

Faculty Development Committee

Minutes 9.19.25

In attendance: Karen Benckenstein, Melissa Eder, Brandon Fansler, Victor Favela, Chris Hudson, Lynne Kenney, Stephen Malley, Lori Petty, Anna Rodriguez, Greg Rohloff, and Kara Starkweather.

Members not in attendance: Maria Johnson, Chelsea Thurman, Elizabeth Copley, Chris George, Will Ratliff, and Frank Sobey.

Welcome

The members of the committee introduced themselves.

Purpose of Faculty Development

Victor began the meeting by explaining the purpose of the committee and the changes that have taken place since last year. Before, there were about twice as many members, but they found that around 12 people did all of the work. So now, the committee has been reduced in size. The Committee addresses more than just the ACES conference – focusing on year-round faculty needs and training.

Dr. Sobey has asked the Committee to evaluate the interest in a faculty retreat. Are they well-received or viewed as an onus forced on faculty? Greg talked about how much he enjoyed the retreat in Santa Fe ~2013. What would a retreat now look like? Who would be involved? Everybody can't go, so how will it be decided who is able to attend? If it's writing something, many people won't be selected. Stephen commented that his colleague routinely asks to participate (seeking service on committees, hoping to take part in activities like this retreat) but is overlooked every time. How can that be addressed?

After previous retreats, faculty complained most often about the extracurriculars. What would the focus of the retreat be – what would we work on? Maybe AI? What theme and deliverable would be produced? Kara suggested mini retreats over 2-3 Saturdays. That way, an entire weekend doesn't have to be given up, and each day could focus on a specific goal. Maybe going to Palo Duro Canyon for a day. There are lots of places in our area that could work – the ropes course, Ceta Canyon, etc. The day-long mini retreats would also eliminate the need for any extracurriculars.

Committee members are now encouraged to informally poll their colleagues to find out if there's interest in a retreat (or these mini retreats) and to get feedback on what would be most appealing.

ACES 2026

ACES will be on January 15 and has been restructured. A complaint from attendees of previous ACES conferences was that their students' needs weren't addressed and the faculty didn't feel that they fit, particularly those from other campuses. Robert and Victor have met with numerous individuals (deans, faculty) to determine what would better meet needs and appeal to more faculty. Some have already acted on those meetings – David Hall has been actively encouraging his East Campus faculty to submit presentation proposals to ACES 2026. The venue has changed to the First Responders Academy and there will be fewer sessions (down from 40 to more like 30). There will be informational tables featuring services provided by departments like the Library and the Writers' Corner. There will also be a meditation room, chair massages – some stress-relieving activities/areas.

We'll have two keynotes: Rich Gagnon, the City of Amarillo's Managing Director and CIO, will be the first, speaking on how Amarillo College fits into Amarillo. He grew up here and will be focused on local issues. The second keynote will take place in the afternoon, delivered by Jose Bowen on AI *and* non-AI (either/or). He wrote the book *Teaching Naked Techniques: A Practical Guide to Designing Better Classes*. The last session will be division breakouts to share what was learned and get feedback about the event immediately. Almost like a debriefing with your dean. What about having a panel discussion with students sharing what their needs are?

Adjuncts need to be invited. It would be nice if dual credit teachers could come, but they'll be in their schools and won't get release days for this. Although CTL is making inroads in providing resources and support to adjuncts, this committee could target adjuncts, to provide better opportunities for their development.

Applications to present at ACES will be due the end of Fall Break – by October 27. Robert and Victor will be offering a workshop (for those who want a little help) to help faculty polish their proposals so that they're ready to be delivered at ACES. The hope is to have the roster finalized in October. To keep up with that goal, we'll need to set the subcommittees soon. The members of this committee will head a subcommittee and ask a trusted person or two to help. Faculty who help in this way will receive a thank-you that they can use toward their service requirement, even though they're not officially on this committee. Robert will send the call for presentations next week.

There are 9 classrooms in the Academy, so we might only need 27 sessions (not even quite 30)? Each session will be for 45 minutes. At some conferences, they've shortened the sessions down to 15-20 minutes – that might also be something to consider. Offering duplicate sessions might enable people to attend more of the sessions they were interested in.

Last year, faculty didn't get their materials submitted early enough. Lori suggested requiring presenters to attend a meeting in November to hand over their materials. CTL will also link the ACES website to CTL's, as an archive of previous conferences, in a place where faculty will be finding other helpful resources. Committee members will soon have access to the shared Google Drive folder with ACES materials.

Faculty Development Committee Stipends

Full-time faculty will receive an \$800 special assignment in the Spring semester. Lori's working on Greg's adjunct stipend.

Action Items

Sign-ups for the subcommittees:

- Donations (or Courtesy) – not yet determined; possibly Chelsea or Trena?
 - Lori requested that there be a better system this time for the drawing, to ensure that winners know which prizes they won and that they're delivered more promptly.
- Presentations – Robert & Greg
- Logistics – Steve & Chris, with Jacob's help
- Program/Website – Karen, Brandon, & Lynne
- Registration/Volunteers – Anna & Melissa
- Surveys – Kara

Consensus seemed to be that there will be no theme other than “ACES 2026.”

Will we get t-shirts this year? Lori said there’s money, but we should do better at determining what sizes are needed – ask participants for their size, along with dietary restrictions, on a registration form.

Attendees would only need to register to attend the conference as a whole – not for specific sessions.

This registration form could also give participants their drawing information for the door prizes, which might streamline the door prize delivery.

Previous conference attendees expressed a desire for box lunches, so if the café can’t do that (promptly, and at a different site, now at the Academy), maybe Jason’s would work.