Proposal for Faculty Learning Community AY 2013-2014
Utilizing online resources and technology in classes targeting rural students

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Description: This topic based Faculty Learning Community (FLC) will focus on identifying and utilizing appropriate, quality online resources, creating content with new technologies, and identifying technologies to organize and/or access those resources in classes targeting students in rural Alaska. This FLC is open to any faculty who teach students located in rural Alaska, and staff involved in tutoring students in rural Alaska utilizing distance, face-to-face, and blended delivery techniques.

FLC members already implementing new resources and technology in the fall semester will report back to the group, document the utility of the new resources and technology, and modify their approach as appropriate in the spring semester. Faculty who are not implementing new resources and technology will work in the fall to identify and incorporate new resources and technology for implementation and documentation in the spring semester. If possible, the FLC will partner FLC members implementing in the fall with FLC members implementing in the spring in a mentoring relationship. The FLC will look at online resources and technologies to supplement other class materials, but will also be concerned with the potential of replacing traditional resources with online materials where appropriate.

Justifications: Finding and integrating quality online materials and finding engaging and useable ways for students to access them will allow faculty serving students in rural settings to offer them a wider range of materials in their topic area, engage students with materials appropriate for various learning styles in the same class, and improve the “flow” of the class as students will more reliably have access to the same material (eliminating late enrollment/no materials issue). Rural students have limited access to typical academic resources that are used to expand their knowledge beyond basic textbooks, including libraries, museums, and tutoring or mentoring programs. These resources are more easily integrate into syllabi and teaching when they are easily accessible for students. While CRCD campuses and UAF as a whole work hard to ensure student access through programs like the UAF Writing Center and the Distance Librarian service, these services can be cumbersome for students to use at a distance. In addition, much of the information on usage of online resources assumes students have high bandwidth/technology access and that online materials supplement physical resources.

Goals:
- Enhance teaching skills for faculty teaching students located in rural Alaska
- Offer a forum for faculty to innovate, discuss, and get feedback on online resources; their variety, their quality, their usability.
- Offer a forum for faculty to innovate, discuss, and get feedback on different technologies; their usability in rural Alaska, their potential to engage students, and their potential to engage various learning styles.
- Create a list of resources and technologies and their pros and cons in different subjects/classroom types

Outcomes:
- Strengthening of teaching skills
- Courses redesigned to integrate online materials and innovative technologies
- Final paper/presentation that details the materials and technologies utilized, their strengths and weaknesses, and suggestions for further exploration
- Increased collaboration between faculty across disciplines and campuses in CRCD

Gatherings and other details: As this group will include faculty in various parts of the state meetings will be held approximately every two weeks at a distance utilizing distance communication technology such as Skype or Google Hangouts. We will also utilize an online site to post information to share with one another (specifies tba). Funds will be used in part to purchase licenses for faculty to experiment with various technologies.