

Faculty Learning Communities

“I hope to participate...again and again and again”

Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs) are **groups of trans-disciplinary faculty** who engage in an active, collaborative program with a curriculum about **enhancing teaching and learning**. FLCs attend seminars and activities that provide **learning, development, and community building** across a number of diverse and relevant topics. FLCs meet and discuss in communal settings in which faculty can **share their experiences to help learn from and support one another** as they navigate complex topics. FLCs have voluntary membership, develop empathy among members, develop openness and trust, **engage with complex problems, energize and empower their participants, and are holistic in their approach**. Survey data was collected regarding all FLCs taking place over 2015-2016.

Faculty Learning Communities offered over the last two years covered many different topics that are important to faculty. The FLCs that were conducted over the past two years include:

- Writing a Journal Article, Community engaged research, Service Learning, Threshold Concepts, Contemplative Pedagogy, Mid-Career, Palliative Care, and Cultural Intelligence

Many FLCs received a maximum rating of excellent. Respondents to the survey shared why they were interested in joining particular FLCs. Some examples of where interest tended to focus on specific FLCs are:

- **Contemplative Pedagogy**
 - Interest was focused on **managing distress and focus** in the classroom and
 - Introducing **mindfulness in the classroom**
- **Mid-career**
 - Interest was focused on **connecting with others in similar stages** of their careers and
 - Having an opportunity for **self-reflection and guidance** in planning next career stage
- **Palliative care**
 - Interest was focused on **knowledge seeking** on the subject and
 - How best to **help and interact with students possessing military experience**

Primary interest in joining the FLCs focused on the beneficial information presented as well as the diverse and thoughtful perspectives being offered. The most commonly reported primary interests were the:

- Value of the **learning experience** and the
- Value of **connecting with like-minded colleagues**
- “I...was excited to be a part of a group on this campus who had similar interests”

Ratings of the FLCs were very favorable with the vast majority of participants giving positive feedback regarding the overall experience, effectiveness, usefulness and applicability, as well as the value of the community building entailed within. The survey data showed that:

- **92%** rated the **experience as excellent**
- **92%** rated the **value and effectiveness as excellent**
- **94%** rated the **usefulness and applicability** of the materials presented as **very useful**
- **92%** **strongly agreed** that **community building** added to the value of the workshops

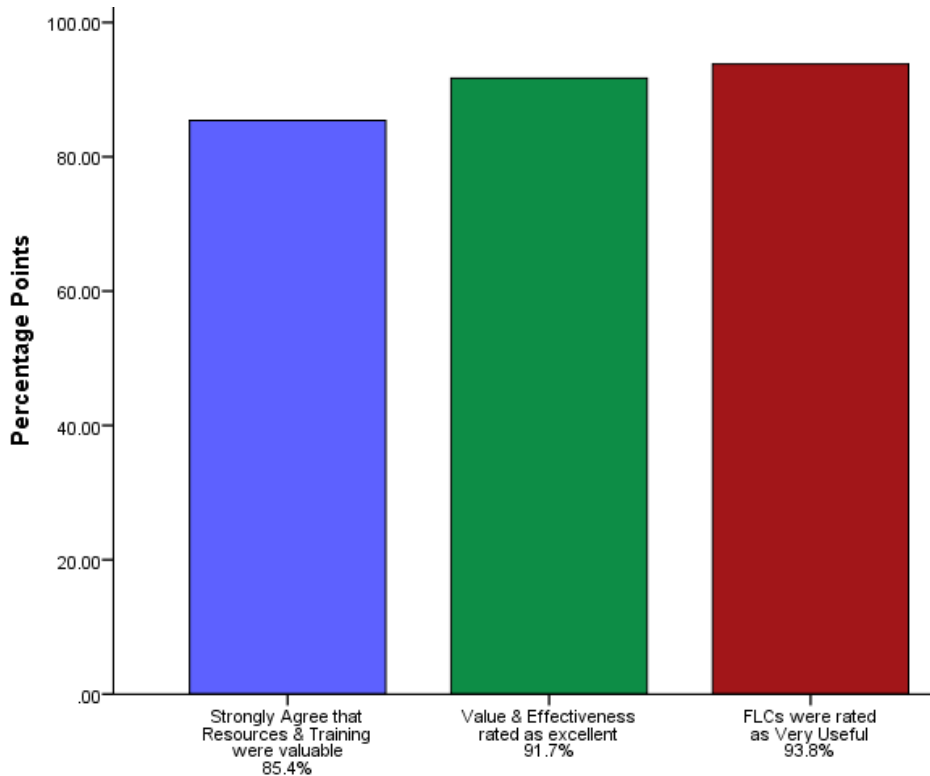


Table 1: Bar graph depicting the ratings of the Resources & Training, Value & Effectiveness, and Usefulness of the Faculty Learning Communities.

In addition to being appreciated overall, some the **most enjoyed aspects** reported by participating faculty centered on the sense of community fostered during the FLC sessions. Some of the most important aspects were:

- **Sharing experiences** with colleagues
- **Connecting** with colleagues
- **Giving and receiving support** from colleagues
- “Beyond a doubt, working with my colleagues...truly one of the highlights of my career”

Overall Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Participating faculty members shared some of their thoughts on the Faculty Learning Communities. Some informative feedback included:

- “I think this learning community can contribute a great deal to the university”
- “More time to talk and reflect with fewer structured activities”
- “[K]eep it going – it’s a wonderful project”

Continued Reading Section

Journal on Excellence in College Teaching – <http://celt.miamioh.edu/ject/>

Learning Communities Journal – <http://celt.miamioh.edu/lcj/>

TIAA Institute Theodore M. Hesburgh Award for Leadership Excellence –
<https://www.tiaainstitute.org/public/institute/awards/hesburgh>

Faculty Learning Community Goals Inventory – <http://www.units.miamioh.edu/flc/design/flcgi.pdf>

Faculty Learning Community Goals Inventory: Interpreting the Results –
http://www.units.miamioh.edu/flc/design/flcgi_results.pdf

Preliminary Planning Inventory for Faculty Learning Community Facilitators –
<http://www.units.miamioh.edu/flc/design/facilitators.pdf>

Planning Guide and Checklist for Faculty Learning Communities –
<http://www.units.miamioh.edu/flc/design/checklist.pdf>

16 Recommendations for Creating and Sustaining Effective Faculty Learning Communities –
<http://www.units.miamioh.edu/flc/16Recommendations.php>

Faculty Learning Communities: Recommendations for Initiating and Implementing an FLC at Your Campus – <http://www.units.miamioh.edu/flc/recommendations.php>

General FLC Bibliography – <http://www.units.miamioh.edu/flc/bibliography.php>