**White Paper**

Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Jonathan Bassett

Lillie Craton

TD Maze

Paige Ouzts

Sam Tolbert

I. Describe the general plan you would put in place to address one or more specific learning outcomes at Lander University.

*The proposed plan calls for the development of a Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning on the Lander University Campus. This plan would address the goal of enhancing “the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution.” Specifically, the proposed QEP would address the claim in our mission statement that “Lander University has chosen teaching and learning as its principal concerns and providing a challenging education for qualified students as its mission.” To document our commitment to teaching and learning as our principle concern and to enhance the quality of the education provided to students, we propose the development of a Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.*

*This plan would also address the learning outcomes associated with the General Education program:*

*The General Education program is designed to enable students to develop:*

*1. University-level knowledge and comprehension*

*2. The ability to apply information*

*3. The ability to analyze information*

*4. The ability to communicate effectively and appropriately*

*The objectives of the Lander University CETL would be to enhance the quality of students’ education at Lander by increasing faculty awareness of the documented principles of teaching and learning and by promoting faculty use of evidenced based pedagogical practices that maximize student learning. The goals of this plan would be to promote innovative and evidence based teaching across campus by .providing resources and opportunities for dialogue and collaboration. Successfully meeting these goals should have positive benefits on student learning across the entire campus and promote the perception of Lander as a small university where every faculty member is an outstanding teacher or in the process to become one. The success of the CETL should be reflected in student improvement on the General Education goals referenced above.*

*Potential ways the center might promote the desired outcomes described above could include:*

* *Enhancing Lander faculty’s participation in professional development related to evidence based principles of teaching and learning by bringing in external speakers and providing funds for faculty travel to external pedagogical conferences.*
* *Producing and maintain an up to date online archive of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) resources, such as web-links, articles, and videos.*
* *Promoting faculty interaction and engagement around issues of pedagogy by sponsoring periodic events such as book/journal clubs, presentations by faculty, or faculty discussion forums; highlighting best practices or innovative approaches that Lander faculty are already doing in the White Board publication and/or in online video interviews; providing faculty with forums to share with their colleagues things they have learned from attendance at pedagogical conferences*
* *Developing, maintaining, and disseminating a list of potential online SoTL and pedagogical webinars/programs in which faculty might be interested and incentivize participation in these programs.*
* *Creating a community that will foster understanding between those teaching and those learning thereby creating more actively engaged students.*
* *Providing programing for students about best practices and evidence based strategies for optimal learning.*
* *Creating new internal grant opportunities for Lander faculty doing research on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.*
* *Promoting an institutional culture that values Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.*
* *Developing improved feedback and evaluation processes that provide valid and formative support for faculty to improve teaching and student learning.*
* *Enhancing incentives for faculty to achieve measurable improvement in teaching and student learning.*
* *Promoting the continuing transformation of the student learning environment by focusing on experiential education and other engaged teaching practices.*

II. Are you aware of Lander assessment data that provides support for your idea? Please cite and analyze any data that is available to you. Jim Colbert can assist you with locating data in various offices as needed.

*In terms of assessing the goal related to the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution, we would focus on faculty perceptions, student perceptions, and* academic benchmarks indicating student success*. The faculty perceptions would involve metrics reflecting: 1) levels of faculty participation in activities deigned to improve pedagogy, 2) rates of faculty using best practices as currently validated in the pedagogical literature, and 3) faculty perceptions of adequacy of resources and support for teaching activities. The student perceptions would focus on metrics reflecting student opinions about the quality of instruction and interactions with faculty.* The academic benchmarks indicating student success would include graduation and retention rates.

*The HERI survey data currently administered to Lander faculty every three years contains information relevant to these issues. In the results from the 2013-2014 HERI survey, only 75% of faculty indicated that they had participated in organized events around enhancing pedagogy and student learning during the previous two years. Similarly, only 41% of faculty indicated that they had participated in a paid workshop outside the institution focused on teaching during the previous two years. These numbers indicate that there is room for improvement in the number of faculty who are attending and participating in professional development activities aimed at enhancing the quality of teaching (particularly those conducted outside the institution). The HERI data also indicate that only 51.4% of faculty reported using student inquiry to drive learning in all or most of their courses and only 18.6% reported using learning before lecture techniques such as flipping the classroom in all or most of their courses. Both student led inquiry and the flipped classroom are topics currently receiving a lot of attention in the pedagogical literature and their effectiveness in improving student learning is supported by a growing body of evidence. The HERI data indicate that there is room for improvement in the number of Lander faculty using these and related evidenced based pedagogical practices. The HEIR data also indicate that only 37.7% of faculty strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement that there is adequate support for faculty development. There seems to be room for improvement here by increasing the resources and opportunities for faculty to engage in professional development related to teaching.*

*Information about students’ perceptions is already available from data currently being collected. The ACT Student Opinion Survey provides information about student’s satisfaction with testing and grading practices, content of courses, quality of instruction in their major, availability of faculty, and faculty attitudes towards students. The National Survey of Student Engagement provides information about students’ perceptions of the quality of student-faculty interactions and the effectiveness of faculty teaching practices.*

*In regards to the goal of improving the learning outcomes associated with the General Education program “to enable students to develop: 1) university-level knowledge and comprehension, 2) the ability to apply information, 3) the ability to analyze information, and 4) the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately,” relevant data are already being collected. The ETS Proficiency Profile provides information about reading, writing, math, and critical thinking that can be used to address success at meeting goals 2-4 above. In addition, each academic department currently submits a Program Goals and Indicators of Success report on a regular basis identified in the master assessment schedule. Most if not all of these reports contain a measure of overall content knowledge in the major (either through a homegrown or nationally normed instrument), which could be used to address success at meeting goal 1 regarding university-level knowledge.*

III. Do you envision development of new assessment strategies as part of your plan? If so, please describe.

*As mentioned in the previous section, there are already several assessment practices and sources of data in place relevant to the assessment of the effectiveness of the proposed CETL in enhancing the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution and in improving student outcomes on the general education learning goals. A few additional new assessment practices would need to be developed and implemented. Data would need to be collected regarding attendance, participation, and satisfaction with CETL sponsored programing as well as usage of CETL provided resources. A new locally devised measure of faculty engagement in pedagogical activities, faculty usage of best practices, and faculty perceptions about support for and valuing of good teaching would need to be developed and administered annually.*

IV. Are you aware of related literature sources that might be used in writing a full QEP Proposal? Please identify as many resources as necessary to provide adequate support for your plan and include a bibliography.

*There is an extensive literature on the science of teaching and learning (an example of a representative publication is provided below).*

*Blumberg, P. (2011). Making evidence-based practice an essential aspect of teaching. Journal of Faculty Development, 25, 27-32.*

*There is also a literature showing that engaged practices increases student learning, retention, and success (an example of a representative publication is provided below).*

*Finley, A., & McNair, T. B. (2013). Assessing underserved students’ engagement in high-impact practices. Publication of the Association of American Colleges and Universities.* [*https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/assessinghips/AssessingHIPS\_TGGrantReport.pdf*](https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/assessinghips/AssessingHIPS_TGGrantReport.pdf)

*A variety of online resources related to teaching and learning are available from The Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence and Educational Innovation at Carnegie Mellon University* [*http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/*](http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/)

*There is literature discussing the best practices in teaching and how they affect the learning*

*environment for both faculty and students. Also included is the discussion of the importance*

*of the creation of learning communities such works include*

*Chickering, A. A. and Gamson, Z. F. (1987). Seven Principles for Good Practices in*

*Undergraduate Education. Washington Center News, Fall.*

*Long, J., Labone, E., and Nicolson, M. A. (2009) Evaluating Broad Based Professional*

*Learning: A Case Study of a School System’s Implementation of Quality teaching*

*Pedagogies. The International Journal of Diversity in Organizations, Communities and*

*Nations; 9 (2).*

V. What departments or administrative units at Lander would play key roles in the implementation of this plan?

*The Office of Academic Affairs would play a key role in the implementation of this plan but involvement from multiple faculty across the campus would be key. There is currently a task force composed of recent recipients of Lander’s teaching awards (Distinguished Professor, Young Faculty Teaching, Young Faculty Scholar, and Moore Award) that has been charged with investigating ways to promote excellence in teaching and learning. This group would be in charge of the initial planning and making recommendations to The Office of Academic Affairs.*

VI. What resources would the plan require? You do not need a detailed budget, but should identify general human resources, facilities, and support needed for implementation of the plan.

*Resources needed for this project would include physical office space, a part-time faculty directorship, and programming/grants funding:*

* Dedicated office space: *A small faculty office with large conference or meeting room for workshops, reading groups, etc. The cost for appropriate furniture should be factored into these plans.*
* Directorship: *A half-time position for a teaching faculty member. Appropriate compensation would include an annual stipend (we suggest approx. $8000, including summer funding) and course release time (we suggest two courses per semester).*
* Staff Support*: A part-time or shared administrative staffer to support programs.*
* Programming: *Funds to bring faculty development speakers to campus, fund social activities associated with CETL programming, buy library materials/subscriptions, etc. (Programming funding will determine the scope of the Center's work. We'd suggest a* ***minimum*** *annual commitment of $10,000 for an initial "shoestring" startup budget.)*
* Grants: *Funds for faculty grants to travel to pedagogy conferences, offer faculty-led training activities, and undertake special professional development projects.*

Jim Colbert will be available throughout the summer to assist authors with questions or to gather data. Please send white papers to Jim Colbert, [jcolbert@lander.edu](mailto:jcolbert@lander.edu), by August 17, 2015.