

## HOW TO ORGANIZE A CAMPUS-WIDE COURSE REDESIGN PROGRAM USING NCAT'S METHODOLOGY

### **V. Building Awareness and Capacity**

Important goals of a campus-wide course redesign program are (1) to build awareness of the possibility of improving student learning while reducing instructional costs and (2) to develop the capability to do so among faculty, administrators, and professional staff. The redesign of specific large-enrollment courses is, in essence, a means to an end.

After making decisions specific to your institution's campus-wide program as described in Chapter III, we recommend that program leaders engage in the following activities that educate the campus community about course redesign and that will arouse initial interest on the parts of those who want to participate in the program.

#### **Get Campus Leadership on Board**

Program leaders should meet with the institution's board of trustees, the president's cabinet, and faculty leaders (e.g., faculty senate, pertinent committees) to discuss the new initiative. The purposes of such consultations are to explain the concept of course redesign and its benefits and to enlist the support and leadership of those important campus constituencies.

*Why:* Because institutional leadership is key to the success of a course redesign program, these meetings will help ensure that key leaders support the new initiative.

#### **Announce the New Initiative**

We recommend that the campus executive leadership announce the new program to the database constituents described in Chapter III.

*Why:* When top administration actively supports the initiative, the importance of the program is signaled to all campus constituents.

#### **Distribute the Call to Participate**

The Call to Participate formally invites all members of the campus community to consider participating in the course redesign program. The Call should be distributed approximately two months before the Orientation Workshop (described later) and should include specific information about the workshop. We recommend circulating the Call to every faculty member, administrator, and professional staff member on campus to make all aware of the program.

*Why:* To interest as large an audience as possible in participating in the Orientation Workshop—even if not everyone ultimately submits a proposal—and to develop an awareness of the redesign initiative among all members of the campus community. Those interested should be encouraged to send teams (more than one representative of a potential course redesign) to the workshop.

A sample Call to Participate is included in the appendices.

## **Distribute the Application Guidelines**

Application Guidelines need to be available to the campus community by the time of the Orientation Workshop. Directed toward those discipline-based teams that are interested in applying to participate in the program, the Guidelines contain the overall goals of the program, stipulate the timeline for applying, describe the expectations from applicants at each step of the application process, and give information regarding the kinds of grants and other assistance that will be available through the entire redesign process. The idea is to establish an atmosphere of competition so that project teams will strive to be selected to participate in the program. Establishing a competition also conveys the message that the program is highly valued.

*Why:* Providing specific information about how the program will work, including the requirements for final proposals, informs everyone what will be involved and how they will be involved.

A sample set of Application Guidelines is included in the appendices.

## **Plan Workshop I: An Orientation to Course Redesign**

Program leaders should conduct a one-day, face-to-face workshop open to anyone interested in submitting a course redesign proposal. The goal of this workshop is that participants acquire a solid understanding of what is needed to implement a good redesign. Through presentations, case studies, and group work, participants learn basic planning steps as well as how to adapt NCAT's redesign methodology to the needs of their particular circumstances. Program leaders should encourage as many faculty members, administrators, and professional staff members as possible to participate in this workshop.

Workshop topics include:

- **An Introduction to Redesign:** Offers an overview of the redesign methodology, its purpose, the premises upon which it has been developed, the strategies it applies, and the planning process.
- **Case Studies in Redesign:** Engages participants in an interactive application of course redesign models to institutional cases.
- **Course Readiness:** Includes a discussion of how to choose appropriate courses for redesign.
- **Planning for Assessment:** Provides guidance about how to assess the impact of course redesign on student learning.
- **Planning for Course Redesign:** Provides an overview of the NCAT's Cost Planning Tool, which facilitates the quality- and cost-planning tasks associated with redesign.
- **Developing a Cost Savings Plan:** Discusses how resources can be saved through redesign and what can be done with the savings.

*Why:* Participants learn more about what is involved in implementing a large-scale redesign, what models have proved successful, and how to measure both student learning outcomes and instructional costs. The group members also exchange ideas about course redesign during a case study exercise, the goal of which is to help them see new possibilities.

## Require Workshop Homework

Participants should be expected to have completed some assigned reading about course redesign developed by NCAT prior to the workshop and to have discussed some redesign possibilities with others.

Prior to the workshop, workshop participants should read:

- An Overview of Course Redesign  
This article provides a brief overview of NCAT's course redesign methodology and outcomes.
- Improving Learning and Reducing Costs: New Models for Online Learning  
This is an edited version of a September/October 2003 *EDUCAUSE Review* article that describes the six redesign models that have emerged from NCAT's course redesign programs.
- Chapters I and III of How to Redesign a College Course Using NCAT's Methodology  
This is a summary of the redesign techniques that are essential to improving student learning while reducing instructional costs.
- [INSTITUTION] Application Guidelines  
The guidelines show how to apply to participate in the course redesign initiative. Participants should pay particular attention to Stage Two: Identifying the Course.

*Why:* The required reading introduces participants to course redesign, prepares them for the content of the workshop, makes the workshop a more productive and meaningful experience, and prevents participants from feeling overwhelmed when they begin to encounter all of the new ideas.

## Conduct Workshop Sessions

Each of the following sessions on the workshop agenda should be conducted by an NCAT staff member and/or the program leaders.

*Note:* If you are new to course redesign, we recommend that you engage NCAT staff to conduct the Orientation Workshop. During the first round of your campus-wide redesign program, the program leaders will learn a lot and become able to conduct this workshop in future rounds.

*Course Redesign Overview.* This session provides an overview of NCAT's course redesign methodology, the methodology's purpose, the premises upon which the methodology has been developed, the strategies it applies, and the planning process, including examples of the Six Models of Course Redesign. It also provides an opportunity for participants to ask questions.

*Essential Elements of Course Redesign.* This session engages participants in an interactive discussion of the Essential Elements of Course Redesign. Participants should be seated at tables of 8 to 10. After a brief overview presentation by the workshop leaders, each table should be asked to consider one element. Questions to be answered during this 45-minute period include, Why do you think this element is important? What benefits would implementing this element offer? What challenges would it present? What needs to be taken into account in

implementing this element? One person from each table should be chosen to speak for the group in the 30-minute report-back portion of the session.

*Getting Ready for Course Redesign.* This session engages participants in an interactive discussion of the course readiness criteria. The criteria address the quality- and cost-planning tasks associated with redesign, including selecting the appropriate redesign model, assessing the impact of redesign on student learning, saving resources through redesign, and what can be done with the savings. After a brief overview presentation by the workshop leaders, each table should be asked to consider one criterion. Questions to be answered during this 45-minute period include, What do you need to consider in making a choice? Why choose one versus another? What do you need to take into account in implementing a particular model or strategy? What issues do you need to consider in developing your responses? What evidence would you provide to indicate your readiness? If there are gaps in your readiness, how would you plan to address them? One person from each table should be chosen to speak for the group in the 30-minute report-back portion of the session.

*What's Next.* This session discusses next steps in the grant application process and provides an overview of NCAT's planning resources that support course redesign. It's also an opportunity for participants to ask questions.

A sample agenda and a list of the logistical tasks that program leaders need to perform in preparation for the workshop are included in the appendices.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Q: Can an NCAT redesign scholar lead the Orientation Workshop?**

A: We strongly recommend that you engage NCAT staff to conduct the Orientation Workshop during the first round of your campus-wide redesign program. An alternative would be to engage one of NCAT's Redesign Scholars who has had experience in course redesign beyond his or her individual course. If you are interested in pursuing either alternative, please contact Dr. Carolyn Jarmon, NCAT vice president, at [cjarmon@theNCAT.org](mailto:cjarmon@theNCAT.org).

If you plan to focus solely on mathematics, NCAT Redesign Scholars in mathematics are fully capable of leading an orientation workshop.

#### **Q: I'd like to lead the workshop myself or join with NCAT staff and/or scholars to do so. What is the best way for me to prepare myself since I'm rather new to the ideas also? What do I do if I don't know the answer to all of the questions that come up about course redesign?**

A: Most campus administrators are not knowledgeable about NCAT's redesign methodology, and even those who are do not have specific experience in conducting course redesigns across multiple academic areas. NCAT is here to help. The NCAT website has an array of free resources for those seeking to implement a successful redesign, including data from both two-year and four-year institutions. You should become familiar with How to Redesign a College Course by Using NCAT's Methodology as well as case studies of prior redesigns (see [http://www.theNCAT.org/PCR/Proj\\_Success\\_all.html](http://www.theNCAT.org/PCR/Proj_Success_all.html)). The case studies are sorted by discipline, redesign model, and degree of success. You should refer questioners to either the web resources or to the relevant Redesign Scholars, who are happy to discuss redesign questions

via email or telephone. You should also feel free to contact NCAT if you have questions or for help in pointing people in the right direction.

**Q: It looks like the content of the workshop and the homework are duplicative. Have you ever had complaints about this?**

A: During the past 15 years that NCAT has worked with literally thousands of faculty and administrators in the orientation workshop, only one person has raised that issue. The repetition is deliberate. The homework provides baseline information about course redesign (and we certainly hope that everyone does the homework), but the reading material is only a prelude to the interactive content of the workshop. Also, because most of the content is new to participants, having the information repeated aids in understanding, as we have been told again and again. We do not believe most academics can master the concept of course redesign—especially its cost reduction aspect—simply by reading our materials. The workshop is an opportunity to interact with NCAT staff and others, get answers to specific questions, and inspire participants that it is indeed possible to improve learning while reducing costs.