

# Digital Transformation: The Impetus Behind the Initiative

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*This chapter provides context for the following chapters. It describes the process used to launch the inaugural cohort of the Provost's Digital Learning Initiative. It describes the impetus for the initiative; details of the way it was crafted, including topics in the workshop series; and the envisioned future of this ongoing project. In addition to the works referenced within the chapter, other resources used with the first cohort are included. The chapters that follow detail cohort members' experiences and results.*

## **ENVISIONING THE INITIATIVE**

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) is a public, historically black university and currently ranks as the fifth largest HBCU with an estimated enrollment of 9,713 students. It is a member of the State University System of Florida, offers 56 bachelor's degrees, 29 master's degrees, 2 professional degrees and 12 doctoral degrees. The University has been accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools since 1935. There are almost 700 full-time and part-time faculty who provide instruction at the main campus and the additional five site campuses located across the state of Florida. Prior to 2013, there was no centralized faculty development that addressed the needs and interests of faculty at all campuses. The 12 colleges and schools were tasked with leading and creating their own faculty development efforts, but these efforts were often stalled because of funding limitations, and, in some instances, shifts in administration. Aside from ongoing administrative transitions and funding challenges, the University reckoned with the dilemma of determining faculty development needs; ways these needs differed for faculty of various disciplines, ranks and teaching caliber; and, finally, what resources might be required to satisfy these needs.

### **Every Great Solution Begins With an Even Greater Problem**

In fact, the University has experienced a great deal of turnover. Since 2011, there have been three presidents (both interim and permanent), three provosts, and as many as eight transitions among deans within the 12 colleges and schools. Each of these transitions has introduced new priorities. Meanwhile, the inconsistent efforts of faculty development were often being lost in the shuffle. The most recent administration recognized these inconsistencies, gaps in effort, and ineffective movement toward accomplishing professional development goals that solely addressed the interests and needs of the faculty.

As mandated by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC), the University is required to design a comprehensive Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that addresses student success with a topic that introduces learning outcomes aligned with the

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