

## 1. Applicant Information

### Principal Applicant's Contact Information:

#### Faculty Cyber Connections Program

Eastern Region College Committee on Human Resources Development

<http://itic.durhamc.on.ca/easternRegion/>

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## 2. Overview

### **Descriptive Title:**

Faculty Cyber Connections: Building on Best Practices (Phase One)

### **Intended outcomes:**

Phase One of this project will see the development of a workbook for developers of Faculty Cyber Connections (FCC) modules. The workbook will guide the developer through a process designed specifically to meet the unique needs of FCC. FCC is a one-of-a-kind faculty development program that is an emerging collaborative initiative between colleges. Modules are designed and delivered (in-kind) by faculty members for faculty members. Often these modules are designed to quickly reflect changes in our teaching environments, therefore the FCC program must be flexible and responsive.

Over the few years that FCC has been operating, best practices have been emerging in how the modules are designed and delivered. We would like to further research these best practices and support them with the appropriate theoretical foundation and framework. This will help ensure the continued success of the FCC program as the committee membership evolves over time.

The Phase One Workbook will comprise a design framework that will include module components, design guidelines and resources that reflect the best practices in online design and delivery of training in a collaborative community of practice setting. Delivery methods such as peer teaching/mentoring, reflection and dialogue will be addressed. The purpose is to produce a workbook that would support and guide the module developer through the process that incorporates good online course principals, consistency in design and takes into consideration the individuality of the module leader.

Month 1-2: Conduct research into FCC best practices and design theories around online training modules (building upon preliminary research already conducted).

Month 2-6: Develop a workbook based on the design framework and best practices as experienced by FCC. The workbook would provide a detailed process to guide faculty members through the module development to produce a training course that specifically meets the needs of FCC.

Month 7 – Deliver workbook to FCC Organizing Committee

Month 8 – Incorporate changes and finalize process/content

Phase Two (to be developed next year) of the project would be to create an interactive web version of the workbook where the resources, lists of activities, design components would be available in a database. Developers would advance through the process using the framework set out in the workbook but all work would be completed through an online interface.

**Rationale:**

The Faculty Cyber Connections (FCC) program was conceptualized and initiated by an Ontario Colleges Eastern Region planning team in 2007. FCC is comprised of short online learning modules (four- week duration) designed for college faculty who wish to advance their teaching practice through collaboration with other colleagues across the Ontario Eastern Region Colleges.

Through the FCC modules, participants build teaching and learning strategies, while exploring emerging technologies within an online community of practice. Modules are developed and facilitated by college faculty across the eastern region, exploring issues of contemporary teaching practice such as, academic integrity, formative assessment, educating the millennials, group work and universal design for learning. Currently there are 11 FCC modules developed with an additional four modules in development. There is no established operational budget for the FCC program nor is a registration fee charged to participants. The FCC program model is based on collaborative planning and “in-kind” sharing of the module design, development and facilitation and the technological support of the program.

A challenge for the sustainability of this program is the creation of a flexible module design model that strikes a balance between creating a common “look and feel” and yet is sufficiently adaptable to foster creativity and community. Additionally, a module design model is needed that provides support to faculty module developers across the region who may not have access to online instructional design expertise. Additionally, a design framework in a workbook format is needed to assist faculty in this development as they are working “in-kind” with little direction or assistance.

The FCC program has successfully grown to include 440 participants since its inception in the fall 2007. The FCC program has proven to be a cost-effective faculty professional development initiative aimed at advancing teaching practice and enhancing the community of practice in the six Eastern Region Colleges.

The FCC module design model and best practice guidelines that result from this project will enhance the sustainability of this successful collaborative faculty professional development initiative. This project is closely aligned to several themes in the Educational Developer’s Caucus Living Plan, January 8, 2010. Specifically, this project furthers educational development as a field of practice through the sharing of best practices in educational design, supports the development of online module design and delivery and creates and offers a valuable educational development resource. Additionally, this cross-institutional collaboration furthers faculty engagement and participation in educational development practice. As a web-based interactive design, the development of Phase Two of FCC module design workbook has the potential to be applied to other professional development initiatives at the regional, national and international level.

**Scholarship:**

This project has been informed by relevant scholarly work, albeit at a preliminary level. The intent of the FCC: Building on Best Practices project is to expand upon this research and to develop online resources

in the form of a workbook that will offer a flexible and responsive design framework for faculty developers of FCC modules. Building on the work of Lawler, P. A., & King, K. P. (2001) and other colleagues in the field of faculty development (Cranton, 2006; Cox, 2004), (Moore, A.; Moore J.; and Fowler, 2005), the FCC initiative will address faculty as adult learners as they engage in and integrate best practices for online teaching and learning in higher education settings. In approaching faculty development from the perspective of the adult learner, it is vital to take into consideration their characteristics and the context in which their learning is occurring (Lawler, 2003).

The literature contains a wide array of resources promoting effective online course/curriculum development guidelines which provide a strong conceptual foundation. While many researchers, including *Paloff, R.M. & Pratt, K. (2007)*; J. Bourne and J. C. Moore (2006), Chao, I., Saj, T., Hamilton, D (2010) ; *W. Chickering and S. C. Ehrmann (2006)*, have reviewed and promoted quality design elements and standards for online learning modules and courses, there is limited focus on the development of resources that align best to a collaborative community of practice. The FCC: Building on Best Practices project promotes the development of a faculty resource that can be readily adapted to the collaborative design and delivery of FCC modules. The evolution of the FCC program has reflected the characteristics of a community of practice (Lave, J. & Wenger, E. 1991), (Wenger, 2004), (Chalmers, L., & Keown, P., 2006) and has proven to be an effective platform to build and support faculty growth and development.

There are several frameworks of interest for further exploration in the FCC project. An approach that has gained attention is the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework developed by Garrison, Anderson and Archer (2000) and further developed for application in blended learning in higher education (Garrison, Vaughn 2008). They propose that in order for learning to be effective in online and face-to-face environments, the learner must feel a sense of belonging to a community of inquiry. The CoI model views the online learning experience as a function of the interaction of three elements: social presence, cognitive presence, and teacher/facilitator presence.

The FCC: Building on Best Practices project intends to provide further opportunities for faculty within and beyond the Eastern Colleges region to share knowledge about teaching and learning within a culture of community and inquiry.

### **Dissemination:**

FCC is built on the concept of sharing expertise and resources. FCC will submit proposals to present this Workbook at the STLHE Conference next year, the Ontario College's Curriculum Affinity Group, the Great Learning Conference (sponsored by the OCCAG), the Council for Ontario Educational Development (COED) group, Ontario Colleges Committee on Human Resource Development, and the Ontario College's Educational Technology Committee annual conference.

The workbook may also serve as a model to others who wish to develop similar training modules in an academic environment.

## References Cited:

J. Bourne and J. C. Moore, "Elements of Quality Online Education," The Sloan Consortium, 2004, <<http://www.sloan-c.org/publications/index.asp>> (accessed March 6, 2006).

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Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press.

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Paloff, R.M. & Pratt, K. (2007). *Building online learning communities: Effective strategies for the virtual classroom*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons.

Wenger, E. (2004). *Communities of practice: a brief introduction*. Retrieved 15, October 2010 from [http://www.ewenger.com/theory/communities\\_of\\_practice\\_intro\\_WRD.doc](http://www.ewenger.com/theory/communities_of_practice_intro_WRD.doc).

### 3. Budget

[CF5] Item (including any applicable taxes)	Cost
Salaries (educational consultants) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Maureen Wideman</li> <li>· Janet Honsberger</li> </ul>	\$1250.00 \$1250.00
Total Costs	\$2500.00
Less matching funding obtained from other sources  Materials, resources and supplies (“in-kind” contributions by Eastern Region colleges – Algonquin, Durham, Fleming, Loyalist, La Cite and St. Lawrence) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● committee members document review time</li> <li>● teleconference resources for meetings</li> <li>● internet access and document repository</li> <li>● library resources and access</li> <li>● printing and photocopying</li> </ul>	(In-kind)
<b>Total amount requested from the EDC Grant Program (not to exceed \$2500)</b>	\$2500.00