

Center for Teaching Excellence Introducing Interdisciplinary Faculty Learning Groups

Are you forming or planning to form an interdisciplinary group to exchange ideas and brainstorm about a shared problem/issue related to your work as professionals at Nazareth? Would a \$200 budget help foster and support those discussions? Since its inception in Fall 2002, CTE has sponsored and supported a variety of different types of groups whose purpose was to facilitate professional development and learning, including teaching circles. The response to these opportunities has generally been quite positive, especially when the groups are interdisciplinary in nature. Participants note that they have grown in unexpected ways as a result of the discussion they have had with their colleagues. But feedback from those who have participated also suggest that broadening the range of topics for these discussions may be necessary and would allow for richer and more timely opportunities for those who participate.

In response to this feedback, the Center has broadened the previously implemented concept of a teaching circle to become simply a faculty learning group. Obviously, faculty learn from one another in many different ways. Learning communities can exist in a variety of different forms, all of which have their place within a college setting. To be eligible for support from the Center, however, a faculty learning group must:

- Consist of 5-12 members.
- Be interdisciplinary, ideally with members from different schools as well as different departments.
- Formulate a clear set of goals and objectives, which ideally would be pursued over a year-long series of discussions. However, learning groups can be sponsored for a single semester.
- Select a facilitator from among its members.
- Submit a one page annual report of their activities.
- Welcome new members from the larger community annually.

Support and funding may include:

- A \$100/semester budget, which may be used for expenses associated with forming the group and achieving its goals, such as a small honorarium for a speaker/guest consultant, books, copying, food for meetings, etc.
- Priority access to the Center meeting room, G351.
- Access to Center snacks and beverages during meetings held in G351.
- Inclusion of meeting dates and times on Center WWW calendar.

If interested, please submit an application to the Center for Teaching Excellence.