IDEA GROUP PUBLISHING

701 E. Chocolate Avenue, Suite 200, Hershey PA 17033, USA
Tel: 717/533-8845; Fax 717/533-8661; URL-http://www.idea-group.com

ITP4637

Campus-Wide Faculty Development: No "Mission Impossible." Results from Implementation of Intensive Summer Workshops Programs

Katia Passerini, Kemal Cakici, and William Koffenberger
The George Washington University
(202) 994 2770 (w) (202) 994 0454 (m)
pkatia@gwu.edu, cakici@gwu.edu, billkoff@gwu.edu

OVERVIEW

Faculty development is the key enabling strategy for the successful introduction of technology in the classroom and at a distance, required as universities strive towards achieving campus-wide technology competencies. Motivating the entire faculty to acquire new technology skills and to experiment with applications in their area of competence has been regarded by many as "mission impossible." Technology training and its curriculum implementation often require a time investment that may discourage faculty commitment.

To foster technological innovation, the Instructional Technology Laboratory (the center which provides pedagogical and technological support to faculty at the George Washington University) created an intensive development program supported by partnerships across several university departments. Faculty participating in the summer development institute and undertaking new projects (as a result thereof) receive incentives and rewards (release time, student assistance, monetary and resource support).

The paper will present the success of the institute evaluated on a series of criteria: faculty needs and satisfaction, ability to meet faculty time-constraints with an intensive program format, and short-term and long-term benefits in terms of new initiatives implementation. It also highlights lessons learned on successful, and less successful, incentives.

The paper does not address how faculty development programs impact students' learning and satisfaction. Effectiveness questions on classroom technology initiatives are elaborated in several other studies, and are out of the scope of this review.

THE FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

Summer Intensive Workshop Initiative (SIWI), is a faculty development program designed to significantly increase faculty competency with advanced instructional technologies. Unlike other approaches that focus primarily on a technical skills 'boot camp', the SIWI seeks to provide faculty a progressive series of experiences that sequentially build on different skill levels and abilities and that include both pedagogical and technical experiences and training. Additionally, it incrementally adds new direct staff support to assist faculty during design and implementation of instructional technology projects started as part of the SIWI. The initiative involves units across the University community to provide complete solutions and tap existing expertise and resources.

The SIWI accomplishes the goal of increased faculty proficiency and use of instructional technologies through a series of intensive three-day long workshops and seminar summer institutes. Since 1999, each summer, at least three of these summer institutes - comprising the yearly Summer Intensive Workshop Initiative - are flexibly offered to faculty in the form of learning tracks/modules. The tracks/modules are designed to provide a progressive series of experiences ranging from basic computer skills, through computer based research skills, including productivity and classroom presentation tools and skills, and progressing to elaborate pedagogically sound multimedia and mediated learning projects. Pedagogical, technical, and content specialists provide year-long support and assistance to faculty, as they implement effective instructional technologies and approaches learned through the SIWI.

THE "WHY "OF FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Several colleges and universities in the US currently offer faculty instructional and technology support services. Regardless of the services availability, the core problem faced by faculty often remains the lack of time and funds to undertake technology-based projects. Simultaneously, students' expectations surrounding faculty use of technological resources to support learning increased exponentially. In the last few years, scholars often find themselves openly challenged in exploiting the new pedagogical opportunities and advantages of Web-based course delivery. An on-line survey conducted on faculty members at the George Washington University showed that over 80% of the 79 respondents surveyed felt a higher than average need for additional support to use information communication technologies, such as the World Wide Web (Figure 1).

These numbers show the importance of initiatives for faculty development. Results from the survey conducted in 1999 assisted in increasing University Official's awareness of faculty needs and garnered support for the launch of the SIWI program.

THE "HOW" OF FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Intensive three-day sessions that provide faculty with opportunities to experiment with new technology, assist in demonstrations, discuss curricular impacts, and submit grant proposals for technology-based projects in the class-

Figure 1

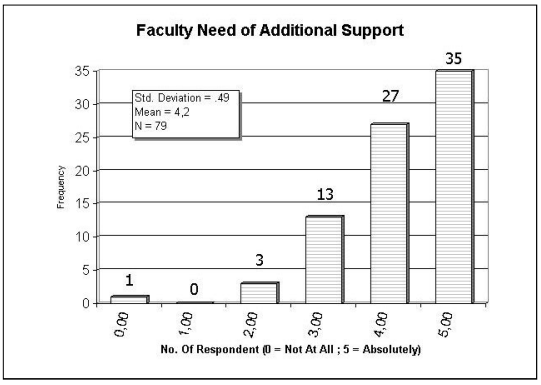
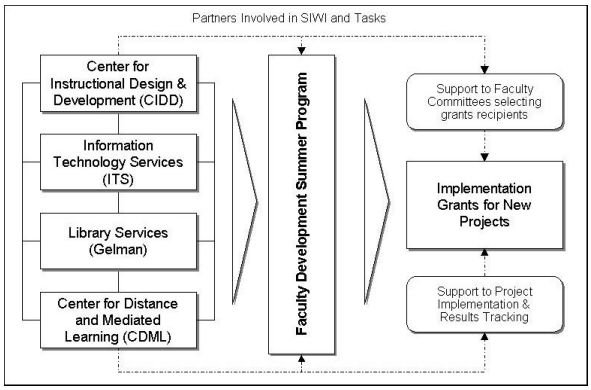


Figure 2



room are component of successful development programs. The SIWI development plan differs from similar efforts in its reliance on a partnership based management model In terms of implementation, the SIWI experience shows the importance of partnership and coordination across university centers (university teaching centers, libraries, instructional technology labs, computer resource centers) to provide the full spectrum of services needed by faculty in their technology-based curriculum innovations (Figure 2). This model brings increased success due to synergistic efforts, and offers the ability to serve the diverse need of instructors in different fields. The partnership model also brings opportunities for program cost sharing across different units, while achieving an enhanced level of content variety and *ad hoc* support for each participant.

THE "WHAT" OF FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

A successful development program must not only answer the question on how to use technology, it must also explain the benefits of different instructional technologies. To this end, the SIWI seeks to encourage and support exchange of ideas, experiences, practical tips, and interactions coupled with skill based activities. Success stories from faculty in the same field inspire innovation. Luncheon scholar showcases encourage sharing of research findings among participants. Guest speakers and key figures in technology-based instruction also provide knowledge and lessons learned. Discussions occur about project partnerships supported by the institute through grants and awards. Opportunities for hands-on experience, assisted projects, and demonstrations in two-hour blocks focus on both curriculum issues and software skills during the program.

The application software used in the summer workshops includes the MS Office suite, Web-authoring software, and graphical software packages for image scanning and editing, such as Adobe PhotoShop. Other packages include: Adobe Acrobat, Adobe Premiere, RealProducer and the web-based courseware applications. Future edition of SIWI may present full multimedia development workshops, - using Macromedia Director, Flash and Authorware - and video production workshops.

THE "WHEN" OF FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

A faculty development institute offered during the summer sessions reduces faculty time constraints by creating a pedagogical and technical support system available to participating instructors during less demanding months of the year. The institute approach proposes a track-by-track progression of skills, building competencies on the basis of a phased approach, from basic to advanced skills. Faculty enjoy an intensive exposure to technology and computer mediated instruction in the summer institutes. They then conduct hands-on activities and receive project support throughout the academic year. An Instructional Technology Lab and content experts provide assistance on field-specific implementations. Teaching assistants are also assigned to support academic projects. Although the preferred progression to higher-level tracks is on a year-to-year basis, faculty can complete all tracks during the same summer.

THE "WHERE" OF FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

A final evaluation form was completed at the end of the 3-day event. Participants agreed and strongly agreed with the statements in the final evaluations. The only statement that participants disagreed strongly with was the proposal that SIWI should be held off-campus. Participants seemed to enjoy the ability to go to their offices during breaks. The rationale for the proposal was related to the organizers' fear that there would have been a high "mortality" rate for specific seminars and workshops. There were in fact some cases in which attendance to specific workshops was lower, but faculty appreciated the flexibility to choose not to attend specific events if constrained by their schedules.

RESULTS FROM IMPLEMENTATION

The evaluations conducted after each edition witness a success story with highly encouraging results. Overall, participant satisfaction was very high: (scale out of 5.0)

- Participants reported that they were satisfied with SIWI (mean=4.76)
- They found that SIWI motivated them to participate in other learning tracks (mean=4.75)
- They found that SIWI encouraged collegiality (mean=4.70).

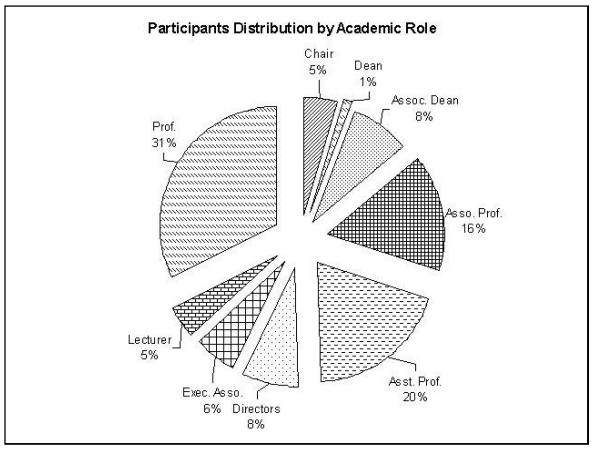
Several comments recognized and praised the organizers for a job well done. Partners had organized the initiative with clear expectations, but had several concerns:

- Faculty would not find the time, nor the motivation, to participate in SIWI
- Limited grants and incentives would discourage participation
- Attendance might be discouraged because program participation and often classroom innovation are not generally included in tenure criteria
- It was not clear how self-selection would impact successful faculty completion of a learning track.
- It would be difficult to forecast whether any of SIWI endeavors would be transformed into specific products and projects by participating faculty

Many of these concerns proved unsubstantiated. Faculty participation was very high, with a fair distribution across academic roles (as represented in Figure 3). Faculty enthusiasm was high throughout the workshops, in spite of the intensive schedule and the amount of new material presented.

A number of new projects were started as a result of ideas and skills attained in SIWI. While specific impacts on classroom effectiveness are difficult to measure, faculty indicates that skills acquired in the SIWI have made a positive impacts on their teaching. Analysis of walk-ins at the Instructional Technology Lab facilities shows that at least 20% of participants repeatedly used faculty support facilities after SIWI, and they used applications that were demonstrated at the workshops (scanning, narrated PowerPoint, HTML, CD-ROM burning, and video digitization). In addition, many participants started using web-based applications in their courses (e.g. use of streaming technol-

Figure 3



ogy and Adobe Acrobat), or moved to an advanced level of on-line course implementation using pedagogical strategies demonstrated in the workshops.

LESSONS LEARNED

SIWI feedback clearly portrays a success story. The responses range between the levels 3 to 5, which are values above the mean. Participants were satisfied with the events and with the organization. The lessons learned in this initiative are therefore less a result of faculty concerns than reflective of trouble-shooting and administrative hurdles that the organizers encountered.

The main reason why the SIWI programs ran smoothly is related to the staff efforts in troubleshooting computer hardware problems. Staff undertook last minute installations of software not available on the computer network. Often, the number of computers properly functioning in a given lab was less than the number of participants. Several computers appeared infected with viruses. Although all the problems were successfully addressed, careful testing of hardware and software prior to faculty development events is critical.

As new and advanced learning tracks are added, evaluation of faculty skills and subsequent assignment to learning tracks, will become much more important. In some instances, self-selection disrupted the pace of instruction because a few participants did not have prior Windows experience. With advanced sessions, problems associated with overconfidence in prior skills may have significant impacts on the program's success and faculty satisfaction.

Although speakers were well received, the luncheon presentations were often regarded with less enthusiasm. Future programs should reduce luncheon presentations and while increasing networking, information exchange and opportunities to share experiences and build research partnerships.

Strategies for follow up activities should be carefully integrated in the development of a faculty development program. Faculty should be made aware that participation entails the initiation of a project, often extending over an entire semester that will draws upon the skills and the resources made available in the summer workshops. This goal could be better achieved if participation was competitively based on willingness to start new projects. Faculty would apply to SIWI on a competitive basis by submitting an outline of their projects and highlighting their training and resource needs.

Implementing this approach would also allow SIWI partners to have a clearer vision of audience needs, background and objectives. A needs assessment was indeed one of the most crucial missing elements of SIWI. The inability to select audiences with competing project proposals led to the inability to target objectives and needs. By making registration to SIWI more competitive and based on project proposals, audience needs would be identified and the emphasis would move towards the realization of specific products, rather than short-term technology training.