

APPENDIX D: Focus Group Feedback

Focus groups were conducted in March 2020 to share the work of the project team and vet the comprehensiveness of the draft document through dialogue with stakeholders. Open-ended questions were used to invite input from more voices to discern whether any key aspects had been missed during the development process. While only a sliver of all employee educators participated in these sessions, the feedback represents thoughts and ideas offered by individuals from the following programs and communities:

- Asian Pacific Islander (API)
- Classified Professionals of Color
- Classified Professional Development Team/Classified Senate
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Disability Services and Programs for Students (DSPS)
- English as a Second Language
- Faculty of Color
- Native Community
- General Sessions (open to all employees)

Echoing the Essential Conditions

Essential Condition	Comments and Observations
Affirmative Management Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explicit institution-wide expectations for professional development are needed to create a conducive environment. ▪ Management is in a position to reduce barriers. Some of the barriers mentioned included inequity in access to all employees; restricting access to trainings unless the manager deems appropriate; refusal to close offices; and difficulty of employees being able to get away from their desk. ▪ Staff expressed a desire for supportive management that sees the value of professional development and encourages participation. There is also an interest in mandatory professional development so that it is not dependent on supervisory willingness to allow or encourage participation. ▪ Management should encourage cross-training and development that may not be directly applicable to the current position. ▪ The leadership culture does not prioritize the professional development of new deans. ▪ ARC culture should value professional development as part of the work rather than employee participation being perceived by peers as trying to get out of work ▪ There is a stigma associated with professional development that is perceived as a form of remediation, lack of skills, or only for new employees. ARC leadership needs to foster an open mindset towards growing and learning. ▪ Guilt is associated with requesting funds and participating in professional development. Limited resources suggest participation takes scarce opportunity away from others.
Central Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need central coordination to enable equitable access ▪ Centralize training and onboarding for newly hired employees ▪ Ensure training opportunities include all stakeholders on campus (i.e., staff, students, faculty, administrators) ▪ Create clarity and streamlined processes for funding professional development. Simplify the process for requesting funds and put it online. ▪ Increase awareness of self-service resources that are already available (e.g., Lynda.com). ▪ Currently there is a gravitation towards entry-level offerings. ▪ Create sequenced learning tracks (e.g., beginning, advanced, practitioner, case studies).

Essential Condition	Comments and Observations
Ample Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a network of classified mentors who can supply expertise, networking, and tools Existing staff with expertise are informally pulled away from duties to help others rather than having a designated pool of experts
Thoughtful Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple comments expressed appreciation for the opportunity to provide input Create an advisory group instead of having one person approve funding based on unknown metrics and measures.
Appropriate Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a local system similar to the Vision Resource Center that tracks interests, individual completion, learning trajectory, available resources, and allows the employee to identify goals. The data should then inform the institution's plan for training. Create some kind of space that serves as a portfolio of the employee's professional development activities and growth Provide spaces and community for employees of color <p><i>Note: Comments focused primarily on virtual rather than physical spaces as the feedback sessions coincided with the COVID-19 outbreak and transition to remote operations.</i></p>
Sufficient Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated time for PD without classes or other obligations; schedule so people can attend Designated time to digest and debrief after professional development to consider how what was learned can be adapted to individual roles at ARC Time and space to attend professional development Establish institutional professional development hours and use this time to close offices for training purposes. Close down select areas for training and rotate the closure to reduce impact on operations. Offer diverse timeframes to attend trainings Time to participate is enabled by full-time status; time is a particular barrier for part-time employees Available offerings do not fit the schedule of various employees Staff don't have release time and many are unable to get away from their other work to attend. Use release time and perhaps schedule trainings during intersession. It would be ideal for every department to have dedicated time for training similar to how Financial Aid closes for a day on a regular basis for training purposes. Allow staff two hours per month to demonstrate the value the institution places on professional development (e.g., flex time for staff)

Funding and Budget Observations

Avenues to professional growth are dependent on funding rather than strategically planned.

Increase the availability of funding to attend NCORE and other professional development activities so that individuals are not repeatedly denied access. There should be sufficient funding to attend a regional/national conference each year.

There is insufficient funding available or lack of access to funding. Increase the current \$800 funding.

Develop an appeal process for denied funding requests. Increase transparency for specific conferences (e.g. NCORE).

Reimagine professional development to ensure that there are authentic opportunities even if budget is not available.

Support and invest in the professional development of student workers and temporary employees.

Will resources that were being invested in facilities be redirected?

If classified staff are designated as mentors, they should be compensated through comp time or other incentives.

Requested Offerings

Competency	Requested Offerings
Equity-Minded Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General cultural awareness (e.g., individual cultural knowledge and how it differs from students' cultural knowledge; how to operationalize awareness in classroom or office) ▪ How to write syllabi ▪ Sustained series on supporting multilingual/ESL students (e.g., awareness of needs and assets) ▪ Exploration of what equity means when working with ESL students ▪ Opportunities designed to build empathy (e.g., multilingual panel, immigrant experience) ▪ Creating equitable instruction and service environments for those with limited computer access, first generation, etc. ▪ Strategies for addressing students' unconscious bias, racism, and religious bias while respecting student agency/viewpoints ▪ Equity in the classroom: expressing vulnerability and individual identity while appropriately managing what is revealed and exposed based on student identity and beliefs ▪ Better supporting communities of color within individual classrooms ▪ Supervisory training to better support faculty of color ▪ Cultural sensitivity and cultural humility ▪ How to relate to students ▪ Trauma-informed care and effects of secondary trauma ▪ Embedded tutoring ▪ Strategies to support students with anxiety/ADD/ADHD ▪ Best practices for serving and reaching ESL students (e.g., awareness workshops) ▪ Best practices for serving students with disabilities across all offices (e.g., how to make handouts accessible) ▪ Classroom management ▪ Handling disruptive student behaviors and crisis situations (e.g., suicidal student) ▪ Customer service; accurately and sensitively guiding students to information and resources ▪ Addressing student needs in disruptive circumstances (e.g., job loss due to COVID-19) ▪ ADA accessibility topics such as accommodations for people with physical impairments; accessibility related to classroom furniture and other physical features ▪ Using discretion in service interactions (e.g., appropriate times for discussing proctor forms) ▪ Faculty roles and responsibilities related to serving students with disabilities ▪ How to be inclusive and examine bias regarding students with disabilities ▪ Mental health service considerations including reactions and proactive responses ▪ Concepts of intersectionality ▪ Best practices for working with interpreters for Deaf students
Effective Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Best practices for student services when communicating with ESL students ▪ Best practices for counseling ESL students including exploration of multilingual counseling (i.e., providing services in the student's native language) ▪ Cultural and language awareness (e.g., assuming students recognize majors that are not familiar in all countries; assumptions related to citizenship, public discourse, civil rights, etc.) ▪ Navigating difficult conversations ▪ Skill-building in how to facilitate conversations ▪ Facilitating conversations to support marginalized communities ▪ Workshops that develop communication skills and self-advocacy related to job applications and interviews for persons of color (e.g., API perspective) ▪ Helping students navigate interpersonal conflicts in group work in a club or classroom setting ▪ Communicating virtually: how to connect in the new normal (e.g., protocols for reaching students who do not engage) ▪ Conflict management and techniques for creating win-win situations ▪ Talking points and de-escalation techniques

Competency	Requested Offerings
Technology Proficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chromebook training ▪ How to use computers and computer programs ▪ Technical training related to remote operations ▪ ADA compliance and accessibility topics (e.g., how to enlarge print on documents) ▪ Adaptive technologies and screen readers ▪ Word and PDF protocols; guidelines for emailing documents in terms of accessibility ▪ Regular and consistent Excel training; basics of Outlook ▪ Certification in the Microsoft Office suite ▪ Refresher trainings in various applications ▪ Training on new releases of existing technology ▪ Access and training to update the ARC website ▪ Email etiquette for ARC Everyone on Exchange and protocols for replying all ▪ Coding
Organizational Adeptness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comprehensive onboarding process ▪ Time management and logistics (e.g., balancing competing interests; prioritizing workload) ▪ Stress management, self-care, and creating boundaries ▪ Los Rios/ARC resources that can benefit well being and increase job performance (e.g., teacher work groups, grading efficiently) ▪ Practical application of Part B: Hiring the Best and Equity Rep (e.g., how to write good equity-minded interview questions) ▪ Resources for translation (e.g., translating forms, assisting students) ▪ Parameters of own job and others' jobs (i.e., primary focus vs. secondary roles) ▪ Business Services training (e.g., travel requisitions and hiring paperwork) ▪ Cross-functional bridges that build understanding of programming and how it works (e.g., Business Services and Student Affairs) ▪ Knowledge of local, regional, and national community partners and resources (e.g., API nonprofits, publications, listservs, and professional networks) ▪ Awareness of ARC organizations (e.g., PRISE) ▪ Understanding of ARC services function and available resources ▪ Organizational connections: conveying who does what and who to contact ▪ How classified staff can move up in the system ▪ Accreditation and the standards ▪ Resources in hiring ▪ Districtwide resources to support affinity groups ▪ Transition support as jobs change or people are redeployed in a post-remote environment (e.g., PD for a cohort of faculty who are not able to make load) ▪ Interviewing skills ▪ Safety topics and resources for those who feel unsafe on campus
Leadership Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building capacity within oneself to serve as a team lead (e.g., intensity of work, skill sets, templates, campus resources) ▪ Networking (community-building) ▪ Work-life balance ▪ Personal resilience and avoiding burnout ▪ Training curriculum for managers that is designed to build professionally as a team ▪ Project management ▪ Connecting to affinity groups for managers ▪ How to categorize levels of seriousness in issues ▪ Mentorship opportunities ▪ Realities of leadership roles (e.g., what causes high stress and high turnover)

Competency	Requested Offerings
Collaborative Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaboration between ESL and English faculty ▪ Quality and improvement prompted by accreditation, but approached as a natural part of our work ▪ Collaboration with people that are teaching similar classes to facilitate exchange of ideas (small group collaboration) ▪ Cross-functional collaboration and sharing of ideas (e.g., faculty and staff) ▪ Provide opportunities for different constituencies (e.g., faculty and staff) to share perspectives, see how jobs impact each other, understand how jobs impact students, and collaborate towards common goals
Data Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understanding the disproportionate impact to immigrant and refugee students
Specialized Expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discipline-specific programs and best practices ▪ Innovative ways of teaching writing (e.g., service learning and multimedia/hybrid texts)

Suggested Delivery Practices and Ideas

Flip the model so that participants don't go to training, but rather training comes to the participant (virtual or in person) through a distributed model of professional development.

Make training available via different modes (e.g., Zoom) and record the sessions for asynchronous viewing. Also provide the necessary technology, equipment, and transcription to facilitate virtual professional development.

Allow individuals to self-assess.

Use learning communities as the primary vehicle for professional development. Courses or offerings should be the secondary method.

Incentivize professional development through the creation of a badge system or other methods for those who want or need incentives.

Create a roster of vetted, bona fide Native educators/practitioners/consultants for the community. Allow any employee to request a visit (in-person or remote delivery) from these individuals either as a special speaker, one-on-one learning session, group learning session, or to provide input on curriculum design, etc. Compensation for those on the roster could vary based on time spent and type of contact. This model would break the mold on traditional PD, is flexible, allows building relationships, and can be cost effective in terms of impact to the campus. A similar model has been effectively used in the Sacramento City Unified School District. It was created using Title IV funding.

Supply ongoing access to the type of information that is delivered at conferences (e.g., NCORE).

Use distributed information (e.g., trickle of content) on a weekly basis that is convenient and readily accessible to practitioners. For example, a 10-minute weekly podcast could keep individuals engaged and thinking about a topic.

Use "sneaky teaching" to feed people spoonfuls of information to keep them learning.

Ensure community and group-specific professional development as well as integrated professional development.

Trainers/facilitators should have the lived experience of the topics being discussed. This factor addresses both who is being given the opportunity to lead and the participant's level of engagement (comfort level during interaction).

Seed curiosity and knowledge in a variety of ways that spans the range from texting out relevant PowerPoint images from conferences to more formal, module-based training

Build more local opportunities at ARC and across Los Rios. Consider creating institutes (e.g., Skyline College).

Create formal/informal forums to learn from colleagues and meet professional needs.

Make training in social justice and equity mandatory (similar to Title 9).

Trainings need to be ADA accessible.

Community-building opportunities structured as follows:

- Informal gatherings for the whole campus community (pre- and post-semester)
- Informal and formal API-specific gatherings (e.g., APAHE conferences)
- Opportunities to build stronger relationships between counselors and classroom instructors
- More community-building activities during Flex Week and Convocation instead of focusing on housekeeping issues; perhaps reinstating the barbecue that used to be held after Convocation
- More activities that focus on best practitioner.

Provide group-based training for managers that serves focused or strategic purposes.

Make professional development responsive to changing conditions (e.g., remote operations).

Provide summer training and summer institute for Classified staff. Allow staff to earn credit similar to Flex Time.

Create the equivalent of a program roadmap for classified staff that shows how to advance to higher-level positions and the professional growth that would support advancement or skill-building towards a different position.

Employee onboarding should include an A-Z guide to tour areas of campus and identify the offices to which students are frequently directed.

Offer technology training on a regular, reoccurring schedule.

Offer pre-emptive planning and training to introduce new technology or initiatives before they are launched.

Incorporate training about DSPS students in new faculty onboarding. Give a lot of explanation for people who are outside of student services. Offer in week 1 or 2 of fall semester. Connect to people and faces in the student services.

Student and temporary employees need robust onboarding to build foundational knowledge. These workers are often the front line that interact with students.

Include instructional classified staff in training related to pedagogy and other instructional aspects.

Do a large scale meeting to check-in on how people (employees and students) are doing in COVID-19. Not just employees, but students as well.

Transitioning to remote operations would have been less of a problem if employees were previously trained and proficient in technology.

Other Observations, Concerns, Questions, and Comments

How does the self as the “well-spring of everything we do” manifest in professional development?

Professional development can only take deep root in authentic community. Authentic community is the umbrella in which professional development happens.

Who will come to the trainings? Will it only be those who are already advocates of the training topic?

Patterns of ESL marginalization due to unconscious racism should be emphasized.

Institutional recognition of what conferences provide and their value to participants:

- Conferences create spaces to recharge (e.g. NCORE) especially for People of Color
- No real way to quantify emotional labor, and there are no bounds to that emotional labor.
- Attending conferences goes beyond self-care
- Attendance/participation necessary to keep people in community and engaged, infused with new ideas
- Need to incorporate this understanding as a piece of professional development (like a recipe); conferencing is critical for recharge, rejuvenation, and community building.

Incentivize those who go to conferences in order to make it about more than moving up the ladder.

Recognize the college's unwritten values (quantitative data, prestige, etc.) There is a conflict between institutional and individual values that results in some requests for professional development being denied.

Until values are contractually mandated, the needle will not move. Until metrics are placed, some people won't engage.

People of Color are under-represented in full-time positions. Classified staff, which are a larger percentage of People of Color, are more likely to be let go and are often in positions that offer equity support for our most vulnerable students.

Are volunteerism or community service included among the official definition of professional development?

Access to professional development for management is not as clear as other groups. There is no professional development fund from which to obtain funding or to create transparency.

The amount of commitment required to participate in the District New Deans Academy conflicts with college interests in terms of letting new deans attend.

To create a culture of support, supervisors could use the competencies to work with the employee to develop a professional growth plan.

There is a connection between professional development planning, technology planning (Technology Master Plan), and instructional technology planning.

Be clearer about the opportunities and more direct in encouraging classified staff to attend. Clarify that professional development is intended not only for the current position, but to enable growth towards future positions.

Professional development is a component of the tenure review process, but there are hardships and barriers to doing meaningful development outside of what is offered during FLEX.

People need to feel valued.

Suggested Training Resources

Association of Colleges and University Educators (ACUE)

- [ACUE Course in Effective Teaching Practices](#)
- [Effective Online Teaching Practices](#)
- [Gaps in Faculty Confidence and Behavior Reduced or Eliminated After Taking the ACUE Course in Effective Teaching](#) or [Brief Summary](#)

Association of Community College Administrators (ACCCA)

- [Great Deans Program](#)

CAST Team

LRMA Leadership Series

National Behavioral Intervention Team Association (NABITA)

- [Free Resources for Colleges and Universities](#)
- [Training and Events](#)
- Trainings on How to de-escalate and How to categorize levels of seriousness in issues were specifically suggested for managers

National Deaf Center

- [Resources](#) – includes a variety of materials, videos, publications, and guides
- [Engage for Change](#) – comprehensive training is available to support institutions that become part of a local Engage for Change project

[Ohlone College Center for Deaf Studies](#) – potential training resource as one of the largest programs in California