

Spotlight: Campus Change Driven by Professional Learning

Equity-Minded Faculty Development: An Intersectional Identity-Conscious Community of Practice Model for Faculty Learning¹

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Abstract

Equity-minded institutional transformation requires robust faculty learning. Research has shown that the single most important factor in student success is faculty interaction. Positive, supportive, and empowering faculty interaction is particularly important to the success of female students, poor and working class students, and students of color, but most faculty are not prepared to offer the kind of support that has been shown to be most effective for marginalized students. If institutions are serious about equity and about transformation, then they are obligated to provide professional development that will support the learning necessary for faculty to fulfill these important roles and to support faculty financially or by buying their time to participate in it. An effective way to do this is to align such professional development with the urgent needs of the campus and their related campus-wide initiatives. This article describes a community of practice model of identity-conscious professional development that engages faculty in a scholarly approach to the science of learning and evidence-based teaching and curriculum development while at the same time insistently and consistently incorporating critical reflection on and exploration of how systems of power and oppression impact learning. We believe this faculty engagement is key to transforming our institution into a more equitable and inclusive learning environment for students and faculty alike.

Keywords: faculty development; faculty communities of practice; identity-consciousness; learning as social participation; equity-minded institutional transformation

The Role of Faculty and Faculty Learning in Equity-Minded Institutional Transformation