

Office of Teaching and Learning, North Dakota State University: **Background and Communication Plan**

Background:

The *Office of Teaching and Learning* (OTL) at North Dakota State University (NDSU) was formally established on July 1, 2015, from the merger of several independent offices on the campus, including *Distance and Continuing Education* and the *Center for Science and Mathematics Education*. Programs under each organization became part of OTL. The organization's creation was specifically called for by the 2015 NDSU Strategic Plan, which was updated 2016 and reviewed in 2017 (see link below). OTL has since added the *Office of Assessment* to its portfolio, as well as several university programs, including the *Graduate Teaching Certificate*, *Teaching Assistant Training*, and the *Peer Teaching Partnership Program*. It is also the central office for the five-year National Science Foundation-funded *Gateways-ND* instructional development project.

OTL offers a group of educational experts and affiliated faculty and staff who work with faculty and staff to develop successful programs. Staff members in OTL have roughly 200 collective years of experience and extensive knowledge about NDSU. It is also a supportive place to find assistance to better an individual's teaching. Our reach is broad, encompassing all subject areas and interdisciplinary approaches to education. Communicating with our broad audience is essential to serving our mission of sharing best practices. Together we aim to reinvigorate the teaching mission of North Dakota State University. The Office of Teaching and Learning believes that good teaching practices support student success and great teachers commit to professional change. We provide an introduction to, and training in, teaching models that enhance student learning. Engaging students in the learning process produces better results. In addition, we believe: 1) All students can learn; 2) All teachers must continue to learn; 3) We learn together, and; 4) There is richness to our differences that make it worthwhile to learn together.

2018 Communication Plan – Moving Forward // Based on Strategic Plan and Review^{1,2}:

1. To make a significant impact in the upcoming year, OTL needs to bring in more voices from across campus. One of the identified strategies is to **Create an OTL Advisory Board**. Moving this strategy forward offers the potential to reach faculty in colleges or departments OTL has not reached, create a group of OTL supporters to spread the message about OTL services, and receive valuable feedback to help OTL improve its services.
2. To help **prioritize programs** the strategic plan set a task of getting a committee together to review current programs against a set of criteria. To move this strategy forward, a list of criteria that designates important programs should be generated and reviewed by stakeholders. Additionally, a form should be developed for individuals/departments to submit their event/program funding requests. The form should explain how their program meets the previously mentioned criteria. This helps OTL stay focused on programs/events that move us toward our mid-term goal of expanding resources and support for quality teaching.
3. Regroup on **developing a new website**. Discuss where the website is, what more is needed (ex. dynamic content), who can assist with the website, what to do with website domains of programs under OTL (ex. Group Decision Center), etc. Develop a plan of action to overcome current barriers to launching the site.
4. Continue to **seek new and innovative ways of creating awareness of OTL**. Explore different avenues of communication with groups across campus we partner with.
5. Focus on **developing resources**. Create a plan of action for the type of resources most needed. Are there faculty/instructional staff members who would be willing to write content, create tutorials, record podcasts, etc.?

Specific Areas of Communication – Progress to-date^{1,2}:

- 1. Build one website for all of OTL**
 - New website is in progress. There are some display/design issues that need to be addressed by a graphic designer. Some database linking needs to be addressed for the new site to be functional. Set up a meeting to discuss current status of the new website.
- 2. Create promotional materials for OTL.**
 - Postcards were created for all programs/services except assessment. Card images were turned into television monitor ads, social media and email images. Created folders to promote NDSU OTL and hold the previously mentioned post cards. Table banners were printed. Stand up banners will be printed this coming year. Annual summer catalog of K-12 professional development classes was produced and mailed.
- 3. Ensure the OTL brand is on every event/program offered.**
 - New logo was developed to co-brand Assessment, Group Decision Center, and Center for Science and Mathematics with OTL's branding. This allows those groups to maintain their autonomy but still be identified as an OTL program. Need to continue to ensure OTL is identified with every program we support financially or by staff time. Educate why it is important that OTL be identified as a supporter.
- 4. Make use of social media.**
 - A social media/email content calendar was developed and is guiding what is being promoted on social media. A list of K-12 school social media accounts was created. A Twitter list titled "We Learn Together" was curated from various educational sources and is updated as resources are identified. Need to refine social media campaigns.
- 5. Use campus listservs to promote services and key talking points.**
 - Created an email template for different types of content and a schedule of emails for the year. Tested out a variety of different variables with email to find the most effective methods of getting information out. Created an email subscription for faculty, staff, and students to get exclusive content from OTL. We currently have 109 subscribers. Send faculty listserv emails every two weeks per our negotiated agreement with Faculty Senate. Send staff and graduate student listserv emails as needed.

Strategic Plan Leader: Connie Jadrny, *Marketing and Public Relations Coordinator*

¹ Office of Teaching and Learning Strategic Plan (2016):

https://www.ndsu.edu/otl/PDFs/OTL_Strategic_Plan_FINAL_121916.pdf

² Strategic Plan Review (2017): https://www.ndsu.edu/otl/PDFs/OTL_Strategic_Plan_2017_Review.pdf