DISTRIBUTION AND PENETRATION OF TEACHING-LEARNING DEVELOPMENT UNITS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

IMPLICATIONS FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING AND RESEARCH

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This chapter presents descriptive information about 1,267 U.S. teaching-learning development units (TLDUs). It provides strategic planning and research tools previously unavailable. Results indicate that TLDUs occur in at least 21.2 percent of U.S. higher education institutions, and their presence is correlated at a higher level with student enrollment than with number of faculty. The study provides normative data on the nature of higher education in the United States and on TLDUs by Carnegie classification, location, and type of institution. Additional information is provided about the presence of centers at special-focus institutions such as Hispanic-serving institutions.

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Difficult budget times often result in administrative requests for data to support the importance of a teaching development center. Administrators may ask for normative data about what types of schools have centers or how common centers are. These data can assist in structuring the argument for the creation or continuation of a teaching-learning development unit (TLDU). The field of teaching development has been hindered because the population of TLDUs has been unknown and because research has had to rely on samples of convenience. Those interested in investigating factors influencing success in the field have had to rely primarily on experiential information and do without the additional dimensions of understanding that accompany systematic research.

Two major efforts to identify the maximum number of faculty development units have been made. Centra's (1976) survey of 756 institutions was the first large-scale investigation and found that 333 respondents (44 percent) had a faculty development unit or coordinator. Erickson (1986) investigated the state of the field by mailing surveys to 1,588 four-year or more institutions. From this sample of 750, 47 percent were identified as having faculty development centers, but 24 percent of the sample were nonrespondents. Both studies relied on self-report. In addition, "faculty development" could include a wide variety of units, from grant offices to funding committees within the discipline, not necessarily a teaching development unit.

Another methodology relies on a sample of convenience. Hellyer and Boschmann (1993) examined faculty development programs at ninety-four institutions in a sample based on the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (POD Network) membership, conference attendees, and individuals they knew. Unfortunately, we do not know if the sample was representative or if they simply located centers with directors who were responsive or part of the professional network. This approach may miss centers that are understaffed, underfunded, and overwhelmed, without time to complete surveys or money to attend meetings. Thus, the generalizability of results to the population of TLDUs is unclear.

More recent efforts have looked at subgroups of institutional types. Wright (2000) targeted a population of 125 research universities. At that time she identified 55 centers (44 percent) based on responses to a letter to schools; 33 (26 percent) participated in the survey. Unfortunately we do not know the status of development at the 56 percent of schools (70) that did not respond to the letter.
Frantz, Beebe, Horvath, Canales, and Swee (2005) sent surveys to the 206 centers on the University of Kansas website list and the POD Network listserv, as well as to the small college developer listserv. They received 109 responses but apparently did not investigate duplication of institutions. Their sample, which included only two baccalaureate schools and only one specialized college, showed centers at 59 percent of research/doctoral, 25 percent of master's, 8 percent of baccalaureate/liberal arts, 6 percent of community colleges, and 1 percent of specialized institutions. Interpretation of the data is difficult because we do not know how well this sample reflects the population of teaching development units or if multiple surveys came from the same institution. Wesley (2005) surveyed the seventy-eight Texas two-year colleges on the status of faculty development, with fifty-seven responding in the affirmative, an impressive response rate although the sample was restricted in type of school. Again, faculty development is not necessarily teaching development.

The largest recent collection of center data was by Sorcinelli, Austin, Eddy, and Beach (2006), who identified three hundred institutions as having POD Network members. For the U.S. portion of their sample, 48 percent were at research/doctoral, 25 percent at comprehensive, 12 percent at liberal arts, 10 percent at community colleges (likely underrepresented), and 5 percent at other types of institutions. Because this data analysis is by respondent, it is unclear if the sample proportionately represents institutions. There could have been two individuals from the same institution, thus overrepresenting that school and favoring schools with large staffs or multiple units. This survey informed us about POD Network membership but not about what is typical for centers for teaching.

The flaw in all of these approaches is that the status of teaching development at the nonrespondent schools is unknown. Large numbers of centers could be unnoticed and unmeasured and critical movements or ideas lost. In this study, I have identified centers by using specialized search tools to ensure that every institution is examined for evidence of a center.

Method

Data are available on 4,390 U.S. institutions from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (June 19, 2009), which includes the institutional Carnegie classification and information from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). Among the 1,267 TLDUs in the United States
identified in this study, there are 933 unique institutions with Carnegie data available.

The data set was assembled by evaluating units identified through multiple sources. It includes appropriate units from the 2006 membership directory of the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (2006), interim membership updates through fall 2009 (H. Holmgren, personal communications, March 30, 2007, through October 22, 2009), and various postings to the POD Network listserv (Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education, 2009). It includes the 2009 membership list (by institution) of the North American Council for Staff, Program, and Organizational Development (NCSPOD) (P. Honzay, personal communication, September 22, 2009). In addition, information was incorporated from lists maintained by the University of Kansas (2008), Hofstra University (2008), and the University of Victoria (2007). Specific Google searches were made for TLDUs at Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs; Santiago, 2006), historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), tribal colleges (U.S. Department of Education, 2007), and women's institutions. If a unit possessed a distinct graduate teaching assistant program, the program is listed separately in the database. Finally, the remaining three thousand plus institutions were searched using a Google custom search engine that included institutions in which there was no known TLDU. Search phrases included "Center Teaching Learning," "Professional Development," and, for the associate schools, "Human Resources" and "Staff Development." In addition, a random sample of 5 percent of identified TLDUs (N = 10 to 23) was taken for each Carnegie classification being searched. The text from the home pages was copied, entered into a frequency word counter, and the ten most frequently used words were searched. The associate schools were the most challenging to research because of a greater variety of administrative location and structures of TLDU responsibilities. Many of their public websites are geared exclusively to student needs. The data set underrepresents these units.

The criteria used to select units for inclusion in the data set included three elements based on my perceptions of the most central characteristics of a TLDU as discussed in the literature and based on the most typical units belonging to the POD Network. First, the unit serves postsecondary instructors, whether faculty, graduate student, or adjunct. The unit may also serve students, staff, or another population. Second, the institution has assigned to the unit teaching development responsibility for those instructors. In addition to centers, qualifying units could include committees, part-time load reassignment, virtual units, system offices, or human resource offices. Finally, the mission includes some actively delivered
"pure" pedagogy, not only teaching involved in using technology. Seminars (face-to-face or online) on active learning, teacher learning communities, and consultation on instructional design are examples of activities that met this criterion. A Web page simply listing resources did not meet the criteria for inclusion.

Although the term center for teaching and learning is most commonly used, it was found to be problematic. It can include student support units and those that provide primarily technology support or library support and excludes units that are not physical centers (for example, a part-time faculty assignment) or in some other way vary from the "center" ideal yet still do teaching development work among faculty. As a consequence the term teaching-learning development unit (TLDU) was selected as a more appropriate generic term following discussion among attendees at the 2009 POD Network Conference who attended a presentation on pilot data.

The data set is a continuously updated document, and results reflect its status at a particular point in time. Data are reported for the data set as it existed on February 9, 2010. The data set is weighted toward those with a Web presence, but lack of a website was not reason to exclude a TLDU if its characteristics were known through another source. In the sample, 128 (10.1 percent) units do not have a home URL that can be accessed. TLDUs without a website may have been mentioned in strategic plans, otherwise notated by other campus units, or been a member of either POD or NCS-POD. Institutions in which faculty resources are located behind a firewall (more common in associate and private, for-profit institutions) are likely under-sampled.

Results

Three types of data are reported for each variable: normative data about the field of higher education in the United States; a description of the sample of TLDUs by that variable; and penetration, defined as what percentage of the national sample in that variable has TLDUs.

National Representation of TLDUs

According to the Carnegie data set, there are 4,390 postsecondary education institutions in the United States. There are 1,267 TLDUs in the current data set at 933 unique institutions. Thus, at least 21.2 percent of higher education institutions have a TLDU. This is a lower-bound estimate as the sample likely under-represents some types of institutions.
Enrollment and Number of Faculty

The point biserial correlation between number of full-time-equivalent degree-seeking students and the presence of a TLDU for faculty is \( r = .51 \) \((p < .0001; N = 4,389)\), which explains 25 percent of the variance of having a TLDU. The correlation between number of full-time-equivalent faculty and the presence of a TLDU is \( r = .39 \) \((p < .0001; N = 262)\), which accounts for only 15 percent of the variance, but there were fewer schools with data on the number of faculty. Thus, the presence of TLDUs is more highly correlated with student enrollment than with number of faculty.

Carnegie Classifications for Institutions with TLDUs

Table 20.1 provides data by Carnegie classification. Associate and master's institutions represent the largest percentages of the TLDU data set but doctoral/research institutions are most likely to have a TLDU—over triple the national rate of 21.2 percent.

Public and Private Institutions

In the United States, 39.6 percent \((N = 1,737)\) of institutions are public, 39.7 percent \((N = 1,744)\) are private nonprofit, and 20.7 percent \((N = 909)\) are private for-profit. In the sample of TLDUs, 69.6 percent \((N = 649)\) are at public institutions, 29.4 percent \((N = 274)\) are at private nonprofit institutions, and 1.1 percent \((N = 10)\) are at private for-profit institutions. The last category is likely under-represented as many of the private for-profit

| Classification          | Percentage of Higher Education in the United States \((N = 4,364)\) | Percentage of TLDU Data Set \((N = 933)\) | Penetration |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Doctoral/research      | 6.5% \((283)\)                                             | 21.9% \((204)\)                 | 72.1%       |
| Master's               | 15.2% \((663)\)                                            | 28.2% \((263)\)                 | 39.7%       |
| Baccalaureate          | 17.6% \((766)\)                                            | 11.8% \((110)\)                 | 14.4%       |
| Associate              | 41.6% \((1,814)\)                                          | 33.5% \((313)\)                 | 17.3%       |
| Special focus/tribal   | 19.2% \((838)\)                                            | 4.6% \((43)\)                   | 5.1%        |

Note: Number of institutions is in parentheses.
institutions use firewalls and cannot be searched. Thus, 37.4 percent of public institutions, 15.7 percent of private nonprofit institutions, and at least 1.1 percent of private for-profits have a TLDU.

**Geographical and Accreditation Location**

Of the TLDU data set, most are in the Southeast, with the next largest group in the mid-Atlantic, closely followed by the Far West (Table 20.2). New England and the Far West have the largest penetration of TLDUs.

| Regions                  | Percentage of Higher Education in the United States (N = 4,389) | Percentage of TLDU Data Set (N = 933) | Penetration |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| U.S. service schools     | 0.2% (8)                                                      | 0.3% (3)                             | 37.5%       |
| New England              | 6.1% (269)                                                    | 8.0% (75)                            | 27.9%       |
| Mid-Atlantic             | 16.5% (726)                                                   | 17.3% (161)                          | 22.2%       |
| Great Lakes              | 14.8% (650)                                                   | 14.9% (139)                          | 21.4%       |
| Plains                   | 10.1% (444)                                                   | 8.6% (80)                            | 18.0%       |
| Southeast                | 24.2% (1060)                                                  | 22.6% (211)                          | 19.9%       |
| Southwest                | 8.9% (389)                                                    | 8.7% (81)                            | 20.8%       |
| Rocky Mountains          | 3.4% (150)                                                    | 2.7% (25)                            | 16.7%       |
| Far West                 | 13.6% (599)                                                   | 16.9% (158)                          | 26.4%       |
| Outlying areas           | 2.1% (94)                                                     | 0.0% (0)                             | 0.0%        |

*Note: Number of institutions is in parentheses. New England: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Mid-Atlantic: Delaware, Washington, D.C., Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. Great Lakes: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin. Plains: Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota. Southeast: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia. Southwest: Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas. Rocky Mountains: Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Wyoming. Far West: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Washington. Outlying areas: American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Marshall Islands, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, Palau, and U.S. Virgin Islands.*
### Table 20.3 Accreditation Location and Penetration of TLDUs

| Regions              | Percentage of Higher Education in the United States (N = 4,212) | Percentage of TLDU Data Set (N = 925) | Penetration |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| National/Specialized | 25.4% (1070)                                                  | 2.8% (26)                            | 2.4%        |
| State                | 0.3% (12)                                                     | 0.0% (0)                             | 0.0%        |
| Middle States        | 12.0% (505)                                                   | 17.0% (157)                          | 31.1%       |
| New England          | 5.7% (242)                                                    | 8.0% (74)                            | 30.6%       |
| North Central        | 27.0% (1136)                                                  | 28.2% (261)                          | 23.0%       |
| Northwest            | 3.8% (159)                                                    | 8.0% (74)                            | 46.5%       |
| Southern             | 18.7% (788)                                                   | 26.2% (242)                          | 30.7%       |
| Western              | 7.1% (300)                                                    | 9.8% (91)                            | 30.3%       |

Note: Number of institutions is in parentheses.

The U.S. service schools appear to have an excellent penetration rate, but the small numbers should be cautiously interpreted.

The North Central and Southern accreditation regions have the largest number of TLDUs. The Northwest has the greatest penetration, double the national rate (Table 20.3), and North Central has the lowest penetration rate of the accreditation regions.

**Types of Programs**

The 123 land grant institutions represent 2.8 percent of higher education institutions in the United States. There are 21 (0.5 percent) Council of Public Liberal Arts (COPLAC) colleges and 162 institutions identified as medical schools (3.8 percent) in the United States. In the TLDU sample, 6.6 percent (N = 62) were at land grant institutions, 1.5 percent (N = 14) at COPLAC colleges, and 11.6 percent (N = 108) at medical schools. All three of these types of institutions are “friendly” to TLDUs: 50.4 percent of land grant institutions have a TLDU, 66.7 percent of COPLAC colleges, and 66.7 percent of medical schools.

For nonassociate schools, the proportion of undergraduate degrees awarded in the arts and sciences versus professional areas with regard to TLDUs is in Table 20.4. Most TLDUs are found at institutions with both arts and sciences and professional degrees in approximately equal numbers. At institutions whose programs are skewed, TLDUs are somewhat
Table 20.4 Undergraduate Program Classification: Arts and Sciences Versus Professional

| Undergraduate Program Classification | Percentage of Higher Education in the United States (N = 1,571) | Percentage of TLDU Data Set (N = 567) | Penetration |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------|
| Arts and sciences represent 80% of undergraduate degrees | 10.3% (162) | 9.5% (54) | 33.3% |
| Arts and sciences represent 60–79% of undergraduate degrees | 13.5% (212) | 17.6% (100) | 47.2% |
| Balanced degree programs, 41–59% of undergraduate degrees | 32.3% (507) | 40.6% (230) | 45.4% |
| Professional degrees represent 60–79% of undergraduate degrees | 32.0% (502) | 28.7% (163) | 32.5% |
| Professional degrees represent 80% of undergraduate degrees | 12.0% (188) | 3.5% (20) | 10.6% |

Note: Number of institutions is in parentheses.

more likely to be found at schools with more arts and sciences degrees being awarded.

Table 20.5 addresses the level at which an institution awards graduate degrees in the same areas as undergraduate degrees. Relatively few TLDUs are at institutions that are exclusively undergraduate or exclusively graduate. Most are found at institutions with some but fewer than half of the degrees overlapping. The greatest penetration of TLDUs, however, is in schools in which half or more of the graduate degrees correspond to majors offered to undergraduates.

Diversity

Table 20.6 displays data by institutions that serve minorities and women, including HBCUs, tribal institutions, HSIs, and MSIs (minority-serving institutions). MSIs enroll minority populations, including Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, African Americans, and Hispanics, at a level that exceeds 50% of total enrollment.
Table 20.5 Graduate Degrees’ Overlap with Undergraduate Programs

| Types of Programs | Percentage of Higher Education in the United States (N = 1,571) | Percentage of TLDU Data Set (N = 567) | Penetration |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------|
| No coexistence    | 31.3% (N = 491)                                               | 13.1% (N = 74)                          | 15.1%       |
| Some overlap in programs | 52.9% (N = 831)                                            | 54.5% (N = 309)                         | 37.2%       |
| High overlap in programs | 15.8% (N = 249)                                           | 32.5% (N = 184)                         | 73.9%       |

Note: Number of institutions is in parentheses.

Of all HBCUs, 23 percent have a TLDU, comparable to the national rate of 21.2 percent. For all other diversity categories, TLDUs have below national levels of penetration, with the lowest level (none) at tribal institutions and next lowest at women’s institutions, but the total numbers are very small for those two groups.

Table 20.6 TLDUs in Diverse Institutions

| Type of Institution | Percentage of Higher Education in the United States | Percentage of TLDU Data Set (N = 933) | Penetration |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------|
| HBCUs               | 2.3% (100)                                        | 2.5% (23)                              | 23%         |
| Tribal colleges     | 0.7% (32)                                         | 0.0% (0)                               | 0.0%        |
| HSIIs               | 8.8% (385)                                        | 7.1% (66)                              | 17.1%       |
| MSIs                | 18.0% (787)                                       | 11.7% (109)                            | 13.9%       |
| Women’s institutions| 1.2% (53)                                         | 0.8% (7)                               | 13.2%       |

Note: Number of institutions is in parentheses. Rows represent separate analyses as the categories are not mutually exclusive.
Graduate Teaching Assistant Programs

Eighty-five units identified out of the 1,267 (6.7 percent) are either specifically for graduate teaching assistants or offer a program for them. The number of graduate teaching assistant programs is likely an underestimate as identification of these programs relied on existing lists of units, thus suggesting a starting point for further developing the data set.

Discussion

These results serve as a baseline for developing further understanding of the field of faculty development. The lower-bound estimate of 21.2 percent of U.S. institutions having a TLDU reveals room for growth and can serve as a possible argument for uniqueness in tough budget times. In the sample of TLDUs, more are located at master’s and associate-level institutions, with the greatest single percentage located in the Southeast and having North Central or Southern accreditation. TLDUs are located most often at institutions with a balance of arts and sciences versus professional degrees and some overlap between graduate and undergraduate programs.

A description of the sample, while interesting for knowing the state of the field, is not as useful as examining where TLDUs have most deeply penetrated a type of institution. TLDUs have been most fully adopted by doctoral/research institutions, with three-quarters having a TLDU. Contrary to expectations, based on this data set, doctoral/research institutions are more likely to have a center than institutions in Carnegie classifications with the reputation of being more devoted to the instructional mission. This difference may be due to greater resource availability from larger enrollments at doctoral institutions, greater need, or some as yet unknown factor. The data on GTA programs are sparse and also need further development.

Institutions with Northwest accreditation are far more likely to have TLDUs (double the national rate). This may be due to a specific requirement that institutions are to provide for the development of faculty on an ongoing basis (Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, 2001). In contrast, the requirement of the North Central region, the region with the lowest penetration rate, is less specific: “The organization values and supports effective teaching” (North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Higher Learning Commission, 2007, p. 6). TLDUs have been most successful at institutions in which more arts and sciences degrees are awarded than professional programs or in which the two are
balanced. They are also more successful where graduate programs and undergraduate programs significantly overlap.

Some of these data may be explained by the correlation with enrollment. A larger institution in terms of enrollment is apparently better able to support TLDUs or see the need for such a unit, or perhaps TLDUs encourage greater enrollment. This suggests that if the only consideration were continued existence, TLDUs would be wise to encourage practices that sustain and improve enrollment.

Other favorable environments for TLDUs are land grant, medical schools, and COPLAC schools. TLDUs are underrepresented at institutions that award greater than 80 percent professional degrees. Because they are doing well at medical schools, one inference is that more work is needed at penetrating law, faith, and business schools. Research on why these differences occur could be useful in uncovering values and techniques for TLDU management.

The penetration of TLDUs into historically black colleges and universities (23 percent) is similar to the national rate of 21.2 percent. Penetration of TLDUs fall short of the national rate in all the other categories of diversity (minority serving, Hispanic serving, tribal, and women's institutions). Some of the discrepancy may be due to enrollment size. The largest tribal institution enrolls 1,935 students, and the largest women's institution enrolls 10,750 students. However, HBCUs reflect the national rate, but their largest institution enrolls only 13,067. And the largest HSI enrolls 57,026 yet has a lower than national rate of TLDUs.

For the first time in many years, it is possible to say what is typical or not in terms of institutions supporting the presence of TLDUs. The normative data contained in this report may be useful for many strategic planning tasks of development units. Perhaps more significant for the field is the opportunity to use benchmarking with samples from this data set and even to develop a taxonomy of TLDUs. From this core list of units, it will be possible to identify best practice for various types of units and devise TLDU accreditation standards that can aid in determining time and money allocations. This data set and the opportunity to take random samples will enable researchers to draw stronger inferences. The possibility of investigating and contrasting specific subtypes of TLDUs will allow the field to investigate richer hypotheses and provide more targeted services to their clientele. Sustaining the data set will require cooperation of the research community through sharing newly gleaned information and corrections. The field, and ultimately teaching and learning, is empowered for deeper, richer change.
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