

Modular Onboarding for New Faculty 🖨

Project Detail

What is the current status of your project?

In-progress

Please indicate the original project start date, original project end date, and anticipated completion date if project is not completed. Please list dates on separate lines.

- Start Date: April 2016 Strategy Forum
- Posted Date: Sept. 16, 2016
- Original End Date: Nov. 1, 2017
- Anticipated Completion Date: Dec. 15, 2017, to put in place mechanisms to ensure faculty are completing modules, to complete all surveys, to establish an owner of the process, and to make improvements following survey.

Briefly describe the current status of the project. Explain how this project relates to any strategic initiatives or challenges described in the institution's most recent or soon-to-be submitted systems portfolio, if applicable.

The Project is moving steadily toward completion, as can be seen in the project strategic plan attached below. The onboarding modules and Blackboard site are being given final review so the modules can be rolled out for adjuncts and full-time faculty hired for the 2017-2018 academic year.

The Project addresses one of the Strategic Priorities in VU's new strategic plan, which the Board approved in February: *Cultivate Internal and External Resources*, with the specific focus item: *Enhance onboarding of new faculty and staff*.

In addition, as noted in VU's recently submitted AQIP Portfolio, this project is also an effort to address Campus Quality Survey data concerning the need for better communication and improved faculty onboarding/orientation. VU used a professional development session to discuss four concerning issues revealed by the Campus Quality Survey. Participants grouped at various tables commonly agreed that adjunct faculty and staff need a stronger onboarding process. This need has grown greater in recent years due to a large number of faculty and staff retirements (55 faculty and 74 staff retired in five years, from 2012 through 2016). VU has begun to address the faculty onboarding issue with this and other projects, and the institution plans to move to the staff onboarding issue, building on the work completed for this project.

List the project goals as stated in the original project declaration along with the metrics/measures for assessing the progress for each goal.

The following goals are taken from the original project:

The principle goal of this project will be to improve the preparation of new full-time and adjunct faculty. A baseline survey of adjuncts will be used next year to check faculty perception of their preparation; improved numbers of faculty indicating they feel prepared will indicate success. In more specific terms, VU surveyed adjuncts regarding their onboarding experience and how well prepared they felt to use various required systems and tools such as Blackboard, the Banner grading system, and VU's early warning system. 75% of respondents felt some level of prepared and 25% felt unprepared. VU hopes to increase the number of new faculty feeling some level of prepared to between 85 and 90%.

More specific action steps and expected outcomes were listed in the following strategic plan; below, the plan is updated to include the status of action steps.

Timeline for Modularized New Faculty Onboarding, AQIP Action Project

Actions	Start Date	Completion Date	Responsible Persons	Expected Outcome	Status
Survey Adjuncts to Determine Needs	April 15, 2016	May 30, 2016	Provost, Asst. Provost, IR Director	Survey results that will provide better understanding of adjunct faculty needs	Complete May, 2016; led to identification of 5 pilot modules
Develop 5 Onboarding Modules for Opening of Fall 2016 Semester	July 26, 2016	August 18, 2016	Project Team, CTL Director, Content Experts	5 modules complete; survey of new faculty will reveal positive response to modules; feel competent to complete tasks covered	Completed and used by adjuncts and new faculty
Identify Existing or Develop New Manual for New Faculty	August 4, 2016	August 18, 2016	Project Team	Supplement to modules that new faculty will find useful for completing faculty tasks during first semester	Completed in Aug. 2017
Identify and Develop Site for New Modules and Other Onboarding Materials	August 4, 2016	May 11, 2017	Project Team, Faculty Reviewers	Site developed, with ability to track access: Survey will reveal new faculty find new onboarding site helps them complete tasks	Completed: (1) Blackboard Site for Users, (2) Pilot survey complete
Review Onboarding Modules at	August 4, 2016	October 21, 2016	Project Team	Reports on other onboarding modules at other institutions	Completed and all modules identified

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Other Institutions					
Survey Deans and Department Chairs for Module Content	October 5, 2016	October 28, 2016	Project Team, Deans, Department Chairs, IR Director	Completed survey that will lead to greater Institutional ownership of the onboarding project and modules and more comprehensive set of modules	Completed in January 2017; suggestions determined final 3 modules
Survey of Pilot Module Users	October 5, 2016	October 28, 2016	Project Team, IR Director	Completed survey suggesting faculty using the modules respond positively to content, length, quality, etc.	Completed in January 2017
Identify Topics of All Modules To Be Developed	August 4, 2016	October 21, 2016	Project Team	A list of modules that reflect a comprehensive onboarding and training	Completed in March 2017
Share Modules Topics with Deans, Dept. Chairs, Site Coordinators, other admin. for Final Comment	October 24, 2016	November 11, 2016	Project Team, Deans, Department Chairs, Site Coordinators and other administrators	Survey results that help finalize list of modules and greater institutional ownership of onboarding process	Survey not completed, but earlier survey gave needed information
Identify Content Experts and Assign Responsibility for Completing Modules	November 18, 2016	December 6, 2016	Project Team	All modules will have lead person; greater Institutional ownership of onboarding process	Completed in April 2017
Complete Modules	December 10, 2016	March 30, 2017	Content Experts, CTL Director	All modules will be completed and located on site. Greater Institutional ownership.	In Process
Review Modules	March 30, 2017	May 4, 2017	Project Team, Deans, Department Chairs, Faculty	Improvement feedback that will lead to module and onboarding site.	In Process

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Identify Expectations for Completing Modules, Evidence of Completion, Assessment of Users Understanding	May 11, 2017	June 1, 2017	Project Team, Content Experts	Deans, Chairs, Site Coordinators, Administrators will confirm site is complete. Greater Institutional ownership	In Process
Finalize and Deploy Modules	June 1, 2017	July 1, 2017	Project Team, Content Experts, CTL Director	Modules complete and site ready for use	July Deployment expected
Assess New Faculty Users on Vincennes, Other Sites	September 15, 2017	October 1, 2017	Director of IR	Review of users access will show faculty have completed all modules and will show good understanding of module content; survey will confirm site value	
Evaluate Results and Determine Improvements Needed	October 15, 2017	November 1, 2017	Project Team, Content Experts, CTL Director, IR Director	Future Faculty users will complete and show good understanding at higher rates than baseline data	
Onboarding Site Owner Identified	November 1, 2017	On-going	Site owner and supervisor responsibility for oversight	Site will have on-going ownership to review and maintain the site; site owner's supervisor will evaluate owner's maintenance	

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Describe what has been accomplished with this project over the past year, specifically referring to quantifiable results that show progress. You may need to include a discussion clarifying how the original goals and anticipated outcomes may have shifted during the year.

VU is making satisfactory progress on this project. Three feedback opportunities have been provided to faculty and staff. The first survey was sent to the adjuncts regarding their experience as an adjunct working for VU. Next, the deans and program chairs were given an opportunity to give feedback on the initial modules. Finally, VU asked for feedback from the new faculty and adjuncts who worked through the first five modules. All three surveys are linked below--see "Project 4 - Modularized Onboarding for New Faculty."

The initial survey of adjunct faculty (titled "Onboarding Survey Report May 2016") indicated that most adjuncts felt good about their initial experiences with VU--their welcome, their engagement with their supervisor, and the materials and tools offered to do their job. However, the numbers of faculty responding that they felt "unprepared" for teaching the content reflected in their common course outlines (15% of adjuncts with an opinion) and for handling the classroom management tools such as Blackboard, TAPS, and attendance and teaching policies (25% of adjuncts with an opinion) were troubling and helped VU understand CQI data that suggested onboarding could be improved. VU is addressing the first issue (comfort with course content) in other projects, including its work on the "Assessing General Education in the Early Colleges" Action Project and the effort to build a University Common Core assignment catalog. The second issue, which is focused on classroom management tools and policies, is addressed in this project. Modules cover topics such as Blackboard usage, submitting grades via Banner, TAPS (VU's early warning system), FERPA, VU's Lotus Notes email system, Human Resources issues, the VU culture, classroom management, and safety.

To check the value of the initial five modules and to determine what additional modules were needed, VU surveyed department chairs and college deans after they reviewed the modules. The summary of survey results (see "Onboarding Pilot Module Feedback from Dept. Chairs and Deans" linked below) shows that all respondents who reviewed the modules perceived them to be a positive step for VU, and they were supportive of all the modules. Their comments helped VU edit the modules and their suggestions for new modules led to the development of the classroom management, safety, and HR/VU culture modules.

The third survey used to support this project, linked below as "Onboarding User Survey Results," shows that 100% of the faculty users found the content of the modules relevant to their work, and 90% of those surveyed were either very or somewhat satisfied with the content. 95% of the respondents found the initial five modules easy to navigate. Based on the numbers, VU believes the institution is achieving its goal of better communication and preparation of new faculty, and VU assumes that its next follow-up survey (December 2017) will show new faculty will feel better prepared to handle their classroom responsibilities. As an example of the feedback VU has received from adjuncts, the following recent comment expresses a familiar theme that faculty find the modules helpful and want continued access to the site for handy reference: "I have enjoyed the resources available through this onboarding course and would like to know for how long I will have access to this course. If access is limited, I would like to be given notice so that I may retrieve and retain as much information as possible personally. If I will always have access to this course, I know

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I would enjoy referencing it from time to time throughout my employment." Multiple chairs and deans have asked if the materials would be made available for continuing full-time faculty as well; they too see the site as a reference tool. New faculty will have continued access and VU plans to make the site accessible to all faculty.

[Project 4 - Modularized Onboarding for New Faculty](#)

Describe how various members of the learning community have participated in this action project. Show the breadth of involvement by individuals and groups over the project's duration, particularly during the past year.

This project has engaged a broad range of members of the learning community. The project has been chaired by the Provost and the responsible committee includes faculty, the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Registrar, a college Dean, the Assistant VP for Lifelong Learning (distance ed.), a Jasper Campus staff member, the HR director, and the Asst. Provost for Curriculum and Instruction. Adjunct faculty and some new full-time faculty participated in the user survey, and department chairs and deans have offered feedback on the initial modules. Both full-time and adjunct faculty, department chairs, and deans will offer additional feedback on the full set of modules when they are released this coming academic year.

Describe the effect that this project has had on the institution, students, and others in the learning community. What has the institution learned that can be identified as a good practice to use in other aspects of its quality work or from which other institutions might benefit?

Inspired, in part, by Campus Quality Survey data that suggested a need for better communication and onboarding, this project helped to address a significant change in the VU community. Due to a combination of circumstances, including major changes in the Indiana State Retirement Fund, VU is finding ways to deal with an unusually large number of faculty and staff retirements. In the last five years, 74 staff and 55 faculty have retired. These 129 retirees represent a total of 4,102.4 years of service for an average of 31.8 years of VU service per retiree. In the last five years, VU has added many new full-time and adjunct faculty; as a result, processes for preparing new faculty (and staff) have taken on a new urgency. The use of greater numbers of adjunct faculty to teach on VU's campus and at its dual credit and military locations has increased the need for greater access to preparation for faculty, preparation needed to help them feel more confident about their duties on day one. This project reflects VU's recognition of how the institution needs to adapt to its new staffing circumstances and develop better communication and training practices to meet those needs. As a side note, VU is also working on modules for staff, and HR has recently completed an onboarding module for all employees.

Describe the anticipated challenges that may be encountered in successfully completing the project or for institutionalizing the learning from the project's goals.

The greatest challenge for completing this project have to do with figuring out how to ensure all new faculty, especially adjuncts, participate and complete the modules. While VU has evidence that faculty find the content very useful, some department chairs question whether VU can realistically expect new faculty to complete the modules. The question has been raised as to what to do if faculty do not complete the modules. VU's initial plan will be to track faculty and see who needs to be sent reminders to complete. Blackboard is being used to distribute the modules and the system allows for tracking. VU's hope is that if the material is perceived to be as useful as early reviewers suggest, this might not be a real issue, but some Onboarding Committee members assume that all new faculty should be mandated to complete the modules. Since mandates usually imply some action taken against those who don't participate (or, as a result, VU can expect others to follow suit and not complete), some approach has to be determined. Any suggestions about how to deal with the situation would be appreciated.

In light of the project goals, current circumstances, institutional learning from this project, and anticipated barriers to success, list the next steps to be taken over the course of the next 12 - 24 months in order to complete or institutionalize the results of this action project. Provide a timeline for completing each next step.

The steps to complete are listed in the strategic plan for the project given above. All modules need to be finalized; that step should be completed by August 10th, rather than the date in the strategic plan. A review revealed one more essential module to add--assessment responsibilities. The next steps will be rolling out the modules and communicating with adjuncts and new full-time faculty that we want them to work through the modules. The assignment of the program owner and final assessments and improvements should be completed by Dec. 15th, or in a worst-case scenario, by mid-January, 2018.

Provide any additional information, inquiries, or concerns that the institution wishes reviewers to understand regarding this Action Project. Enter N/A if not applicable.

N/A

Update Questions

I certify that this project is ready for review.

I agree.

Tags:

- Valuing Employees
- Planning and Leading