Project: Center for Teaching & Learning Excellence (CTLE):

Faculty Training in Learning Styles & Universal Design

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I. Abstract (Overview)

There is a need in higher education to help professors understand the learning process so that they can design their courses to meet the needs of all students. There is a great need in universities to create a more universally-designed educational system in today's multicultural, diverse learning environments. There are two different conversations going on at Dominican University: How do we meet the needs of our special needs population? How do we improve retention with at-risk students? Both of these conversations are going on simultaneously, but not necessarily together. Creating a learning community that is based on Universal Design Principles will bring the two conversations together for the good of all students and faculty.

However, this proposal is focusing on providing training, education, and support for faculty through The Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence. Faculty need to have a better understanding of the learning process. Through the exploration in learning styles, different delivery methods create a better understanding of people with disabilities (learning differences), tools to facilitate learning and how modifications in these areas impacts students with special needs, and how they can help all students. Ultimately, it is in everyone's best interest to create a university that is based on Universal Design Principles.

The mission of Dominican University states: "As a Sinsinawa, Dominican University prepares students to pursue truth, to give compassionate service and to participate in the creation of a more just and humane world." One may ask, what is more just and humane, than a university where its' educators show their compassionate service by wanting all learners to have an equal chance at their education, to reach their greatest potential, so they can go out and make our world a better place.

The goal of this proposal is to give students with special needs an equal opportunity for success at Dominican University by providing the faculty with a good pedagogical foundation in Learning Differences and Universal Design Principles, applied in an educational environment. The initial phase of this project establishes the foundation for the evolution of creating Dominican University as a universally-designed educational institution.

This proposal was developed out of the needs expressed by our faculty, in their concern to better understand how to meet the needs of the students who have special needs, but it will ultimately benefit all students. In addition, the faculty needs to be aware and understand how

to use the Universal Design tools (Applications) that are currently on campus. These applications are currently being used by some special needs students and a few staff members. However:, these applications could be of assistance to everyone at the university.

This program is being proposed for the Dominican University faculty so they can serve to help not just the students with disabilities or the at-risk students, but every student, staff, and faculty member. This would create a learning environment at Dominican University that is more inclusive and equalizes the educational playing field for all. Further, it will provide educators with greater awareness and understanding of their own learning styles. In turn, it will provide more options to the faculty for delivery of information. Most importantly, this program will provide the needed awareness, understanding, support, and resources for faculty to meet the challenges they face in the classroom with the diverse learners they educate.

II. Need

The faculty at Dominican University would greatly benefit from training and understanding in the various learning processes and optional delivery methods of information to their students. With this type of training, Dominican faculty would be able to meet the needs of all students, including students with disabilities (special needs).

There has been a steady increase of students with disabilities enrolling at Dominican since 2001. These students have special needs that professors are required to accommodate by law, Sec 504. Statistics have been recorded, starting with the 2001-2002 academic year, for students who are receiving support from Disability Support Services (DSS) according to Coordinator, Judy Paulus. This department is under the direction of the Dean of Students Office, Dean Trudy Goggin. Students who received services are defined as students who have a documented disability confirmed by an MD.

Table 1.0 Below: Are the statics since 2001-2003 academic school years.

Academic School Year	Number of Student Served	Number of Undergraduates Served	Number of Graduates Served
2001 - 2002	12	Break Down Not Recorded	Break Down Not Recorded
2002 - 2003	14	Break Down Not Recorded	Break Down Not Recorded
2003 - 2004	21	Break Down Not Recorded	Break Down Not Recorded
2004 - 2005	19	Break Down Not Recorded	Break Down Not Recorded
2005- 2006	24	Break Down Not Recorded	Break Down Not Recorded

2006 -2007	37	28	9
2007-2008	67	51	16
2008-2009 Fall (8/8/08)	48	36	12

As of the end of the Fall 2008 semester, DSS served 89 students. There were 69 students who had grades posted, and four students who still do not have grades posted (due to incompletes in their classes). This is in addition to two new students who registered for the Spring 2009 class and 14 students who withdrew (some due to medical reasons).

With the steady increase of students with disabilities enrolling at Dominican University, it is critical that our faculty receive additional training so that they can have a better understanding of different types of learning styles and can meet the needs of all of their students.

The following proposal was developed to meet the needs expressed by our faculty in their concern to better understand the needs of the students who have special needs, but that will ultimately benefit all students.

- Faculty needs to have a better understanding of different types of delivery styles of instruction for the different learning styles.

- Faculty needs to have a better understanding of how they are delivering information to learners.

- Faculty would benefit knowing how learners are receiving information or not, based on the delivery methods of the professor and the students' individual learning styles.

- Faculty could benefit from knowing other ways to modify their delivery methods so a greater number of students could understand the information, including students with special needs.

- Faculty would benefit by gaining a greater understanding of what it takes to make reasonable accommodations for students with special needs.

- With very little effort, faculty will learn that making reasonable accommodations to special needs students could be universally beneficial to all students.

By creating awareness of Universal Design Principles in education at Dominican University, we would be able to benefit everyone at the university, students, faculty, and staff. This proposal is promoting these principles:

- For more effective teaching to all students

- To have a better understanding of learning differences
- To have a better understanding of how to reach the at-risk students
- To have a better understanding of how to reach students with disabilities

The faculty needs to be aware of and understand how to use the Universal Design tools (applications) that are currently on campus. These applications are currently being used by some special needs students, staff, and the faculty. However, these applications could be of assistance to everyone at the university. This proposal will assist the faculty in the following:

- Learning about the different applications that are on campus and how these applications can assist everyone:

  - How they can work best for the different learners with learning styles.
  - How they can increase productivity for all learners, staff, and faculty.
  - How they can help improve teaching and learning in all types of classroom settings.

- Promoting more collaborations between undergraduate and graduate faculty to tear down the divisions and build a more unified learning community.

This project's goal is to give students with special needs an equal opportunity to succeed at Dominican University by providing the faculty with a good pedagogical foundation in Learning Differences and Universal Design Principles, applied in an educational environment. The initial phase of this project established the foundation for the evolution of creating Dominican University as a universally designed educational institution.

III. Context

There is a need in higher education to help professors understand the learning process so that they can design their courses to meet the needs of all students. There is a great need to create a more universally designed educational system in today's multicultural, diverse learning environments in universities now. There are two different conversations going on at Dominican University. How do we meet the needs of our special needs population? How do we improve retention with at-risk students? Both of these conversations are going on simultaneously, but not necessarily together. Creating a learning community that is based on Universal Design Principles will bring the two conversations together for the good of all students and faculty.

However, this proposal focuses on providing training, education, and support for faculty to understand the learning process through the exploration in learning styles, different delivery methods, create a better understanding of people with disabilities (learning differences), tools to facilitate learning and how modifications in these areas impacts students with special needs and can help all students. Ultimately, it is in everyone's best interest to create a university that is based on Universal Design Principles.

The mission of Dominican University states: "As a Sinsinawa, Dominican University prepares students to pursue truth, to give compassionate service and to participate in the creation of a more just and humane world." One may ask, what is more just and humane, than a university where its educators show their compassionate service by wanting all learners to have an equal chance at their education, to reach their greatest potential, so they can go out and make our world a better place.

This type of approach to educating all learners starts with an understanding of the learning process by the faculty. They need the support to understand how to reach all of the diverse learners whom they see in their classes. They need supportive resources and programs that are not just one-time events. Programs like this are happening at other universities, such as at the University of Washington with its "Do-It" program. This program has been developed to succeed not just at this university, but to share its research with everyone. This program was developed with the following philosophy in mind: "DO-It serves to increase the participation of individuals with disabilities in challenging academic programs and careers. It promotes the use of computer and networking technologies to increase independence, productivity, and participation in education and employment."

The program that is being proposed here for Dominican University will serve to help not just the students with disabilities or the at-risk students, but every student, staff, and faculty member. This would make Dominican University a learning environment that is more inclusive and equalizes the educational playing field for all. Further, it will provide educators with greater awareness and understanding of their own learning styles. Furthermore, it will provide more options to the faculty for delivery of information. Most importantly, this program will provide the needed awareness, understanding, support, and resources for faculty to meet the challenges they face in the classroom with the diverse learners they educate.

Finally, this program hopes to bridge some of the conversations that are transpiring today at Dominican University; to provide the needed support for the faculty and the whole student body, so that they can achieve their educational goals and become the type of people we are preparing them to be: those who pursue truth, give compassionate service, and participate in the creation of a more just and humane world.

IV. Goals

This proposal is creating a pilot project of four-section modules that would be taught through the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE) in two phases. First, there would be training for the Seminar faculty and two Graduate faculty members from each Graduate School. They will participate at the end of the academic school year in the Seminar faculty two and a half day meeting. Then the second phase of the project would be training of the entire faculty, during the all-faculty meeting prior to the beginning of the academic school year. This would also include monthly follow-up sections for additional exploration and sharing. These seminar programs would be focusing on four thematic modules:

1. Create greater understanding of different types of learners, learning styles and different ways to deliver content to meet the needs of all learners in the classroom.
2. Create greater understanding of different disabilities, learning differences, how it feels to be a student with a learning disability, and how to work with them and their challenges to help them succeed.
3. Applying Universal Design Principles in Education: to help not just the special need student, but how they can help all students.
4. Universally-designed tools that can help everyone learn and be productive.

This program hopes to provide the professors at Dominican University with greater tools and support for the delivery of information to their students, to help them understand about the learning processes, and how they relate to student's ability to understand information.

The proposal goals are to also provide:
- Professors a better understanding of how and why they need to make reasonable

accommodations for special needs students

- Professors with a better understanding of why they need to provide all students with more options to fit their own learning styles

- Professors with greater awareness, education, and support, with regards to the increase of students with disabilities at the university who are in their class

- Professors with a greater understanding of the different learning styles

- Professors with a greater understanding of learning differences and the learning problems of the special needs students in their classes

- Professors with a greater understanding of delivery methods that can be used to complement different learning styles

- Professors with a background and understanding about Universal Design Principles in Education

    o Professors will apply these concepts to their curriculum.

- Create awareness that accommodations do not have to be something special, if they use Universal Design Principles when they design their curriculum.

    o Professors will learn about Universal Design Tools

    o Technology Application the University owns

    o Technology Applications that are available

VI. Anticipated Outcomes

- Professors will have to adapt their syllabi to meet all learners, needs, and through group conversation, they will share their ideas and show their new syllabi in monthly meetings and/or department meetings.

- Professors will have examined the learning process, and they will discuss in monthly meetings and/or department meetings how they can modify their delivery methods to try to meet all learners' needs.

- Professors, through the simulation activity in one of the modules, will express their feelings through group discussion and the reflective paper exercise on how it feels to be a special needs student

    o Will gain more of about insight on how it feels to have a learning disability and what it takes to be successful in school.

- o Will talk more about openly and try to understand the different types of disabilities and how they affect learning.
- Professors will discuss in monthly meetings and/or department meetings, how they deliver information to students differently through monthly workshops.
  - o They will share the ways they have tried different methods of delivery to the different types learners who they teach and talk about what worked and what did not work and why it did not work.
- Professors will express through group discussion in monthly meetings and/or department meetings how they have a greater understanding of not only how and why they need to make accommodations for people with special needs but also how they can help all of the diverse learners they teach.

  - o Express their understanding of how and why they need to make accommodations for students with disabilities.

- Professors discuss in monthly meetings and/or department meetings how they have started using the resources the University has to assist them in accommodating different learning styles.

- Professors discuss in monthly meetings and/or department meetings how they have a better knowledge of where to go for assistance and resources when they have questions on how to assist a special needs student.

  - o Talk about what assistance they have sought out and how it helped or not.

- Professors will keep track, show, and discuss in monthly meetings and/or department meetings, how they incorporated Universally Designed technology (Assistive Technology) that is available at the University, and how they and their students are using them.

  - o Discuss how they will use Universal Design Principles in their teaching.

  - o Discuss how they have explored student learning styles

  - o Discuss how they have modified their instruction by teaching to multiple learning styles.

  - o Discuss how they introduce Universal Design tools to their students.

- Professors will ensure that the resources used in their classes are available in electronic format so that all students can access them with Assistive Technology.

- Professors keep track and share in monthly meetings and/or department meetings, how

they are trying to create a more universally-designed curriculum

- o Will discuss that they may also help the at-risk students on campus just by being more aware of how humans learn.

- o Will discuss and show how they have changed their approach of delivery of information to meet the needs of all students whom they teach.

    - Special needs students.
    - Watch to see if the changes might also meet the needs of some at-risk students.
    - If the changes in delivery have helped the general students in their classes.

- Though this program and monthly sharing meetings, Dominican University faculty will become one community of educators though this interdisciplinary learning experience.

VII. Stakeholders

Faculty who will be taking the seminars:

- Phase One: Seminar faculty (40) & select faculty in all Graduate Schools (10)

- Phase Two: Entire faculty of Dominican University, the proposal is accepted as the theme for the academic year 2010-2011.

Stakeholders who will be creating the program:

- David Krause Ph.D. Associate Provost / Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and **an** Assessment Committee Member

    - Ken Black: Center for Teaching & Learning Excellence (CTLE) Acting Director

Invited Speakers

- Guest Lecture**:** Richard D. Lavoie

    - o Others who may be needed

- Trudi Goggin, Dean of Students

    - o Disability Support Services

        - Judy Paulus, DSS Coordinator
        - Merle Branner, Assistive Technology Specialist

- Jeffrey Carlson, Dean Rosary College

    o Faculty member picked by the dean to work on curriculum

- Colleen Reardon, EdD, Dean of Education School

    o Education Team, faculty to work on curriculum

        ▪ C. Ben Freville, Assistant Professor MSSPD.
        ▪ Ardelle Pate, Adjunct Professor
        ▪ Therese Hogan, EdD., Special Director of Education
        ▪ Others to be named

- Bryan J. Watkins, EdD., Executive Director of the School of Leadership & Continuing Studies.

- Students with and without special needs

    o Two Undergraduate Students
    o Two Graduate Students

- Susan Roman PhD, Dean of Library & Information Science

    o Faculty from GSLIS

        ▪ Professor Karen Brown, PhD.
        ▪ Professor Janice Del Negro, PhD.
        ▪ Associate Professor Kate Marek, PhD.

- Jill Albin-Hill, Director of IT
    o Web Master of the University's Website

    o IT Academic Committee Member
- Bob Greenwald, Director of Learning Resources

VIII. Steps

- Meeting of the Core *Development Team* will consist of the Director of the Center for Teaching & Learning Excellence (CTLE), Associate Provost / Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs & Assessment Committee Chair**,** Dean of Students/DSS Coordinator, Director of IT, Dean of Education, Director of Special Education and Education Team

    o Discussion of the proposed seminars being taught through the Center for

Teaching & Learning Excellence:

- The four themes of the modules:
  - The different learning styles & delivery methods to meet diverse learners in the classroom

  - Creating greater understanding of different disabilities, learning differences, how it feels to be a student with a learning disability, and how to work with their challenges

  - Applying Universal Design Principles in education to help not just the specials need student, but all students

  - Universally-designed tools that can help all students learn and be productive

- Proposed seminar delivery methods to discuss:
  - Four sessions that will be divided into two hours per module
    - Monthly follow-up including sharing and one topic
  - Delivery options may be a combination of a few of these ideas:
    - One module per week for four weeks
    - One module per month for four months
    - Beginning of school year faculty meeting
      - This would be the theme for the whole academic year
    - End of year seminar faculty retreat (Entire day)
- Select graduate faculty would join them.
- Size of the seminar classes
  - 30 maximum in a class
  - May need more than one section of each module
- Planning the implementation
  - Discussion on delivery schedule of seminars and scheduling
- Meeting of the *Core Development Team and with Development Team* that consisting of the Deans from all of the colleges, Executive Director of the School of Leadership & Continuing Studies, Assessment Committee Members and the IT Academic Committee Member, Director of the Learning Resources, and the DSS staff.

  - Discuss how they will go about creating a training course for the (Seminar Faculty & Graduate Faculty) & (Entire Faculty) on The Learning Process &

Universal Design Principles in Education and Tools.

- Deans, IT, IT Academic Committee Member, Dean of Student/DSS Coordinator will select faculty from all departments for the *Curriculum Development Team* to create the learning modules, along with the monthly follow-up sharing sessions and learning enrichment lectures and activities.

  - Discussion on who might be teaching the seminars
    - University staff or adjunct faculty
    - Outside speakers
    - Facility availability for *Curriculum Development Team*
      - Faculty
      - DSS Staff
      - Education Team
      - Director of Special Education
      - Deans from all the schools
      - Members of the IT Academic Committee
      - Members of the Assessment Committee
      - Director of Learning Resources
      - Students
  - Discussions on the extent of student participation for effective curriculum design.

    - Students who receive services from the DSS office
      - Undergraduates Students
      - Graduate Students
        - Education Majors from Graduate School of Education
        - Non-Education Majors
        - Others
    - Review with IT, applications and facilities needs
    - Review and discuss planning the implementation
- Joint meeting with *Core Development Team*, *Development Team,* and *Curriculum Development Team* and others who are needed.

- o Review the task at hand
  - ▪ Discuss the module development
- Meeting of the Curriculum Development Team
  - o Brainstorm ideas that fit the themes of each module
  - o Discuss who will develop which module
  - o Develop a schedule of weekly meetings to work on the modules
- Second joint meeting of *Development Team Meeting* & *Curriculum Development Team*
  - o Review Progress of *Curriculum Development Team*
    - ▪ Present first draft of the modules
      - • Discussion and modifications of the modules
      - • Discussion of the instructors for each module
- *Curriculum Development Team* reworks modules
  - o Finalize curriculum to present to the *Core Development Team*
- Joint meeting of the *Core Development Team* & *Curriculum Development Team*
  - o Finalize curriculum review
  - o Layout final schedule of the program
    - ▪ Finalize instructors and facility availability
- Meeting of the *Core Development Team, Development Team, & the Curriculum Development Team.*
  - o The final program curriculum is presented to the *Core Development Team*.

IX. Timeline (Six Months)

- ▪ First meetings the first week
  - o *Core Development Team*
- ▪ Meeting of the *Core Development Team* & *Development Team* second week
- ▪ Meeting of the *Core Development Team*, *Development Team,* and *Curriculum Development Team* third week
- ▪ Meeting of *Curriculum Development Team* fourth week
  - o Weekly meetings to create modules for two months
- ▪ Joint meeting of the *Core Development Team*, *Development Team* with *Curriculum Development Team* month three
- ▪ *Curriculum Development Team* reworks modules for four to six weeks

- Joint meeting of the *Development Team* and *Curriculum Development Team*
    - Final reviews and changes in curriculum
    - Facilities and equipment
- Meeting of the *Core Development Team, Development Team, & the Curriculum Development Team*

    - The final program curriculum is presented to the *Core Development Team*.
- Implementation planning for Pilot Seminar faculty training at the end of the academic year 2009-2010 in May.

    - End of the year Seminar Faculty retreat with two graduate faculties from each school participating.

- Set-up Support Services for the Faculty
    - Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence
    - Disability Support Services
    - Education Team
- Implementation of training for the entire faculty.
    - Beginning of the year faculty meeting before fall session begins, August, 2010
        - Monthly meetings throughout the academic year

X. Anticipated Challenges

- Faculty may resist the concept of learning new methods of delivery.
- Faculty may not want to put in the time to learn teaching methods.
- Deans may find that this program will take a lot of their time to put together.
- Deans may find that the commitment to this program will take their faculty away from other projects.

- There may not be funding for this program in today's hard economic times.
- The University may not be ready to commit at this time to provide universal access to education.

XI. Monitoring/Evaluation

There will be a written assessment of each of the modules after completion of a section by faculty. This is in addition to the faculty self-assessment that they will provide during the monthly meetings and/or with follow-up assessment tools that will ask open-ended questions for faculty to express what they are doing and provide physical examples. The evaluation

process of this program will be on-going to help them meet the needs of their students. This is in addition to making any needed improvements to the training program. There will also be observations by the *Curriculum Development Team* during sharing sessions with faculty at the monthly meeting as during normal faculty meetings.

- Goals of the observation done by the *Curriculum Team*:
  - Decrease need to modify and make accommodations for special needs students
  - Increase need to expand licenses of existing universally-designed applications
  - Increase requests for new universally-designed applications for different departments
  - Increase retention of at-risk students
  - Increase faculty conversation on the positive changes that they are seeing in their students
- Faculty Products: Lesson & syllabi changes hope to achieve:
  - New options for students' assignments

Monitoring students who receive services from DSS for a period of three years after implementation of the program is very important. We will be tracking their progress to.

- Tracking DSS Student Progress
  - o Look for a reduction in requests for accommodation by students with disabilities
    - Monitor the types of accommodation requests that are made by students with disabilities
- Monitor students with disabilities to see if there are any differences in their academic progress
- Monitoring the progress of the faculty for a three-year period in dealing with students with special needs in regards to:
  - o Their acceptance and use of Universal Design Principles in how way they deliver information to their students
  - o Keep track of the assistance provided to professors by DSS, the School of Education, and the types of challenges they are facing in dealing with diverse learners in their classes
- Track for a three-year period the at-risk students who are on academic probation to

see if their numbers are affected by the implementation of this program

- o Are the numbers going down for students on academic probation?

Appendix: A

Guidelines for Use of the Principles of Universal Design

January 29, 1999 / Revised September 9, 2002

The Principles of Universal Design were developed by The Center for

Universal Design in collaboration with a consortium of universal design

researchers and practitioners from across the United States. Funding for

the project was provided by the U.S. Department of Education's National

Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research.

Others are welcome to reproduce the Principles, with the following

restrictions.

1. The Principles of Universal Design must be printed intact, without interpretationor

   abbreviation or any other alteration. It is acceptable to reprint the Principles of

   Universal Design in one of two formats: either ALL of the seven Principles alone, or

   ALL of the seven Principles with ALL of the 29 associated guidelines.

2. The Principles of Universal Design must be clearly labeled, "Copyright © 1997 NC

   State University, The Center for Universal Design."

3. The Principles of Universal Design should be cited as follows: "The Center for

   Universal Design (1997). The Principles of Universal Design, Version 2.0. Raleigh,

   NC: North Carolina State University."

4. Whenever feasible, all ten authors of the Principles of Universal Design should be

   listed.

5. If the Principles of Universal Design are being used as the basis for other work, it

   must be made clear that The Center for Universal Design is responsible only for the

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