

MULTI-CAMPUS CONFERENCING FOR FACULTY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

In *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities for the Professoriate* (1990), the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching delivers a powerful challenge:

...the work of the scholar ...means stepping back from one's investigation, looking for connections, building bridges between theory and practice, and communicating one's knowledge effectively to students.

Maritime colleges are in a unique position to affect the constantly changing nature of teaching and learning as well as the challenges surrounding the future of "faculty work." *Scholarship Reconsidered* should be the catalyst for redefining maritime education, with a focus on a seamless and interdependent relationship of learner centered activities. Maritime education, with its effective degree productivity and assessment, should serve as an exemplar for other professional preparation programs as well as for the traditional arts, sciences and humanities disciplines on comprehensive campuses. But, this will require that our faculties possess the same "intentionality" we strive to imbue in our students. And, if our faculties are to be able to intentionally share best practices with their students and peers in a two-way efficacious manner, our maritime institutions need to support their professional development, particularly in terms of addressing any shortcomings associated with narrowly focused or otherwise limited preparation for an academic position.

In order to provide this professional development in "added value" ways, multi-campus conferencing, introduced in the "Teaching & Learning in the Maritime Environment" Conference held at The California Maritime Academy in March 2007, provides an efficacious and replicable model for improving faculty work in professional disciplines within and beyond maritime education. Specifically, this approach includes best teaching and experiential learning practices, research findings, and exemplars of integration in areas such as curriculum development, enrollment management, simulation, and "semester-at-sea" or other "sea term" operations, and achieves the following outcomes:

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- Recognize the contributions of all faculty in the maritime *milieu*
- Introduce newer educators to the basics of contemporary pedagogy and scholarship
- Provide an opportunity for scholarly papers (including “Proceedings” publication) of best “learner-centered” practices in maritime education
- Strengthen the resource network of maritime and comprehensive university campuses

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I am now a Vice President for Academic Affairs at the smallest of the California State University institutions, The California Maritime Academy, with an array of challenges and opportunities ranging from familiar to novel (e.g., the ship as laboratory). During my first year in the position, I began to think about how best to use conferencing to address the most immediate needs of the campus, in particular the growing importance and utilization of “practice faculty” (also known as clinical or vocational faculty depending on the professional discipline in question). Whether it is the maritime vocational instructor moving from shipboard operations to an academy simulation laboratory, or other “practice” faculty such as the registered nurse moving from the hospital setting to the campus setting, the challenges of understanding and embracing the pedagogical and scholarly demands associated with a dynamic balance of theoretical and experiential education can be daunting for those who enter the faculty ranks from a primarily “industrial” rather than “ivory” (tower) professional preparation arena.

The current movement in higher education known as *Reconsidered Scholarship* has clarified the true nature of faculty work, and has also opened many avenues for non-traditional, “practice” faculty to make, and be recognized for, scholarly contributions while also creating a more seamless relationship between theory and practice in an academic environment. Nonetheless, many practice faculty need orientation to the pedagogical and scholarly enterprises if for no other reason than to better understand that their role is not to “teach” students what they (the practice faculty) know. Rather it is to guide the students to a place of being “intentional learners” capable of demonstrating that they are informed, empowered and responsibly engaged. Ironically, many of the more traditionally trained (Ph.D.) faculty have much to learn in this respect as well (witness the efforts of the CGS/Pew Professors for the Future project).

In order to more fully establish added value approaches to higher education, including “reconsidered scholarship” and “intentional learning”, the “New Academy” needs to focus on proactively crafting “intentional faculty” who, themselves, are informed, empowered and responsibly engaged in the generation, preservation, and distribution of learning in a digital, “we don’t own knowledge” world. Guiding such efforts should be the work of faculty professional development on every campus, and that work should address the needs of traditionally prepared academics as well as the needs of the grow-

ing cadre of practice faculty, particularly within professional schools and colleges. However, the establishment of campus-by-campus mechanisms to provide development for the dynamic acculturation of a “New Academy” may be a challenge beyond the capability of many smaller or specialized campuses with limited resources. And this raises the question: Is there an efficacious, “added value” way to approach this issue?

At the California Maritime Academy, a small campus with limited faculty development resources, and a significant cohort of “practice” faculty who are rich with industrial experience, we are examining new ways to nourish and equip all of our faculty to be “reconsidered scholars” adept at guiding students to become “intentional learners”.

As a campus without “economy of scale” and with expensive instruction, Cal Maritime is challenged to have multi-purpose undertakings. Thus, and because we are associated with other “maritime” mission or milieu campuses, Cal Maritime spearheaded an unusual professional gathering in spring 2007. “Teaching & Learning in the Maritime Environment,” drew more than 125 participants from maritime (and other) institutions, provided vastly different faculty, albeit with a common thread of “the sea,” an opportunity to share and learn about best practices and new discoveries with sessions ranging from workshops introducing basic pedagogical approaches to the presentation of scholarly breakthroughs and exemplars across the “reconsidered scholarship” continuum of discovery, teaching, application and integration.

How did the Cal Maritime approach differ from the more traditional disciplinary association conference, which might have some of the above activities? Firstly, the final format and content of the program as well as the target audience was fashioned by faculty professional development personnel from an identified group of “maritime” campuses. Secondly, a matrix of reconsidered scholarship focal areas with topics for varying faculty audiences (e.g., practice faculty, research faculty) within each area, assured that there were utilitarian opportunities for faculty whose attendance was supported by their home campus to be (re)oriented to the “big picture” of contemporary higher education. Thirdly, assessment of the conference and a post-event debrief included attention to establishing what still needs to happen “back on campus.” In addition to these and other differences, and to a focus of this presentation, the conference format and planning mechanisms are replicable for other groups of institutions and/or disciplinary areas.

This session is based on a 60 minute seminar format during which I will start with a presentation of the process by which the first “North American Conference on Pedagogy and Scholarship in the Maritime Environment” was planned and produced - from concept development across several campuses to project implementation and event management, with special attention to the replicable aspects of the project, and “lessons learned” for future undertakings. The presentation will be followed by an interactive portion, which will focus on audience input regarding perceived positives and negatives of the multi-campus conference concept, and “brainstorming” regarding specific

situations on the campuses of the session participants. Framing the interaction will be the requirement that kudos and criticisms address the overall intent to use the conference as a utilitarian faculty development activity as well as an academic exercise of free choice.

Seminar attendees should emerge from this session with a comprehensive overview of the process “from scratch” necessary to assemble and implement a multi-campus (and/or multi-country) faculty development undertaking. In addition, attendees should come away with a better understanding of the nature and value of “practice faculty” as well as the challenges they face. Lastly, the session will provide a replicable model of “added value” and self-supporting faculty development when resources are limited. Note that this session addresses the “globalization and M.E.T.” section (world maritime excellence) of the IAMU 8th AGA at the Odessa National Maritime Academy in September 2007.