Title: Active Learning Across the Curriculum

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Focus: This faculty learning community will explore methods for supporting and increasing active student engagement in the classroom. Our interdisciplinary focus is broad, and may include any and all pedagogical techniques, strategies, and technologies that put the focus on the student as active agent of her/his own learning. While some of the techniques we investigate might be more “traditional” methods, such as in-class group work or debate, others might involve newer technological platforms like the i>clicker or back-channel chat room. All types of classroom environment may also be considered: traditional and hybrid, small seminar and large lecture, undergraduate and graduate.

Why focus on active learning? Students exposed to an active learning model in the classroom retain more information and demonstrate a wider variety of problem-solving strategies; they also report the ability to make more sustained connections between subjects and to better appreciate perspectives that differ from their own. We as faculty also benefit concretely from the active learning model—when we provide students with more opportunities to speak and to shape their own response to course material, we learn much more not just about their views but also about how they process information. This in turn can give us valuable insight into potential new teaching strategies.

Outcomes:

• Throughout the fall semester faculty participants will meet regularly as a group to discuss what “active student learning” might look like in our respective disciplines. As part of this general discussion, we will brainstorm different potential pedagogical methods for promoting active learning in various contexts.

• By the end of the fall semester each faculty participant will have made concrete plans for building one or more new activities and expectations reflecting active learning into a spring-semester course, and will share the revised course syllabus with us. The syllabus should in some way clearly reflect the incorporation of the active learning practices under investigation.

• In the spring semester each faculty participant will update the group regularly on the usefulness and effectiveness of the pedagogical strategies they are investigating. As a part of these updates, faculty are expected to propose and subsequently chart criteria for measuring effectiveness in the context of their specific class. Although faculty are free to develop their own criteria for
measuring student engagement, they are encouraged to consider looking at both qualitative factors (e.g., quality/depth of analysis/argumentation, creativity of thought) and quantitative factors (e.g., in-class or online participation, median/mean scores on quizzes and tests, attendance stats, number of new majors declared).

- At the end of the semester, the entire group will participate in a “best practices” reflection session—most likely a workshop or round table hosted through the Center for Teaching and Learning which the university community will be invited to attend.
- Faculty are encouraged to share sample materials (such as quizz/exam models, essay prompts, or presentations) with the group. At the end of this FLC, some of these materials may also be included in the round table presentation.
- Finally, some faculty participants may wish to use their newfound experience to restructure portions of existing courses, to propose new courses, or to rethink the structure of existing curricular cycles. This is not a requirement of the FLC, however.

**Potential Meeting Time**

This faculty learning community will meet on certain Fridays, on the Boca Raton campus, between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. (specific dates and times to be determined according to the individual schedules of the FLC members). Depending on those participating, several FLC sessions could conceivably be held on partner campuses. Participants (especially those on partner campuses) will also be invited to join meetings virtually by means of a video-capable e-learning platform or Skype.

**Stipend:** Participants will receive a $1,000 stipend for active participation in the FLC and upon fulfilling all FLC expectations. These expectations include attendance at 80% of the group meetings, participation in the FLC’s project(s) and the communication of the project outcomes, and completion of the end of experience feedback survey.