

Faculty Academy project at Washington and Lee University

Progress report, Jeff Overholtzer, Sept. 18, 2002

A two-week Faculty Academy in August, incorporated hands-on workshops, demonstrations, and "open lab" time for instructional technology projects. The sessions co-taught by librarians, technologists and faculty members focused on an element often missing in information fluency-related initiatives: equipping faculty with skills and knowledge needed to find, organize and present information with technology tools. Faculty members will have considerable influence on students' exposure to information fluency concepts; in their use of information and technology for teaching and learning, they are exemplars for their students. In addition, faculty who are information fluent are more likely to incorporate learning activities that demand information fluency from students.

Workshop topics included:

- Effective research with on-line library databases
- Copyright considerations in producing course materials, and creating electronic reserve materials for courses
- Tools for Teaching at W&L
- Creating course evaluations with Flashlight Online

Demonstrations by faculty members included:

- Irish Literary Studies: A Web Portal -- included a discussion of instructional strategies used in assigning students to find and assess images for use in literature course work.
- Using GIS Technology in the Political Science Classroom: Redistricting as a Test Case – included discussion of how students use GIS to acquire spatial data analysis skills in a political science course.

ACS funds sponsored these sessions, and also helped to pay for lunches for session presenters and participants.

A complete schedule for Faculty Academy, including additional sessions, may be viewed at: <http://facultyacademy.wlu.edu>

At a glance

Workshops	18
Faculty teaching-and-technology demonstrations	4
Open lab sessions for faculty projects.....	3
Faculty participants, all sessions.....	39
Total enrollment	106

Workshop evaluations (response rate: 59 percent)

Statement on evaluation	% agreeing with statement
Workshop met my needs in this subject area	91.5 %
I had opportunity to ask questions	100 %

I received adequate assistance from instructor	97.9 %
Instructor was well-prepared for workshop	97.9 %

Selected comments from the anonymous workshop evaluations:

- It is not an exaggeration to say that the Faculty Academy has changed the way that I work and teach, and the term hasn't even begun yet!
- FANTASTIC. Really helpful- appreciated everybody's work and energy and time. Wish there had been more time to learn more stuff.
- Good workshop! It helps a lot.
- It's been very well organized and very helpful for those who participate.
- The lab setting was especially helpful.
- I especially appreciated this general overview. I came into the workshop with a random assortment of questions, and they were all answered over the course of the session. Such a broad and basic array of skills was presented -- I'll use them daily in my teaching, research, and general negotiation of the university.
- I am impressed at how much work people are doing to coach a small group of us. This wouldn't happen at a larger institution.
- Julie K. is a great presenter--organized, knowledgeable, funny. She keeps things moving at a good pace
- A very good thing! I wish I could have gone to the others!
- Very good introduction. Simple, but useful. I wasn't bogged down in too much information. John was very pleasant and instructive.

Analysis

A complementary blend of activities helped make Faculty Academy successful. Skills-oriented workshops were interspersed with presentations by faculty members who demonstrated the application of technologies to meet specific pedagogical goals in their courses. Daily lunches offered an opportunity for faculty members to talk, compare strategies and ask questions in an informal setting.

Attendance was good for a first-ever University-wide technology education effort during the summer. Participation was low during the first few days of the first week, but increased rapidly. Many faculty e-mailed that they wanted to attend sessions, but had prior out-of-town commitments. Faculty members have expressed a preference for technology education to be conducted during vacation and exam periods, so these probably continue to be the best periods for such activity.

We will follow up Faculty Academy with faculty demonstrations and project assistance during the fall semester, and a brief Faculty Academy during exam week at the end of fall semester. In addition, a series of lunch-time presentations by faculty members on a variety of topics related to information fluency and instructional technology will be featured.