June 23, 2014

Dr. Jennifer H. Herman

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Dr. Insert Name Here

Dear Dr. Saunders,

Thank you for your participation in the Center for Excellence in Teaching’s Course Design Institute (CDI) from Monday, June 16 through Thursday, June 19, 2014 from 10:00am-3:00pm each day. One of the summer programs available through the Center for Excellence in Teaching, the CDI was originally developed by The Ohio State University and has been adopted by a number of institutions; the content and design has benefitted from input from professionals across the country.

The CDI follows the “Backward Design” model described in L. Dee Fink’s *Creating Significant Learning Experiences.*  This model moves course design from organization around content, often following the chapters of a textbook, to an approach centered on student learning. During the institute, the eight participants worked collaboratively to design or redesign their courses based on this model.

The first day of the CDI focused on clearly articulating course goals and student learning objectives, with particular emphasis on centering the course around “big rocks,” or the objectives for student learning that should be given the highest priority. During the second day, participants selected assessments or activities that would allow them to observe whether the student learning objectives had been met. Day two also included an overview and discussion of theories of student learning and development.

The third day began with a discussion-based PowerPoint presentation on nine principles of Universal Design and their implications for course design. Participants then created one of the key assignments for their course, worked with a partner to refine the assignment, and created a rubric using a primary traits analysis approach. The final day of the CDI focused on synthesizing knowledge to create a final course design, including learning objectives, assignments/assessments, and teaching methods and activities. The CDI ended with participant presentations on their course designs.

Your participation in the Course Design Institute was a substantial commitment of your time and energy and demonstrates a dedication to improving the quality of your course design and, subsequently, your teaching. We hope that the information provided, the time to create and reflect, and the collaborative nature of the CDI has been beneficial to your work in preparing your courses for the fall 2014 semester.

Thank you again for your participation,



Jennifer H. Herman