PROMOTING INSTRUCTIONAL INNOVATION THROUGH A FACULTY INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Sally A. Jackson
Vice Provost for Educational Technology
sjackson@u.arizona.edu

Stuart Glogoff
Office of Distributed Learning
stuartg@u.arizona.edu

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OVERVIEW

- Goals, challenges and approaches to a faculty incentives program
- New Learning Environments and Instructional Technology Grants Program (NLE/IT)
  - Addressing institutional needs
  - Call for participation
  - RFPs
  - Review process
  - Synoptic view of proposals, 1997-2001
- Observations
- Discussion & Comments
OVERARCHING GOAL

Articulate an academic rationale for expanding instructional technology and other technological innovations
FACULTY REWARDS STRUCTURE

- Disciplinary emphasis
- Reputation built by research and scholarship in field of study
- Rank and promotion tied to research and scholarship
CHALLENGES

- Structuring a rewards program consistent with the institution’s core values
- Re-structuring an incentives program that rewards people for doing what someone else wants them to do into a deliberative process that treats the issue of future directions as open for discussion
- Valuing innovation and teaching without sacrificing research and scholarship
CHALLENGES

- Faculty feel under-rewarded for instructional innovation
- Faculty and administration remain skeptical of the value of investment in instructional innovation
MEETING CHALLENGES

- **Challenge:** Faculty feel under-rewarded for instructional innovation

- **Contrasting solutions**
  - Creating rewards outside the peer evaluation process
    - damaging to long-term career goals
    - not very satisfactory to faculty
  - Use competitive process not only to support innovation but also to cultivate ability within faculty to recognize innovation
    - recruit new reviewers each year
    - invest time in discussing how to recognize worthwhile achievements in instruction
MEETING CHALLENGES

■ Challenge: Faculty and administration remain skeptical of the value of investment in instructional innovation

■ Contrasting solutions:
  • Persuade campus to invest in speculation (not likely, and probably the wrong choice for institutional resources)
  • Use a grant process to generate the data needed to make good decisions
    ➢ require formal assessment as part of every innovation proposal
    ➢ follow up with evaluative reports
New Learning Environments and Instructional Technology Grants Program at the University of Arizona
NLE/IT: BACKGROUND

- In mid-1990s -- negotiated agreement between the University President and student government leaders for a tuition increase
- Generates $700K annually
  - Faculty incentives program
  - Roll out the Web
  - Instructional tools
  - Fund sending faculty to EdTech conferences
NLE/IT GOAL: ADDRESS INSTITUTIONAL NEEDS

- Instructional innovation:
  - Technology solutions to recurring instructional design problems
  - New strategies for dealing with diversity of learner characteristics
  - Contributions to faculty productivity and/or learner productivity
NLE/IT GOAL: ADDRESS INSTITUTIONAL NEEDS

- Faculty development:
  - Dissemination of knowledge or tangible products of earlier innovation projects
  - Preparation of faculty to teach in high technology environments
  - Projects involving departmental, interdepartmental, and inter-institutional collectives
NLE/IT GOAL: ADDRESS INSTITUTIONAL NEEDS

- Effective utilization of existing resources:
  • Use of available technology resources and/or unique intellectual assets to increase return on investment, especially in such areas as distributed learning and distance delivery of instruction
NLE/IT GOAL: TARGETING SPECIFIC NEEDS

- Instructional laboratory refresh:
  - Updating and repair of existing instructional computing facilities on a cost-sharing basis with departments and colleges
NLE/IT GOAL: TARGETING SPECIFIC NEEDS

- Online course development:
  - To identify a new emphasis area
  - To explore new uses of online instruction
  - To meet broad enrollment management goals (e.g., recruitment, retention, enrollment flow within course sequences, regulation of time to graduation)
NLE/IT GOAL: TARGETING SPECIFIC NEEDS

- Southwest Project: a collaborative educational model that is cross-disciplinary, cross-institutional, and developmental that works to enrich students' educational experience

- Oracle: a site license for all Oracle database products enhances making learning materials available on the web
NLE/IT GOAL: TARGETING SPECIFIC NEEDS

- Planning Grants for Tri-University Academic Programs
  - New UA-sponsored statewide initiative
  - Purpose: to stimulate statewide collaboration in technology-delivered education
  - Available for departments and colleges interested in forming statewide partnerships to develop new online and technology-delivered programs
NLE/IT: PROCESS OVERVIEW

Using the grant competition as a yearly communication campaign and collaborative learning opportunity

- Solicit faculty input
- Develop priorities
- Distribute letter to faculty
- Hold workshops
- "Brief" reviewers
- Read and rate proposals
- Gather comments
- Make decisions
- Send feedback
- Publicize awards
NLE/IT: THE RFP

- Call for proposals
  - Introduction describes program goals and parameters
  - Eligibility
  - Spending rules
  - Proposal development support
  - Proposal format
  - Proposal review and evaluation process
  - Submission information
NLE/IT: EVALUATION PROCESS

- Reviewers: faculty, academic professionals and expert staff recruited from across campus
- Charge: to study the institutional context and examine proposed projects for their potential to push the University to the next level in instructional technology
NLE/IT: EVALUATION PROCESS -- THE RETREAT

- 1-2 days, held off-campus
- Introduction of reviewers and facilitators
- Objectives
  - Make funding recommendations
  - Generate feedback to authors
  - Examine the grant program’s implicit strategic direction
  - Identify important development directions
  - Evaluate the grant review process
NLE/IT: EVALUATION PROCESS -- THE RETREAT

- Procedural: e.g., organized into teams; team responsibilities
- Substantive: e.g., overviews of current campus resources
- Discussion-intensive reviewing protocol
  - Critical discussion in place of rate-and-aggregate helps develop consensus on values
  - Panel advocacy for funding or not funding (or adjusting funding amount) helps refine ability to discriminate among routine and innovative uses of technology
NLE/IT: REVIEW CRITERIA

- Institutional goals: scalable support for distributed learning; solutions for recurring problems in large enrollment courses (GEN ED); strategies for adapting to learner characteristics
- Value of proposed work: originality of idea; fit with on-going initiatives; general merit of idea
- Impact/Number server: number of students served in project; number of students potentially affected by results of project
NLE/IT: REVIEW CRITERIA

- Impact/Learning: improvements in learning; solutions to teaching problems; creation of new learning environments; generalizability to other disciplines

- Financial contribution of unit: prior invested in instructional technology; on-going commitment to IC; support for current proposal; non-monetary contributions (e.g., space, faculty release time, consumables, staff support)
NLE/IT: REVIEW CRITERIA

- Feasibility: availability of appropriate space and infrastructure; appropriate plans for dissemination of materials
- Assessment plan: clear delineation of what it would mean for this project to succeed or fail; commitment to collection of evaluation data
- Collaboration: partnership across academic units; alignment with service units
- Overall proposal merit
NLE/IT: 1997-98 SYNOPTIC VIEW

- Total recommended funding $295,192 for 24 of 57 proposals
  - Agriculture: $62,500
  - Architecture: $15,000
  - Engineering & Mines: $14,700
  - Fine Arts: $76,400
  - Humanities: $41,500
  - Science: $59,000
  - Social & Behavioral Sciences: $26,150
NLE/IT: 1997-98 SYNOPTIC VIEW OF PROPOSALS

- Technological Assessment of Microcomputer Skills in a Beginning Agriculture & Biosystems Engineering class
- Web-Based Teaching Modules for Visual Learning
- Student-Centered Learning Modules in Immunology
- Tohono O’odham Language Web-Based Dictionaries Project
NLE/IT: 1998-99 SYNOPTIC VIEW OF PROPOSALS

- Total recommended funding $556,500 for 35 of 94 proposals
- College/unit: Science, Fine Arts, Social & Behavioral Sciences, Humanities, Engineering & Mines, Nursing, Agriculture, Medicine, Architecture, Education, Multimedia Lab, Library, CeDRR
NLE/IT: 1998-99 SYNOPTIC VIEW OF PROPOSALS

Spending by purpose

- Lab refresh (12 proposals) $207,500
- Other equipment (9 proposals) $100,000
- Content development (10 proposals) $175,000
- Other (4 proposals) $74,000
NLE/IT: 1999-00 SYNOPTIC VIEW OF PROPOSALS

- Recommended funding $350,926 for 36 of 53 proposals (total requests ~$800K)
- New departments receiving funding: American Indian Studies, Arizona International College, Pharmacy, Arizona State Museum, Undergraduate Education
NLE/IT: 1999-00 SYNOPTIC VIEW OF PROPOSALS

- Integration of Oracle into GIS Education
- Curriculum Integration Through a Webcast Radio Station
- Interactive Multimedia Applications for Teaching the Principles of Animal Behavior
- Web-based Enrichment Module for Honors GENED Natural Sciences Course
- Remote Sensing Using Spectroscopy: Student Projects and Class Demonstrations
NLE/IT: 2000-01 SYNOPTIC VIEW OF PROPOSALS

- Recommended funding $477,865 for 24 of 34 proposals (total requests ~$778K)
- Tri-University proposals
  - Empowering Rural and Home-Bound Students: A Certificate in Women’s Studies Through Distance Learning ($30,000)
  - Planning a Distance Learning Program in Semiconductor Manufacturing ($30,000)
  - Post-Masters’ Certification in Healthcare Informatics ($30,000)
NLE/IT: 2000-01 SYNOPTIC VIEW OF PROPOSALS

- Instructional innovation proposals
  - Developing and Implementing a Methodology for Laboratory Online Courses
  - U of A Experimental Museum of Web Art
  - Searchable Database of Useable MIDI files
  - Creation of Computer Simulation Models for Genetics
NLE/IT: OBSERVATIONS

- Retreats are succeeding in the program’s education and consensus building goal
- Fewer proposals that call for developing a project from scratch
- More thoughtful proposals
- Attracting new participants each year
- Campus Showcase a popular event
DISCUSSION & COMMENTS

Possible discussion points

• How is instructional innovative rewarded at your campus?
• How does your campus recognize instructional innovation in the Promotion & Tenure process?
• Can you share other means of integrating instructional innovation in the institution’s core values?