Center for Academic Excellence and Student Engagement

Annual Report

Patricia Ploetz, Interim Director

2009-2010
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1. About CAESE

Academic year 2009-2010 was a year of transition for the Center for Academic Excellence and Student Engagement (CAESE). Launched in 2006, CAESE came to the end of its initial funding on June 30, 2009. In September of 2009 additional funding was secured and with the help of the new Associate Vice-Chancellor for Teaching, Learning & Academic Programs and CAESE’s Advisory Committee, a new mission statement was drafted and approved by the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point’s (UWSP’s) faculty senate.

CAESE mission statement

The Center for Academic Excellence and Student Engagement seeks to foster a learning-centered culture of teaching at UWSP by engaging faculty and staff in an ongoing, collaborative process of instructional development.

In particular, the Center is dedicated to pursuing the following goals:

1. Assist faculty and staff with pedagogical innovation, especially by encouraging the adoption of engaging teaching methodologies and instructional technologies.
2. Provide pedagogical development opportunities in support of the General Education Program.
3. Coordinate faculty development opportunities in support of meaningful academic program assessment, including both departmental programs and the General Education Programs.
4. Seek ideas to improve student engagement, paying special attention to students in the first year and to connecting curricular and co-curricular learning environments, and share these possibilities with faculty and staff.

In addition to the goals identified in the mission statement, CAESE’s professional development activities support UWSP’s mission by promoting a student-centered learning environment that advances critical thinking, promotes civic engagement, and supports the liberal arts.

CAESE activities are guided by CAESE’s advisory committee and in response to faculty-initiated interests. The advisory committee consists of the Associate Vice-Chancellor for Teaching, Learning, and Academic Programs, five volunteer faculty members, and one volunteer academic staff member. The committee meets monthly throughout the academic year.

CAESE’s Interim Director was appointed by Provost Virginia Helm. Funding for the position and the FTE are currently provided by Information Technology. In 2008-2009, the help of a quarter-time support person was acquired through collaboration with the Learning Resource Center. That collaboration continues through 2009-2010 and into 2010-2011.
CAESE documents, including advisory group meeting notes, annual reports, budgets, assessment data, and historical documents are located on CAESE’s SharePoint site which is available to all UWSP faculty and staff.

II. Meeting CAESE Goals
CAESE meets its goals through its programming activities. The majority of CAESE’s activities are collaborations between CAESE and UWSP faculty and staff members who assist in the design, development, delivery, and assessment of CAESE’s professional development offerings. CAESE also collaborates with campus committees, departments, and offices in providing UWSP faculty and staff members with additional professional development opportunities.

CAESE Instructional Development Goals
CAESE programs are designed to model best practices in teaching and learning with outcomes-based, active-learning professional development activities. Whether face-to-face or online, CAESE programs begin with learning outcomes that are clearly linked to program assessment. In addition, best practices and/or quality standards are used in the design and development of CAESE programs. For example, Chickering and Gamson’s Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education (1986) are used as a model for CAESE face-to-face instruction, whereas quality standards promoted by (Quality Matters at the University of Maryland and California State University at Chico) are the cornerstone of CAESE’s online instruction.

Goal 1 - Assist faculty and staff with pedagogical innovation, especially by encouraging the adoption of engaging teaching methodologies and instructional technologies.

During 2009-2010 CAESE offered faculty and teaching staff multiple opportunities to investigate a variety of engaging teaching methodologies and instructional technologies. They include:

- Year-long Team-Based Learning Pilot
- Week-long ePortfolio Workshop
- Digital Storytelling Workshop - “Introducing Students to the Power of Digital Storytelling”
- Six-week Curricular Redesign Online Program
- Instructional Video Workshop
- Web Conferencing in Online Instruction Workshop
- Semester long Teaching and Learning Online, Interest Group
- Second Life at UW System

Goal 2 - Provide pedagogical development opportunities in support of the General Education Program.

The following CAESE programming provided pedagogical development opportunities in support of UWSP’s General Education Program.

- Critical Thinking Conference – Performance Tasks
- Inclusive Excellence is Good Pedagogy - Two-day Workshop
- Service – Learning Interest Group
Goal 3 – Coordinate faculty development opportunities in support of meaningful academic program assessment, including both departmental programs and the General Education Programs.

Collaborations with UWSP’s Assessment Sub-committee, the General Education Program Review Committee and the 14th Annual UWSP Teaching Conference planning committee led to the development of two major activities that provided support in understanding course and program assessment.

- The 14th Annual UWSP Teaching Conference’s topic, “Enhancing Student Learning with Outcomes-Based Assessment” offered practical instruction in how to write learning outcomes and design appropriate assessment strategies. The conference set the stage for the spring semester’s Assessment Academy Series.

- The semester-long Assessment Academy Series addressed learning outcomes and assessment in a greater detail. As a result of the workshops, departments developed program learning outcomes. Twenty-nine departments sent two to four persons each to the following three workshops:
  - Developing Program Learning Outcomes
  - Refining Program Learning Outcomes
  - Assessing Program Learning Outcomes

Goal 4 - Seek ideas to improve student engagement, paying special attention to students in the first year and to connecting curricular and co-curricular learning environments, and share these possibilities with faculty and staff.

First Year Seminar
In collaboration with the Associate Vice Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Academic Programs and the First Year Seminar Planning Committee, CAESE supported programs addressing the design and development of First Year Seminar courses, they include:

- Strengthening the First Year of College: The First Year Seminar
- First Year Experience: UW - Green Bay, “What you need to know about teaching a first year seminar.”
- “Telling vs. Showing: Maryville University’s Evolution from a Welcome-to-College Course to a Thematic University Seminar.”

Service-Learning
Service-Learning (S-L) continues to grow at a steady albeit slow pace at UWSP. While the support of an S-L Coordinator/Facilitator would further stimulate growth in this area, an application for a new WiCC Americorps* VISTA support grant was not submitted for FY 2009-2010. The S-L Steering Committee felt that changes in the grant requirements did not coincide with the goals of UWSP’s S-L program. The chart below shows S-L growth from 2008-2009 to 2009-2010.
Additional Activities
In addition to programming that assists CAESE in meeting the identified goals from above, CAESE also offers activities that promote personal professional development. These activities include:

- Profile of UWSP’s 2009 Freshman Class
- Reading Seminars:
  - The Missing Professor – Fall 2009
  - What the best college teachers do – Spring 2010
- Grant Writing Workshops - Fall/Spring 2009-2010

As UWSP’s administrative representative to UW System’s Office of Professional Instructional Development (OPID), CAESE’s interim director collaborates with OPID members to engage UWSP faculty members in:

- Wisconsin Teaching Fellow/Scholar Program
- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)
- Faculty College
- President’s Summit and other UW – System professional development programs.

III. CAESE Impact

Assessment
CAESE utilizes a variety of formative and summative assessment techniques in its programming. Faculty and staff presentations such as Digital Storytelling, Profile of Learners, etc., typically use Minute Papers and Muddiest Point techniques to assess presentation value and effectiveness, whereas conferences and workshops utilize surveys, reflections, and/or performance tasks to determine whether or not program outcomes have been met. Assessment results for CAESE programs are located in CAESE’s SharePoint site which is available to all UWSP faculty and staff at the following link Assessments and Evaluations for 2009-2010. Reflection papers and program outcomes such as new syllabi and/or new course outlines are not presented as we do not have participants’ permission to share their work. Future programs will include a request to share participant documents. All assessment results are shared with program presenters, developers and/or collaborators, and are used to enhance future programs and identify areas of interest for new programs.
Transformative Learning
CAESE and CAESE collaborators alike want to know if participants leave CAESE workshops/conferences with new frames of reference, points of view, and/or habits of mind, all indicators of transformative learning. A beginning step in that direction is reviewing participants’ comments and/or reflections to identify indicators of transformative learning. A small sample of participant comments/reflections with potential transformative indicators is included below:

**Outcomes Approach to Curricular Redesign**
“After this workshop, I realize that I don’t need to cover all of the material just because it is in the book. I will be able to center my instruction around the important ideas, so students will not have to question “what is important.” My course will be more integrated and cohesive when I implement the design methods presented at the workshop.”

**Inclusive Excellence is Good Pedagogy**
“At the beginning of the workshop I was thinking that I know a lot about diversity but I am now certain that what I know was limited. The workshop was excellent. It helped me understand a lot of things especially things that will help me become a better teacher.”

**Curricular Redesign for the Online Environment**
“I liked the readings--they brought to mind ideas I had not considered. For instance, I have never received any instruction at all on writing learning outcomes, and this will help in both online and face-to-face courses.”

**14th Annual UWSP Teaching Conference**
“The conference got me to think about carrying a different message to my students: There’s an end goal important to them (my philosophy changed)!”

**3rd Annual Critical Thinking Conference**
“The interaction among colleagues and the exchange of diverse opinions and ideas [was of most value to me]. I came away with more determination to collaborate with other colleagues on this topic.”

In the future CAESE plans to work more closely with collaborators to prepare and assess for transformative learning experiences.

**Involvement**
During FY 2009-2010, 629 faculty and instructional staff members attended CAESE events. Of those 629, approximately forty-five were members of other UWSP campuses and/or the surrounding community, leaving 584 UWSP attendees. Of the 584 attendees, approximately one-third (~194) were one-time attendees, the remaining two-thirds (390) represent individual faculty and staff who attended two or more events. Therefore, if we’re looking for the total number of individual faculty and staff members attending CAESE events approximately one-half of the 390 or 195 can be counted as individual attendees, this results in an approximate total of 389 (194+195) individual attendees, at CAESE events. A 10% increase over the previous year.
Of the programming that CAESE offers, the majority (43%) of participants attended one or more of three CAESE conferences whereas, 36% attended CAESE workshops. CAESE workshops are two or more days of intensive instruction. The remaining 6% attended the Team-based Learning Pilot and/or one or more anytime-Anywhere Webcasts.

IV. CAESE Budget
A total of $41,904 was spent during FY 2009-2010. Of that total, $25,512.92 (60%) was spent on faculty member stipends for summer workshops. Thirteen percent, or $5522.71, was used to support CAESE programming; programming costs include support for workshops, webcasts, Critical Thinking and Artists Training Artists conferences, books for reading seminars, and other miscellaneous costs. Altogether, seventy-three percent of CAESE’s budget goes directly to faculty and instructional staff stipends and programming.

CAESE spent seventeen percent, or $6957.70 for operating expenses; $6,500 for a quarter time assistant for one year, plus telephone support, postage, printing, supplies, and other office expenses. Travel expenses of $3,910.68 includes faculty travel to the President’s Summit and Faculty College, OPID faculty and administrative representatives travel to OPID meetings, the Interim Director’s travel to Educause 2009 and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education conferences.
Grants
CAESE’s Interim Director and faculty/staff collaborators submitted and received one grant during FY 2009-2010. During 2009-2010, a $1000 Institute on Race and Ethnicity grant, received in 2009, and a spring 2010 OPID Conference Development Grant provided support for the 2010 Inclusive Excellence Workshop and the 14th Annual UWSP Teaching and Learning Conference.

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<th>Grants Received 2009-2010</th>
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<tr>
<td>OPID Conference Development Grant</td>
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<td>Total Grants</td>
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VI. Conclusion
CAESE continues to draw increased numbers of faculty and instructional staff members to its events. In reviewing CAESE assessments it’s apparent the CAESE programs, their presentation and content, meet participant needs and learners benefit from their participation. CAESE has become a valued resource in assisting the University to accomplish its mission and achieve its goals, equipping faculty and instructional staff to educate an increasingly diverse and technologically oriented student body.