Overview

The Communities of Practice (CoP) professional development program provided faculty and staff with collaborative spaces to explore evidence-based teaching strategies, equity-focused practices, and innovations in online and hybrid learning. An estimated 700 participation hours were reported by faculty. A total of 60 survey respondents shared their experiences, reflecting on the professional and instructional impact.

Respondents reported involvement across a broad set of CoPs:

- Accessibility in Online Learning
- Addressing the Stigma of Mental Health
- Best Practices for Hybrid Courses
- Best Practices in Corequisite Calculus
- Calculus with Support
- Considering Artificial Intelligence
- Designing Engaging Canvas Courses
- Equity Institute 2.0
- Equity-Minded Teaching and Learning Institute – Onward and Upward
- Queer & Trans Advocacy in the Community College
- Student Experience Project (Ascend)
- Supporting Neurodivergent Learners

Survey results show that respondents implemented an average of 2.72 new teaching practices as a direct result of their CoP involvement and planned an additional 3.29 practices for future implementation. Comments further reveal strong appreciation for the collaborative, supportive nature of these groups, as well as their lasting impact on teaching practices, accessibility, and student success.

Impact by Community of Practice

Considering Artificial Intelligence (AI) CoP

Faculty explored the uses of AI to support instruction and student learning.

- *"I gained significant insight during this CoP in regard to utilizing AI to assist me in rubric creating, weekly announcements tailored to my curriculum, and in writing case studies for my students."*
- *"Guiding students (particularly those with reading disabilities) to use AI to help them with research basics (brainstorming ideas, generating search terms, and understanding complex/challenging sources) has been a helpful practice, and in coming semesters, I think I could make it better."*
- *"I am trying to use ChatGPT in a more sophisticated way, especially when it comes to prompts. This will help me help students become more sophisticated users."*
- *"AI is impacting our profession at an astounding rate. It forces faculty to reevaluate our dedication to our students. It forces us to focus on each lesson and assess the value and purpose with student learning in mind. AI awareness helps us, not only change with the times, but also helps us keep our teaching integrity intact."*

Designing Engaging Canvas Courses/Accessibility CoPs

Faculty focused on improving course design, accessibility, and effective use of Canvas tools.

- *"One of the best things I was able to implement was creating accessible items available to my students. I had no prior idea that PDFs were not totally accessibly or items within my Canvas pages as well, such as hyperlinks and images. This Canvas CoP really was helpful in navigating me through the process."*
- *"In the Design Plus CoP with Yun-Pu, we learned many new strategies, but the main ones I will be implementing is the Wizard templates in Canvas."*
- *"I practiced using Design Plus on my online course pages and implemented the templates on several pages this semester. Each semester, I will expand the number of pages that incorporate the design templates until all pages have a good, consistent design.*
- *"Using UDOIT and TIDYUP now. Fixing the errors regarding accessibility has created awareness around what is important for our students."*
- *"One valuable exercise led by Yun-Pu involved reviewing each other's assignments to assess clarity from a student's perspective. This peer feedback process was eye-opening and led to meaningful improvements."*

Equity Institute/Equity-Minded Teaching CoPs

Faculty emphasized grading practices, inclusivity, and student belonging.

- *"Adjustments to my ice breaker/introductions activities to make them more gender-inclusive and avoid use of dead-naming for individuals who had not yet registered their change of name in MyShasta (and on my roster). This impacted not only students who are non-binary and trans, but also students who have different preferred names than what is listed on the roster."*
- *"In the Equity institute I learned and implemented new policies and practices in grading, onboarding and a complete revision of my syllabus. The Equity institute is the most valuable training I have had as a teacher in many many years."*
- *"Included more examples of LGBTQ+ centered studies and material in all of my courses, updated my grading practices to reflect a more equity-minded approach, and made significant changes to my RSI based on feedback from the ASCEND surveys."*
- *"…this CoP has answered that need by providing us dedicated space to continue the work, the conversations, and the support of one another in work that is inherently on-going.*

Student Experience Project (Ascend) CoP

Faculty piloted practices designed to build student belonging and engagement.

- *"…I implemented an "attuned assessment wrapper", which ended up being a great way to not only help students feel more connected, but also to get them to engage in and assess their own learning and study habits."*
- *"Ascend has been one of the best instructional CoPs currently being offered… The practices are well designed and informed by research, which is appreciated."*
- *"I allowed more chances on exams and gave students more opportunities to meet the course requirements. I helped students stay on track with proactive communication."*
- *"After seeing the results from my first survey I was more deliberate about encouraging my students that they belonged in the class and were capable of succeeding."*