

Engaging Community

**FACULTY AND STAFF
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
TASK FORCE**



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Process

The Faculty and Staff Professional Development Task Force reviewed five strategic reports compiled for the University of Denver over the past year:

1. Strategic Issues Panel Report
2. Status of Faculty and Staff of Color Report
3. Status of Women Report
4. Strategic Planning Steering Committee Report
5. 2014 Sustainability Plan

The committee inventoried, cataloged, and discussed recommendations in these reports with professional development implications. We identified common themes which are presented here with specific action items and proposed tasks based on the likely time period by which they could be implemented. The full list of recommended actions is available upon request. The committee shared the draft report with the Faculty Senate and the Staff Advisory Council for feedback and input, incorporating selected recommendations.

Scope

The scope of work for this task force was limited to compiling and synthesizing professional development information contained in the aforementioned reports. As such, this committee's report does not, in and of itself, represent an exhaustive approach to strategic professional and career development for DU faculty and staff. The committee believes that developing and implementing a comprehensive employee development program should be a priority for the University and that the recommendations contained in this report should be integrated into such a program.

Definition

At the University of Denver, we define professional development as a comprehensive, sustained and intensive approach to increasing individual success to directly impact the workplace culture. A significant goal of professional development at DU is to foster collective responsibility for achieving institutional values and goals, including but not limited to student success, inclusive recruitment and retention, leadership development, compliance and accountability and community engagement. Effective professional development removes barriers and presents pathways to success. It develops a supportive environment that enables employees to be engaged and innovative. It helps employees discover possibilities. Effective professional development creates the "capacity to aspire" by illuminating pathways that bridge the gap between aspiration and achievement.

The committee believes we will achieve these objectives through the following:

- Effectively identifying and removing barriers to professional success
- Creating and promoting opportunities for career growth
- Establishing and developing core competencies for specific roles and job families
- Promoting the unique qualities and values of DU faculty and staff
- Building and fostering a diverse and inclusive community of engaged DU employees
- Empowering faculty and staff to take responsibility for their own professional and career development
- Holding deans, chairs, managers accountable for their role in developing faculty and staff in their units

Vision

Discussion of the meaning of professional development relative to the university's values and goals resulted in the committee's drafted vision for the initiative at DU:

DU will build a culture of ongoing holistic faculty and staff development to optimize our workforce and cultivate a community anchored by our core values.



Identified Goals

In our review, the following recurring themes surfaced as critical goals for the University to enhance the professional and career development of its faculty and staff:

1. Identify and communicate existing professional and career development resources.
2. Develop an infrastructure, including policies and resources, which will allow all DU faculty and staff to have access to meaningful professional growth opportunities that align with university goals and objectives.
3. Create development opportunities focused on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities faculty and staff require for success in their roles.
4. Establish clear and transparent career path options for DU faculty and staff.
5. Strengthen the core knowledge of managers and leaders across campus.
6. Foster a diverse and inclusive community of DU faculty and staff through orientation, re-orientation, mentorship, and networking.

Prioritized Recommendations

- Catalog existing professional development opportunities and resources.
- Revitalize new faculty and staff orientation program including exploring a re-orientation program for long-term faculty and staff members.
- Implement supervisory and leadership development program that addresses the needs of both newer managers and experienced leaders.
- Provide opportunities for staff and faculty development to help build a more cohesive and inclusive culture, including training on micro-aggressions, implicit bias, and other forms of discrimination that may not be widely understood.
- Mandate compliance and inclusion training for ALL campus search and hiring decision makers— hiring officers/committees.
- Charge each unit in the University with the responsibility of compiling the professional and career goals of faculty and staff through the annual performance management process. Reflect on the goals identified and use the information at both the university and unit levels to help direct development priorities.
- Assess all deans, chairs and managers, through annual reports/performance management process, on their active involvement with the professional and career development of faculty and staff.

Proposed Tasks by Goal

Goal 1: Identify and communicate existing professional development resources.

Short-Term Tasks:

- Catalog existing professional development opportunities and resources offered.
- Develop a strategy for communicating opportunities to the campus community.

Mid-Term Tasks:

- Audit, at the unit-level, efforts currently underway to provide professional and career development for staff.
- Audit, at the unit-level, efforts currently underway to provide professional development support for faculty concerning issues like securing external research funding, improving teaching, program development, review, and assessment.
- Share results of the two audits with leadership to learn from on-campus best practices and develop intervention and support plan campus-wide.

Goal 2: Develop an infrastructure that includes policies and resources that allow all DU faculty and staff to have access to meaningful professional growth opportunities

Short-Term Tasks:

- Create DU definitions for faculty and staff development—both professional (individual growth in position) and career (individual movement through positions/ranks, to a leadership position/chair/dean, at DU and/or beyond).
- Develop a written policy that both allows and encourages time for faculty and staff to engage in professional development and career advancement opportunities both within the University and externally.
- Assess all deans, chairs and managers, through annual reports/performance management process, on their active involvement with the professional and career development of faculty and staff.

Mid-Term Tasks:

- Charge each unit in the University with the responsibility of compiling the professional and career goals of faculty and staff through the annual performance management process. Reflect on the goals identified and use the information at both the university and unit levels to help direct development priorities.
- For staff, create a training bank (tracking time spent on career or professional development), similar to a sick or vacation bank. Highlight successful utilization of training banks and identify how/why it worked. Identify and remove barriers to the degree practical.
- Encourage staff to explore pathways to advancement via academic programs.
- For faculty, develop seminars, workshops and one-on-one sessions to facilitate various types of peer learning, including peer review of course materials, scholarship, observation of in-class teaching, mentoring new and existing faculty, and facilitation of teaching partners and reciprocal classroom visits.

Long-Term Tasks:

- Design and publish website that compiles all professional development and career advancement programs and opportunities provided broken down by knowledge and skill areas (e.g. leadership, communication, inclusive excellence, mentoring, understanding the university, sustainability, budget) and/or by units providing the programs.

- Create a personalized training history on Pioneer Web for staff organized around the key knowledge and skill areas. The history can be incorporated into the annual performance management review as a list of accomplishments from the last year.

Goal 3: Provide development opportunities tailored to the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities faculty and staff require for success in their roles.

Short-Term Tasks:

- Create new opportunities for faculty to convene across divisional lines in serious and purposeful ways; e.g., all-campus Interdisciplinary Seminars on Big Questions.
- Utilize existing skill assessment tools (Myers Briggs, DiSC, etc.) to help staff and faculty identify strengths, career & job goals, as well as inform work teams of the compatibility of different work styles.
- Include part-time and temporary faculty in training opportunities.

Mid-Term Tasks:

- For faculty, develop a program to advance skills in securing external funding for research. Provide on-going support for grant writing and budget management for PIs.
- For faculty, provide resources including workshops to support experiential learning, including field-based teaching and learning.
- Develop series of workshops around interdisciplinary teaching and team-teaching, inclusive excellence, and sustainability in the classroom.
- Develop workshops, discussion groups and on-line resources to support chairs and deans.
- For DU staff, understand and catalog the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) required for positions and connect professional development opportunities to job families.
- Engage faculty from across DU in addressing the question “What kinds of teaching do we aspire to at DU, and what knowledge, skills, and abilities are required to reach our goals?” Use the results of these conversations to inform professional development efforts.
- Conduct gap analysis between existing professional and career development offerings and expected KSAs for staff positions. This will help document where additional offerings need to be developed. Match existing offerings to KSA, and create/identify development opportunities to fill in gaps.
- Develop programs to assist staff and faculty in learning about different academic units and programs and how the University operates.
- Provide professional development opportunities for faculty and staff who wish to learn more about budget development and environmental assessment.

Long-Term Tasks:

- From the gap analysis, notify staff members, and supervisors, when a comparable training is coming up. Personalize training invitations utilizing live phone invitations to increase engagement and commitment.
- Provide dependable technology in all classrooms, and appropriate training for faculty to utilize it to enhance teaching.
- Develop a University Teaching fellows program, to foster a culture of excellence in teaching by leading seminars, mentoring individual faculty members, working closely with Teaching Associates, and developing teaching materials, resources, and programs to benefit student learning throughout the campus.
- Develop departmental teaching-focused pilot programs, in which an entire department works together to improve teaching and learning effectiveness—with support from campus resources and visiting experts in their field.

Goal 4: Establish clear and transparent career path options for DU faculty and staff.

Mid-Term Tasks:

- Develop and launch a comprehensive staff development plan and support resources to match that can be tracked like a student's academic progress report. Should hold both employee and supervisor responsible for naming goals and engaging resources.
- Create a development program that describes to staff the different phases of career paths, possible career ladders, and experiences need to advance.
- Provide staff development programs to provide opportunity, support, and training to staff, particularly staff of color and women, to move to the next step on the career ladder and/or to pursue a degree (or second degree).
- Provide faculty development programs for faculty, with particular outreach to faculty of color and women, who wish to pursue leadership and administrative positions.

Long-Term Tasks:

- Within academic units develop clear criteria for promotion to full professor and provide structured support for faculty aspiring to attain full professor status.

Goal 5: Strengthen the core knowledge of managers and leaders across campus.

Short-Term Tasks:

- Mandate compliance and inclusion training for ALL campus search and hiring decision makers— hiring officers/committees.

Mid-Term Tasks:

- Create system for keeping hiring decision makers current: annual updates/refreshers.
- Continue and expand supervisor core competency training for faculty and staff.
- Continue methods that work. Such as, the required Legal & Policy Update should be live only, with no one being able to hide behind using the online version. By requiring higher management to attend in person, it projects a team that is engaged and accessible, raising their visibility.

Goal 6: Emphasize our values and foster a diverse and inclusive community of DU faculty and staff through orientation, re-orientation, mentorship, and networking.

Short-Term Tasks:

- IE Collective Education subcommittee launches IE competency "passport/certificate" training program.
- Create small, easy steps that encourage unit leaders to actively promote inclusive excellence. For instance, unit leaders would personally invite their staff to attend the Diversity Summit and the Women's Conference. Further, unit leaders could prepare a schedule that allows for all willing staff to attend while also covering essential duties.
- Acknowledgement from unit leaders for both participation and leadership by faculty and staff in campus-wide community events, like the Diversity Summit, Women's Conference, and Internationalization Summit, by announcing to the unit. Unit leaders engage with faculty and staff in discussions of how the skills and information learned through these community events was incorporated back into the work of the unit.
- Revitalize and expand new faculty and staff orientation to reflect holistic excellence in performance, growth and community involvement and include such topics as diversity and inclusion and information about different academic units.
- Provide annual showcase for highlighting best efforts of faculty and staff; circulate regular newsletter to highlight such efforts more frequently.

- Provide opportunities for staff and faculty development to help build a more cohesive and inclusive culture, including training on microaggressions, implicit bias, and other forms of discrimination that may not be widely understood.

Mid-Term Tasks:

- Develop a long-term plan for “re”-orientations – periodic programs that will be designed to faculty and staff in mid- and late careers, giving them the opportunity to reassess their career paths and goals and identify potential opportunities for new training and professional development opportunities.
- Continue, and develop further, campus-wide mentorship program, based on national best practices, existing campus efforts and staff needs. Possibly modify the recently-created HR mentoring program to eliminate some of the uncertainty that may have resulted in less participation. First, solicit those with any interest in becoming a mentor. Second, develop their mentoring skills. Third, present these mentors as being available, so that staff members have the opportunity to select from the pool of known mentors.
- Continue, and develop further, faculty mentorship programs. Audit units for methods currently in place and share best practices with other units. Make sure each academic unit has a faculty mentorship program in place.
- Develop formal programs employing senior staff and faculty of color as mentors to staff and faculty who are earlier in their career paths.

Long-Term Tasks:

- Create specialist position in OTL to focus on faculty development in the area of diversity and inclusion.

Possible Challenges

- Accountability: Responsibility for professional development resides in every unit and with every individual. How does the institution ensure that objectives are met?
- Support: How will unit-level leaders be supported in meeting their objectives?
- Resources: How will Human Resources and units acquire the resources necessary to meet objectives?
- Measurement: How will we know when we have been successful?
- Effective, on-going communication: How will we share best practices?
- Trust-building: How will we foster a culture of trust and collaboration?

Recommended Next Steps

- Gather community feedback regarding these recommendations.
- Establish a council or implementation working group to continue study and support the implementation of these and other recommendations. This might be a role for unit-level Human Resources liaisons.
- Establish a means of on-going communication and dialogue to keep professional development on the cutting edge.

Additional Resources

Teaching Excellence Initiatives, Academic Planning Committee, Faculty Senate 2010-2011
<http://www.du.edu/facsen/media/documents/TeachingExcellenceInitiativeMay132011.pdf>

University of Denver Teaching Task Force Report, June 2005
<http://www.du.edu/facsen/media/documents/TeachingTaskForceFinalJune2005.pdf>

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