



**Divisional Strategic Planning Brief – Humanities, Foreign Language**  
**5/31/2017**

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**Campus Outcome**

Improve adjunct faculty training and recognition in coordination with Faculty Professional Development and Organizational Development.

**Department Outcome**

Promote Historical and Cultural Understanding

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**BACKGROUND**

The experiential gulf between full-time and part-time faculty is becoming more evident as the number of part-time faculty, nationwide, has increased significantly over the past decade. Part-time faculty are often disconnected from their colleagues and do not sense the feeling of academic emersion experienced by their full time counterparts. The full-time humanities faculty at Valencia East have noticed this divide and have delineated particular areas of concern which result from this condition.

**Understanding the Scope of a Course:** The quality of classes taught by part-time professors, particularly online courses, sometimes lacks depth. In survey courses, such as Introduction to Humanities, it is common for some professors to attempt to cover too much information glossing over vital content in the process.

**Professional Development:** Though many of our part-time faculty participate in general professional development offered by the college, they do not have the opportunity to regularly engage with full-time faculty on academic matters directly related to the discipline of humanities.

**Emersion in the Environment:** As a result of their teaching schedules and other employment obligations, part-time faculty are not present for the day to day planned and spontaneous discussions about teaching strategies and content command.

To counteract the effects of living in what some call “the academic wilderness,” the humanities faculty on East have designed an intervention which has addressed these concerns and has helped lay the groundwork for enriching the relationship between full-time and part-time faculty in the future.

**INTERVENTION**

We established one-on-one mentoring experiences for part-time faculty. In addition to the annual classroom visitation, full-time faculty members worked closely with part-time faculty on specific areas of content organization and teaching strategy.

Faculty cited the need for full-time faculty leadership in this area. Karen Styles agreed to coordinate this work. She received a stipend for leading this effort.

We established team teaching opportunities for part-time and full-time faculty. Wendi Dew's professional development team arranged a workshop on team teaching. Kathryn Plank, Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning at Otterbein University and author of *Team Teaching across the Disciplines*, guided the group through exercises designed to illuminate the mechanics and benefits of team teaching.

## STRATEGIC RESULTS

Karen Styles observed Luke Leonard teach his 7:00 am *Introduction to Humanities* course (HUM 1020). She helped him revise his syllabus to accurately reflect the course outline, and met with him to discuss course content. Based on their discussions, Luke plans to alter the course content in the future to be more focused on key concepts.

Karen Styles also observed Gina Bortz teach her Sunday morning *Introduction to Humanities* course (HUM 1020). Gina admitted she was not happy with how she structures the course, so Karen made suggestions for how to restructure it and focus on key concepts for each cultural period.

In addition, Karen Styles met with Patrick Szymanski regarding his HUM 1020, which he has never taught before, but plans to teach online in the fall. Karen gave him the outline of topics to be covered, in *Introduction to Humanities* and a sample syllabus, course schedule, and gave him access to her own online so he could utilize materials from it.

Another adjunct professor, Dezso Bartha, is sitting in on every class meeting of Karen's HUM 1020 course this summer, and Karen will observe one of his evening classes later in the term. Dezso wants to work on his presentation methods for the *Introduction to Humanities* course so that he can provide more engagement with the students.

This past spring, Eric Wallman worked with Justin Ryals to help him improve his online teaching, especially in creating writing topics for his *Twentieth Century Humanities* course (HUM 2250). The work involved several face-to-face meetings, as well as Eric "observing" Justin's online class, and vice versa.

Karen Styles "team taught" with Jessica Hasara, a part-time faculty member just out of graduate school. Karen and Jessica taught *Introduction to Humanities*, HUM 1020, together with great success. Jessica's teaching demonstration, during a recent interview for a humanities position, showcased her mastery of a portion of the material covered in the team taught course. Though presenting alongside professors with far more teaching experience, her presentation was clearly one of the top two demonstrations viewed by the committee.

## NEXT STEPS

Based on the results of the previous year's work, it would certainly be worthwhile to involve more faculty, both part-time and full-time, in mentoring and team-teaching in the future. New instructors gain insight from seasoned faculty in the areas of student engagement, assessment, classroom issues, and learning the culture of Valencia. Seasoned faculty benefit from mentoring and team-teaching because as they serve as role models for newer faculty, they will constantly strive to improve their own teaching.

To further this work, compensation that was made available during the past year, such as PD credit being awarded to all part-time and full-time faculty who participate in mentoring partnerships, and a stipend for the faculty member who coordinates the program, would need to continue, as the work requires a time commitment from faculty that goes beyond their contractual workload. Additionally, the positive results of the faculty mentoring program need to be advertised more widely so others will be encouraged to participate.

Regarding team-teaching, the goal is to involve more faculty so that a team-taught course could be offered each semester. Not only do faculty benefit in the areas listed above, but students also benefit by being introduced to different perspectives in the classroom, and by witnessing two professionals working together to achieve a common goal.