

NC Teaching & Learning Hubs

Building Capacity & Supporting Educators at North Carolina Community Colleges

NC STATE UNIVERSITY
College of Education
Belk Center for Community College
Leadership and Research



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ABOUT THE PARTNERS AND AUTHORS

The **Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research** works with educators, researchers, and policymakers to further more equitable community college outcomes in North Carolina and across the nation. We equip community college leaders with actionable insights and create opportunities for collaboration as we tackle the most pressing issues facing students and campuses to build stronger, more resilient communities. The Belk Center is housed in the College of Education at North Carolina State University, a land-grant university that shares our commitment to community colleges and the critical role these institutions play in creating and expanding opportunities for all North Carolinians.

The **North Carolina Student Success Center** (NC SSC) drives transformative change across North Carolina's 58 community colleges, impacting over 700,000 students annually. As part of the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS), we serve as a resource hub for shared learning, technical assistance, idea generation, and policy advocacy. Our primary initiatives include implementing Guided Pathways to streamline educational experiences, enhance retention rates, and close achievement gaps. We lead initiatives that ensure a future-ready workforce and foster lifelong learning pathways that drive economic mobility. Our focus extends to holistic student support and promoting inclusive excellence.

By leveraging the North Carolina Guided Economic Pathway model, we create a

coherent, statewide framework through which community colleges can evaluate, align, and integrate their work. This statewide lens helps colleges learn from each other, ensures a consistent student experience across the state, and allows for economies of scale in professional development and support.

Achieving the Dream is a partner and champion of more than 300 community colleges across the country. Drawing on our expert coaches, groundbreaking programs, and national peer Network, we provide institutions with integrated, tailored support for every aspect of their work — from foundational capacities such as leadership, data, and equity to intentional strategies for supporting students holistically, building K–12 partnerships, and more. We call this Whole College Transformation. Our vision is for every college to be a catalyst for equitable, antiracist, and economically vibrant communities. We know that with the right partner and the right approach, colleges can drive access, completion rates, and employment outcomes — so that all students can access life-changing learning that propels them into community-changing careers.

DVP-PRAXIS LTD is an evaluation and consulting firm focused on improving postsecondary education and training systems to support students and workers. We bring subject matter and methodological expertise to help clients and partners understand and improve their organizations and programs in ways that include, reflect, and benefit the communities they serve.

INTRODUCTION

In the community college, teaching and learning represents a multi-faceted commitment to student success, credential completion, and matriculation to baccalaureate degree-granting institutions. Specifically, teaching and learning encompasses faculty awareness of the roles that access and equity hold in instruction and student learning, incorporates universal design and other inclusive practices in course design and delivery, and is complementary to student success initiatives facilitated by both academic and student affairs. Teaching and learning is at the core of a college's identity and is often advanced through collegewide efforts, as well as through external partnerships.

A commitment to teaching and learning is illustrated by institutional support for faculty to learn about and implement evidence-based practices that are essential to student learning and success. We call this process professional learning.

In the fall of 2018, the Dallas Herring Lecture – an annual lecture that welcomes community college leaders from across the country to speak on urgent and emerging topics, framing how to address the issues and proposing a path forward – was delivered by Dr. Karen Stout, president and CEO of Achieving the Dream (ATD). Stout's lecture, titled "The Urgent Case: Centering Teaching and Learning in the Next Generation of Community College Redesign," was a call-to-action for community colleges to develop a culture of teaching and learning excellence.

In the spring of 2019, the Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research (Belk Center) began collaborating with ATD to better understand the work of teaching and learning in a cohort of institutions in the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS), within the context of future collaboration with, and support of, the System's Student Success Center.

Historically, there has been a lack of access to comprehensive information about North Carolina teaching and learning data, initiatives, and institutional resources. To address this, several institutions across the state were identified as excellent candidates for a comprehensive evaluative case study that explored existing institutional teaching and learning initiatives while assessing opportunities for professional learning in this area. We selected institutions that reflected several key identities:

- **Geographical locations within North Carolina that represented rural towns, as well as midsize and large cities.**
- **Institution size, reflective of the pre-COVID enrollment diversity across North Carolina.**
- **History or emergence of an existing professional development unit (e.g., center for teaching and learning).**
- **The number of part-time/adjunct faculty in comparison to full-time faculty.**

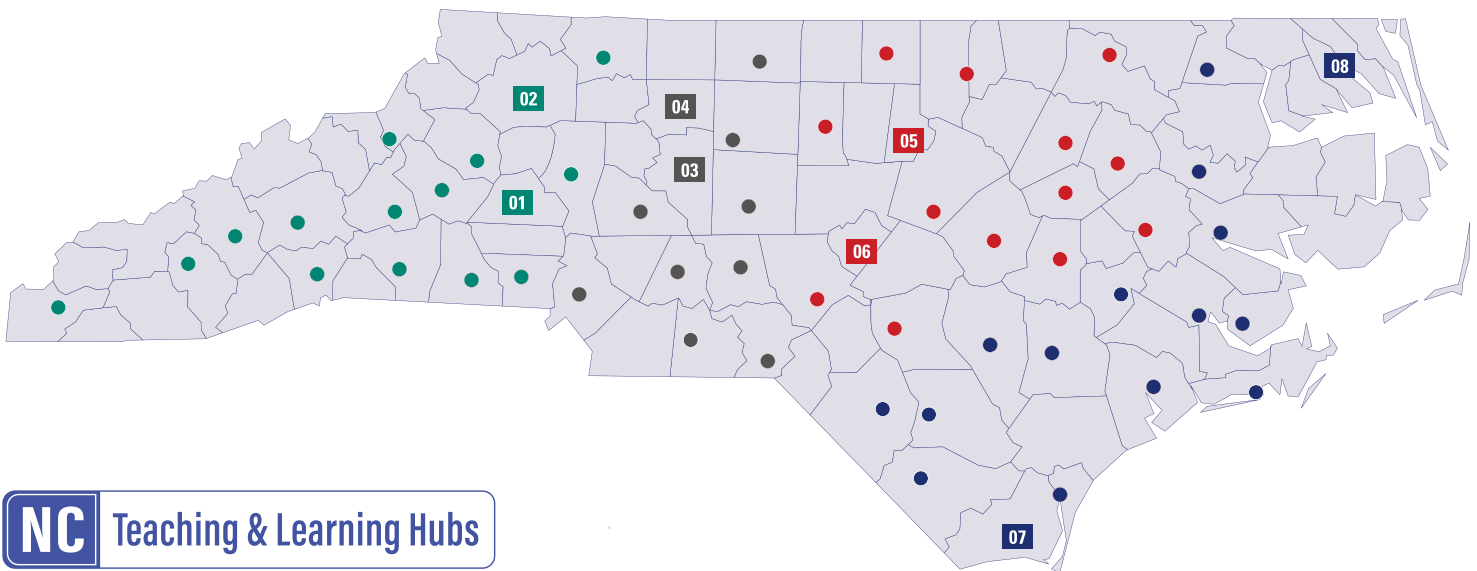
We reviewed relevant publications and determined that teaching and learning literature specific to community colleges was not robust, perhaps due in part to the diversity of how teaching and learning was identified and described at the system and institutional levels. In reviewing the literature, we discovered that active learning, Guided Pathways, culturally responsive teaching, and high-impact practices were some of the leading strategies that transform the student experience, particularly for racially minoritized and poverty-affected students (Eynon et al, 2024). The literature also reflects a shift toward inclusivity, with teaching and learning, teaching excellence, and faculty development all being grounded in a student-centered institutional culture.

Equipped with this deepened understanding, we initiated efforts to further our shared mission of fostering student success across the NCCCS. The Belk Center, ATD, and the North Carolina Student Success Center leveraged our considerable technical expertise, along with our trusted relationships with community college presidents and extensive statewide networks, to create four Teaching and Learning Hubs within North Carolina’s “Great 58.”

The mission of the Hubs is to foster equitable student success through faculty-led communities of practice, grounded in research and tailored to the needs of North Carolina community college educators. The Hub design, organized by four regions and aligning two Hub leader colleges with up to 16 affiliate campuses

in proximity to a Hub, provides complementary support to existing professional learning embedded within the affiliate campuses’ institutional priorities. This proximity approach allows the Hubs to support capacity-building activities across the affiliate campuses while establishing a peer network of professional learning leaders – specifically, leaders in academic affairs (e.g., center for teaching and learning directors) who play a central role in professional learning and development for faculty, geared toward strengthening learning outcomes and, more broadly, student outcomes. Faculty Hub co-directors and professional learning leaders have organically created a peer-to-peer network of support, innovation, and collective action across disciplines, positions, and institutions.

NORTH CAROLINA TEACHING AND LEARNING HUBS



NC Teaching & Learning Hubs

WEST HUB

CO-HOSTS

- 01 Catawba Valley
- 02 Wilkes

AFFILIATES

- Asheville-Buncombe
- Blue Ridge
- Caldwell
- Cleveland
- Gaston
- Haywood
- Isothermal
- Mayland
- McDowell Tech
- Mitchell
- Southwestern
- Surry
- Tri-County
- Western Piedmont

PIEDMONT HUB

CO-HOSTS

- 03 Davidson-Davie
- 04 ForsythTech

AFFILIATES

- Central Piedmont
- Guilford Tech
- Montgomery
- Randolph
- Richmond
- Rockingham
- Rowan-Cabarrus
- South Piedmont
- Stanly

CENTRAL HUB

CO-HOSTS

- 05 DurhamTech
- 06 Central Carolina

AFFILIATES

- Alamance
- Edgecombe
- Fayetteville Tech
- Halifax
- Johnston
- Nash
- Piedmont
- Pitt
- Sandhills
- Vance-Granville
- Wake Tech
- Wayne
- Wilson

EAST HUB

CO-HOSTS

- 07 Brunswick
- 08 College of the Albemarle

AFFILIATES

- Beaufort
- Bladen
- Cape Fear
- Carteret
- Coastal Carolina
- Craven
- James Sprunt
- Lenoir
- Martin
- Pamlico
- Roanoke-Chowan
- Robeson
- Sampson
- Southeastern

THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN STUDENT SUCCESS

Why focus the Hubs on professional learning for community college educators? Higher education researchers have turned significant new attention towards professional learning over the past two decades. We now know much more about best practices in professional learning design and facilitation, and the ways in which it positively impacts faculty classroom practice and student learning. Today, colleges and universities much more frequently incorporate professional learning in their strategic planning processes because they understand how to leverage it as a driver of institutional change.

Studies show that when educators participate in well-designed, well-resourced, sustained professional learning activities, their classroom practices improve (Artze-Vega et al., 2023; Bransford et al., 2000; Eynon & Iuzzini, 2020; Kuh, 2008). Furthermore, these improvements are associated with gains in student learning and success (Brown & Kurzweil, 2018; Hammond, 2015; Theobald et al., 2020). ATD's teaching and learning supports for colleges across our national Network are grounded in these findings and in their assessment that colleges must attend to matters of teaching and learning if they wish to truly move the needle on student success.

BUILDING A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IMPROVEMENT

During the 2020-21 academic year, our project leadership team pursued a series of planning activities to create a shared understanding of the needs and interests of North Carolina community colleges and educators. We conducted a survey of faculty professional learning, as well as a survey of chief academic officers (CAOs) and professional learning leaders, to assess institutional capacity. We also developed a mission, vision, and scope for the Hubs, which the faculty Hub leaders would later use to inform their planning processes for each of the four Hubs.

ASSESS FACULTY NEEDS AND INTERESTS

Between November 2020 and February 2021, 2,833 faculty across North Carolina community colleges responded to our survey, sharing their interests and experiences around teaching, learning, and faculty professional development.

Questions on this survey map to ATD's four cornerstones framework for building a culture of teaching and learning excellence.



KEY FINDINGS:

- Full- and part-time (adjunct) faculty generally express similar levels of interest in the same teaching and learning practices, although more full-time faculty indicated substantial interest in new developments in their specific discipline or field (58%) compared to adjunct faculty (46%). More full-time faculty also indicated substantial interest in new strategies for effective and engaging instruction (57%) compared to adjunct faculty (50%).
- A slightly higher percentage of full-time faculty (91%) have access to data that tell them how students are doing in their courses as compared to adjunct faculty (85%).
- A slightly higher percentage of full-time faculty (85%) have ample opportunities to learn about supports and resources available to students as compared to adjunct faculty (76%).
- General education full-time faculty are more likely to strongly agree that participation in professional learning is considered in evaluation processes (29%) as compared to faculty in other areas (19%–23%).

UNDERSTAND THE COLLEGE'S CAPACITY TO ADVANCE CHANGE

Between January 2021 and March 2021, 31 CAOs across North Carolina community colleges responded to our survey, sharing information about their colleges' current capacity and needs around teaching, learning, and faculty professional development. When asked about how the majority of teaching and learning improvement-focused professional development programs were organized on campus, respondents indicated a range of structures. Most common were a center for teaching and learning (CTL) or comparable college structure (35%) and a decentralized structure where a range of different offices and programs share coordination of such activities (26%). Of those colleges that have a CTL or comparable structure, 43% have at least one full-time staff member leading this work, while 32% support faculty with released/reassigned time to lead this work.

A number of colleges leverage external supports for professional learning (e.g., programs provided by the North Carolina Student Success Center, ACUE): 21% indicate one-quarter to one-half of their programming is organized this way, while 21% indicate that more than half of their programming is supported by external providers.

We learned that colleges focus on several key topics in faculty professional learning, including student engagement, active learning strategies, inclusive and/or culturally responsive pedagogies, managing the tools of remote/online/hybrid learning, and making remote/online/hybrid learning more inclusive and engaging for students.

Guided Pathways implementation, high-impact practice implementation, open educational resources (OER), corequisite implementation, improving teaching and learning related to programmatic and/or institutional student learning outcomes, and using disaggregated course data to advance equity in teaching and learning were also noted as significant in faculty professional development.

Colleges leverage a wide-range of program formats for professional learning, including campus-wide convocations, informal "brown-bag" lunches, targeted workshops, multi-day institutes or "boot camps," external conferences/seminars (for which resources to participate are provided), and sustained semester-long or year-long seminar programs, such as faculty learning communities, communities of practice, or teaching circles. Respondents indicated several ways in which educators' participation in their college's professional development programming is encouraged and rewarded. These include encouragement from executive leadership and/or academic chairs, celebration of professional development programs in collegewide events and communications, stipends for participation, released/reassigned time for participation, and the highlighting of participation in professional development in the faculty handbook and/or job descriptions. In many cases, educators reflect on their participation in their evaluation and promotion documents; this can take the form of noting participation, documenting the impact of participation on their teaching, and documenting the impact of participation on their students' learning.

CRAFT A MISSION, VISION, AND SCOPE

The findings of the faculty and CAO surveys were essential to our understanding of the teaching and learning landscape across the Great 58. We also saw that this document would be essential in creating a sense of shared understanding for the faculty who would be charged with co-leading each Hub. The mission, vision, and scope are included in the Appendix.

KEY LEVERS TO ADVANCE CHANGE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

When professional learning is done well, it supports educators as they integrate evidence-based practices, deepen teaching quality, and foster student learning and success (Condon et al, 2016; Desimone & Garet, 2015; Garet et al, 2001; Hunzicker, 2010; Levesque-Bristol, 2022; Eynon & Iuzzini, 2020). This understanding has guided the design of the North Carolina Teaching and Learning Hubs and is at the core of our effort to provide support to the faculty Hub leaders and to the professional learning leaders and educators on the host and affiliate campuses.

Our work is guided by the New Learning Compact Principles of Good Practice. These principles are organized into four dimensions of professional learning practice, which inform the efforts of our project leadership team and the faculty Hub leaders:

Individual: How do effective professional learning programs engage educators as individual practitioners?

What kinds of approaches help educators change their practice and advance student learning?

Community: Educators (like all human beings) are social creatures. How do effective professional learning programs bring educators into a community to collaborate for change? What are the principles for designing such professional learning communities?

Institutional: Professional learning cannot succeed if it is not rooted in strategic institutional support. What institutional policies and practices help generate and sustain effective professional learning?

Ecosystem: Multi-campus partnerships and professional learning networks offer opportunities for exchange and cross-fertilization. How can campus teams most advantageously engage national success movements, disciplinary associations, accreditation agencies, funders, and other stakeholders in the higher education ecosystem to build a culture of teaching and learning excellence?

These design principles should inform a college's work to actualize each of the levers we describe below. We encourage college leaders, professional learning leaders, and educators to consider how each lever can advance their Hub's efforts to build a culture of teaching and learning excellence, college by college.

INDIVIDUAL DIMENSION

- Respect Educators' Knowledge
- Connect with Practice
- Engage Inquiry & Reflection
- Protect Participant Time

INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSION

- Integrate Changes in Pedagogy, Curriculum, & Assessment
- Connect Professional Development & Strategic Priorities
- Leverage Reward Systems as a Resource
- Build a Learning Culture

COMMUNITY DIMENSION

- Create Supportive Professional Communities
- Involve All Sectors of the Professoriate
- Bridge Boundaries
- Learn From and With Students

ECOSYSTEM DIMENSION

- Build Partnerships & Exchange
- Capitalize on Strategic Messaging
- Leverage External Funding
- Engage Internal & External Stakeholders

LEVER 1: PROVIDE PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT THE GROWTH OF INDIVIDUAL EDUCATORS AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

A distinguishing feature of the North Carolina Teaching and Learning Hubs is our dual focus on (a) providing professional learning programs to support the growth and development of individual educators, and (b) ongoing capacity building to strengthen how each participating college designs and facilitates its professional learning programs.

To be sure, a singular focus on providing professional learning programs for individual educators has value, especially in the context of Hubs that leverage the collective expertise of educators from across dozens of colleges. But the ultimate impact of such an effort would be limited without an investment in and commitment to the second focus of our work: capacity building. Each semester, our faculty Hub leaders have convened professional learning leaders from the

affiliate colleges within each Hub. The professional learning leaders represent a variety of roles at their respective colleges. Some lead formal CTLs, while others might lead a committee or task force focused on professional learning. Some are CAOs, faculty on partially reassigned time from teaching, and others hold roles in human resources. Across these varied roles, these individuals carry significant responsibility on their campuses for designing, organizing, and facilitating professional learning. There is tremendous opportunity in these roles to build capacity for sustained growth and development in a college's professional learning activities. To the extent that such capacity-building effort endures, professional learning leaders are especially well positioned to help advance strategic change on campus.

LEVER 2: SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL LEARNING LEADERS WITH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES AND ONGOING COACHING

The Hubs launch each new academic year with an eight-module leadership development seminar, aimed at supporting the co-directors as they create strategic plans for each Hub. Our colleagues at ATD design and facilitate the seminar, refining it each year based on feedback from the prior year's participants. The faculty co-directors immerse themselves in the research on high-impact professional learning and evidence-based pedagogies and practices. They review and discuss case studies of colleges that have implemented and scaled student success interventions with the aid of an intentional professional learning strategy. With guidance from coaches and subject matter experts, they craft strategic plans to guide the development of the Hub.

These ongoing leadership development and coaching activities are vital to the success of the Hubs. They provide faculty leaders from participating colleges an opportunity to develop a new area of knowledge and skill. These activities also support a community-building function, helping to strengthen relationships among co-directors from eight different community colleges across the state. Finally, these programs aid our faculty co-directors in modeling engagement in continuous learning and improvement — the very activities so essential for the success of educators at North Carolina's Great 58.

LEVER 3: CREATE NETWORKS WITHIN NETWORKS

Student success reforms — especially those focused on teaching improvement — are often advanced through the power of networked improvement communities. Our leadership team, consisting of partners from the Belk Center, the North Carolina Student Success Center, and ATD, functions as a network, as does the team of faculty co-directors.

Taking this idea one step further, the Hub leaders work tirelessly to create networks of professional learning leaders within their Hub. These networks facilitate information sharing, with the professional learning leaders bringing information about Hub activities to the educators on their campus and then sharing feedback to the Hub's co-directors about educator

needs and interests that can inform future programs. These networks also serve to build community, with professional learning leaders supporting each other's work, providing guidance and support around the design of professional learning programs on their respective campuses. This sense of community serves to advance the capacity-building function of the Hubs, as Hub co-directors convene groups of professional learning leaders for workshops and full-day institutes focused on peer learning. The impact of these activities is enhanced when we leverage the differing perspectives and lenses that the professional learning leaders bring to this work, as faculty, administrators, and college leaders.

LEVER 4: CONTINUE TO BUILD AND STRENGTHEN THE COMMUNICATION FEEDBACK LOOP

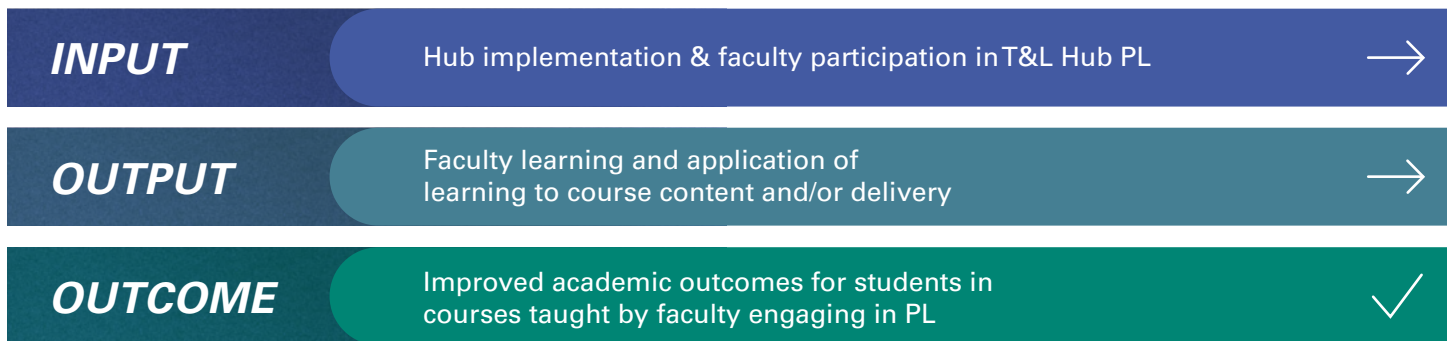
The networks we describe in Lever 3 — networks of faculty co-directors and professional learning leaders in particular — are essential to sustained success of an initiative. So too is a feedback loop that enables ongoing communication among key stakeholders in the professional learning process. Faculty co-directors should have varied opportunities to gather feedback and input from the professional learning leaders at each of the participating colleges. Likewise, educators — who are the key audience for Hub professional learning programs — should be able to easily share their feedback on their experiences, as well as any barriers to participation.

Educator engagement in these programs is deepest when participation is encouraged, incentivized, and celebrated by college leadership. Thus, faculty co-directors should be provided a regular opportunity to share updates and gather feedback from their college's CAO and president. Executive leaders from across Hub affiliate colleges benefit from gathering on a recurring basis to discuss how these professional learning opportunities are supporting their student success goals and to exchange ideas about how to support the growth and sustainability of their Hub.

EVALUATING TEACHING AND LEARNING HUBS: IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACTS

To understand the Hubs' implementation progress and impact, we are engaging in a multi-year, mixed-methods evaluation led by our partners at DVP-PRAXIS LTD. This ongoing evaluation examines the relationship between faculty participating in professional learning offered by the Hubs, changes faculty make in their classrooms, and the resulting student outcomes.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FACULTY T&L HUB EFFORTS AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC OUTCOMES



INPUT: IMPLEMENTATION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING HUBS

To understand Hub implementation, the evaluation team engaged faculty in focus groups during spring 2021 and spring 2022. Insights gained from faculty feedback served as guideposts for the Hub co-directors to plan their professional learning sessions. Key factors for Hub implementation included the following:

- Ensuring high-quality sessions so the Hubs are seen as a trusted source of information.
- Offering a broad array of topics for faculty to choose from and to meet the diverse learning needs of faculty from different disciplines, with differing years of experience, and serving a wide range of students.
- Designing professional learning sessions to be action-focused, especially as it relates to embedding equity and helping faculty build relationships with students in online environments.
- Providing varying formats for sessions depending on the topic. For example, for in-depth topics, offering longer-term opportunities with support for classroom implementation in addition to shorter-length formats for topics that can be easily digested and more quickly applied.
- Embedding structured opportunities for faculty to network and learn from their peers (Deal & Valentine, 2022).

OUTPUT: CHANGES IN THE CLASSROOM

To understand how faculty are taking what they learn in Hub-offered professional learning sessions and making changes to their classroom, the evaluation team surveyed attendees (Deal & Price, 2023). Survey results from spring 2023 indicate that through participation in at least one professional learning session, faculty were engaging in reflection and/or inquiry around their teaching practices (62% reported this experience) and reflection and/or inquiry around issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion (51%).

Additionally, two-thirds of faculty who participate in Hub-offered professional learning reported making (or planning to make) tangible changes in their classrooms. The most common change reported was to encourage active learning (63%). Other areas of change included: inclusive teaching practices (49%), transparent course structure (49%), improved feedback (48%), syllabus changes (45%), collaborative learning strategies (41%), and connection with students (41%).

Survey data indicates that faculty experiences in professional learning sessions and the resulting changes in their classroom are generating improved experiences for students. Specifically, faculty expect students will engage in more discussion, feel welcomed in class, interact with peers, and have an improved sense of belonging in their program and at college.

OUTCOME: REACH TO AND IMPACTS FOR STUDENTS

The evaluation is also examining student and course administrative records to understand how faculty participation in professional learning sessions and changes made in the classroom are reaching and affecting students.

During the first two years of the Teaching and Learning Hubs, co-directors designed and led 129 professional learning opportunities that reached 1,753 participants

across all of North Carolina's community colleges (Lubera et al., 2023). Of these participants, 1,033 were faculty who taught 8,510 courses. Each Hub-trained faculty reaches an average of 151 students per academic year, and, in total, faculty participating in professional learning sessions reached 74,210 students through their courses. Importantly, Hub-trained faculty are reaching significant numbers of low-income and first-time students, adult learners, and students of color.

Preliminary analysis of course outcomes suggests that faculty engagement in Hub-offered professional learning corresponds with a two percentage-point average increase in successful course pass rates (i.e., grade of A, B, C, or Pass) (Lubera et al., 2023). Additionally, data suggest a 9% increased likelihood of one-semester retention for each additional course a student takes with Hub-trained faculty.

NEXT STEPS

As the North Carolina Teaching and Learning Hubs multi-year study continues, the evaluation team will gather additional survey data about classroom changes. Specifically, the team will examine the relationship between students who enroll in courses taught by Hub-trained faculty between fall 2021 and spring 2024 and their academic outcomes, including retention, persistence, credential completion, and transfer. Final study results will be reported in 2025.

WHAT'S AHEAD

The Belk Center serves North Carolina's community colleges by convening leaders, creating tools, and catalyzing social and economic mobility for learners by building stronger, more resilient communities. Our work is grounded in the belief that collaboration drives systemic change. At the Belk Center, we believe that professional learning for all educators — including full-time faculty, part-time faculty, and staff — must be at the core of a community college's commitment to student success.

The Teaching and Learning Hubs are an example of statewide systemic change. By collaborating with faculty and staff educators and other stakeholders across the NCCCS, we are distilling knowledge of evidence-based, high-impact teaching and advising practices into faculty-led communities of practice that drive equitable student success outcomes.

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APPENDIX:

NORTH CAROLINA TEACHING AND LEARNING HUBS MISSION, VISION, AND SCOPE

MISSION

The North Carolina Teaching and Learning Hubs will support full- and part-time faculty and staff educators from North Carolina community colleges in their efforts to build equity, learning, and student success. Working with local campus networks to offer virtual and face-to-face workshops and seminars, these Hubs will help educators learn about, adapt, test, and scale the evidence-based strategies that help students learn and thrive. Drawing on local and national expertise, Hubs will collaborate with campus professional development leaders who want to advance their work and build capacity for supporting student, faculty, and institutional learning.

VISION:

The North Carolina Teaching and Learning Hubs will support full- and part-time faculty and staff educators from North Carolina community colleges in their efforts to build equity, learning, and student success. Working with local campus networks to offer virtual and face-to-face workshops and seminars, these Hubs will help educators learn about, adapt, test, and scale the evidence-based strategies that help students learn and thrive. Drawing on local and national expertise, Hubs will collaborate with campus professional development leaders who want to advance their work and build capacity for supporting student, faculty, and institutional learning.

In recent years, a growing body of research has demonstrated that quality teaching and learning is central to student success. It has revealed an array of evidence-based pedagogies and practices that support learning for all students and have particular benefit for first-generation students, low-income students, and students of color. Active learning and culturally responsive pedagogies, Guided Pathways, high-impact practices, and other strategies help students of all backgrounds succeed in advanced education and meaningful careers.

To effectively employ these practices, educators working within and beyond the classroom need support in learning about them, adapting them to their specific disciplines and courses, and integrating them into everyday practice. Faculty and student support staff from academic and student affairs want to learn new ways to help students thrive. Research shows that professional development — now increasingly called professional learning — provides educators with the vital support needed to strengthen student engagement and learning.¹

Initiated by the Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research at North Carolina State University and the North Carolina Student Success Center, each Teaching and Learning Hub will be based on a host campus. Hubs will work with host and affiliated campuses to offer high-impact professional learning programs in virtual and face-to-face settings. Developed in collaboration with Achieving the Dream, the Hubs will draw on the research-based professional learning strategies and structures. Partnering with campus-based CTLs and local professional development leaders, the Hubs will draw on local, state, and national expertise to design programs that help North Carolina educators find the professional development they want and need.

Moving the needle on student success requires a whole college effort. Recognizing that adjunct faculty teach a high proportion of courses at many campuses, the Teaching and Learning Hubs will offer programs designed for part- and full-time faculty from curriculum, continuing education, and college and career readiness teams.

¹ For a review of the literature on evidence-based pedagogy and the impact of professional development on teaching, learning, and student success, see Achieving the Dream's Teaching and Learning Toolkit: A Research-Based Guide to Building A Culture of Teaching and Learning Excellence (2020), available at <https://achievingthedream.org/teaching-learning-toolkit/>

Student engagement with tutors, advisors, and other academic support staff involves learning and teaching and can play a critical role in advancing effective change. Forward-looking campus policy and strategic planning can nurture learning-focused innovation. Hubs will look for ways to effectively support all educators and help campuses advance an integrated approach to collaborative educational improvement.

Hub programs will respond to local needs, bringing educators together in supportive professional communities. They will help educators connect with resources for innovation and with each other. While advancing student learning, educators will themselves engage in ongoing learning, reflecting and deepening their insights as they test new approaches. Designed to be efficient and practical, Hub programs will go beyond stand-alone workshops, engaging educators in the sustained efforts that deepen practice and transform the student experience.

Collaboration and respectful exchange will guide Hub programming. The Hubs will invite faculty and campus professional development leaders to share their expertise across campuses. Campus professional development leaders will connect with

each other and explore research-based guiding design principles for high-impact professional learning. Sharing proven strategies for engagement, impact, and doable evaluation, campus leaders will build a collaborative regional network. Campus executive leaders and other stakeholders will consider new ways to support teaching and learning and address their most important strategic goals and priorities. Mutual support and capacity-building will help all campuses in the region build a culture of teaching and learning.

Research shows that well-designed professional learning helps faculty and staff educators grow and thrive, deepening their skills and developing a professional community. It helps campuses effectively implement their strategic initiatives, achieve their highest priority goals, and develop as agile, adaptive learning organizations. Most importantly, the research demonstrates that professional learning benefits students, reducing equity gaps and advancing educational excellence for all. The Teaching and Learning Hubs will help North Carolina community college campuses address these goals and advance their work on the front lines of higher education.

SCOPE

The North Carolina Teaching and Learning Hubs will offer a range of professional development services and programs, collaboratively designed to meet the needs of educators and campuses. The scope of these programs can be outlined by addressing three questions: Who? What? and How?

Who will Hub programs seek to engage?

Hub programs will engage educators from North Carolina community colleges, particularly educators from the host and affiliated campuses in the region. In some cases, they may open programs to educators from other parts of the state. Programs will be designed to engage the following:

- Full-time faculty at every stage of their professional journey, from new faculty to mid-career and senior faculty
- Part-time or adjunct faculty, offering flexibility to accommodate their schedules
- Academic and student affairs staff educators, recognizing that learning takes place both in and out of the classroom and that faculty and student affairs professionals can help each other advance student learning and success
- Professional development leaders from host and affiliated campuses, helping them consider ways to expand and deepen professional learning practice on their campuses
- Campus leaders, creating opportunities to discuss ways to deploy professional learning and strengthen the culture of teaching and learning on their campuses

What kinds of topics will Hub programs address?

Hub programs will be designed in collaboration with educators and leaders from the host and affiliated campuses to ensure that they meet regional needs and support local campus student success initiatives. Data has already been gathered on faculty interests and campus needs, and ongoing feedback will be an essential element for every Hub. Responding to this input, Hubs will offer programs designed to help educators in its region learn about, adapt, test and scale the following:

- Evidence-based pedagogies that have been shown to build student learning and close equity gaps, such as active learning, inquiry learning, writing-to-learn, experiential learning, collaborative learning, and holistic pedagogies (teaching the whole student)
- Culturally responsive pedagogies that can help build equity and engage first-generation students, students of color, and low-income students
- Validated high-impact practices, such as learning communities, first-year experience, undergraduate research, and ePortfolios
- Promising new approaches, such as accelerated remediation, open educational resources/open pedagogy, transparency framework, and growth mindset
- Strategies for engaging students in remote and hybrid learning, applying evidence-based pedagogies to technologically mediated learning environments
- New approaches to advising, co-curricular learning, and student support processes
- Curricular innovations, such as eight-week semesters and building employability skills

How will Hub programs operate?

Guided by the research-based principles of high-impact professional learning, Hub programs will use a range of strategies and structures to meet the needs of campuses and participants. Design features of Hub programs will do the following:

- Deploy on-line and face-to-face engagement, separately and in combination, as appropriate
- Include synchronous and asynchronous workshops, extended (semester and year-long) faculty learning communities, and mini-seminars targeting selected topics
- Connect educators with research and practical resources, tools, and approaches they can apply in their classrooms and co-curricular settings
- Be significantly faculty-led and respect the expertise that faculty and staff educators bring to the professional development setting
- Help educators consider data about their students and classrooms and use that data to advance effective, research-based approaches
- Support educators as they move from learning about new approaches to testing them with students and using those experiences to develop new skills and insights
- Engage inquiry and reflection to help educators make the connection between theory and practice and advance their growth as reflective practitioners
- Build supportive professional community that helps all participants develop and sustain effective innovation
- Focus on strategies with the potential for broad impact and support campus teams as they work to scale the use of evidence-based practices within and across departments and programs
- Engage evaluation processes to advance effectiveness and ongoing programmatic improvement

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