Building Capacity for Change:
Strengthening Teaching & Learning through High-Impact Professional Learning
Frequently Asked Questions

The Building Capacity for Change program was highlighted in a cover story in the March/April 2022 issue of *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*. Free access to the article here.

1. **How will this program benefit my college?** To address key challenges — enrollment declines, equity gaps, and the need to better prepare students for career and citizenship — colleges must engage faculty and other educators as partners. This program will help your college employ high-impact professional learning strategies to build those partnerships, advancing both student and institutional success.

2. **What do you mean by "professional learning"?** What has long been called "faculty development" or "professional development" is now increasingly discussed as "professional learning." This new term recognizes that some faculty dislike the idea that they need to "be developed," and builds instead on the idea of lifelong learning. It also recognizes that while faculty are essential, other groups (such as Student Affairs educators) may also be involved in and benefit from professional learning programs.

3. **Why is professional learning important?** A decade of research has demonstrated that professional learning is the key to educational improvement. Quality implementation of evidence-based pedagogies is essential to advancing equity and building student success. High-impact professional learning is an essential step toward implementing those pedagogies, at scale. See chapter 3 of the *Teaching and Learning Toolkit* for research citations.

4. **What kinds of pedagogies will this program spotlight?** Drawing on ATD's *Teaching & Learning Toolkit* and a broad body of research, this program will review a evidence-based pedagogies and practices, from active learning and culturally responsive teaching to high-impact practices (HIPs), inquiry learning, accelerated remediation, and open pedagogy. Teams will select and learn more about the pedagogies that fit the needs of their campuses.

5. **We typically organize faculty professional development separately from support for Student Affairs professionals. Can you explain more about this approach that connects Student Affairs with teaching and learning?** We recognize that learning takes place both within and outside the classroom and we see advisors and co-curricular leaders as educators. Shared professional learning can build collaboration, support faculty

innovation, and help the entire institution work together to build equity and student success.

6. **Can I register as an individual or must my college send a team?** This program is designed to support collaborative team efforts that can spur broad institutional change.

7. **Who should we include on our team?** We recommend a team of 6–10 members, representing diverse campus perspectives, such as faculty leaders, student affairs educators, professional development leaders, coordinators of success initiatives, and an upper-level administrator (dean or above). Individuals who bring knowledge of professional learning and who are positioned to lead change will strengthen the team.

8. **What's the time commitment for participating team members?** The program is built around eight virtual seminars (two hours each), beginning in September 2023 and concluding in April 2024. It also involves individual reading, regular campus team meetings, coaching sessions, and contribution to the program's Canvas site. Team members should be prepared to commit at least 32 hours over the course of the eight-month program. Team leaders who ensure that participants are aware of this commitment will find it easier to reach team goals.

9. **What's the role of the team leader?** In addition to taking part in all program activities, team leaders should be able to coordinate their team's work, schedule and facilitate team meetings, coordinate with coaches, and ensure that campus leadership is kept aware of the team's progress. It will be helpful if the team leader has some role in existing professional learning efforts. Upper-level campus administrators can play a valuable role as part of a two-person leadership team, but it is vital to include someone who can devote significant time to team leadership tasks.

10. **Does everyone on the team have to take part in everything?** No one is taking attendance, but the team will be much stronger and more effective when everyone is learning and contributing to the planning process. It is helpful to have a core group of at least 4–5 members who can consistently play an active role.

11. **What will individual members of the team get out of this experience?** Team members will have the opportunity to develop new skills, from evidence-based classroom pedagogies to strategies for designing and leading effective professional learning programs. They will have the opportunity to collaborate with others from their campus and to learn with peers from other campuses. They will have the chance to advance their own growth as campus leaders and to advance vital change in the structure and culture of their institution.

12. **What's the role of our chief academic officer (CAO)?** CAOs play a pivotal role in campus change. The Building Capacity for Change program creates opportunities for structured partnerships between team leaders and CAOs to ensure alignment with

campus goals. CAOs and their team leaders collaborate to guide the transition from research and planning to effective implementation. A CAOs Summit offers opportunities for high-level exchange on a national stage.

13. **What is the ATD *Teaching & Learning Toolkit*? How can I get one?** Published in September 2020, the *Teaching & Learning Toolkit* is a research-based guide to building a culture of teaching and learning excellence on your campus. It offers overviews of relevant research, case studies from ATD Network institutions, and resources for learning more about evidence-based pedagogies, holistic student supports, and high-impact professional learning. The [toolkit](#) is available for free on our website, and participants in the Building Capacity for Change program will receive a free spiral-bound hard copy.

14. **The application form suggests that this program addresses institutional change. What do you mean by that?** High-impact professional learning builds equity and student success, but it only succeeds when the institution develops structures, policies, and practices to sustain the professional learning process. In return, building enduring capacity for high-impact professional learning can support transformative institutional change, helping colleges advance as agile and adaptive learning organizations. This program invites teams and their colleges to consider the linkage between equity, professional learning, and the institution's strategic priorities.

15. **We already have a Center for Teaching & Learning. What would we get out of this program?** The Building Capacity for Change program will help strengthen how you leverage your Center's existing resources, connect faculty and staff with best practices drawn from national research, and provide tools and strategies that equip your institution to support professional learning.

16. **Our college does not have a Center for Teaching & Learning. Will this program be of use to us?** Our program is designed to meet you where you are and build from there. The presence of an active CTL is helpful but not essential. The supportive community of practice model assumes that every participating campus has strengths, and every team has goals for improvement.

17. **What will happen in the seminar and coaching sessions? How are the coaching sessions different from the work we currently do with our ATD coaches?** Using a "flipped classroom" model, the virtual seminars will focus on dialogue and small-group collaboration, helping teams apply what they are learning from readings, videos, and other resources. Guest speakers will discuss campus strategies and answer questions. Teams will meet with each other for exchange and mutual problem-solving. The coaching process will provide opportunities for in-depth support, planning, and guidance. This program is different from general ATD coaching because it connects to a structured, eight-month collaboration with teams from other campuses. We will work

with you and your ATD core team to align the work of Building Capacity for Change with other student success efforts underway on your campus.

18. **What is the Building Capacity Action Plan (BCAP)?** The *Building Capacity Action Plan* invites teams to apply the Good Practice Principles for high-impact professional learning to the issues and opportunities of their campus. Built step-by-step over the course of the year, the plan incorporates short- and long-term goals for strengthening teaching, student learning, and professional learning structures and processes. It asks teams to identify key elements for achieving those goals, including: key stakeholders, resources, short and long-term action steps as well as evaluation and communication plans. It prepares teams to present these plans to key stakeholders to leverage support and incorporation into the institution's strategic planning and resource allocation process. In the past team plans have included these goals:

   ▪ Identifying and implementing strategies for more effectively engaging more part-time faculty in campus professional learning programs;
   ▪ Designing and launching a new Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL);
   ▪ Strengthening an existing CTL by shifting away from one-shot workshops and moving towards more sustained and collaborative Faculty Learning Communities;
   ▪ Planning and implementing ways to engage all educators by more effectively recognizing professional learning in the processes of hiring, promotion and tenure;
   ▪ Aligning professional learning with the campus strategic priorities and integrating it into the planning and resource allocation process;
   ▪ Identifying plans, goals and a research-based rationale for professional learning-based grant proposals to external funders.

19. **Why do you ask for a letter from the president or CAO?** Improving professional learning requires high-level as well as grassroots support. We ask you to get a letter from your president or CAO to make sure that they are aware of this effort and prepared to consider your plan of action when it is complete. Engaging them in advance increases the likelihood of your long-term success.

20. **What are the advantages of priority application?** Colleges that meet the priority application deadline will receive detailed feedback and pre-seminar support, and will learn earlier in the summer if they have been selected for participation. This will give them more time to prepare their teams for seminar participation. We strongly encourage teams to meet this deadline if at all possible.