

Building Capacity for Professional Learning

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	4
Team	4
Organizational Structure	5
Mission Statement	5
Goals and Values	5-6
Programs and Services	6
Resource Allocation and Infrastructure	8
Community Partners/Reporting Structure	8-10
Budget	10-11
Assessment Plan	12
Conclusion	13
Appendix A: Phased Timeline	14-15
Appendix B: Sources	16

Executive Summary

Hartnell College does not currently have a professional learning structure. Currently available professional learning opportunities are not inclusive, transparent, accessible, and consistent. To the extent that professional learning opportunities are offered and advertised, they are uneven and sporadic. Further, the college has not regularly tracked attendance at sessions, workshops, and conferences and not at all measured the efficacy of professional learning and its impact on student success and job satisfaction. Despite this, well over \$200,000 a year is spent on professional learning.

Recognizing the need to strengthen our professional learning plan, process, and structure, Hartnell College identified professional development as a top priority for 2025-2028, naming it directly in our Achieving the Dream (ATD) action plan and as a strategy to meet our new strategic goals.

To that end, a team of faculty, staff, and administrators led the exploration of designing a professional development plan, process, and structure that ensures clarity, equity, inclusivity, and effectiveness. Utilizing [ATD Teaching and Learning Toolkit](#) and lessons learned from participating in an 8-month long professional learning series as a framework for their work, the team proposes the creation of The Teaching and Learning Center (TLC). The mission of the TLC is to **provide high-quality growth opportunities to transform practices across all education environments**. Goals and values of the TLC are aligned with Hartnell College's goals and values. A key component of the proposal is that professional learning at Hartnell College be inclusive of all employee groups.

In addition to proposing a physical location for the TLC, the team proposes the following outcomes and recommendations in order to build capacity for professional learning done well at Hartnell College:

1. Ensure effective leadership, management, and resources
2. Offer a range of programmatic opportunities for all employees, leading with our strengths.
3. Ensure transparency and inclusivity related to funding, travel, and participation opportunities.
4. Commit to measuring program efficacy and impact on student success and employee satisfaction.
5. Create a system of evaluation of process, offerings, and leadership.

This proposal serves as a recommendation to the Academic Senate, Academic Affairs Council, and the Hartnell College Council during Spring 2025.

Introduction

As an ATD network member, Hartnell College identified [professional development](#) as a strategic priority, which aligns directly with numbers one, two, and three of Hartnell College's Strategic Goals and tangentially to numbers four and five. (This is explained in more detail later in this document). Beginning in early fall 2024, a Professional Development action plan team consisting of faculty, administrators, and staff from various departments and areas of the institution led the exploration of designing a professional development plan, process, and structure that ensures clarity, equity, inclusivity, and effectiveness. To date, the team of eight met 30+ hours and engaged in well over 20 hours of research, review, and planning. The co-leads met an additional 20 hours over the course of eight months, including meeting regularly with our ATD coach, Dr. Shantell Strickland-Davis. Specific outcomes of those meetings were: a) researched professional development models at other institutions; b) developed, distributed, and evaluated a campus-wide needs assessment; c) created a mission statement; and d) drafted a professional development plan. Included in our meetings was a monthly Teaching and Learning Professional Series hosted by ATD. The guiding text for the series was the [ATD Teaching and Learning Toolkit](#), and the lessons learned in the Series are instrumental to our understanding of best practice regarding professional learning and have served as the foundation for our Building Capacity for Professional Learning Proposal.

Team:

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Organizational Structure

Mission Statement and Values NOTE: The name of the center is a working name—subject to change.

The mission statement for the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) is: **The Teaching and Learning Center provides high-quality growth opportunities to transform practices across all educational environments.** Our mission statement is reminiscent of Hartnell College’s recently approved mission in that it is succinct, memorable, and directly states what we intend to do. Inherent in our mission is a commitment to professional learning done well that will lead to improved student outcomes and a sense of value for all employees, regardless of role.

Based on the above mission, the team is proposing the creation of The Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) which will serve as the centralized hub for professional learning at Hartnell College.

Goals of the TLC:

Goal 1: Ensure that we put students first in everything we do. By committing to professional growth for all employees, we send a message that Hartnell College is paying attention to our students and willing to grow and evolve to meet their ever-changing needs.

Goal 2: Optimize student access, momentum, and success. Professional learning done well is proven to improve outcomes for students. Using a data driven approach, we will assess our model to demonstrate that engaging in professional learning will lead to improved outcomes for our students.

Goal 3: Maximize operational efficiency and effectiveness. Centralizing professional learning will lead to a more efficient and seamless experience for employees. We commit to transparent, clear processes which will lead to more equitable engagement in professional learning for all members of the college community.

Goal 4: Implement fiscal health and sustainability practices. With our model—which will include sustained professional learning opportunities (as opposed to “one-offs”), built in reflection sessions and time, and follow-up with participants—we will be better able to track funds invested on professional learning to student outcomes.

Goal 5: Create and sustain meaningful relationships with our communities. The Teaching and Learning Center vows to create community among Hartnell College’s staff, faculty, and

administrators through sustained professional learning opportunities that are inclusive and equitable.

Alignment of the TLC with Hartnell College's Values:

Education. We are committed to continued education for all educators, regardless of role. When employees are given opportunities for lifelong learning and professional training, we know that student outcomes will improve.

Connection. TLC will bring together faculty, staff, and administrators in a central location, which will help foster a sense of connection. Through professional learning, educators will better understand their connection to each other and to the College's mission.

¡Sí se puede! With a shared commitment to improve practices across all educational environments, we can transform our own lives and the lives of our students for generations to come.

Cultural wealth. The Teaching and Learning Center will draw heavily upon our collective expertise, lived experiences, and knowledge, thereby increasing every employee's sense of value and worth.

Impact. TLC's evidence-based practices will result in a model that enables the measurement of its impact by continuously collecting and analyzing data on student outcomes.

Programs and Services

Offerings

In 2019, ATD and a diverse group of educators with extensive experience designing professional learning programs came together to develop guiding principles of professional learning “done well.” Their framework highlights four dimensions of professional development practices:

1. **Individual:** How do effective professional learning programs engage educators as individual practitioners? What kinds of approaches help educators change their practice and advance student learning?
2. **Community:** Educators (like all human beings) are social creatures. How do effective professional learning programs bring educators into community, to collaborate for change? What are the principles for designing such professional learning communities?

3. Institutional: Professional learning cannot succeed if it is not rooted in strategic institutional support. What institutional policies and practices help generate and sustain effective professional learning?
4. Ecosystem: Multi-campus partnerships and professional learning networks offer opportunities for exchange and cross-fertilization. How can campus teams most advantageously engage national success movements, disciplinary associations, accreditation agencies, funders, and other stakeholders in the higher education ecosystem to build a culture of teaching and learning excellence?

Within those four dimensions, there are several “Good Practice Principles” that professional development leaders are encouraged to keep in mind when designing professional learning offerings. See the [ATD Teaching and Learning Toolkit](#), pages 74-122, for specific elements of the Principles.

Keeping those principles in mind, our proposal is to initially draw heavily upon existing professional development and on the expertise of our faculty and staff. Sample initial offerings for faculty and staff may include:

- Equity Rubrics
 - Created in-house by the Student Success and Equity Committee for faculty and staff to improve equity in their courses or services to students. It is also being integrated into the faculty tenure review process.
- Cultural Humility Toolkit
 - The toolkit was created by the Academic Senate for California Community College and was designed as a tool to help both individuals and institutions move forward in bringing about change, exploring anti-racist concepts and ideas to better help us serve students equitably.
- POQR for online excellence
 - Peer Online Course Review is a process that follows the CVC OEI Rubric to improve online courses. The goal is to ensure more college students successfully complete their educational goals in high-quality online courses.
- SERVE
 - Seminar for Equitable Restorative Validating Education. Intended to help faculty reflect and re-imagine their courses for student equity and success.
- Great Teachers Seminar
 - Currently led by established faculty; would be centralized under TLC
- Caring Panthers
 - Continue the work that has been done with evaluation and expansion of the Caring Panthers principles.

- AI Literacy
 - Increasingly cited as the number one skill students will need for future success; currently being explored by the English department and librarians.
- Peer Faculty Observation and Review

Based on feedback from our ATD coaches and partner schools, we also would like to add sessions designed and led by Classified Professionals.

If approved, TLC lead faculty and staff—with input from the campus community will—determine which offerings should be prioritized for Spring 2026. See Appendix A for a complete phased timeline.

Resource Allocation and Infrastructure

Teaching and Learning Center

A key institutional strategy to build student learning and success is the creation and advancement of a professional learning center, and college leaders must invest in their Center if they “wish it to thrive and grow as an effective lever for improving quality and advancing change” (*ATD Teaching and Learning Toolkit*, p. 145). Karen Stout confirms that “Centers for Teaching and Learning can and should play a role as an anchor for excellence across the institution” (137).

To that end, the team has identified Castroville Education Center as the location for our teaching and learning center. Our rationale for choosing Castroville Education Center for TLC include:

- The design of CEC is conducive to a warm, welcoming center
 - Center home base upon entering
 - Classroom available with computer lab to accommodate hybrid/virtual delivery of programs
 - Accessible
 - Ample parking
- Available office space for both Classified and Faculty leads
- “Getting away” for professional learning establishes intentionality

Hartnell Community Partners

The Teaching and Learning Center should include educators who are recognized by their peers for their skill and dedication and who have “modeled the process of developing one’s craft through reflective practice” (144). ATD recommends a “shared leadership structure” (145) between faculty and administrators. In addition to ATD's recommendations, our team proposes the incorporation of a classified staff member to the leadership structure. Not only will this model be consistent with the college shared governance structure which utilizes a tri-chair

model, but it also aligns with the mission of TLC to provide transformative professional learning opportunities for all members of the college community.

In order to fully support the operations and logistics of The Teaching and Learning Center, our team proposes the following personnel, based on established best practices:

- Faculty Lead with full release time; Same faculty for 2.5 years; new faculty works with the incumbent for .5 years.
- Classified Lead and Support; 100% of role dedicated to TLC
- Instructional Designer (Fall 2026)

IT will support the functions of the Teaching and Learning Center

The faculty member will work collaboratively with Center's staff to fulfill the mission of The Teaching and Learning Center. Examples of their duties include:

- Identify, plan, and communicate professional learning opportunities
- Monitor participation and assess effectiveness of all offerings through TLC
- Track mandated training and compliance requirements
- Create procedures, criteria, and forms that will enable all employees an opportunity to request resources for professional development on campus and for travel and conferences
- Serve on committees and work groups related to professional learning opportunities, such as the Professional Development Committee and the Faculty Advancement & Opportunities Committee
- Serve as Flex Coordinator for the college and assume all responsibilities that come with that title, such as maintaining database documentation of individual faculty flex activities and compliance with flex requirements
- Collaborate with the office of Institutional Research, the Informational Technology Division, and Human Resources to ensure mandated training is added to master calendars
- Provide support for other campus professional learning offerings, such as New Faculty Orientation, the Faculty Teaching Academy, and faculty or staff brown bag sessions
- Keep an updated web page with TLC offerings and maintain an online presence
- Allocate resources and manage budget

The classified staff member will work collaboratively with faculty members and other staff to fulfill the mission of The Teaching and Learning Center. Examples of their duties include:

- Identify, plan, and communicate professional learning opportunities
- Monitor participation and assess effectiveness of all offerings through TLC
- Track mandated training and compliance requirements

- Create procedures, criteria, and forms that will enable all employees an opportunity to request resources for professional development on campus and for travel and conferences
- Serve on committees and work groups related to professional learning opportunities such as the Professional Development Committee
- Provide support for other campus professional learning offerings such as Caring Campus and staff brown bag sessions.
- Assist in allocating resources and managing budget
- Assist in daily operations of TLC

Reporting Structure

The faculty lead will be on a 3-year rotation, and both the classified and faculty lead will report to the VP of Student Success and Teaching Excellence or designee; designee will also be on a 3-year rotation. The 3-year rotation cycle creates consistency while promoting inclusivity and fostering new perspectives and new energy every three years.

Role of the Professional Development Committee (PDC)

Currently, the PDC's charge is to *encourage and further the professional development of faculty and staff, as well as develop, implement, and evaluate a professional development plan in accordance with assessed needs of the college; and to develop and implement an agenda for contractual flex day activities*. Though their charge allows for much of what is being proposed by the TLC, in reality it has proven difficult to manage the professional development needs of the college. Since COVID, in particular, the PDC has lacked clarity on how to garner and allocate resources, and much of their time has been spent planning and coordinating the days formally known as “convocation” and “student success conference.” The PD action plan team believes those items to still be appropriate for the PDC as well as the following:

- Collaborate with the TLC to create procedures, criteria, and forms to request resources for travel and conference applications
- Assist in vetting applications
- Assist in promoting TLC offerings
- Assist in evaluating efficacy of programs

Budget

Faculty and researchers from Bronx Community College in the CUNY system studied one of their leading professional learning initiatives, FYE. With the help of the institutional effectiveness office, they compared classes taught by faculty who took part in sustained professional learning with faculty who took part in a more limited model. They reviewed syllabi, assignments, and rubrics and then considered outcomes for students. Overall, the students of faculty who had engaged in sustained professional learning demonstrated stronger pass rates, next semester retention, and credit accumulation (71). The implication is that “intensive

professional development is worth the investment of money and time, as it helps an institution attain the goals of not only improving retention and graduation rates, but also deepening students' learning and improving their long-term professional and personal success" (71).

Hartnell College is embarking on a number of initiatives that will require sustained, quality professional learning. **First-year experience, increased 8-week courses, and improved online pedagogy are three examples of programs for which preparation and ongoing learning are necessary for success.** When Amarillo College, for example, instituted 8-week courses en masse, they invested \$1M over the course of 24 months in professional learning. In conversations with leaders from Amarillo College, they reinforced that professional learning was essential to the success of 8-week courses.

The yearly budget for all operations of The Teaching and Learning Center will be approximately \$550,000. Budgetary needs include costs associated with travel, stipends, outside speakers, and operational costs. As much as possible, we hope to draw upon existing budget lines for operation.

	Funds Needed	Possible Source
1 FTEF (100% release time for one faculty)	\$61,000-\$90,000	General funds
Travel funds	\$200,000	Grants, General funds
Speaker series	\$50,000	Grants
Special Project Agreements	\$150,000	Grants, General funds
Operational Costs	\$25,000	General funds
On campus professional learning opportunities	\$50,000	Grants, General funds
Classified staff	Current Staff	Grants, General funds
Total	Approx. \$550,000	

Assessment Plan

Creating an assessment plan is essential for cultivating a culture of teaching and learning. An assessment plan should promote evidence based practice and assist in determining whether or not the institution's strategic and equity goals are being achieved through professional learning. We propose the following assessment plan for the TLC:

Component	Description	Tools/Methods	Timing
Participation Tracking	Monitor attendance and engagement across all TLC activities and workshops.	Sign-in sheets, online registration data	Ongoing, after each event
Satisfaction Surveys	Collect feedback from participants about the quality, relevance, and inclusivity of offerings.	Post-event surveys	Immediately following sessions
Impact on Practice	Assess changes in professional practice as a result of participation.	Follow-up surveys at 3- and 6-month intervals; Self-reflections	3 months and 6 months post-participation
Student Outcome Analysis	Explore potential correlations between employee participation and student success metrics (e.g., retention, completion rates, course success rates).	Institutional Research Office data analysis; Disaggregated student data review	Annually
Process Evaluation	Review the internal operations of the TLC to ensure efficiency, inclusivity, and transparency.	Internal audits; Focus groups with employees; Budget reports	Annually
Equity Analysis	Disaggregate participation and impact data by employee role (faculty, classified, administrator), division, and demographics to assess inclusivity.	Equity dashboards; Disaggregated survey results	Annually

Conclusion

Considering the impending upheaval that community colleges are facing, it may be tempting to put professional learning on the backburner. We argue, however, that now is the time to invest in our faculty and staff's ability to meet the uncertain challenges that lie ahead. Supporting high impact professional learning is how Hartnell College will foster a culture of continuous improvement, crucial to advancing equity, student success, and economic mobility. Together, we will leverage professional learning to meet our mission of Advancing Social and Economic Justice through the Transformative Power of Education.

Appendix A

Phase	Timeframe	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
Phase 1: Planning and Design	Fall 2024 – Spring 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PD Action Team - ATD Teaching & Learning Toolkit - Institutional Research - ATD Coach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Needs Assessment - Research Models - Develop Mission & Goals - Draft TLC Structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Completed Needs Assessment - Draft TLC Mission and Goals - Initial Program/Service Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear blueprint for TLC - Shared vision and commitment
Phase 2: Launch	Fall 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TLC Faculty Lead Appointed - Classified Staff Reassigned - Location Secured (CEC) - Budget Allocated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish TLC at Castroville Center - Prioritize Offerings for Spring 2026 - Begin Branding and Outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TLC Open to Campus Community - Initial Professional Learning Calendar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased awareness - Staff and faculty engagement
Phase 3: Early Implementation	Spring 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full Staff in Place - Resource Materials Ready - Communication Channels Set 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliver Initial Programs (e.g., Equity Rubrics, AI Literacy, Caring Panthers) - Track Participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional Learning Workshops Conducted - Attendance and Participation Data Collected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong baseline for tracking engagement - Early feedback on offerings

Phase 4: Growth and Refinement	Summer 2026 – Spring 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data from Initial Launch - Feedback Surveys - Additional Resources as Needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand Offerings - Implement Reflection and Follow-up Sessions - Adjust Programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhanced Professional Learning Menu - Evaluation Reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved participant satisfaction - Increased impact on student success indicators
Phase 5: Sustainability and Continuous Improvement	Fall 2027 onward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular Evaluation Cycles - Leadership Rotation - Cross-Departmental Partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institutionalize Evaluation Processes - Sustain Funding - Refresh Leadership (Faculty Lead Rotation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual Reports on TLC Effectiveness - Embedded in Strategic Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuous quality improvement - Cultural shift toward lifelong learning

Appendix B

Sources Cited and Consulted

ATD Teaching and Learning Toolkit: Emphasizes dimensions of Individual, Community, Institutional, and Ecosystem levels for effective professional learning. See especially pp. 74–122 and p. 145.

Karen Stout, President and CEO of Achieving the Dream: Advocates that Centers for Teaching and Learning should serve as *anchors for excellence* across institutions (ATD Toolkit, p. 137).

Bronx Community College (CUNY System) Study: Demonstrated that faculty who engaged in *sustained professional learning* showed improved student pass rates, retention, and credit accumulation compared to limited PD (ATD Toolkit, p. 71).

Amarillo College Case Study: Invested heavily (~\$1M over two years) into professional learning to support structural changes like 8-week terms, reinforcing that *intensive PD investment* is crucial for successful large-scale change.

American Association of Community Colleges (AACC): In multiple policy statements, the AACC emphasizes the importance of *embedded, sustained, and outcome-focused professional development* to achieve equity and success goals.