



Needs Assessment Report

University of North Carolina at Wilmington

MIT 530

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Section I Executive Summary

The Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) was established in 1992 at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington (UNCW) to assist the university in fulfilling its commitment to strengthening undergraduate and graduate instruction. CTE provides resources and assistance exclusively for the faculty of UNCW, which cover a wide variety of pedagogical issues and topics. Some are in the form of group workshops or individual projects. The current director Dr. Patricia Turrisi expressed a problem related to low participation and involvement in CTE programs by UNCW faculty. Specifically the issue was expressed as “CTE desires more input from its constituents (faculty) as to specific programs and services needed relative to CTE’s mission.” At present, there are a low number of unsolicited requests for CTE services and assistance. This makes it difficult to plan workshops and provide other resources of interest to the faculty of UNCW. Dr. Turrisi described the *optimal* or desired level of input, as a significant increase in requests and usage from the current level of requests, both in quantity and quality. She would like a more formalized system of requests for CTE services, which would generate over 25 requests per semester for services.

In an attempt to better understand the current and desired aspect of this problem as well solicit opinions as to causes and potential solutions a four-phase needs analysis was conducted.

1. Conduct a personal interview with Dr. Turrisi, CTE director.
2. Review the limited historical data from CTE pertaining to workshop participation.
3. Conduct a personal interview with Dr. Raymond Burt, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs.
4. Send and analyze an electronic opinion survey to the entire UNCW faculty. After completing this research, several common factors from the sources emerged.
 - CTE is clearly underutilized and faculty requests for services are severely lacking.
 - Faculty organization lacks a formal system of identifying, generating, and reporting pedagogical development needs to CTE.
 - Workshop participation is constrained by a combination of faculty time availability and low prioritization and incentives.
 - Inconsistent methods of evaluating and measuring faculty pedagogical skills development exist across various departments.
 - Faculties with the least amount of experience tend to participate in CTE more often than those with more experience.

We concluded that the issue expressed by CTE in terms of participation and requests for services, was due to systematic problems within UNCW faculty and administration, which constrained pedagogical development in general. Other issues specific to CTE (misunderstood, awareness of services, time) did have a major impact on faculty participation and input.

We recommend that the university make participation in CTE a priority for faculty and alleviate time constraints in order for faculty to be able to participate in CTE workshops. UNCW should then formalize the process of faculty evaluations and communication with CTE.

Section II Overview

Context

The University of North Carolina at Wilmington (UNCW), established in 1969, is part of the North Carolina state system of higher education. It offers degrees in over 90 majors to a combined graduate and undergraduate enrollment of 11,000 students. It is growing student enrollment at a rate in excess of 7% yearly. This requires growth in total number of faculty and programs/courses offered. Developing new courses and improving existing ones are fundamental to maintaining the integrity and vitality of the University's educational programs.

The University Planning Council recently adopted statements of UNCW's strategic vision, identity and core values, which included:

Teaching Excellence

Excellence in undergraduate teaching at the forefront of knowledge and technology has been a hallmark at UNCW, recognized and rewarded since its inception. A commitment to teaching excellence requires that students and teachers engage in an array of intimate learning experiences generally associated with smaller institutions and continue to build upon knowledge gained through such close interactions throughout a life of learning.

Currently, the faculty is composed of over 464 full time faculty (86% of which have a PhD degree) combined with 168 part time faculty. In response to the North Carolina legislative mandate for all state colleges and universities to provide teaching and learning resources for all faculties, a new program titled the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) was established in 1992. Dr. Patricia Turrisi currently directs the center. Other CTE staff includes a technology and an administrative assistant along with 3 as-needed faculty members (Table 3). Dr. Turrisi has headed this program since 1996 and is leaving this position in May 2004. Reporting directly to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Dr. Raymond Burt, the CTE utilizes a board of advisors comprised of department chairpersons and faculty representing various academic areas.

The Center for Teaching Excellence is dedicated to assisting the university in strengthening undergraduate and graduate instruction. CTE recognizes that excellence in teaching is only achieved through teaching scholarship, which involves continuous scrutiny of course content and methods of instruction, knowledge of modern educational techniques and practices, and analysis of the effects of different teaching methods on student learning. The CTE provides resources and assistance exclusively for the faculty of UNCW. CTE resources cover a wide variety of pedagogical issues and topics. Some are in the form of group workshops or individual projects. Other items are available online. Faculty participation in CTE workshops and other activities is voluntary.

To increase opportunities for professional development, CTE participates in a variety of resource-sharing consortia, both formal and informal, with the University of North Carolina system. In addition, CTE participates in statewide and national associations that support the mission of improving higher education.

UNCW instructors are required to produce an annual professional development report (PDR), which includes evidence of improvement in teaching. Peers within the departments base the evidence on evaluations and CTE provides opportunities for faculty in meeting this goal.

Problem and Optimal Performance

During an interview on 2/16/04 at her office, Dr. Turrisi, Director of CTE, expressed a problem that she described as, “CTE desires more input from its constituents (faculty) as to specific programs and services needed relative to CTE mission.” At present, there are a low number of unsolicited requests for CTE services and assistance. This makes it difficult to plan workshops and provide other resources of interest to the faculty of UNCW.

There is no formal procedure or system for receiving and generating input to the CTE. Most requests come from individual faculty on an informal basis and represent their own specific needs. Quantifiable measures of requests are not specifically tracked. However, it is estimated that there is a downward trend from 15-20 requests several years ago to approximately 6 in the academic year 2003-04.

Dr. Turrisi described the *optimal* or desired level of input, as a significant increase in requests and usage from the current level of requests, both in quantity and quality. She would like a more formalized system of requests for CTE services, which would generate over 25 requests for services. The preferred outcome of input would be for 75% of CTE workshops dedicated to pedagogy training requests and 25 % focused on new “cutting edge” issues.

Dr. Turrisi feels the causes of this problem are systemic in nature and relate to:

- Incentive: Faculty is not rewarded for utilizing CTE services to improve teaching skills. Decentralized and inconsistent methods of evaluating teaching improvements limits emphasis on utilization of CTE services. There is no formal system of identifying and organizing teaching improvement needs within the various academic departments.
- Motivation: Faculty and department chairs have increasing responsibilities and workloads, which limit time available for attending workshops. Improving basic pedagogical skills has become less of a priority when combined with focus on other responsibilities, including incorporating technology into teaching which is not a service offered by CTE. In addition faculty salaries have been stagnant for 3 years.

As a possible solution, Dr. Turrisi envisions a system whereby there is a formal procedure for each department head to provide input to CTE, which addresses the needs of the faculty within their respective departments on an annual basis. This input could be incorporated into annual plans of revised services and resources offered by CTE. This increased input of actual faculty needs combined with increases in rewards for participation would result in a much more effective and beneficial CTE program.

Purpose

The purpose of this needs assessment plan was two-fold. First, it defines the problem and finds the performance desired by obtaining and reviewing relevant extant data on actual performance levels, along with interviewing the administrator(s) responsible for CTE as to optimal performances and input system(s) for CTE. It also gathers data from stakeholders within the UNCW academic departments. The analysis of the data results determines overall opinions about potential causes and solutions of the existing problems with CTE.

Section III Implementation Methods

Theoretical Basis

The theoretical model for needs assessment as described by Allison Rossett was used as a basis for this plan. The Training Needs Assessment model provides an approach to analyzing performance problems in the form of researching and identifying actual and optimal performance followed by gathering extant data and input from stakeholders and other data relevant to people concerning feelings, causes, and solutions. This purpose-based model describes and provides details on the use of various instruments to gain needed information.

Needs Assessment Team

The assessment team consists of four graduate students from the Masters of Instructional Technology (MIT) Program at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. The team shared the overall decision making process and divided other tasks which included making contact with stakeholders, writing survey and interview questions, developing and following timelines, analyzing data using SPSS, writing and editing all documents and reports.

Data Collection Process

A data collection summary (Table 1), a stage planner (Table 2), and a timetable (Table 4) were devised to guide the data collection process. To better define the problem and identify causes, at stage 2, all extant data available on CTE participation by faculty was analyzed and summarized.

Secondly, during stage 3, an interview was conducted with Dr. Raymond Burt, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs. The director of CTE reports directly to Dr. Burt. Dr. Burt was presented with the problem as defined by Dr. Turrisi along with supportive extant data to solicit his input as to the optimal levels of requests for CTE along with related opinions on causes and potential solutions.

Once problem was defined and validated by Dr. Burt, university faculty was surveyed to identify causes and potential solutions. Each faculty member received an online survey to complete.

Upon completion of all information gathering, data was analyzed for evidence of true causes along with generating a list of potential solutions.

Description of instruments: Interview and survey questions are included in the appendix.

Section IV Data Analysis and Findings

Description of Data Analysis Methods and Processes

Stage 1: Interview with Dr. Turrisi, CTE Director

Stage 2: Analysis of extant data from CTE

The data collected at stage 2 includes workshop requests, participation levels, and participant satisfaction. The data could better quantify actual problem and search for insights into root cause or causes.

All relevant datum were requested from CTE, however the only data available pertained to workshops provided to UNCW faculty in 2002. Approximately 15 separate workshops were conducted dealing with a variety of pedagogical subjects with participation ranging from 5 to 19 faculty members. Also a “summer camp” workshop was provided on Teaching and Learning Styles. There were 43 participants in summer camp.

At conclusion of each workshop, participants were asked to complete an anonymous 6-item question evaluation sheet using Likert 4 point rating scale . The evaluation provided 4 response options of strongly agree, agree, disagree, and N/A and to solicited specific feedback on:

1. Convenience of time and place
2. Consistency of program with expectations
3. Usefulness
4. Interest in other similar programs
5. Willingness to recommend to colleagues
6. Intent on applying workshop learning.

In analyzing results of the extant data for individual workshops, participant levels were low and some evaluation responses were incomplete. We considered an analysis of all 2002 workshops combined; however the composite data was invalid due to the topic specific nature of the evaluation and also unknown numbers of new vs. repeat participants.

Examining the data regarding CTE services requests from faculty, revealed that participation levels were low. This result validated the actual problem discussed with indicated by the Director of CTE. The workshop participants’ evaluations of the 6 criteria mentioned above appeared to be positive (Agree) in general. Participation dissatisfaction is not a factor contributing to the low usage of CTE services by faculty.

Stage 3: Interview with Dr. Raymond Burt, Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs (oversees CTE)

The purpose of the interview was to verify the actual problem and gain perspective on causes and obtain solutions and vision of what CTE should do to increase participation and faculty requests.

Dr. Burt agreed with the CTE participation problem which was based on Dr. Turrisi’s comments and limited extant data. He acknowledged that the overall mission of CTE was being reexamined by UNCW administration in relation to its stated mission. The cited causes of low participation were:

1. Lack of incentive and motivation for faculty to expend time in pursuing teaching excellence (salary increases have not existed for 3 years and actual compensation levels dropping due to higher benefit costs for faculty)
2. Low priority of professional growth in teaching skills (significant variation amongst individual departments in faculty evaluation methods and absence of standard quantifiable performance measures.)
3. Increasing demands on faculty, which limits time available to pursue pedagogical development.

Dr. Burt described his vision of CTE as being part of a UNCW new faculty development plan. CTE would be a complete resource for faculty and administration in providing more customized individual based services aimed at improving overall level of teaching skills and performance at UNCW. This concept was part of his vision of “A Community of Scholars”. In discussing possible constraints to these changes, Dr. Burt specifically mentioned lack of funding, resistance to adopting standard quantifiable faculty performance measures, and continued demands on faculty for non-teaching tasks such as publishing. He felt as though the entire UNCW community were stakeholders with faculty acceptance being the key to change.

Stage 4: Online Survey of UNCW faculty

The purpose of the survey was to gather information concerning:

1. The faculty views and perceptions of CTE in relation to their own needs and motivations.
2. Amount and type of prior interaction with CTE, causes, and suggested improvements.
3. Individual respondent experience and faculty level at UNCW, age group and Gender.

Data analysis and Findings

Respondent data from electronic survey:

1. Valid responses received from 131 recipients, which represented approximately 20 % of surveyed population.
2. Of this group, 90% were faculty members as opposed to department chairs or administration (10%).
3. Within faculty members, of the 76% who responded to faculty position question; 25% were tenured associate professors, 6% non-tenured associate professors, 24% assistant professors, and 20% professors.
4. Gender breakdown was 60% male/ 40% female with relatively normal distribution of age between 25 and 65 with average in the 46 to 55 years old category.
5. The result of employment years at UNCW indicated almost half (45%) of the respondents had been employed 5 years or less.

Respondent opinions:

1. Perception of CTE purpose varied significantly and lacked consensus understanding amongst faculty.
2. 87%) indicated participating in 0-2 pedagogical workshops other than CTE during past year.
3. Of those having participated in CTE workshops, only 47 % indicated they had clearly met their expectations, while 91% indicated never requesting workshops on a specific subject.
4. Of faculty not having participated in CTE, lack of time was clearly indicated as primary reason (44%) followed by not major priority (15%), and lack of incentive (10%). Of the 15% of respondents who choose other/comments, scheduling conflicts was the most prevalent reason cited for not participating.
5. Less than half (49%) believes that CTE will benefit their career.
6. (8%) of respondents have requested a workshop topic. (91%) of those requests were made through the department chair.
7. Given a multiple choices of strategies to increase faculty's use of CTE resources, 131 respondents ranked selected as follows:
 - More incentives, stipends- 70/131
 - Better faculty knowledge of programs- 66/131
 - Structured communications within depts. About workshop needs-52/131
 - On line delivery of workshops- 41/131
8. (90 %) of all respondents indicated a willingness to utilize CTE if their suggested strategies for improvement were implemented with majority (68%) willing to commit 0-4 hours per semester.

Statistical Result of Cross Tabulation Analysis

The survey question five asking the faculty about the number of years of experience they had been working at UNCW. The results were were cross-tabulated with question eight which asked how many workshops have been taken in the past two years. The cross tabulation result shows a significance at .001. This means that faculty with less experience at UNCW take more workshops than more experienced faculty. The actual cross tab analysis and the survey questions are located in the appendix.

Section V Results Interpretation and Recommendations

Interpretation of the Findings

The initial problem addressed in this needs analysis was that the CTE desired more input from its constituents (faculty) as to specific programs and services needed relative to CTE mission. From our data, we have uncovered a variety of potential causes for the lack of input. They are as follows:

1. A constraint on faculty time due to ever increasing workloads is a significant factor in contributing to unable to participate in pedagogical skills development.
2. Perception of mission and purpose of CTE is not clearly understood by a great number of UNCW faculty members faculties.
3. The university has no formal standardized process for identifying, implementing, and measuring pedagogical development amongst various departments.
4. The UNCW system does not put a high priority on facilitating and rewarding faculty skills or professional development. Personal career benefits of CTE programs are not known or appreciated.
5. Other issues specific to CTE include lack of faculty awareness of program offerings, schedule conflicts, and marginal satisfaction of program participants.

Prioritization of the solutions:

Based on the findings, the needs assessment team generated the following solutions to the problem and the team further prioritized the solutions via analyzing the pros and cons of each solution.

Potential Solutions	Advantages	Disadvantages
Make faculty time available for pedagogical development and make CTE the first choice for professional development	Pedagogical skills of faculty are greatly increased and students benefit; resources become available on campus on a regularly scheduled basis	Possible budget constraints if workshop demands increase drastically; demand for professional trainers may not be easily met; difficult to alleviate other time consuming responsibilities already in place
Resolve system and administrative issues related to prioritizing, offering incentives, and formalizing faculty skills development.	All departments will systematically address professional development needs relevant to their topic areas; faculty receive incentive benefits	Conflicts may occur with other faculty responsibilities; resistance to change within each department may vary
The mission of CTE along with revision and awareness of its services should be addressed.	Departments become aware of resources available; CTE begins to become an integral part of professional	Positive change may be minimal at first and progress slowly

Address the solutions through concrete and operational statement using action verb.	development; CTE mission is recognized and accomplished	
Formalize the process of requesting services from CTE	CTE can plan accordingly and develop resources; professional development needs can be met	Resistance to the procedural change may occur

Prioritization

Address the solutions through concrete and operational statement using action verb.

1. The mission of CTE along with revision and awareness of its services should be addressed.
2. The issue of faculty time available for pedagogical development in general and making CTE the first choice for professional development.
3. System and administrative issues related to prioritizing, offering incentives, and formalizing faculty skills development is critical, once the faculty time issue is resolved.
4. Formalize the process of requesting services from CTE.

Recommendations

The following are the prioritized solutions recommended by the needs assessment:

All UNCW departments must first be made aware of the mission and purposes of CTE. CTE should disseminate flyers, revise the website, and conduct open house events to promote the availability of the facility. Once departments know that CTE is a convenient and dedicated resource for professional development, general interest in CTE will begin to increase.

Time constraints should be addressed by both CTE and university or departmental administration. Flexible scheduling of CTE workshops should be offered (repeat offerings if possible). Workshop schedules should be made available and reminders of all activities should be made available to all departments. Departments should review semester schedules and find time to set aside for participating in CTE professional development activities. Efforts to reduce time constraints should be made by UNCW Administration.

System-wide issues of pedagogical skills development relative to priority, incentive, recognition and formalization should be addressed at the highest level. Common goals relative to faculty improvement in pursuit of excellence should be established at the highest level within UNCW and then broken down into supporting goals for each college, departments, and individual faculty members.

Each department should develop a plan to implement a high priority, standardized professional development plan and identify its constraints. UNCW administration should then review individual department plans and implement changes, which would alleviate the primary issues of incentive, and motivation system-wide.

Once completed, the individual department chairs should formally communicate their pedagogical skills development needs and issues to CTE. CTE would serve each request and develop a range of services aimed at facilitating and servicing their specific needs. These services should include all aspects of faculty skills development such as time management, teaching efficiency, quality, etc.

These services should be delivered in a systematic manner convenient to faculty needs. This process should be incorporated into the annual faculty evaluations with reports from department heads evaluating effectiveness of CTE services. Department heads will also evaluate professional development of individual faculty from prior year while developing a request for CTE services for their departmental needs for the coming year.

UNCW CTE NA Report Evaluation

Criteria	Clearness					Completeness					Correctness				
Executive summary	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Introduction	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Description of NA Methodology	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Data collection and analysis	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Interpretation of analysis results	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Recommendations	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1

Section VI Appendix

Table I: Data Collection Summary

Data Sources	Source numbers	Types/Purposes					Tools & Techniques
		Actual	Optimal	Feelings	Causes	Solutions	
CTE Director	1	x	x	x	x	x	Interview
CTE Workshop participation	1	x					Extant data
Academic Affairs Admin (Dr. Burt)	1		x	x	x	x	Interview
UNCW Faculty	600			x	x	x	E-Survey

Table II: Stage Planning

TNA Planner Techniques and Tools		
Stage	Technique	Tools and Sources
1	Needs Assessment	Interview CTE program director regarding further definition of problem (actual/optimal) and feelings about causes and solutions.
2	Extant data	Gather and analyze extant data on CTE

		4 year summary of workshop participation
3	Needs Assessment	Interview (Assistant Vice Chancellor of AA). Present extant data from step #2, to gain insight into program optimal, feelings, causes and possible solutions.
4	Needs Assessment	Survey all UNCW Department heads and faculty for feelings, causes and possible solutions.

Table III CTE Organization

CTE ORGANIZATION

Staff:	Faculty Associates:
Patricia Turrisi Director	Midori Albert, Ph.D. Anthropology
Shane Baptista Computing Consultant	Don Bushman, Ph.D. English
Dianne Bass Administrative Secretary	Russell Herman, Ph.D. Mathematics

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Table IV Information Collection and Reporting Schedule

Stage#	Activity	Purpose					
2	Obtain summarize extant data	Problem definition	2/24/04				
3	Interview Dr. Burt			2/26/04			
4	Final survey design	Generate potential causes and solutions			2/27/04		
	Conduct and complete surveys					3/1-3/5	
5	Analyze data and generate report						3/10-3/21

CTE Interview questions for Dr. Patricia Turrisi, CTE Director

Purposes	Questions
Context	Could you please give your role and us an overview of what the CTE does?
Problem Id	Our group looking to do needs analysis and solutions proposal in 6 weeks- do you feel you have a performance problem or situation would like us to explore? (Assume answer is yes)
	Please describe the problem in terms of the specific performance, who is involved, and when did it start.
Actual	How do you measure the performance?
	Is specific data readily available on this measurement?
	If no- who has this info & how can we get it? If yes what is the actual performance- now and previous?
	Are there any trends to performance measure?
Optimal/Feelings	What do you think or would like the performance to be? When?
	Why do you feel this is attainable?
	Do we need to talk with anyone else to get feelings on optimal / desired performance. Do we need permission from anyone to speak with him or her? Would you help us access them?
	What data exists that may help us analyze this problem? Who has it? Can we access it? How?
Causes	What do you think is the cause(s) of this problem? Why?
	Who else has information, which would help identify the cause?
	Can we interview/survey them? Do we need permission from anyone to speak with him or her? Would you help us access them?
	Are there any other constraints to getting information we should be aware of?
Solutions	What do you think the solution is? Why?
	Are there financial, time, or resource constraints to consider in developing a solution?
	Who else has information that may help in developing solutions? Can we interview/survey them?
	Who do you think is a stakeholder in terms of benefiting from solving this problem?

SUBJECT: CTE Workshop Request and Attendance Problem

STAGE 1 - Needs Assessment

WHAT IS KNOWN: The Center for Teaching Excellence provides workshops and resources to UNCW faculty in order to improve overall instruction methods. Participation is voluntary and open to all departments. Workshops conducted are based on input received from UNCW faculty.

INFORMATION BEING SOUGHT: The purpose is to clarify existing problems and other information about the optimal, actual performance, feelings, causes, and possible solutions as seen by the director of CTE.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION: Dr. Patricia Turrisi, CTE Director

TNA TOOLS: Interview

QUESTIONS/AGENDA: See Appendix CTE Interview questions for Dr. Patricia Turrisi, CTE Director

SUBJECT: CTE Workshop Request and Attendance Problem

STAGE 2 – Extant Data

WHAT IS KNOWN: CTE has reported data on attendance and satisfaction of workshops to attendees over the last four years. Report includes the types of workshops previously offered by CTE.

INFORMATION BEING SOUGHT: Current participants attitudes toward workshops attended from CTE, actual participation frequency

SOURCES OF INFORMATION: Dr. Patricia Turrisi, CTE Director

TNA TOOLS: Not Applicable

QUESTIONS/AGENDA: Not Applicable

SUBJECT: CTE Workshop Request and Attendance Problem

STAGE 3 – NEEDS ASSESSMENT

WHAT IS KNOWN: The director of CTE reports directly to Dr. Raymond Burt, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs.

INFORMATION BEING SOUGHT: Stage 3 will gain insight into Dr. Burt's feelings about program optimal, causes, and possible solutions to the issues brought up by Dr. Turrisi in stage 1.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION: Dr. Raymond Burt, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs

TNA TOOLS: Interview

QUESTIONS/AGENDA: To be determined

SUBJECT: CTE Workshop Request and Attendance Problem

STAGE 4 - Needs Assessment

WHAT IS KNOWN: The director of CTE and the VC of Academic Affairs has been interviewed and information about opinions and feelings about the causes and solutions have been gathered. Analysis of extant data has occurred.

INFORMATION BEING SOUGHT: Stage 4 purpose is to gather information about stakeholders views of CTE in relation to their own needs and motivations.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION: UNCW Department Chairpersons and all faculty

TNA TOOLS: Electronic Survey

QUESTIONS/AGENDA: To be determined