Announcing the new CAT group for Assessment Support
September 2014

The Curriculum Facilitation Team (CFT) is a group of faculty with experience and interest in curriculum development who are dedicated to assisting faculty colleagues with the development and revision of courses and programs. The CFT approach, which was started by the College in 1995, has been hailed as an innovation in curriculum development.

To bring this same level of assistance to faculty related to course and program level assessment, this successful model was used to create the Curriculum Assessment Team (CAT). The faculty members on the team will have expertise and experience in assessment of student learning outcomes at both the program and course level. Similar to the CFT process, the CAT team members will work directly with faculty in disciplines other than their own to guide them through the process of data gathering, analysis and documentation of assessment efforts in their courses and programs.

In Fall 2014, the CAT team will focus on working with faculty and department heads in those areas which have not yet documented their efforts in assessing program level outcomes. CAT team members were matched with groups of three to four programs based on their understanding of the types of assessment done in those areas. The CAT team will receive training and orientation working with the Director of Assessment and the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. The team will then work individually and in small groups with their assigned program areas. The CAT team will also schedule “boot camp” workshops for groups of faculty at which they can bring their data, assessment plans, curricular maps etc. The goal of the boot camp sessions is for the participants to work on their own actual programs while learning the strategies of assessment, data collection and analysis – and to have a completed assessment document at the end of the session.

In future semesters, members of the CAT team will rotate off the team and will continue to provide guidance and leadership within their own disciplines and programs. New team members will be recruited from among those who were served by the team in the past, and now become the experts to assist others. This “train the trainer” or ripple effect will provide a sustainable model to ensure continued support for faculty as well as broad based understanding of and engagement in assessment.

The CAT team will also work closely with the Curriculum Facilitation Team and the Office of Distance Education. Over time membership in the CFT and the CAT may merge as expertise and understanding among the faculty as a whole continues to grow. Collaboration with the Office of Distance Education will help insure that online and hybrid courses follow the assessment processes established for onsite courses and are consistently assessed as part of the cycle established by each department.