The Rocky Road to Faculty Development

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A panel of three Instructional Technologists, a Media Services Librarian, and a member of the faculty will present the history, trials and tribulations, disasters and successes of faculty development at this small liberal arts college in suburban Pennsylvania. Topics covered in this panel discussion will be the history of faculty development, the development of an Instructional Technology team, the move from technical workshops to project-based faculty development, the collaboration between Media Services and Instructional Technology, and a brief presentation of a project developed during project-based faculty development.

The history of faculty development began with desk-top applications workshops designed for faculty and staff where the basics of the application were taught by computing services staff. The workshops were taught out of context with no relationship to their application to teaching; faculty and staff received the same training.

The development of an Instructional Technology team led to changes in the focus of faculty development. Faculty still looked at workshops as being “techie-oriented” and it has been an ongoing struggle to change their perceptions.

The addition of the Media Services Librarian (with faculty status) to the IT team led to the collaborations between the library and the Instructional Technologists. The Librarian’s familiarity with the faculty provided insight into the attitudes that were affecting the success/failure of faculty development. We needed faculty allies!

After a year of providing workshops with few attendees we developed a new plan. With the help of “early adopters” of technology we presented a panel, “Exploring the Possibilities of Teaching with Technology”. Four faculty members served on a panel and briefly described their successful incorporation of technology. They answered questions by the faculty concerning the time involved in learning the technology and the development of course materials, the benefits to the students of technology incorporation, the assistance available through the IT team. At the end of the panel we advertised our new approach to faculty development, project-based faculty development opportunities, and asked for proposed projects from individual faculty members.

Shortly after the end of the Spring semester we held our first Technology Exploration. Ten professors with specific ideas for technology integration into their courses attended our three-day hands-on Exploration. Multiple workshops were designed specifically to meet the needs of the individual faculty projects. Time was given for work on individual projects with one-on-one assistance from the instructional technologists as well. The Technology Exploration ended with each professor presenting his technology project.

One of these professors will give a brief presentation of the multimedia, web-based project he developed and is using with his classes. Included in his presentation will be his impressions of the new approach to faculty development.

Time will be given throughout the panel to questions from the audience.