



### ACS final report form

- Complete this form in no more than five pages.
- Attach your final financial report in a separate document and submit it to [sfabritius@colleges.org](mailto:sfabritius@colleges.org)
- Note that portions or the entirety of your final report may be reprinted on the ACS grants webpage.

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Campus: Centre College and Birmingham Southern College  
Project title: *Regional Faculty Development through Active Learning Design*  
Today's date: October 31, 2021

#### I. Project summary

Briefly describe the purpose, intended goals, and major activities of your project.

This grant's purpose was to continue exploring how best to extend the impact of the June ACS Teaching and Learning Workshop through additional faculty professional development programming. Now over 25 years old, the June ACS workshop is well established. At a 2016 planning retreat, staff members of the June ACS Teaching and Learning Workshop determined that workshop staff would design and develop additional workshops at other times of the year to assist ACS faculty in applying effective instructional design and the science of learning to their own courses and instructional strategies. The staff indicated that these workshops should be offered on campuses that lack a teaching and learning center and would include topics most relevant to the specific campus community. In 2018 and 2019, Kerry Paumi and Kent Andersen received two ACS grants to offer two-day workshops at Centenary and Millsaps Colleges respectively. In 2018, at the request of Centenary, the workshop focused on problem-based learning and was specifically designed for Centenary. In 2019, at the request of Millsaps College, the workshop focused on learner-centered pedagogical practices and was opened to regional campuses including Birmingham-Southern, Sewanee, Rhodes, Centenary and Hendrix. Both grants yielded considerable insight into how to design and deliver a two-day workshop for ACS faculty, including a better understanding of the time required for preparation, recruitment, and logistics on the hosting campus. In addition, we learned how to extend the workshop beyond the campus community to the regional ACS community.

We used these insights to design the 2020 grant, which we had initially planned to execute at Birmingham-Southern in fall 2020. Completion of this grant was delayed by

one year due to the pandemic. This current 2020-21 grant continued the exploration of extending the June workshop by offering a two-day workshop at Birmingham-Southern College. Because we did not plan to cover travel expenses for participants, this project was open to all institutions in the ACS consortium. Working with the BSC chief academic officer and a campus representative, the BSC workshop was delivered in July 2021 with a focus on learner-centered inclusive pedagogies. Nineteen faculty participated, including nine from Birmingham-Southern, three from Davidson, three from Sewanee, two from Furman, and one from Centre. We indicated in our initial proposal that this grant would be a success if we:

1. Develop and deliver a workshop at Birmingham Southern College available to all campuses of the ACS but focused on regional campuses within driving distance; such development and delivery includes the articulation of specific learning outcomes and appropriate forms of evaluation and learning assessment. Topic will be determined in collaboration with the host institution.
2. Are able to test the delivery and cost models we developed as part of the initial grant and make a recommendation about how to offer a similar workshop on an annual basis without relying on grant funds. More specifically, we will share costs for the workshop with participating campuses (rather than cover all expense with the grant) and identify facilitators from the current pool of ACS June workshop staff to lead the workshop. As such, campuses will be able to more realistically determine the feasibility of nominating faculty and paying for participation, and we will be able to determine staffing needs.

Both of these goals have been achieved. We discuss activities and evidence for achievement of these goals in the next section of the report.

## **II. Attainment of goals**

Explain the steps you took to achieve and evaluate the success of *each* project goal. Provide details regarding the tools and methods used to measure each goal and the extent to which, based on those measurements, each goal was met.

*Goal 1: Deliver and assess a two-day workshop at Birmingham Southern available to all institution in the ACS consortium.*

The workshop was successfully delivered on Aug 12 and 13, 2021 at Birmingham-Southern College. We used four measures to evaluate the success of this workshop: the number of participants in attendance, a post-workshop evaluation survey, direct assessment of participant's SMART goals set at the conclusion of the workshop, and responses to a fall survey of workshop participants.

The workshop emphasized learner-centered inclusive pedagogies. This topic was selected in consultation with the Birmingham-Southern campus facilitator and the chief academic officer of the college. The workshop emphasized key principles related to learner-centered inclusive pedagogies as articulated by scholars working in this and how to apply these principles in the classroom. The facilitators prepared a workshop packet and handouts to be used during the workshop. These materials state the intended learning outcomes for the workshop, as well as provide various tools and materials for use during the workshop. The stated learning outcomes of the workshop include (1) Contribute to and create a learning community; (2) Articulate principles of inclusive learner-centered teaching; (3) Assess/evaluate various instructional strategies for learner-centered and inclusive pedagogies; (4) Reflect on strengths and areas for growth with inclusive learner-centered teaching; (5) Accept and provide feedback on a learning artifact (syllabus, activity, assignment) using an inclusive learner-centered framework.

*Goal 1, Measure 1: Number of participants.*

Nineteen total participants attended the Birmingham-Southern College workshop. We view nineteen participants as a successful level of participation. The campus facilitator at Birmingham-Southern recruited participants directly. In addition, a solicitation email with details on the workshop was sent to deans or other representatives of all ACS consortium schools. We received twenty nominations total from the Birmingham-Southern campus or from ACS deans. Nineteen faculty eventually participated. Because some participants were not from Birmingham-Southern, we arranged for a block of local hotel rooms to be held at a discounted rate. In addition, the facilitator reserved a classroom and worked with on-campus catering to provide coffee and pastries, boxed lunches, and dinners during the workshop.

Nominees were asked to complete a registration survey. The registration survey asked participants to provide contact information, academic discipline, and background as to why the participant was interested in learner-centered inclusive pedagogies, what assignments or programs they were considering working on for the workshop, and what specific outcomes or products they hoped to produce as a result of their participation in the workshop. Information from the registration survey was used to inform the final workshop design, including activities and handouts. Participants were also provided additional information about the workshop closer to the workshop dates, including location.

In our view, a participation rate of nineteen indicates a successful level of participation for a two-day workshop facilitated by three ACS faculty. One participant was unable to attend for reasons related to the pandemic. Also significant is the fact that we had at least one representative from five campuses from across the ACS, including campuses beyond driving distance.

*Goal1, Measure 2: Post-workshop evaluation survey.*

In addition to attendance, we evaluated the success of the workshop through an evaluation survey completed immediately at the workshop's conclusion. Sixteen participants were able to complete this survey. One respondent did not complete the second page. Full results are included in the appendix. The evaluation survey asks participations to indicate the extent to which they feel they are able to achieve the goals related to learner-centered inclusive design; the usefulness of the materials provided and activities conducted; the effectiveness of the facilitators; their overall rating of the workshop; and if they would recommend this or a similar workshop to colleagues. Each set of questions also includes space for open-ended remarks.

One-hundred percent of respondents indicated that they would recommend the workshop to their colleagues. Similarly, 80% of respondents (12 of 15) indicated that the workshop was "excellent"; 20% of respondents (3 of 15) indicated the workshop was "very good." Fifteen of sixteen respondents (94%) indicated an "excellent" rating for the facilitators while one of the respondents indicated a "very good" rating for areas of preparedness and that the facilitators were helpful in providing guidance during the workshop.

For the items related to learning outcomes, for all but one outcome, 100% of respondents indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed that, as a result of the workshop, they were able to achieve the stated learning outcomes. The two strongest outcome statements concerned the ability to "engage meaningfully with others around inclusive learner-based pedagogies" and "reflect on the extent to which individual and institutional practices are

learner-centered”; 75% and 81% of respondents strongly agreed with these statements, respectively. The outcomes with the lowest rating concerned respondents’ abilities to “articulate key principles related to learner-centered design”; 63% strongly agreed with this outcome statement. Feedback during the workshop accords with these results. And the conclusion of the first day, facilitators solicited feedback about what to keep, what to drop, and what to add. This feedback indicated that participants wanted a clarified definition of learner-centered inclusive pedagogies. This was addressed on day two and revealed the extent to which there can be a gap between articulation and application: as one participant wrote, “don’t quite have the jargon down, but I feel pretty good about the principles.” Overall, the narrative comments echo the numerical comments.

The numerical results and supporting narrative comments are very positive. At the same time, we observe that only 63% of participants (10 of 16) strongly agreed that “the activities of the workshop gave me sufficient practice and feedback.” These results suggest that participants may have required additional practice time and time to give and receive feedback on their work.

### *Goal 1, Measure 3: goals worksheet.*

As part of the concluding activity during the workshop itself, participants completed a worksheet that asked them to set goals and state a rationale how they would implement or apply key concepts related to learner-centered inclusive teaching. From the point of view of assessment, assertions made indicate the extent to which learners have accurately understood key concepts and applied them appropriately.

We reviewed each worksheet for the stated goal and related rationale and scored them on a three-point scale: 1=instructor centered and/or not inclusive; 2=transitioning; 3=learner-centered and inclusive. This scale echoes rubrics developed by Phyllis Blumberg for evaluating the extent to which instructors evidence learner-centered teaching (Blumberg, 2009, pages 277 to 288). Each facilitator conducted their own evaluation and we compiled the results into a single composite score. An assertion was considered learner-centered and inclusive if it provided a specific change to instructional behavior and offered a rationale grounded in an accurate understanding of the concept. An assertion was considered transitioning if it was non-specific, but demonstrated a clear and appropriate understanding of the concept (without merely restating the terms provided); or if it was specific and appropriate, but lacked a justifying rationale that linked the specific action to the concept. An assertion was considered teacher-centered and/or non-inclusive if it was not specific enough to discern understanding, the application was inappropriate, or the rationale indicated an inaccurate understanding of the principle. Each of the facilitators reviewed each assertion independently and then compared results to determine a final score for all items. All results are presented in the appendix.

In total, 70 assertions were available for assessment. These assertions distributed evenly across four summary principles and overall impression of learner-centered inclusive teaching: 20% considered the climate and tone; 20% considered the intentional leaning design; 20% considered the distribution of power; 20% considered self-reflection and responsibility, and 20% considered overall impression of learner-centered inclusiveness.

The rubric results indicate that the majority of planned changes and provided rationales were either transitioning or demonstrated learner-centered and inclusive teaching practices. The highest scoring outcomes related to intentional learning design, with 43% of plans and rationales deemed learner-centered and inclusive in the composite score. The second highest composite score was for distribution of power, with 36% evaluated as

learner-centered and inclusive. Individual facilitator scores varied for distribution of power. Climate and tone is third highest composite score, with 29% evaluated as learner-centered and inclusive. Self-reflexive and responsible was the lowest scoring outcome, with 15% indicating learner-centered and inclusive. In reviewing the composite scores, we observe some variability in individual facilitator responses. In the future, some calibration of scoring may be necessary to both clarify levels of performance and application of principles. Additionally, these results related to reflection and responsibility reinforce the need for practice time observed in the survey discussed above.

*Goal 2: Develop a model for sustainably offering two-day faculty professional development workshops for ACS campuses.*

Following the conclusion of the Millsaps workshop in 2019, we generated and explored various models for how to organize a workshop, recruit participants, and pay for a two-day workshop on an ACS campus on an annual basis. Ultimately, we developed a model that we shared with deans from the participating campuses. Three measures were used to gauge success on this goal: development of a cost model that served various interests; feedback from deans about the proposed cost model; and information from other ACS staff regarding the feasibility of staffing of a two-day workshop. For the BSC workshop, we tested this model by shifting all expenses related to travel and lodging to the participant's home institution. The grant covered facilitator stipends, travel, and lodging and workshop expenses, including food.

*Goal 2, Measures 1 & 2: Test a model for sustaining the workshop without full grant coverage and determine staffing needs*

The execution of the workshop demonstrates that we can share expenses with the home campuses to cover expenses related to the workshop; that is, we can offer a workshop without relying on grant funding to cover all expenses.

To verify this observation, we reviewed the expenditures for the last two grant cycles, with particular attention to expenditures for the Millsaps and BSC workshops. We also reviewed the federal per diem rates for food and lodging. The costs were comparable for both workshops, with the expenses for travel shifted to home campuses. By using a local hotel, we were able to keep lodging expenses low, which was attractive to the deans.

Untested from our Millsaps model is our pricing strategy—that is a fee for participation that would cover the full extent of workshop expenses, including facilitator fees, facilitator travel, and food. We are confident there is sufficient interest among ACS staff to facilitate a workshop like this one on a regular basis. However, we continue to explore how best to cover these expenses between a hosting campus and visiting campuses to cover facilitator stipends and preparation time. The facilitator fees are considerable, as we had four designers plan and execute the BSC workshop, including the BSC campus representative. Testing a fee model to cover these expenses, shared with the hosting and visiting campus, is the next realistic step. Such a test would not require a grant, but would require staffing support (e.g. invoicing) from the ACS and would likely require that the home campus take a greater share of facilitator fees, perhaps agreeing to cover the facilitator fees in exchange for promoting their campus among the ACS.

### **III. Impact of project**

Explain the impact your project had on relevant constituencies (e.g., students), structures, (e.g., a major program), processes (e.g., community engagement), and/or relationships (e.g., consortial partnerships).

The primary impact of this grant was on the Birmingham-Southern campus community and the participants from other campuses. As with our work at both Centenary and Millsaps, we observe that faculty members crave opportunity to discuss and reflect on their instructional approaches with other instructors, particularly following the challenges related to COVID-19. Teaching, too often, is a private activity with limited opportunity to think collectively and productively about the challenges and difficulties one faces as an instructor. This two-day workshop provided an opportunity for participants to think with others about their approaches to teaching. More specifically, the workshop impacted participants in the following ways:

- a. Deepened instructor knowledge and application of learner-centered and inclusive pedagogy.
- b. Provided focused time to examine specific classroom assignments and courses, with feedback and input from peers.
- c. Enhanced campus input into professional development by pursuing a topic important to all ACS institutions.
- d. Prompted intra-campus and inter-campus networking and discussion opportunities around shared pedagogical and other concerns.

#### **IV. Consortial (ACS-wide) value of the project**

Describe how your project results can or will strengthen ACS, e.g., via the dissemination of a final report, the future training of campus leaders, or the building of an inclusive community of practice.

This project strengthens the ACS in many ways. First, this project extended the faculty professional development curriculum of the June ACS Teaching & Learning Workshop by developing a third stand-alone, two-day workshop. Extending this work enhances the reputation of the June ACS Workshop and the reputation of the ACS consortium overall.

Second, such workshops provide needed space for inter- and intra-campus networking and problem-solving. Participants worked in small groups with participants from other campuses, gaining insights into the overlap between their interest and the interests of other institutions. The workshop provides the necessary space to consider improving student learning through intentional design of instructional strategies and classroom or learning environments.

#### **V. Lessons Learned**

Describe the surprises, challenges, and lessons learned during the project, e.g., is there something you are very glad you did or would do differently? Did you face obstacles that called for creative problem-solving? What would have made the project even more successful?

This grant builds on the work initiated in prior grants, including grants developed in response to the pandemic to create virtual, brief workshops and conduct working groups remotely. Likewise, this grant built on prior grants focused on workshops for Centenary and Millsaps. For this grant we organized and executed a workshop for Birmingham-Southern College, with open invitations to all ACS campuses, focused on learner-centered inclusive pedagogies. Based on our work this cycle, we gained further insight into the five lessons learned from the previous grants. Our initial insights were: 1) faculty on ACS campuses crave opportunities to collaborate with others around teaching and

institutional change; 2) logistical concerns require a campus contact when executing a workshop and may require support from the ACS office for invoicing; 3) time is a paradox when it comes to learning in that time on task is central to gaining facility with key concepts and practices; 4) conducting a deep-dive on a new topic is fun, but highly demanding in that all four facilitators had to gain facility with vast amounts of literature and develop a concept model for instruction.

#### **VI. Next Steps**

Explain what you intend to do with/how to you intend to use or build on the results of your project.

We look forward to discussing the success of this series of workshops with the staff in the ACS Teaching & Learning Workshop at our strategic planning retreat in January. Based on our cost model, the material and topics developed for the workshop and interest from the staff and the desire for faculty development opportunities from faculty across the ACS, we plan to continue to offer a version of this workshop in the future.

#### **VII. Feedback/suggestions for the ACS grant program (optional)**