The Foundational Course Initiative (FCI)
A Proposal for 21st-Century Support for Teaching at Scale

Goals for the FCI
1. A 21st Century Approach to Student Success: Foundational courses should maintain rigor and have the success of all students as their goal.
2. Evidence-Based Course Design: Disciplinary experts and education professionals address course-specific challenges as a team while adding to our theory and knowledge of teaching and learning.
3. A New Standard for Excellence: Michigan’s foundational courses should be the best in the nation, continuously innovating, assessing success, and setting the standard for higher education.

Why Participate?
Motivations for participating in the FCI will vary among courses and disciplines, but for any foundational course, there are a number of possible reasons to participate.

• Explore possibilities for course design and pedagogy that leverage emerging technologies.
• Infuse evidence-based pedagogies that:
  • Support the learning and success of all students.
  • Improve motivation and engagement.
  • Increase student perception of educational value.
• Create opportunities for intergenerational mentoring on teaching.
• Collaborate to tackle challenges, such as:
  • In some courses, student success and satisfaction are low.
  • Teaching these courses alone is difficult, and team support can help make improvements possible.*

Collaborative Course Design Teams
CCD teams draw expertise from the department, college, and from CRLT staff and others with a substantial investment in the course.

Consultation & Proposal
FCI works with department stakeholders on a formal proposal to enter the CCD process.

Exploration & Design
CCD team meets regularly to study the course and its students and to develop learning objectives, select pedagogies, and design assignments.

Development & Testing
CCD team meets regularly while the pilot version of a reformed course is taught. The course becomes a learning laboratory, as new approaches are implemented and assessed.

Delivery & Reporting
Faculty teach the “final” revised course and work with the CCD team on a report describing evidence of success and ongoing needs for support.

Certification & Foundational Status
FC status is granted by a Faculty Advisory Board after review of the CCD team report. FCs receive ongoing support and, after 3 years, the course is reviewed to identify opportunities for further innovation.

Collaborative Course Design Process

What are Foundational Courses?
- FCs are gateways to the major or the primary introduction to a discipline.
- FCs enroll large numbers of students with very diverse backgrounds, interests, and goals.
- Student success in FCs can vary widely.
- FCs are often taught by multiple faculty over time and/or in a given semester.
- FCs are time consuming to teach and manage.

FCs generate $150 million in tuition every term.

In 5 years, we will transform 30 courses, and impact 80% of undergrads.

*Courses with enrollments of 200+

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