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"Breaking Barriers in Teaching and Learning"- Building and Enhancing Honors Programs through Faculty Learning Communities

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CHAPTER SIX

Building and Enhancing Honors Programs through Faculty Learning Communities

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INTRODUCTION

Many important institutional concerns and opportunities, observes John R. Cosgrove, involve honors programs and colleges, such as their impact on undergraduate academic performance, retention, and graduation (Cosgrove). Another consideration for honors programs is the area of curriculum revision or enhancement, for example, increasing ethical inquiry across courses in the honors curriculum. Others involve inspiring faculty to create new honors courses, adjusting criteria for student requirements and recognition, initiating joint enterprises with liberal education and STEM programs, and advancing the role of the honors curriculum in advocating change across the institution. These opportunities beckon solutions that can be investigated and proposed by committees, task forces, and workshops. Colleagues involved in these discussions are
often part of an honors advisory group, those loyal members of the choir who have been long-term advocates for the honors program.

This chapter proposes a relatively new approach for addressing such opportunities or concerns. The process involves small learning communities of faculty across disciplines that can bring new faculty and diverse disciplinary perspectives into the honors curriculum and community. These learning community members can engage in year-long dialogue and action in order to propose, investigate, and implement new ideas and solutions. The members of such a learning community, which can include early-career faculty in addition to mid-career and senior faculty, may be curious about but not familiar with the university’s honors program. Their interest in teaching and learning, however, when coincidently or purposefully connected to honors program issues, can bring new excitement, perspectives, and involvement. An example of such a learning community involving honors programs was in place in 2012–13 at Xavier University in Cincinnati. This faculty learning community (FLC), with the topic of “Teaching Honors/Scholars Courses at Xavier,” had the following description:

The goal of this FLC is to enhance the course-level and program-level teaching of honors students at Xavier. The FLC may consider how honors sections can become part of a common experience for honors students (especially University Scholars), regardless of major. We intend to look at the best practices at other institutions with successful honors programs. FLC members may visit and study honors programs at other universities; learn about how to incorporate new technologies into honors courses; discuss how to differentiate an honors course from a non-honors course; consider whether to propose common guidelines for honors courses; design or redesign particular honors courses that they teach; and explore other issues pertinent to teaching honors that the group determines. (Xavier University)

Xavier’s goal statement of their implementation of an honors FLC is just a glimpse at how FLCs may be designed in an honors program.
or college, a hint of how the concept is catching on in honors circles, and a more detailed view of Miami University's approach is offered later in this chapter.

Before examining the particulars of an honors FLC, however, the next sections in this piece describe the role community has played generally in the U.S., in higher education, and in teaching and learning as well as discuss definitions and aspects of this type of learning community.

THE POWER AND FRAGILITY OF COMMUNITY

Anne Colby, Thomas Ehrlich, Elizabeth Beaumont, and Jason Stephens's comments about student community compel us to ponder why community in general is such an important facet of our pursuit of not only student but also faculty and institutional excellence in higher education: If today's college graduates are to be positive forces in this world, they need not only to possess knowledge and intellectual capacities but also to see themselves as members of a community, as individuals with a responsibility to contribute to their communities. They must be willing to act for the common good and capable of doing so effectively (Colby et al. 7). Equally concerned with the issue of community, Robert D. Putnam, in *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, describes the decline of membership in communities during the last third of the twentieth century. He notes a decline of membership of 61% in the Red Cross, 42% in the League of Women Voters, 58% for those attending club meetings, and 40% in league bowling, which gave rise to the title of his book. Putnam cautions that loss of social capital—"the ways our lives are made more productive by social ties" (19)—could pose a threat to a way of life. Has this nationwide decline in community been mirrored in the way we teach and our students learn? How might this decline affect the culture of academic programs such as honors, departments, colleges, and universities?

With respect to the academy, in looking for campus community, Parker Palmer writes, "Academic culture is a curious and conflicted thing . . . infamous for fragmentation, isolation, and
competitive individualism—a culture in which community sometimes feels harder to come by than in any other institution on the face of the earth” (179). With respect to departments, in a national study, William F. Massy, Andrea K. Wilger, and Carol Colbeck found that collegiality was “hollowed,” with community usually absent in meetings, curricular planning, and pedagogical work. Taking stock of such observations, John Tagg concludes, “One reason we deny meaningful communities to our students is that we, as college teachers, do not participate in them ourselves” (262–63). Such perspectives of higher education in the last half of the twentieth century suggest that Putnam’s concerns about the decline of community in the U.S. are applicable to the academy.

**FACULTY LEARNING COMMUNITIES**

Concerns about the decline of community in higher education during the last third of the twentieth century have fueled the design and implementation of faculty learning communities. During this period, universities in the U.S. almost exclusively directed their expectations, efforts, and rewards on establishing early-career faculty members as producers of disciplinary discovery scholarship while overlooking teaching and learning development. The three-year grant that in 1979 enabled Miami University to launch a new faculty development model, later called a faculty learning community (FLC), was awarded by the Lilly Endowment, a foundation that supported university innovations, including teaching development for early-career faculty (Austin; Cox, “Reclaiming,” “Development”). The name “faculty learning community” was finalized in the 1990s, complementing Jean MacGregor, Vincent Tinto, and Jerri H. Lindblad’s research on student learning communities, which showed that when compared with students not in them, students in student learning communities had a higher institutional retention rate, faster cognitive-structural intellectual development, and a higher level of civic engagement than their peers. Similarly, research on faculty learning communities has confirmed the same outcomes for faculty participants: higher tenure (retention) rates, greater cognitive development, and more civic engagement when
Faculty Learning Communities

compared with faculty not in the learning communities (Cox, “Development,” “Faculty Learning,” “Fostering”).

A faculty learning community (FLC), write Milton D. Cox, Laurie Richlin, and Amy Essington, is a “voluntary, structured, yearlong, multidisciplinary community of learners of around 6–12 participants (8–10 is ideal) that includes building community, the development of scholarly teaching, and the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL)” (1.5). The FLC engages in a collaborative, active program of seminars and professional development activities through a curriculum based on educational research evidence of best practices in producing significant learning; typically, the FLC curriculum is focused on enhancing teaching and learning or advancing an institutional cause. Sixteen recommendations for effectively designing, implementing, facilitating, assessing, and sustaining FLCs are listed in Appendix 1. These recommendations for FLC infrastructure are based on my own and others’ forty years of experience with and research about the effectiveness of FLCs.

Two types of faculty learning communities exist: cohort-based and topic-based FLCs. Cohort-based faculty learning communities address the teaching, learning, and developmental needs of a cohort of academics who may have been affected by specific pressures in higher education, such as isolation, fragmentation, increasing demands, or a chilly climate in the academy. The participants shape the curriculum to include a broad range of teaching, learning, and institutional areas of interest to them. Examples of cohort-based faculty learning communities include early-career academics (one is now in its fortieth year as a major change agent at Miami University, with a new group each year), senior and mid-career academics, part-time/adjuncts, department chairs, and honors program instructors.

Participants in topic-based faculty learning communities design a curriculum to address a special campus teaching and learning or institutional challenge or opportunity; examples include developing electronic portfolios, designing or redesigning honors courses to address ethical issues, using mobile technology in courses, team-based learning, or redesigning advising systems for honors or other
programs. Such faculty learning communities focus on a particular topic and provide opportunities for professional development and for engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) across all academic ranks and cohorts.

Both types of FLCs generate positive accomplishments. Faculty, directors, and deans involved with honors programs may find the following assessment outcomes particularly relevant and valuable as an incentive to implement FLCs in honors. The outcomes are products of surveys completed by faculty involved in faculty learning community development.

1. In a six-university study by Andrea L. Beach and Milton D. Cox, faculty reported the top ten effects in rank order on student learning as a result of their learning community participation. All of these items are high on the Bloom taxonomy and are valued highly by faculty in honors programs:
   a. An ability to work productively with others
   b. Openness to new ideas
   c. A capacity to think for oneself
   d. Understanding of perspectives/values of course or discipline
   e. Ability to think holistically
   f. Ability to think creatively
   g. Ability to synthesize and integrate information and ideas
   h. Improved learning of concepts and theories
   i. Problem-solving skills
   j. Ability to apply principles and generalizations already learned to new problems and situations

2. When asked how they accomplished changes in student learning, faculty learning community participants cited the following teaching and learning approaches as the top five. These approaches reveal that the lecture approach has not
been favored in faculty learning communities. Again, the items enjoy a strong correlation with priorities in honors education:

a. Active learning
b. Student-centered learning
c. Discussion
d. Cooperative or collaborative learning
e. Writing (Beach and Cox)

3. Participants in faculty learning communities report the following top five effects of learning community participation on their educational development:

a. Perspectives on teaching, learning, and higher education beyond their own disciplines
b. Interest in the teaching process
c. Understanding of and interest in the scholarship of teaching and learning
d. View of teaching as an intellectual pursuit
e. Comfort level as a member of the university community (Beach and Cox)

4. Faculty learning communities offer an effective program to work with faculty on developing the scholarship of teaching and learning (Beach and Cox; Cox, “Fostering”).

5. Implementation science, developed by Dean L. Fixsen et al., confirms that FLCs provide the most effective faculty development programming model for implementing evidence-based teaching and learning interventions.

6. A study of early-career cohort FLCs at Miami University revealed that early-career faculty who participated in these faculty learning communities were tenured at a significantly higher rate than those who did not (Cox, “Development”).
Another significant structural characteristic to note is that a faculty learning community is not a committee, taskforce, course, book club, or action learning set. Those structures may not include community building or development of the scholarship of teaching and learning. In contrast, a faculty learning community is a collaborative, small-group structure that supports community building and the scholarship of teaching and learning. In FLCs, participants can investigate and develop scholarly solutions to almost any opportunities or challenges in higher education.

AN HONORS FACULTY LEARNING COMMUNITY

In 2001–02, the University Honors Program at Miami University proposed, designed, and implemented a faculty learning community on the topic of “Ethics across the Honors Curriculum.” This faculty learning community offered each participant the opportunity to investigate, discuss, and design a course in his or her discipline that contained a significant degree of ethical inquiry and could be offered for honors credit. The members read and discussed agreed-upon texts in ethical theory, practical ethics, and cognitive moral development. To revitalize their teaching, faculty learned how to develop and use case studies that raised moral issues. Departing from the typical FLC schedule of one meeting every three weeks, the honors FLC group had two-hour weekly seminars and attended two conferences, the Annual Conference of the Society for Ethics across the Curriculum and the Annual Meeting of the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics. Each member planned to design an honors course that could be offered three times over a five-year period.

Learning community membership was limited to full-time, tenured, or tenure-track faculty. Applicants had to agree to teach an honors seminar in their area of specialty where at least one third of the course content would involve an examination of ethical issues, and they had to have written consent from their department chairs for their participation as well as a promise that the courses would be offered by their departments. The letter of acceptance—written by the faculty learning community facilitator and sent to members,
indicating plans and expectations—is in Appendix 2. Ten members were selected, representing the departments of philosophy; psychology (two); sociology, gerontology, and anthropology; computer science and systems analysis (two); teacher education; communication; management; and speech pathology and audiology.

The Miami honors faculty learning community received generous funding that exceeds most faculty learning community budgets. Each participant received at least $500 for travel expenses and attendance at the two conferences or other professional items of his or her choice. Also unusual was a one-course reassignment from a regular teaching schedule. This course-coverage cost was usually $2,400 for one course, and it provided time for the learning community member to participate in the community, complete the readings, and begin honors course planning. This generous funding was required because of the large time commitment that members would have to provide during one semester. The financial support for the development and operation of this faculty learning community was made possible in large measure by a program development grant awarded to the University Honors Program by Miami’s teaching center, the Office for the Advancement of Scholarship and Teaching (OAST). The year before the faculty learning community was launched, this grant also enabled the University Honors Program to organize a three-day workshop on ethics in the honors program. The success of that workshop and the subsequent meetings and reading group held by its participants encouraged the University Honors Program to believe that faculty members possessed the wherewithal to develop a real curriculum of courses, each with a significant component of moral reasoning. Dr. Rick Momeyer, Faculty Associate in the University Honors Program and a member of the philosophy department, facilitated the faculty learning community and chaired the selection committee that was made up of members of the University Honors Program and OAST.

**ASSESSMENT AND DISCUSSION**

Assessment was done by using the survey adopted by all faculty learning communities at Miami University. The survey instrument
and entries for the honors faculty learning community at Miami University appear as Appendix 3. A quantitative comparison with all thirty-seven previous FLCs at Miami, both cohort-based or on other topics, is given in Tables 1 and 2, attached to the end of this essay. Table 1 compares the faculty development impacts of these thirty-seven FLCs and the honors FLC, and Table 2 provides the evaluation of the program components. The participants’ open-ended comments appear in the survey document, which is Appendix 3.

Table 1 indicates that the honors FLC faculty development effects are significantly lower than those of the thirty-seven previous FLCs. This difference is in part because the honors FLC differed from the recommended FLC structure (Appendix 1). For example, the honors FLC met for only one semester instead of two semesters—the first FLC at Miami to do that—thus halving the time needed to create the results that previous FLCs achieved. The intensive pace and rigor of weekly seminars also contrasted with the usual meeting pattern of a seminar every three weeks. As one participant noted in Appendix 3, “The semester went way too fast and the time we had together flew by because of the intense conversations shared among us.”

The meetings of the honors FLC focused on discussion of the readings from the selected books on ethics. The meetings did not provide time to engage the design and implementation of infusing ethics into the members’ new and not-yet-designed honors courses. Here are some comments from Appendix 3:

- I really enjoyed our weekly associations and found most sessions extremely insightful. Would have liked more discussion of ethics pedagogy, but all in all was quite pleased.
- Because most of our format has been primarily reading and discussing, I need time to work with the material.
- I would like to see a session added where we talk about the practical nature of assessing students’ work when they deal with ethical coursework.

With respect to designing and teaching their new honors courses, at the end of the FLC two members commented:
• We didn’t really talk about this very much.
• It is too early for this to have had an impact yet.
• I need more practice, which I will do on my own eventually.
  (From Appendix 3)

Thus, the outcomes listed in Table 1 turned out not to be the focus of this FLC. For example, this FLC did not produce a research project, hence the low SoTL impact. The highest impact in Table 1, “Your view of teaching as an intellectual pursuit” (6.1), was a result of the challenging learning experiences involving the discipline of ethics.

Items 6–9 in Table 1 are low probably because these FLC members were seasoned teachers whose careers had already produced experiences that resulted in parallel impacts, as two members note:

• My interest was already pretty high.
• This is a new component to my teaching, but I have been integrating undergraduate with graduate experiences since I came here so do not expect a great awareness to suddenly occur.

With respect to the impact of the programming components, Table 2 reports that the seminars delivered the highest impact (8.6). Because this emphasis on seminars was the essence of the programming engaged in by the FLC, the FLC was effective in what it attempted, namely to teach ethics to the FLC members. The second strongest impact, “The colleagueship and learning from other participants” (8.0), indicates the success of approaching this University Honors Program project using an FLC.

The lowest programming impact reported in Table 2 is “The teaching project” (5.8), again confirming that the FLC did not have time to accomplish the objective of designing a new honors course involving ethical inquiry in one’s discipline.

Item F in Appendix 3 reports the good intentions of the participants as they look to the future of designing and offering their honors courses after completion of the FLC; two FLC members note:
• At this time, I am in my thinking phase and have just started reading books that might pertain to ethics for inclusion in ongoing courses.

• Additional ethical components will be added to each of my courses and I am especially interested in finding interesting case studies.

Designing and offering honors courses would have been an excellent project for a second semester of this FLC. This unachieved goal confirms that FLCs should meet for more than one term. For a typical FLC, the first term involves learning about the FLC topic and designing a teaching and learning project to be engaged in the second term. The second term involves discussion of progress and fine-tuning as each member reports and receives participant support on project progress and outcomes. Also during the second term, the FLC members present the results to the institution. Given the amount of time required for (1) learning ethics, (2) designing an honors course with an ethics component, and (3) teaching this course for the first time, achieving these FLC goals offered the opportunity of a third term for this FLC. An FLC third term is rare because of the demand of faculty wanting FLCs on other topics and the limited resources of a teaching center. This time, however, a third semester was needed for the honors FLC to meet while the new courses were being offered, providing an opportunity for the members to support each other during their initial experiences.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Recommendations follow for honors programs that are considering an FLC approach to developing honors courses, supporting instructors who are designing or teaching honors courses for the first time, revising existing curricula, and contemplating other program changes:

1. Contact the teaching center for FLC organizational advice and funding support.
2. Plan for having the FLC for at least two semesters and three if the time is needed to achieve the goals and objectives of the project.

3. Involve an FLC facilitator who is an excellent teacher-scholar and respected contributor to or member of the honors program.

4. Engage, and if needed, adapt as many as possible of the sixteen FLC recommendations in Appendix 1.

5. Adapt the teaching center’s FLC assessment procedures and add ones that are particular to the topics and goals of the honors FLC. Using the Beach and Cox instrument offers the opportunity to compare the honors FLC outcomes with those of other FLCs.

6. Encourage honors faculty and staff members to join and participate in FLCs that are on topics of interest to but perhaps not directly connected to honors programs—such as new liberal education course requirements, information literacy, undergraduate research opportunities, and STEM issues.

Faculty learning communities offer honors programs an excellent opportunity for the educational and academic development of faculty and staff who align with the themes and goals of their respective programs. In addition, faculty learning communities provide honors programs with ways to involve faculty who are unfamiliar with the advantages and challenges of teaching and learning in honors courses. Perhaps most importantly, faculty learning communities offer honors programs a role in building community across the college and university, thus playing a part in enabling the institution to become a successful learning organization.
### Table 1. Miami University Faculty Learning Communities: Assessment of FLC Member Faculty Development Outcomes

Results from the question, “Estimate the impact of the community on you with respect to each of the following developmental outcomes. ‘1’ indicates a very weak impact and ‘10’ indicates a very strong impact.”

Number in parentheses is the ranking of this outcome over the years the question has been asked.

Number on second line is mean for that outcome over the years the question has been asked.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes (Number of years surveyed) Listed in order of impact across all FLCs listed here</th>
<th>Junior Faculty (20 years) 1980–00</th>
<th>Senior Faculty (10 years) 1991–01</th>
<th>Using Difference To Enhance Learning (3 years) 1997–00</th>
<th>Cooperative Learning (1 year) 1999–00</th>
<th>Problem-Based Learning (1 year) 2000–01</th>
<th>Team Teaching (1 year) 2000–01</th>
<th>Technology (1 year) 2000–01</th>
<th>Ethics Across Honors Curriculum (1 year) 2001–02</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Your interest in the teaching process</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Your perspective of teaching, learning, and other aspects of higher education beyond the perspective of your discipline</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(10)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Your comfort level as a member of the Miami University Community</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(8)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Your view of teaching as an intellectual pursuit</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(8)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>(8)</td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>(10)</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Overall Mean for Cohort</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Your understanding of and interest in the scholarship of teaching</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Your awareness and understanding of how difference may influence &amp; enhance teaching and learning as a teacher</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Your total effectiveness as a teacher</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Your understanding of the role of a faculty member at Miami University</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Your awareness of ways to integrate the teaching/research experience</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Your research and scholarly interest with respect to your discipline</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Your technical skills as a teacher</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OVERALL MEAN FOR COHORT: 7.6 7.7 7.6 8.7 7.2 7.4 7.4 4.9
**Table 2. Miami University Faculty Learning Communities: Evaluation of FLC Program Components**

Results from the question, “Estimate the impact of the FLC on you with respect to each of the following program components. ‘1’ indicates a very weak impact and ‘10’ indicates a very strong impact.” Includes reports from those who engaged in a particular component and rated it. Number in parentheses is the ranking of this component over the years the question has been asked. Number on second line is mean for that component over the years the question has been asked.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components (Number of years surveyed) Listed in order of impact across all FLCs</th>
<th>Early Career Faculty (20 years) 1980–00</th>
<th>Senior Faculty (10 years) 1991–01</th>
<th>Using Difference To Enhance Learning (3 years) 1997–00</th>
<th>Co-operative Learning (1 year) 1999–00</th>
<th>Problem-Based Learning (1 year) 2000–01</th>
<th>Team Teaching (1 year) 2000–01</th>
<th>Technology (1 year) 2000–01</th>
<th>Ethics Across Honors Curriculum (1 year) 2001–02</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The colleagueship and learning from other participants</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>9.4</td>
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<td>8.0</td>
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<td>2. The retreats and conferences</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
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<td>(6)</td>
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<td>8.3</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
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<td>3. Release time (Junior, Senior) or substantial funds for professional expenses</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
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<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
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<td>6.9</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
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<td>4. The teaching project</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
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<td>8.0</td>
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<td>5. Seminars</td>
<td>(4)</td>
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<td>6. Student associates</td>
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<td>7. A one-to-one faculty partnership (Junior: senior faculty mentor; Senior: faculty partners in learning)</td>
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<td>8. Observation of a faculty partner's and others' classes</td>
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APPENDIX 1

16 Recommendations for Creating, Implementing, and Sustaining Effective Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs)

1. Limit your FLC to a workable size: 8 to 10 (6–12 perhaps) faculty, professionals, and administrators.

2. Make membership voluntary and by an application process with department chair sign off.

3. Consider having affiliate partners: mentors, student associates, consultants.

4. Select a multidisciplinary FLC cohort, topic, goals, and membership;
   3 reasons: participant curiosity, rich innovations, dysfunctional unit relief.

5. Meet every 3 weeks for 2 hours for one academic year, and determine meeting time at the point of member applications.

6. Provide social moments, community, and food at meetings; an FLC is not just a committee or task force.

7. Make the facilitator a key participating member who models desired behavior and initially determines goals.

8. Have members determine FLC objectives, meeting topics, budget.

9. Focus on obtaining and maintaining FLC member commitment.

10. Assess 3 areas of FLC impact: member development, student learning or effectiveness of the FLC’s innovation, and FLC components engaged.

11. Employ an evidenced-based, scholarly approach leading to SoTL.

12. Present the FLC outcomes to the campus and at conferences.

13. Blend online/distance FLCs with an initial and 2 or 3 face-to-face meetings when possible.

14. Include enablers such as rewards, recognition, and a celebratory ending.

15. Imbed an FLC Program into a Teaching and Learning Center and have an FLC Program Director.

16. Adapt the FLC model for your readiness and institutional culture.
Dear Louise:

I am pleased to inform you that the Selection Subcommittee of the Committee for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching and the University Honors Program has selected you for membership in the Faculty Learning Community on Ethics for spring term, 2002. We are most excited by your application and look forward to your participation in the program.

You will need to be released from one course of your teaching time for next semester, unless you have made other arrangements with your department chair because of an already reduced teaching assignment. You should also be released from administrative and committee duties unless you wish otherwise. You need to make these arrangements with your department chair as soon as possible. Course replacement monies at the usual rate will be provided to your department should they need to hire someone to cover your courses. Your chair should finalize these arrangements directly with Milt Cox.

We shall meet for wine and planning (the two go together quite well, in my experience) from 5:30 P.M. until 7 P.M. on Wednesday, 14 Nov. I will send you more details about this meeting soon. In the meantime, it would be very helpful if we could prepare a booklet of applications to the community. This will be an efficient way to share background information as well as your plans for your proposed courses. Please email your permission to xxxxxx, CELT, at <xxxxxx@muohio.edu>. If you would like us to omit or edit part of your application, indicate that to xxxxxx. Please return your permission or revision by Friday, 9 Nov.

Please also complete the enclosed form indicating your contact information, dietary preferences, and second semester schedule. Be sure to list any dates you will be off campus for conferences, etc. I realize that some of your commitments may change.

Here are some dates to mark on your calendar for this and next term:

The Lilly Conference on College Teaching. The enclosed theme track list of sessions on Ethical/Moral Issues may be of interest to you.
Faculty Learning Communities

Every Wednesday next semester, from 8–10 A.M. for our meetings and discussions.

January 30–Feb. 3: Third Annual Conference of the Society for Ethics Across the Curriculum at the U. of Florida, Gainesville. This is the conference for which each of us will receive $500 to offset expenses.

Feb. 28–Mar. 3: Eleventh Annual Meeting of the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, Omni Netherland Hotel, Cincinnati. This is a conference for which members of our Learning Community have been offered a steeply discounted registration rate of $75 and which you are encouraged to take advantage of. We shall also endeavor to find funds for even this minimal expense.

Congratulations to you on your selection as a participant in the CELT/UHP jointly sponsored Faculty Learning Community on Ethics. I very much look forward to working with you next semester.

Sincerely,
Rick Momeyer
Faculty Associate, University Honors Program
Professor of Philosophy

Enclosures

cc: xxxxxxxxx, Chair, Speech Pathology and Audiology
    yyyyy, Dean, College of Arts and Science
    zzzzzz, Director, University Honors Program (UHP)
    Milt Cox, Director, Center for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching
APPENDIX 3

Faculty Learning Community on Ethics Across the Honors Curriculum

Final Report and Evaluation Summary

2001–2002

Complete and return to Milt Cox, OAST by April 26.

If you are comfortable with the process, complete and return this report by email to <bartonm@muohio.edu>. As an alternative you may complete a hard copy and return it by campus mail. Before you begin, you may wish to review your application letter and the program goals and objectives as they appear on pp. 4 and 16 of the CELT Book. Your community coordinator and the university director for teaching effectiveness programs will review this report. The Committee for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching, University Senate, and the Provost may review this report or an excerpt or summary of all of them as they plan for the future. Thank you.

A. Estimate the impact of this Faculty Learning Community on you with respect to each of the following program components. Circle the number on the scale below that reflects your judgment: “1” indicates a very weak impact and “10” a very strong impact. Also, if you have brief comments to make about any of the items, use the space provided. Open-ended questions occur at the end of the report.

1. Retreats and conferences. (N= 7; R= 6.1)

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- The conference in Cincinnati was not very useful. The quality of the research was marginal.

- I went to two conferences, “Ethics Across the Curriculum,” in Gainesville, FL, and “Association for Practical and Professional Ethics,” in Cincinnati. I gained more from the Gainesville conference than the Cincinnati conference for the topics were more general; thus audience discussion was more spirited and represented a greater number of views. I felt both conferences helped me in better understanding the way in which philosophers think and identified ethical issues that I had never thought about before.

- The topic of greatest teaching impact for my future courses was “Social Responsibility and the Professional” (Gainesville).
Faculty Learning Communities

• The topics of greatest impact on things I worry about on a non-professional basis were the panels on “Ethical and social issues of embryonic stem cell research” and “International conflict: The morality of violence and sanctions.”

2. Seminars (Which topics/sessions were most helpful and/or interesting?)
(N= 8; R= 8.6)

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• For me, the readings from Glover and Hallie and the discussions related to them were the most helpful because they provided me with greater insight about ethical issues I worry about the most. The Hallie chapters and the discussion of the Children of Chabannes (my class and I attended this presentation after it was mentioned in the ethics seminar) were very beneficial for a class discussion we had relating this information to our discussion on Uncle Tom's Cabin.

• Our debate (including preparation for it) on the ethical issues to be presented at the ethics bowl was probably the most interesting session.

• Most Helpful: Ethics Bowl—Being asked to apply our knowledge, Davis article and discussion of Pedagogy. Glad to read Glover but he was tedious eventually.

• The seminars in which Rick led discussions of various topics in the area of ethics were a vital portion of this project.

• I really enjoyed our weekly associations and found most sessions extremely insightful. Would have liked more discussion of ethics pedagogy, but all in all was quite pleased.

3. Your teaching project, designing the ethics components of your course (your program-related initiative). (N=8; R=5.8)

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• We didn’t really talk about this very much.

• It is too early for this to have had an impact yet.

• The program was very helpful in preparing me for designing a course. I am much more aware of additional topics to be covered; Rick served as an excellent model as a discussion leader. I met a speech pathologist and social workers at the Gainesville convention who will be excellent resource people.
4. Funds ($500) for teaching and learning support (N= 6; R= 6.0)

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- I guess that is what paid for my trip to Gainesville; I still need to submit hotel bills. At both conferences I ordered a pile of books. Money is always wonderful; however, the trips would have been worth going to even on my own money.
- It enabled me to go to Florida and I am glad of that, but I probably could have found funds to go anyway.

5. The colleagueship and learning from the other community participants (N= 8; R= 8.0)

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- Most colleagues were extremely gracious and supportive. I found a couple of the interactions frustrating, though. One member in particular seemed quite dismissive of others' ideas on occasion, and this really shut me down at times.
- I knew most of the other members of the group before we met. It was wonderful to meet new people and to hear discussions by folks I have already known.

B. In a similar manner, estimate the impact of this faculty learning community on you with respect to each of the following outcomes: “1” indicates a very weak impact and “10” a very strong impact.

1. Your awareness and understanding of ethics in general and with respect to your discipline. (N= 8; R= 7.4)

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- I give it a 10 for ethics in general and 5 for ethics in my discipline. But, when I teach the ethics course to students in my discipline, I will be incorporating the general ethics 10.

2. Your understanding of and ability to take your existing lessons, curricula, and courses and include components related to ethics. (N= 8; R= 6.6)

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- I need more practice, which I will do on my own eventually.
3. Your understanding of how and ability to **teach students the skills they need to analyze** ethical considerations. (N= 8; R= 6.8)

   weak  
   impact      strong  impact  
   1  2  3  4  5(2)  6(2)  7(1)  8(2)  9(1)  10

   • Again, I need practice.
   • Rick served as an excellent model, but my ability is not so strong.

4. Your understanding of how and ability to **diagnose the problems some students may have** in working on ethical considerations. (N= 8; R= 5.5)

   1  2(1)  3  4(1)  5(2)  6(2)  7  8(2)  9  10

   • I will be better than I would have been without the program.

5. Your understanding of what **expected student learning outcomes result** from your efforts to include and teach your ethical components. (N= 8; R= 5.3)

   1  2(2)  3  4(1)  5  6(3)  7(1)  8  9(1)  10

6. Your understanding of how and ability to **assess the quality and quantity of students’ work** with ethical components. (N= 8; R= 6.0)

   1  2  3(1)  4  5(1)  6(4)  7  8(2)  9  10

7. Your understanding of and ability to **describe what you are doing and why in order to communicate to others** the nature and advantages of ethical components and **inform colleagues** of ways to implement these. (N= 8; R= 6.6)

   1  2  3(1)  4  5(2)  6(2)  7  8(2)  9  10(1)

   • As above, because most of our format has been primarily reading and discussing, I need time to work with the material.

8. Your technical skill as a teacher (N= 8; R= 5.3)

   1  2(1)  3(2)  4  5(1)  6(2)  7(1)  8  9  10(1)

9. Your total effectiveness as a teacher (N= 8; R= 5.5)

   1  2  3(2)  4  5(3)  6(1)  7(1)  8  9  10(1)

10. Your interest in the teaching process (N= 8; R= 5.3)

    1  2(1)  3(1)  4(1)  5(1)  6(3)  7  8  9  10(1)

   • My interest was already pretty high.
11. Your research and scholarly interest with respect to your discipline (N= 8; R= 4.4)

- weak impact
- strong impact

12. Your view of teaching as an intellectual pursuit (N= 8; R= 6.1)

- As with many of these questions, the seminar was very compatible with my own perspectives and reinforced them, but didn't really initiate a lot new, except where I have indicated.

13. Your understanding of and interest in the scholarship of teaching and learning (N= 8; R= 5.1)

14. Your awareness and understanding of how difference may influence and enhance teaching and learning (N= 8; R= 4.4)

15. Your awareness of ways to integrate the teaching and research experience (N= 8; R= 3.8)

16. Your comfort as a member of the Miami University community (N= 8; R= 4.9)

17. Your understanding of the role of a faculty member at Miami University (N= 8; R= 4.5)

18. Your awareness of ways to integrate the undergraduate and graduate experience (N= 8; R= 2.9)

- This is a new component to my teaching, but I have been integrating undergraduate with graduate experiences since I came here so do not expect a great awareness to suddenly occur.
19. Your perspective of teaching, learning, and other aspects of higher education beyond the perspective of your discipline (N= 8; R= 5.1)

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C. If not covered by the above questions, what have you valued most from your participation in the Community on Ethics across the Honors Curriculum?

- Meeting Individuals with similar Interests.
- Diversity of disciplinary perspectives shared and the contact with colleagues I wouldn’t ordinarily come in contact with. The facilitator was also a good role model.
- The opportunity to be the “student” with an excellent teacher like Rick.
- The chance to identify specific sympathetic colleagues with whom I might pursue endeavors with in the future: Karen, Jeff, Marty.
- The seriousness and commitment of my colleagues.
- Reading Glover; I wouldn’t have without this prompting.
- The exposure to ethics as a discipline, mode of thinking and analysis. I feel as though a whole new way of thinking has been provided to me and am deeply appreciative of the authors we read, the articles we were exposed to, and the line of inquiry we investigated. Most of all I am indebted to the kinds of questions we pondered throughout the semester. The semester went way too fast, and the time we had together flew by because of the intense conversations shared among us.
- Rick was adept at facilitating the group and engaging us in thought-provoking conversations, intellectual pursuits along hard line, difficult topics that were not always easy to pursue. He always introduced us to a varying array of authors so that many different opinions were shared and different ways of viewing the world were put forth. This was particularly important as I set about putting together my own course and its contents.
- This entire experience was life changing for me primarily because I faced several ethical dilemmas with students this semester. Through course discussions, readings, and conversations, I faced these dilemmas in ways differently than I would have in the past with the experiences gained from this community.
- I’ve also decided to pursue a new research project because of this community primarily due to exposure to one of the authors we were introduced to and a
concept we dealt with frequently. I will be applying the concept of moral imagination as it relates to education, especially in the area of science education.

- The discussions, led by Professor Momeyer, prompted me to read further and to reflect on the issues that we discussed. I have already been able to use some of the results of that additional reading and reflection in my reading.

- Modeling of effective teaching by our facilitator.

D. What aspect(s) of the Program could be changed to make it more valuable for future participants? Do you have any suggestions for modification (additions, deletions, substitutions, restructuring, etc.) of the content or form of the Community?

- I would like to see a session added where we talk about the practical nature of assessing students’ work when they deal with ethical coursework.

- More scheduled time to work on the teaching project. One less week of Glover, not Nussbaum.

- A couple of the participants added extra information to our listserv. This helped prepare us for further discussion. If this component was deliberately included more of us might have added to the listserv exchange.

E. In what ways have you used some or all of your $500, and how has this affected your teaching?

- Travel to a meeting on ethics; Useful, but not directly applicable.

- I did not receive any support from CELT except for partial support for 2 conferences.

- I used the money entirely to support my travel to AERA, in which I attended numerous sessions on ethics in education sessions. Several of these sessions are guiding my new research agenda with moral imagination in education. I also purchased several ethics books (with my own personal money while at the convention).

- It got devoted to the conferences, which was fine.

- I didn’t get $500. Should I have received it?

- I may have used it up going to the conferences in Gainesville and Cincinnati. If not, it can be used to help buy the books I bought at the two conferences. See notes above for the benefit of going to the conferences. The books I am buying focus on ethics related to healthcare and are very beneficial.
F. For your project (design the ethical component and how to teach it), report your progress and indicate your plans for the semester you offer the course. At this point, when do you plan to offer the course?

- Some aspects of my design have already been used within an existing (non-honors) course. I, with a colleague, am now working on a new honors seminar. We fully expect to have completed a syllabus by the end of the semester.

- I will coordinate this with Al Sanders since we are working together. I will not teach it next year since I will be on faculty improvement leave then.

- Inclusion of components on ethics in introducing courses—at work on these components. We’ll be included as guest spots in dept. courses.

- I plan on teaching the course next spring, 2003. The course is tentatively titled “Teaching Science, Society, and Ethics” and is geared for the Middle Childhood and Adolescent/Young Adulthood Educations majors. I’ve gathered readings and am in the process of designing the learning activities the students will be engaged in as part of the course.

- Marty and I are meeting in two days to work. I haven’t done anything yet. I plan/am scheduled to offer the course in Spring 2003 as my WMS offering.

- Will offer course in Spring, 2004, and have selected some ethical stimuli and forms for analysis.

- I will be teaching our topics capstone course, SPA 413, second semester next year, Spring, 2003. The focus of my course will be on ethical dilemmas in working with individuals with disabilities. This fall I will also be submitting an honors course, SPA 180, to be taught the following year.

- At this time, I am in my thinking phase and have just started reading books that might pertain to ethics for inclusion in ongoing courses. Additional ethical components will be added to each of my courses, and I am especially interested in finding interesting case studies that can be used in my MOSAIC class this fall. My previous partner, my upcoming partner for the new year, and I will be meeting on April 26 for initial discussion on possibilities of case studies for inclusion in each of the main topics of the MOSAIC agenda.

G. Describe how your teaching and your perception of yourself as a teacher have changed (if they have) as a result of your involvement in the Community on Ethics across the Honors Curriculum.

- In the past, I have limited discussions on ethical issues in advanced undergraduate or graduate level courses only and had not considered it as a critical
component of beginning courses in our major. I have also taught three honors courses at the 180 level and never included discussions of ethics in any of them until this spring. Discussions, while in the community, have served as a wake-up call that it would be most appropriate to include such discussions in all of the courses I teach, thus serving as a more effective model for students.

- More aware of ethical component in my courses.
- I am reinforced in my pedagogy and purposes. I believe I am a very good teacher and have had that reinforced by my colleagues. I have had some growth edges supported.
- I realize I am much more sensitive to “unethical” behavior in students than ever before participating in this community. There have been several incidents this year where I’ve had to deal with unethical behavior in students, and I’ve been extremely hurt by their behavior and shocked that they didn’t see anything amoral about their behavior. This course has only heightened that sense of morality in me.
- I don’t think my perception of myself has changed except that I am now more knowledgeable about ethics and the teaching of ethics. That is due to the readings, the conferences, the discussions, and observing Professor Momeyer as he led the group.

H. Additional comments

- Fine experience.
- Rick, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your time, effort, and energy in making this community possible. The conversations were rich, diverse, and, most of all, extremely helpful in propelling us forward into a knowledge base that will serve us well as we develop our courses. I am also extremely grateful for the way you opened doors for me in terms of new ideas, authors, and arenas of thought. . . . These are gifts that are priceless and unexpected rewards from a community such as this.
- Thank you, Milt, for making this community a reality, for finding the funds to get it to happen, for supporting it, and for providing an area where once again faculty from all walks of Miami life can come together and share ideas, thoughts, and notions whose paths might not ever cross. For me, having the opportunity to hear the voices of individuals from marketing, psychology, women’s studies, philosophy, communication, etc., all at once truly is a gift. With life in EDT, I feel I rarely am provided the chance to do truly “professorial” things, and these learning communities provide that opportunity . . .
• So thank you, Rick and Milt. More than you know. Cheers, Ann.
• Thank you very much, please continue the efforts.
• I enjoyed participating, and it gave me a lot to think about. It is nice to have professional opportunities like this available on campus.