s hundreds of faculty members.

Without excellent faculty implementing effective teaching techniques and up-to-date material in the classroom, Tri-C cannot function as an academic institution. This makes continuing professional development of faculty critical to the fulfillment of the College’s mission.

Tri-C’s faculty members realize what is at stake, which is why they make professional development an ongoing, year-round effort.

“There are a variety of ways in which the College facilitates professional development for faculty,” said Andrew Pegman, associate professor of English at the Eastern Campus and chairperson of the Joint Faculty Senate. “It starts with our onboarding process for new faculty, which includes one-on-one mentoring with an experienced faculty member. It continues with yearly training workshops and conferences, both at Tri-C and elsewhere.”

The faculty mentorship program represents an important first step. It assists new faculty members in adjusting to their positions at Tri-C, connecting each new hire to resources within the College. And it fosters a sense of camaraderie, as new faculty get to know their colleagues, both inside and outside their disciplines.

“I think that’s something we do very well here, both for full-time and part-time faculty,” Pegman said. “There are always a lot of questions when you start a new job, and this gives new faculty a place to have those questions answered.”

During their first year at Tri-C, the mentorship program connects faculty members with the many professional development opportunities at the College. While professional development is a mandatory part of the 28 service credits each faculty member must complete each year, the nature of that development is largely left up to the individual faculty member.

“It could be an area in which they feel they need to improve, or a general area of interest,” Pegman said. “The areas could include things like classroom management, teaching techniques, course material—any number of issues pertaining to our central goal, which is student success.”

There are a number of on-site training and learning opportunities for Tri-C faculty, including programs at the Centers for Learning Excellence (CLEs) at each campus as well as presentations and activities at the faculty colloquium held each January. But to

really immerse themselves in new ideas, many faculty members also attend off-site conferences.

The Lilly Conferences—held annually in Oxford, Ohio, and other locations around the country—represent some of the largest gatherings of college faculty in the nation. Tri-C sends faculty members to Lilly Conferences yearly as part of its Dynamic Learning Cohort.

The Dynamic Learning Cohort began on the Eastern Campus in 2016 and has since expanded to the Western and Metropolitan campuses. It is designed as a more intensive alternative to one-off professional development seminars and training modules.

Faculty members participating in the Dynamic Learning Cohort commit to monthly cohort meetings, attendance at a minimum of four workshops at a CLE and attendance at one of the annual Lilly Conferences.

Participants must then utilize the knowledge gained to implement at least one in-classroom change during the following academic year and share the outcome at a minimum of two faculty events, such as a subsequent workshop or colloquium.

“We sent 40 people to the Lilly Conference in Oxford this past year,” said Stacey Souther, associate professor of psychology at the Eastern Campus and the campus’ cohort leader. “A lot of our faculty are drawn to the Dynamic Learning Cohort because the community-learning model is tried and true. There is a lot of research to support it.”

Each year, members of the Dynamic Learning Cohort study a wide range of emerging trends in classroom learning.

“One of the big takeaways from last year was the concept of ‘flipped classrooms,’ moving away from the traditional lecture style,” Souther said. “But a lot of what is ultimately implemented in the classroom is going to depend on the individual faculty member and what their goals are.”

From faculty mentorship to structured, ongoing programs like the Dynamic Learning Cohort, the goal of faculty professional development is to make the great educators at Tri-C even greater, allowing them to pave the way for better outcomes for the thousands of students who walk through the College’s doors each academic year.

“We want our people to grow as educators and as leaders,” Souther said. “We’re fortunate to have tremendous faculty here at Tri-C, and we want them to learn from one another.”

This is the fourth article in a seven-part series that examines how various programs and people throughout Tri-C each play an important role in meeting the AQIP criteria and, by extension, assist the College in remaining accredited. Keep an eye on your email Inbox for the next three stories, running through Feb. 15.