

NDSU

OFFICE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING



NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Office of Teaching & Learning

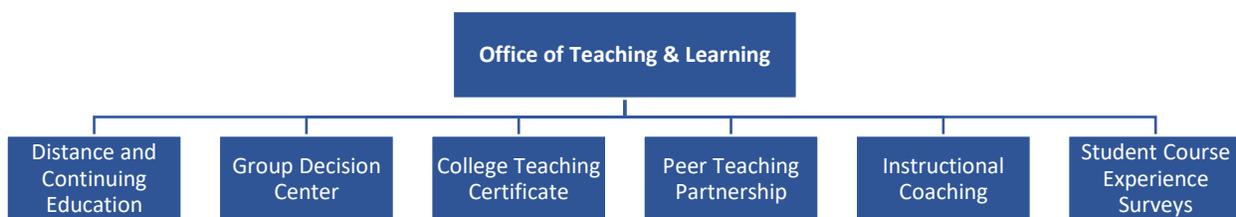
STRATEGIC PLAN

2021-2026

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The Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) opened in 2015, bringing together several campus services and formalizing an internal office dedicated to supporting the improvement of teaching and learning at North Dakota State University. OTL offers a variety of related services that support teaching and learning, including [Distance and Continuing Education](#) to facilitate professional development for K-12 educators, [Group Decision Center](#) to support research and strategic planning, [College Teaching Certificate](#) for graduate students and instructors who wish to study teaching and learning, [Peer Teaching Partnership](#) to support instructors in improving their practice through a formal process, [Instructional Coaching](#)—a new service—to help instructors explore ways to improve or refresh their practices, and the [Student Course Experience Surveys](#) that are required by NDUS and university policy for all instructional coursework to provide feedback to instructors about the effectiveness of their teaching.



OTL currently employs 14 full or part-time individuals. The core staff includes the director, associate director, assistant director of enrollment and records, technology coordinator, registration coordinator, records coordinator and office assistant, marketing and public relations coordinator, information systems manager, K-12 professional development coordinator, and payables and purchasing coordinator. OTL also employs three graduate assistants and a part-time affiliate faculty member who coordinates the College Teaching Certificate.

Planning Process

The Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) began the process of strategic planning spring 2021. Three groups of stakeholders, representing both internal and external stakeholders, were included to ensure broad representation of perspectives and ideas. The groups included OTL staff; NDSU faculty, administrators and students; and K-12 educators. See Appendix A for a list of participants. Each group met separately, facilitated by the OTL director and the assistant director who manages the Group Decision Center (GDC). Each group was guided through a strategic thinking process using XLeap, a software that allows participants to anonymously contribute ideas in response to prompts and questions. The participants can see all contributions made by others, but they are not able to see who made the posts. We chose this approach to encourage participants to share all ideas, even if they felt uncomfortable.

The following sections lay out the strengths, opportunities, and areas for growth identified by stakeholders. The final section provides an overview of activities that will enable OTL to achieve the strategic priorities over the next five years. OTL recognizes additional activities may be added and acknowledges the importance of being flexible and adjusting as the environment changes and stakeholders' needs shift.

Mission and Vision

Mission and vision statements were created during OTL’s initial strategic planning exercise in 2015. They were reviewed during the 2021 strategic planning process to determine if they still reflect not only the work OTL does but also the work aspired to. The stakeholders believed the general spirit of the two statements were reflective of OTL’s work and aspirations, but there was agreement some expansion was necessary to fully embody the future of OTL. Stakeholders called for an explicit commitment to inclusivity stated as part of the OTL mission.

The vision statement elicited important discussion about the concept of *transformation*, which means a complete change. The notion of transformation in a vision statement assumes the need for this change, and implies good teaching is not already occurring. The 2015 vision statement seems not to recognize the many highly effective instructors already positively impacting student learning at NDSU. The words “lifelong learning” were also discussed with questions such as “for whom?” The stakeholders agreed the vision statement needed to be more specific while maintaining a focus on student learning. We also ensured OTL’s mission and vision statements reflected NDSU’s institutional mission and vision.

OTL’s updated mission and vision statements are presented below with NDSU mission and vision, demonstrating alignment.

NDSU Mission

We provide transformational education, create knowledge through innovative research, and share knowledge through community engagement that meets the needs of North Dakota and the world.

NDSU Vision

To lead the advancement of our land-grant ideals through innovative education, research, and outreach.

Office of Teaching and Learning Mission



Office of Teaching and Learning Vision



Strengths

The stakeholders identified numerous strengths of the work currently being done by OTL. It is important to note the perceived strengths and value stakeholders find with OTL to ensure these elements are continued and allocated appropriate resources. The complete list of strengths is listed in Appendix B. Both internal and external stakeholders noted many positive qualities of OTL, with customer service (competence, friendliness, and responsiveness) offered by the staff emerging as a theme. For external stakeholders, the variety and quality of professional development offerings was stated repeatedly, as was the willingness of the staff to accommodate their needs. For internal stakeholders, there was appreciation for the events held to support instructors in improving their practice. Collaboration was noted by all groups as a strength and a way to make a greater impact.

Opportunities

Numerous opportunities were identified for better serving stakeholders and increasing OTL's capacity. A list of responses can be found in Appendix C. Like the responses identifying OTL's strengths, patterns and themes emerged for opportunities. The idea of collaboration was repeated throughout the responses by both internal and external stakeholders. It was seen as a way to be more aware of stakeholder needs as well as a way to extend OTL's capacity, leveraging expertise and resources from a variety of sources and using OTL as a hub to bring these resources together. Related to collaboration was the suggestion that OTL increase outreach to K-12 professional development directors and coordinators, making them aware of offerings that align with their initiatives and needs and even inviting them to vet offerings so they are better able to make recommendations to their educators.

Partnering with on and off-campus stakeholders for grant proposals is another promising idea offered by stakeholders. OTL has the infrastructure to manage and implement grant projects.

In addition, the momentum and activities developed for the Gateways-ND National Science Foundation grant can be leveraged to continue and even expand STEM teaching supports. Three activities can support the extension of Gateways. They include (1) instructional coaching that is customized for STEM classrooms focusing on active learning and other STEM-effective instructional practices, (2) grant proposals will be submitted to expand on successes of Gateways, and (3) OTL will create resources and professional development opportunities that enhance diversity and inclusion in STEM disciplines.

Finally, small shifts can be made to increase value for all stakeholders with activities such as badging/micro-credentialing and high school-college dual credit offerings. OTL already has a system for registering learners, working with K-12 schools, and offering professional development. The existing model will be used to frame new but similar efforts.

Areas for Growth

Stakeholders were also asked where there may be weaknesses and gaps in OTL's services. OTL staff strive to provide stakeholders with positive, high-quality experiences, and knowing where there are shortcomings enables growth and improvement. In some cases, stakeholders offered ideas for improvement. See Appendix D for the full list of responses.

Lack of resources arose as the strongest theme in stakeholder responses. OTL staff, in particular, recognized the gaps in staffing that have created work overload and gaps in services. Several comments were made about the need for another marketing and communications staff member as well as an additional individual for web design and site maintenance. Although OTL has a marketing and public relations coordinator, the workload exceeds what one person can reasonably do, and because of that, there may be missed opportunities for promoting OTL services. Similarly, there are three OTL staff members with expertise in web design and construction, but building and maintaining the professional development marketplace and catalog, designing and maintaining the OTL webpages, and programming and administering the Student Course Experience Surveys more than fill the time allocated to these roles. Oftentimes, grant opportunities call for website development and extensive communications with participants, and although OTL has this expertise, time is a barrier.

Funding was also identified as a weakness. OTL generates a significant portion of its staff and administrator salary as well as all operating funds. The university does not allot funds for instructor professional development. A soft-money structure makes it challenging to provide a stable set of offerings and services for NDSU stakeholders.

Lastly, it is important to address Qualtrics and the Student Course Experience Surveys. For reasons that are not fully clear, the former Division of Distance and Continuing Education, which is now part of OTL, was given the responsibility for funding and administering the Student Course Experience Surveys (SCES, formerly SROIs). Over time, the cost of Qualtrics has grown to over \$43,000 annually. When OTL experienced a budget shortfall in 2020, NDSU's IT agreed to take on half the cost; however, the annual cost to OTL is still about \$22,000. It is also a fulltime staff member's role to administer these surveys and support use of Qualtrics on the NDSU campus. Additionally, because of the move away from paper surveys, use of Qualtrics for the SCESs has increased dramatically, creating a workload that does not allow for timely processing and sharing of the SCES results with instructors. We estimate another half-time staff allocation is needed to support Qualtrics and SCES administration and processing.

Values

Throughout the planning process, particular words and ideas were repeated in conversation and in written statements entered into XLeap. These concepts emerged as shared values among stakeholders.

- **Collaboration** is an essential element in maximizing improvement of student learning. Collaboration enables OTL to do more than it could do alone. It also allows us to be aware of the needs of our internal and external stakeholders, meeting their educational

needs through campus-based professional development and our division of Distance and Continuing Education for K-12 educators.

- **Inclusivity** is a university-level initiative, and OTL also recognizes the importance of ensuring all classrooms use practices that intentionally create an environment of belonging that meet the needs of all learners.
- **Diversity** goes hand-in-hand with inclusivity, assuring multiple perspectives and voices are represented in designing educational experiences and deliberate inclusion of diverse individuals in these experiences.
- **Excellence** is the constant goal of both the work of OTL and the instructional practices of the educators we serve. Excellence is not an endpoint but rather an opportunity for continuous improvement.
- **Innovation** refers to ongoing shift of best-practices as research evolves. It also refers to the importance of knowing the educational needs of stakeholders and identifying the best ways to meet those needs.



Strategic Priorities

Stakeholders were asked to define what OTL is, what it does, and what it should do. The progression culminated in identification of priorities. A variety of recommendations were made by stakeholders that collapsed into three categories.

Strategic Priorities	
Support improvement of NDSU student learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-individualized support for faculty and instructors-opportunities for cross-institutional collaboration for instructors-grant writing, management and implementation for teaching and learning-collaboration with campus offices and departments
Offer high quality professional development for K-12 educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-classes that are high quality with wide variety for all educators-advertise in ND and across nation-cluster classes that meet state credentialing and endorsement requirements-offerings aligned with REA and district needs and initiatives
Provide value-focused community education opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-youth events to support exploration and campus recruiting-community education to enhance personal growth and interests-leverage expertise and interests of NDSU faculty-collaboration with Extension and departments

Activities and Resources

The following section lays out the strategic priorities, identified goals, and explanation of activities and resources needed to achieve the goals. We see these activities as an initial list and recognize additional activities can be added to more fully address the goals over time. In many cases the activities are an expansion or improvement to services already offered by OTL. The intention is to focus our efforts on providing greater value for stakeholders while not spreading our resources too thin.

Strategic Priority 1: Support improvement of NDSU student learning

Aligns with NDSU Goals: Student Success and Achievement & Diversity, Inclusivity, and Respect

Goal 1-Individualized support for faculty and instructors

Activities:

- Instructional coaching
- Peer Review of Teaching
- College Teaching Certificate
- New Faculty Outreach
- Creation of a Certificate for Inclusive Teaching

Although both Instructional Coaching and Peer Review of Teaching programs currently exist, we will expand and improve these services. To expand and improve, additional resources will be needed including additional instructional coaches. This need can be filled through direct staff hires for OTL or by leveraging the faculty fellow model to rotate exemplary faculty into the office for a one-year placement to support varied disciplines. The College Teaching Certificate is an existing opportunity that both graduate students and faculty can complete. This coursework will be reviewed and strengthened as needed to ensure relevance and value. Additional promotion efforts will also be employed to increase awareness of the opportunity for faculty. New Faculty Outreach is a new service that OTL will offer in collaboration with LAIC, where specialized materials and resources will be provided through in-person workshops and disseminated through the OTL website. The support will focus on effective teaching with activities and formal documentation that will support continued growth and movement toward promotion and tenure, as applicable.

Embedded within Goal 1 is a commitment to inclusive practices. During the 2021-2022 academic year, OTL will design a proposal for a certificate for Inclusive Teaching. We will use the College Teaching Certificate as a model and collaborate with other entities on campus including the Graduate School; Office of Equity, Diversity, and Global Outreach; and departments that offer relevant coursework.

Goal 2—Opportunities for cross-institutional collaboration for instructors

Activities:

- Book Studies
- Learning Communities
- Peer Review of Teaching
- Teaching and Learning Grants

All four of these activities have occurred in OTL; however, we will greatly expand the number, frequency, and quality. OTL will offer at least four book studies annually, representing a variety of disciplines and practices and reach a greater portion of the NDSU instructional community. Learning communities will be built around instructional needs and interests of instructors, including faculty and graduate teaching assistants. OTL will have at least two learning communities annually. In the past few years, the Peer Review of Teaching program participation has decreased. To increase value and impact, the program will be revised with guidance from various faculty and department leadership to ensure value and accessibility. Recruiting efforts will be increased, and partnerships will be formed across disciplines to expose participants to innovative and varied practices. Finally, OTL will more aggressively pursue external funding that supports improvement of teaching and learning with a goal of submitting at least five grant proposals a year, collaborating with departments and faculty across campus.

Goal 3—Grant writing, management and implementation for teaching and learning

Activities:

- NSF CAREER Grants
- Discipline-Specific Grants
- Teaching and Learning Grants

In order to grow grant-writing capacity, OTL will need to partner with faculty across campus. Collaboration will increase the expertise and intellectual capacity for writing high quality proposals. Involving a wide variety of faculty will also broaden the reach of OTL for improving student learning. As explained above, OTL will submit at least five grant proposals a year, and we will support efforts of NDSU faculty to submit proposals that include a focus on teaching and learning with appropriate budget considerations for carrying out the grant activities.

Goal 4—Collaboration with campus offices and departments

Activities:

- Regular communication with department heads
- Questionnaires and listening sessions for faculty
- Host joint events with departments and offices

In addition to regular informational communication that is distributed to the campus, OTL will conduct formal, and regular dialogue to determine needs and interests that will guide offerings such as book studies, learning communities, and workshop and conference sessions. In addition, OTL will seek opportunities to cohost events that target instructional effectiveness for improvement of student learning including teaching assistant training, conferences, departmental training, and other opportunities as they arise. OTL aims to expand collaboration and involve departments and offices that are currently not in collaboration with OTL.

Strategic Priority 2: Offer high quality professional development for K-12 educators

Aligns with NDSU Goal: Education, Extension, and Outreach

Goal 1- Classes that are high quality with wide variety for all educators

Activities:

- Recruit educational experts to offer high-interest, high-value classes
- Create a pool of professional development experts who can provide full-service professional development to schools
- Maintain at least 120 unique offerings in the K12 catalog

OTL has always encouraged K12 master educators to offer classes through Distance and Continuing Education, but to meet this goal, a targeted effort will be made to recruit 30-40 individuals to offer classes in high-need, high-interest areas such as special education, school health, social-emotional learning, and personalized-competency-based learning. In addition, we will recruit 5-10 individuals who will develop professional development series that include a combination of onsite, synchronous distance, and asynchronous learning experiences that schools can purchase for their year's professional development. The individuals will work through OTL to benefit from the promotion, organization, and contracting. Our overall goal is to have at least 120 high quality courses in our catalog year-round to ensure educators can participate in the professional development they need.

Goal 2- Promote offerings in ND and across nation

Activities:

- Place ads in publications and on websites for educators with high subscribership
- Have a presence at events for educators in ND and regionally
- Sponsor or buy ads in event programs
- Strengthen our social media presence by adding Twitter and increasing followers and posts

OTL needs additional staffing to fully accomplish the activities listed here. Our current marketing and public relations coordinator is already at workload capacity. We will begin to address this by hiring an intern or graduate assistant. We will also develop campaigns to attract followers using contests and high-interest content for both internal and external stakeholders.

Goal 3- Cluster classes that meet state credentialing and endorsement requirements

Activities:

- Develop packages of classes that meet Department of Public Instruction and Education Standards and Practices Board credentials and endorsements
- Develop series of relevant, high value learning experiences that result in micro-credentials or badges

DPI and ESPB have numerous licensable credentials and endorsements that educators can add on to their current educator license. We will create sets of classes for professional development credit that will meet the credential and endorsement requirements, seeking approval through the state as needed. We will also work with NDSU Registration and Records to identify a way to

post micro-credentials on a transcript and package learning experiences that can be added together to create a micro-credential.

Goal 4- Offerings aligned with REA and district needs and initiatives

Activities:

- Create a staff liaison position with Regional Education Associations and districts
- Prepare course listings customized for REAs and districts
- Recruit instructors to develop coursework aligned with REA and district needs

In the next five years, OTL has a goal of hiring an individual with K12 education experience to work collaboratively with the K-12 Professional Development Coordinator. The new position will be focused on working with external stakeholders, educators, district and REA professional development coordinators, and recruiting instructors to ensure we are meeting educator needs.

Strategic Priority 3: Provide value-focused community education opportunities

Aligns with NDSU Goal: Education, Extension, and Outreach

Goal 1- Youth events to support exploration and campus recruiting

Activities:

- Partner with departments and faculty to offer high interest learning experiences for youth
- Revive and expand Adventures in Science
- Revive and expand Expanding Your Horizons

NDSU faculty have a great deal of expertise to share with youth in a way that will build their curiosity and knowledge about various topics. From evening or weekend short sessions, to summer camps, the format and length can vary by topic and age group targeted. We will also restart programs offered in the past including *Adventures in Science* and *Expanding your Horizons* to draw youth into STEM professions at NDSU, especially those typically under-represented in the profession. OTL has the capacity and expertise to plan, organize, and facilitate these events.

Goal 2- Community education to enhance personal growth and interests

Activities:

- Offer high interest, high value experiences for community
- Market the Group Decision Center

OTL will partner with faculty to identify community education offerings that leverage their expertise and are likely to be interesting and of value to community members. OTL has a goal of offering at least five community education experiences each year. We will collaborate with Extension to ensure complementary but not competing or redundant offerings.

The Group Decision Center offers untapped potential. In recent years, XLeap and GDC use has decreased. OTL will increase marketing efforts to ensure the NDSU and greater community are aware of the features and benefits of the GDC.

Appendix A Stakeholder Participants

- Jeff Boyer, NDSU Director of Assessment and Accreditation
- Janalee Brandt, OTL Assistant Director for Enrollment and Records
- Linda Charlton Gunderson, OTL Technology Coordinator/Group Decision Center
- Jessica Danielson, NDSU Assistant Professor, School of Education
- Deb Demers, OTL Registration Coordinator
- Stacy Duffield, OTL Director
- Missy Eidsness, Fargo Public Schools Associate Superintendent
- Lyndsi Engstrom, Mid-Dakota Education Cooperative Program Director
- Jennifer Glasheen, South East Education Cooperative Senior Director of Teaching and Learning Services
- Kathy Hoovestol, OTL Office Assistant and Records Coordinator
- Connie Jadrny, OTL Marketing and Public Relations Coordinator
- Erin Lacina, Northeast Education Services Cooperative Director of Professional Learning & Operations
- Joe Mocnik, NDSU Dean of Libraries
- Jennifer Momsen, NDSU Associate Professor, Biological Sciences
- Jill Motschenbacher, OTL Associate Director
- Jerry Olson, OTL Assistant Director & Information Systems Manager/Group Decision Center
- Heather Sand, West Fargo Public Schools Director of Curriculum & Instruction
- Barb Schumacher, OTL K-12 Professional Development Coordinator
- Jane VanDerMeer, OTL Payables and Purchasing Coordinator
- Matthew Warner, NDSU Graduate School Graduate Assistant

Appendix B

Strengths Reported by Stakeholders

Note: When a characteristic was stated more than once, it was consolidated into one listing.

- People can access learning a variety of ways
- There are high-quality standards
- Reputable
- [DCE] is an established system for ongoing teacher professional learning
- [DCE] has been around a long time
- DCE allows districts to offer to extend learning on district initiatives for college credit
- [DCE] has reasonable rates
- [DCE]'s interest in relevance
- Willingness to collaborate
- [DCE classes] cover broad topics
- Personable leadership and staff
- Partnership with districts and K-12
- Platform for consistent delivery and organization
- Ability to customize offerings
- Visually appealing, easy to navigate web presence
- [DCE] has consistent offerings over time
- Responsive to areas of need
- Staff work ethic and loyalty
- Connections across campus and region
- Relationships with other offices on campus like LAIC
- Generates income
- Has the structure and resources to manage grants for others
- Work with stakeholders off campus as well as on campus
- The variety and diversity of programs that support the university
- GDC and the XLeap software (unique in ND)
- Versatility
- Variety and quality of professional development offerings
- Number of instructors who repeat DCE classes (indicates a positive experience)
- Number of educators who come back to take classes because of excellent service and course quality
- Number of faculty who continue to work with OTL
- Campus book reads on pedagogy
- Events / workshops
- Learning communities for GTAs
- Comprehensive support for the NDSU campus
- Innovative approaches
- Offers graduate assistantships
- Centralizing resource for dispersed programming

- Responsive to the community
- Connection between K-12 and higher ed
- Peer Review of Teaching
- Graduate Teaching and Learning Conference
- Course design facilitation

Appendix C

Opportunities Reported by Stakeholders

Note: When a characteristic was stated more than once, it was consolidated into one listing.

- Capitalizing on educators who need classes for license renewal and salary lane changes
- Use graduate assistants for outreach to increase visibility
- Youth and community education
- Micro-credentialing
- Dual credit
- Grants with K12
- Have upcoming courses aligned with K-12 PD directors' portfolios and sent out
- Invite K-12 PD directors to vet offerings to enable them to recommend for educators
- Determine if LINC can be used to increase visibility of K-12 PD offerings
- Fill gaps in REA offerings such as content area reading/writing in secondary schools
- Hosting sessions to discuss REA and district offerings and determine where they can collaborate and be more efficient.
- Share messaging about why educators should choose NDSU over other colleges for PD
- Packaged offerings for K-12 educators
- Offer reduced rate per course with additional course registrations (buy X get 1 free) and possibly district or REA-based rates
- Badging and micro-credentialing
- Collaborate on and off campus
- Foundation grants or bigger grants from NSF/NIH/others
- Hosting more workshops or bringing in guest speakers who are "experts" in a specific area (e.g., decolonizing academia, pedagogy practices)
- NDSU foundation fundraising campaign
- Determine and fill perceived and real gaps in high quality teaching and learning research
- Targeted PD for new instructional staff
- Collaboration with departments
- Integration - bring together resources, departments to solve a problem or innovate
- OTL can be a distribution hub, promoting the available resources
- More representation of departments in OTL decision making

Appendix D

Areas for Growth Reported by Stakeholders

Note: When a characteristic was stated more than once, it was consolidated into one listing.

- Loss of revenue and enrollment; PD enrollment was down in 2020 and spring 2021 perhaps due to teacher burnout and overload
- Negative perceptions, misconceptions, and lack of awareness of NDSU faculty and administrators about OTL
- Need another staff member to work with marketing and communications
- Need another web designer; current workload is too much for existing staff
- No operating funds from the university for professional development for faculty
- Data analysis; more use of data for decision making
- Support from upper administration at NDSU (director needs to take an active roll in advocacy)
- Website (Expression Engine and Marketplace issues)
- Need additional instructional designer/coach
- Word of mouth is diminishing since the people who know the power of the meeting software are retiring or have left the University
- Relevance
- Streamlined system for submitting a course offering
- DCE offerings are not as directly connected to the work being done in rural schools
- REA-accessibility for a graduate credit cafeteria plan
- Providing faculty with the books for the book reads
- Funding and sustainable budget
- Promotion / awareness of services and programming
- More connection with other departments for trainings (e.g., IT)
- Targeted PD for instructional staff...PD for different levels (new vs. experienced) and for different areas (such as inclusive teaching)
- Increasing faculty engagement
- More robust personnel structure - director, assistant directors, etc.
- Summer book read on pedagogy
- Hosting more community meetings

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