

Why OPID Matters?

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OPID, along with other UW-System offices, faces budget challenges. The following key talking points might assist in “making the case” for the value and significance of OPID, both to local and state level constituencies:

- OPID is an **award-winning, nationally and internationally recognized** state-wide professional and faculty development institution; 2005 TIAA-CREF Theodore M. Hesburgh Certificate of Excellence in innovation
- OPID’s programming ***directly impacts*** quality teaching and learning in the classrooms of UW-System’s institutions including but not limited to:
 - OPID’s **Wisconsin Teaching Fellow and Scholar (WTFS)** program: creates an annual cohort of outstanding educators from across UW institutions to engage in a year of focused study and SoTL (Scholarship of Teaching and Learning) research to improve direct services to students in the classroom; over 10 Scholars (experienced faculty) and 22 Fellows (tenure track or early tenure faculty) participated as UW-Superior representatives to this program since 1985. Many of these Fellows and Scholars have gone on to win outstanding teaching awards and serve their institutions and UW-System in key leadership positions. At UW-Superior, former Fellows and Scholars have been leaders in faculty development, accreditation and HLC work, Global Awareness, department chairs, program coordinators, published authors, conference presenters, administrators (Deans, Directors, Coordinators, Associate Vice Chancellors, Associate Provosts), leaders of Liberal Arts Initiatives (which are CORE to UW-Superior’s mission), research center leaders, grassroots community leaders, technology advisors and leaders, faculty representatives at System, Chairs of Faculty Senate, fully ranked faculty members and leaders in individual disciplines at the national and international level. Participants in Faculty College from UW-Superior uniformly report excellent positive experiences with this intensive professional development opportunity.
 - **OPID SoTL Leadership Site:** The relationships between OPID and the UW System Leadership Site for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), housed at UW-Milwaukee, is one of cooperation, collaboration and teamwork. The Leadership Site is the primary SoTL arm of OPID and extends the faculty development work of OPID by designing initiatives to encourage scholarly inquiry into teaching and learning. It also creates inter-campus collaborations for conducting SoTL research. As a result, a core of faculty experts in classroom inquiry practices and principles from

across the System now exists. The partnership between OPID and the Leadership Site has elevated the faculty development status of the University of Wisconsin system as a whole. In 2003, the UWS Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) Campus Program with the theme of Creating a Multi-Institutional Framework to Advance the Practice of Teaching Through Scholarly Inquiry into Student Learning. Most recently, in 2006, the UW System has been selected to participate in the 2006-2009 CASTL Leadership Program as coordinating institution of the theme Systemwide Collaboration. This initiative affords the opportunity for OPID and the Leadership Site to mentor and foster SoTL relationships with other national systems including the University of Colorado, CUNY, Miami-Dade, and North Carolina. UW-Superior is in the midst of developing its SoTL based initiative on campus and the plan involved tapping into the resources of the Leadership Site and experts to aid us in enhancing our current SoTL efforts.

- **Faculty College:** OPID's annual professional and faculty development Faculty College has provided hundreds of educators the opportunity for intensive skills building to improve direct services to students in classrooms throughout Wisconsin. Over 800 educators throughout UW-System institutions have participated in Faculty College since its inception in 1998. This is direct impact in quality classroom instruction and directly affects thousands of students. UW-Superior has sent over **fifty** educators to Faculty College as part of its ongoing equipping work to improve direct instruction to students and enhance quality teaching/learning. Several educators reported that Faculty College was "the most transformative professional development that they had ever had." Another graduate of Faculty College said "this came along at the right time for me to renew my enthusiasm and commitment to teaching and learning. I walked out of Faculty College fired up for the classroom again!" Faculty College could not be replicated by a campus on its own.
- **OPID's coordination of UW-institution Centers for Teaching and Learning:** OPID provides one of the only opportunities for Center Directors from around UW-System to gather, communicate, share best practices, collaborate for cost savings and coordinate the professional development activities of individual campuses; OPID's webpage and office staff help ensure that maximum efficiencies are possible between the various individual Centers in UW-institutions; 15 Centers exist throughout UW-System and OPID is the only coordination point amongst them; a newly reinvigorated Centers Initiative is primed to launch through OPID in 2011. UW-Superior (Dr. Cuzzo) was to take the lead in coordinating this initiative beginning in Fall 2011.
- **Lesson Study:** Over 400 UW-instructors in over two dozen disciplines in multiple institutions have learned Lesson Study, an advanced, researched

and effective method of measuring student learning and assessment of student learning; OPID has provided the primary coordination for this state-wide and international initiative. UW-Superior has had at least six educators that have learned and are using Lesson Study within classrooms.

- **Grants:** OPID offers two important “pass-through” grant opportunities to enhance and provide direct service to students in quality teaching/learning. The **OPID Conference Development Grants** provide \$1000 of funding per grant to support professional development for educators to improve quality instruction. UW-Superior has competed for and received 16 of these Conference Development Grants from 1997 to present and used each one to provide quality professional development designed to directly benefit student learning and enhance quality teaching (\$16,000). Each Conference Development Grant, in turn, provides development opportunities on campuses that receive them for up to 15-20 educators. That means that over time, UW-Superior has impacted 240-320 educators through its effective use of Conference Development Grants. The **Undergraduate Teaching and Learning Grants** provide up to \$184,753 of funding directly to educators who are seeking to improve student services and instruction. These grants have been critical for campuses to fund quality improvement to students in the classroom and out of classroom learning experiences. Without these grants, many campuses could not afford to refine quality teaching and learning practices or fund SoTL scholarship to document the effect on student learning. With the growth of national assessment and accountability measures, documenting effective student learning is critical and these grants have provided opportunities for campuses to develop extensive projects on these topics. UW-Superior has received five of these Undergraduate Teaching and Learning Grants since 2003 for various amounts. Each grant has been used to improve teaching/learning practice and deepen faculty reflection on such topics as First Year Seminars, document student learning in First Year Seminars, enhance global learning, develop Lesson Study and other projects. Without these grants, these projects would not be as developed as they are and, in some cases, would not exist at all.
- **Pass Through Funding to support Faculty Development:** OPID and its administrative officers provide generalized pass-through funding to campuses to support faculty development efforts. These pass-through funds have translated into faculty development, support for professional and conference travel and other opportunities. UW-Superior, with its limited overall resources, would be negatively impacted with the loss of this pass-through funding for faculty development purposes. I encourage the Provost and Interim Chancellor’s to examine the budgets to find out how these monies have benefited our campus in the past and the net impact the loss of these monies might have.

- **Information and Resources:** OPID provides a variety of networking, information/resources and other services through its office that are invaluable to campuses working on professional and faculty development. No single campus working on its own could replicate the knowledge/resources that OPID has consolidated and made available to us as part of UW-System.

Key questions and answers about OPID value and significance:

(1) *Although having OPID might be a good thing, is it CORE to the mission of UW-System and the UW-campus?*

ANSWER: Quality teaching and learning by our students is the core mission of higher education in Wisconsin. OPID is a direct link toward ensuring quality teaching/learning in classrooms across System. In this sense, OPID directly impacts thousands of students in the classroom and hundreds of educators who work with those students. OPID is not peripheral to the teaching/learning mission. If teaching/learning is not core to mission of higher education, then it is hard to imagine what might be. UW-Superior has been able to successfully leverage the direct programming that OPID provides in the above programs to allow our educators nationally respected professional development training at an affordable price. Without OPID, we would not have the capacity to provide intensive annual professional development in teaching and learning (Faculty College), the opportunity to work intensively with our System colleagues on Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) projects (WTFS Program), or obtain significant grants to allow direct studies of quality teaching and learning (UTLG grants). We would not have professional development support for our own in-house conferences such as the work we have done in the past involving various methodologies/pedagogies of active learning, collaborative learning, inclusive pedagogy, instructional technologies in the classroom and other examples (Conference Development Grants). We would not have any chance to learn about the international movement of SoTL. Because of our geographic distance, we would not have opportunities for collaboration and interaction with other System colleagues at the disciplinary or pedagogy levels. In short, OPID has been a key part of UW-Superior's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) and throughout the history of UW-Superior's faculty development efforts.

(2) *What core initiatives does OPID serve?*

ANSWER: OPID has provided direct training/equipping on pedagogy and teaching/learning, inclusive excellence and pedagogy, research/scholarship, grantsmanship, leadership development, and strengthening student learning experiences. OPID has been an effective collaborative partner in the course of many UW-System initiatives and has provided a cost-effective way of ensuring proper equipping/preparation.

(3) *Could the campuses assume the cost of OPID?*

ANSWER: Only a small number of campuses have internal resources for national/international professional and faculty development. Most campuses do not have those kinds of resources. For example, UW-Superior has limited resources, staffing and budget in these areas. OPID allows us to leverage our limited resources, network with the broader state community of educators, have access to nationally and internally respected trainers/educators, provide annual Faculty College opportunities to our educators, support our efforts at SoTL and allow cohort-based, quality professional development in intensive ways such as the WTFS program. There is no way UW-Superior or many of the other campuses could replace or offer similar services without OPID's assistance and expertise. Faculty and professional development would be directly damaged and this could cause decreased morale, fewer innovations, less quality instruction and ultimately impact both our educator and student communities.

(4) *How should OPID compare to other UW-System offices?*

ANSWER: OPID is core to the mission of teaching/learning. That direct service relationship should ensure that OPID remains at the center of preservation efforts by UW-System.

(5) *In a time where compliance or regulatory aspects of higher education seem to be non-negotiable, doesn't it make sense to cut something like OPID?*

ANSWER: OPID's work directly affects student learning. National assessment work demands that our institutions document that our students are learning and having quality instruction. OPID's programming is a central piece of ensuring that instruction remains at the cutting edge. While OPID is not mandated by some state or federal law, its work is crucially tied to student learning, which is mandated at both levels. We can expect the accountability/assessment movement to continue to grow and it will become even more critical to show dedicated resources/budget devoted to quality teaching/learning.

(6) *How does OPID contribute to keeping teaching and learning fresh?*

ANSWER: OPID provides the unique opportunities for faculty to review their teaching and learning practices, acquire new skills and enhance current skills, renew their commitments to students, collaborate with colleagues, network with key individuals in their fields and strengthen their commitment to their institutions and the work of teaching. Through SoTL work, educators find new approaches and practices that improve student learning, increase student retention and aid the enterprise of creating life-long learners.

My sincere hope is that there is an open, transparent, inclusive process for deciding UW-System budget priorities and that all affected stakeholders will have the opportunity to provide input on the value/significance of UW-System offices. For UW-Superior, OPID is a key service that is directly tied into the work of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) and our campus work would be negatively affected by significant budget cuts to OPID.