

Introduction

Northern State University has a long tradition as the leading teacher-training institution in South Dakota as well as the upper Midwest/Great Plains region. While we can be proud of the contribution Northern continues to make producing quality K-12 teachers for our communities, state, and region, we must acknowledge that our campus offers relatively little training and support related to professional development for teaching and scholarship for our faculty and other staff involved in instructing Northern's students.

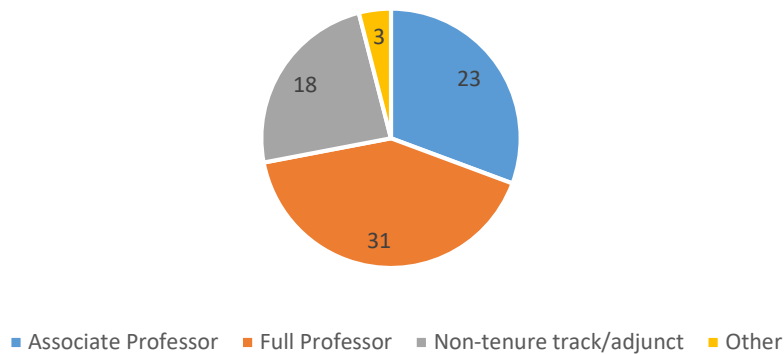
To help address the aforementioned deficiency and further establish Northern as the premier institution for excellence in education at all levels, this proposal provides justification and recommendations for a center to serve as the organizational nexus for innovation and professional development in higher education on our campus. The center will sponsor pedagogical activities designed to promote a campus-wide culture of excellence, innovation, and continuous improvement in professional development in post-secondary education, including scholarship on effective instruction, optimal student learning, classroom management, student engagement, and other related topics.

In an effort to ascertain the feasibility for a center for teaching excellence on our campus, a taskforce was formed during the Spring 2019 semester with representatives from across Northern's campus. The taskforce examined our current resources and services for teaching faculty/staff, and reviewed what our peer and aspirational institutions are currently doing in terms of pedagogical training and development for faculty. This examination, as well as the need to understand what Northern faculty and instructional staff value in teaching support, led us to conduct a survey on campus in March 2019. The findings of this survey are presented below. As a taskforce, we interpreted the results of the survey, and we present recommendations for the development of a center on Northern's campus. These recommendations include a proposed mission statement, optimal staffing needs, and a proposed budget.

Current Views and Wishes of Faculty

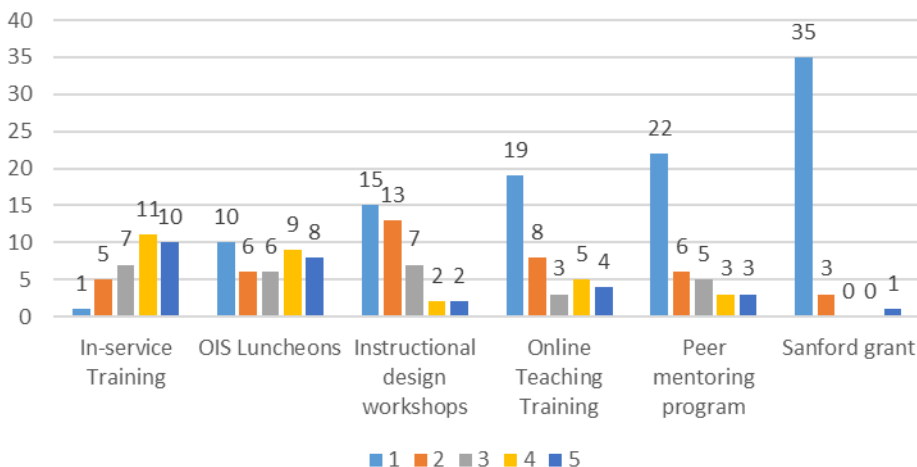
We surveyed NSU teaching faculty and staff over the course of a week and received a total of 39 responses (44% of the BOR-reported 89.5 FTE faculty at NSU) from a range of different faculty ranks as shown in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Faculty Ranking Percentage



Using this survey, we attempted to gauge the levels of use and satisfaction with resources for formal teaching development we have currently identified as available at NSU. These resources are categorized as “formal” as NSU funds, sponsors, and organizes these faculty development opportunities. The opportunities we identified include: in-service training for new and returning faculty, Office of Instructional Services (OIS) luncheons, workshops and trainings offered by Instructional Design (ID), faculty training in teaching online courses required by ID, the peer mentoring program, and using the Sanford grant for curricular proposals. Respondents were asked to rate the frequency of use with “1” being the least frequent use of the resource and “5” being the most frequent use of the resource. When reporting frequency of use, faculty only reported in-service trainings as frequently used and OIS luncheons as moderately used; all other options were used very infrequently as shown in Figure 2.

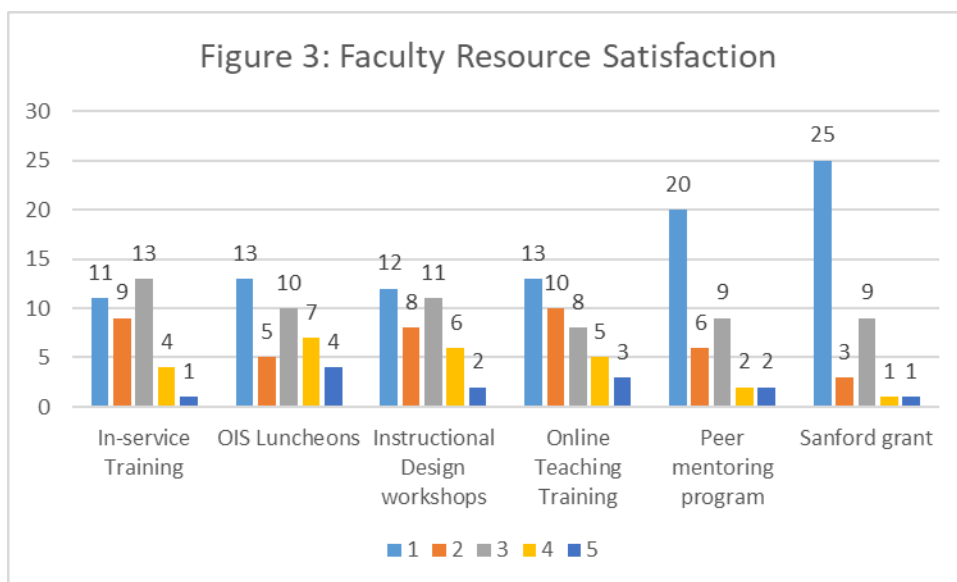
Figure 2: Faculty Resource Use Responses



When asked about the types of “informal” resources, or resources not provided specifically through NSU, used to improve their teaching, faculty offered a variety of options that tended to fall into separate categories: discipline-specific information and networks, pedagogy research,

collegial discussion, and internet resources. Discipline-specific information and networks can broadly include things such as reading journals about teaching within the faculty member's specific discipline, attending teaching-related panels and trainings at academic conferences, or making-use of trainings and webinars offered by professional organizations. Some faculty mentioned reading journals or even engaging in research themselves regarding pedagogy. Other faculty mentioned the importance of conversation with their colleagues. While within the comments there was largely no distinction between online or face-to-face pedagogical conversation, specific internet resources or venues are also covered within the broader category of internet resources. Finally, internet resources includes social media groups, email listservs or connections made with other scholars, and publisher resources. Faculty made no distinction between free publisher offerings and paid courses or webinars offered by publishers (e.g., Sage offers training on using the statistical program R for a fee of \$250).

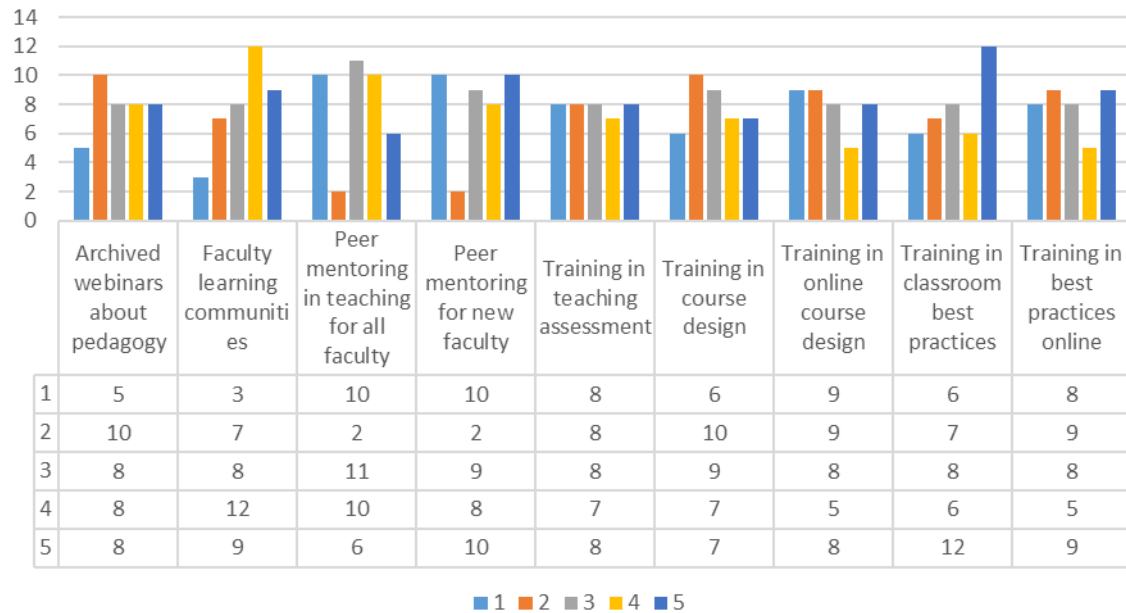
Overall, faculty expressed severe dissatisfaction with the current formal resources available at NSU, and their responses seem to indicate they are achieving their faculty pedagogical development goals elsewhere as highlighted in Figure 3 below. Faculty were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with each formal resource, with "1" being the least satisfied and "5" being the most satisfied.

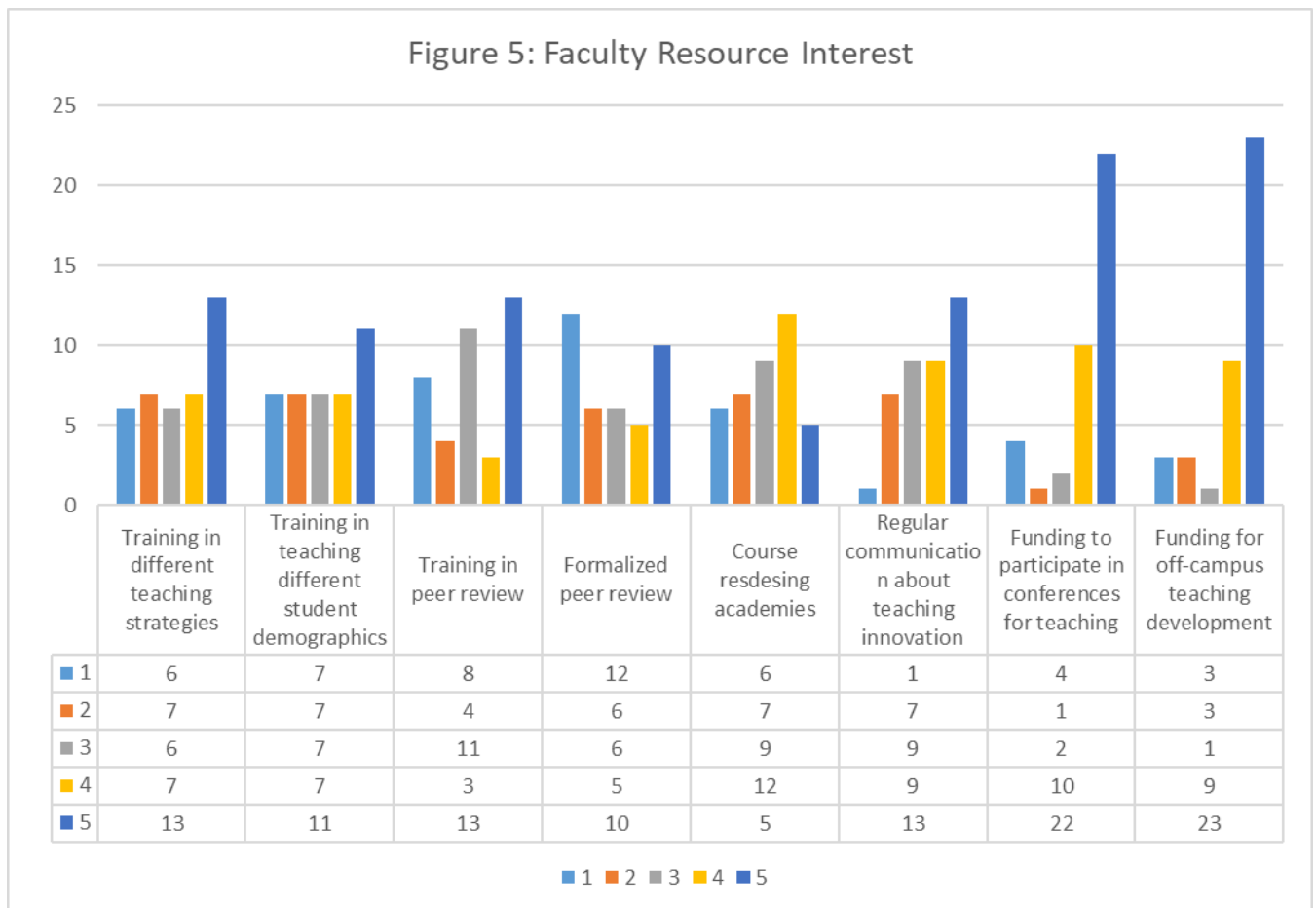


In contrast, faculty showed interest in many of the high-impact practices that the Taskforce noted both our peer and aspirational institutions were engaging in for faculty development in teaching, with "1" being the least interested and "5" being the most interested. This interest is depicted in Figures 4 and 5. Faculty show the most interest in development that will allow them to develop and enhance their teaching skills in the classroom through training in techniques and pedagogy. Faculty also show high interest in practices that provide compensation for their work in developing into better teachers; this was evident with the high interest levels in funded opportunities to attend teaching and learning conferences, or for funding to participate in classes or other outside opportunities to learn more about effective teaching. This is also reflected in the qualitative answers faculty provided when asked about other teaching and learning resources they have "seen or heard about at other institutions that you would like to try here." Six

respondents explicitly wrote comments that reflected a desire for more funded opportunities for teaching development, such as “give faculty necessary monies to attend professional training workshops” and “more travel funds for teaching-related conferences.” Other comments also reflected the faculty’s high desire for learning about specific teaching strategies: “Training for teaching controversial topics is crucial, as is encouragement to teach them from an institutional level.”

Figure 4: Faculty Resource Interest





Proposed Mission Statement and Objectives

“Unleash your potential – Be an exceptional educator.”

The Center for Teaching and Learning seeks to collaborate with instructors, teaching assistants, teaching staff, and administrators across campus to encourage, integrate, and advance Northern State University’s teaching and learning excellence. We wish to foster collaboration in efforts to create courses, curricula, and policies of teaching and learning excellence.

The Center for Teaching and Learning seeks to promote a university culture that values and rewards exceptional teaching. We advocate for effective, evidenced-based, student-centered teaching through mentorship, collaboration, scholarship, and faculty professional development. We are committed to promoting and facilitating dialogue about best practices in higher education to enhance teaching and learning on our campus and in the communities our campus supports.

In pursuing this mission, we support teaching and learning excellence by:

- Creating an inclusive learning environment for teachers and learners of all backgrounds and abilities, by supporting diverse teaching and learning styles;
- Sharing knowledge of effective, evidence-based, student-centered teaching and learning practices through resources and opportunities for faculty professional development;

- Enhancing faculty mentorship, collaboration, connection, and community;
- Collaborating to facilitate dialogues and build collective practice across programs, departments, and throughout campus;
- Rewarding teaching excellence based on student-outcomes and multifaceted evaluation.

Proposed Staffing

A functional and sustainable teaching and learning center depends on proper staffing. The committee has researched numerous institutions, both peer and otherwise, with such centers or related resources of their own. From this research, we have considered the pros and cons of various staffing structures. It is our consensus that the schools that have robust and sustainable centers operate with a full-time director, whose sole job is dedicated to the operations of the center. Additionally, this director typically has a fulltime administrative assistant to support his or her responsibilities. On the contrary, institutions with sub-par/incomplete centers tend to operate with a staff composed of faculty whose primary role is teaching and research, but who oversee the center as an additional duty. In these cases, the success of the center seems to suffer because no one person has sole, dedicated responsibility for its success.

Therefore, it is our recommendation that a center on NSU's campus be managed by a dedicated, fulltime director. This individual will have no teaching or research duties but will focus solely on the activities and function of the center. We also recommend that a fulltime administrative assistant be assigned to the center to assist the director and act as a liaison between all faculty and staff as well as administrators on our campus.

Proposed Budget

| Staffing | | | |
|---|------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Director, fulltime | \$60,000 | | |
| Support staff, 11-month contract | \$30,000 | | |
| Total Staffing cost | \$90,000 | | |
| Activities | | Cost per unit | Number of activities |
| Peer review formalization | \$1,000 | \$1,000 | 1 |
| Peer review mentoring & training | \$5,000 | \$1,000 | 5 |
| Teaching techniques & pedagogy | \$4,000 | \$2,000 | 2 |
| Teaching techniques & pedagogy | \$5,000 | \$1,000 | 5 |
| Travel—boost to conference presentation funding | \$4,000 | \$200 | 20 |
| Total Activities cost | \$19,000 | | |
| Subtotal | \$109,000 | | |
| Overhead/indirect—% of subtotal | \$16,350 | | 15% |
| Total | \$125,350 | | |

As noted earlier, recommended staffing consists of a fulltime director (proposed duties detailed above).

Figure 5 shows faculty interest in TLC activities. The activities include (1) peer review and mentoring, (2) improving teaching techniques and pedagogy, and (3) external teaching workshops/seminars. These activities can be met by a combination of university-wide and school/college workshops/seminars.

There is strong interest in peer mentoring. A combination of campus and school/college activities are recommended. Formalization of peer review process and training could be accomplished with a campus-wide workshop/seminar. The expected cost would be \$1,000. Given faculty differences across campus, the three schools (SoB, SoE, SoFA) would have \$1,000 while CAS would have \$2,000 for ongoing peer mentoring and training. This split approach allows the different functional areas to focus on specific needs.

As with peer mentoring, teaching techniques and pedagogical activities would be a combination of campus-wide and school/college workshops. This split approach allows for global teaching issue coverage while allowing for a more area specific discussion of teaching and pedagogy.

There is strong interest in participating in external conferences/workshops sessions related to teaching and pedagogy. One avenue of facilitating this is expand current faculty travel. If a faculty member is attending a conference, there would be bonus funding of \$200 to attend a teaching/pedagogy conference session or a training. Upon return to NSU, the faculty member would be **required** to provide a workshop at the school, college, or university level. An alternative approach would be to provide \$200 to faculty to attend specific teaching and pedagogy conferences.