



**THE CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT
OF FACULTY EXCELLENCE**

CASE STUDY

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BACKGROUND

Established at North Central College in 2017, The Center for the Advancement of Faculty Excellence (CAFÉ) is dedicated to fostering an academic community focused on student opportunities and faculty development. One of CAFÉ's strategic goals is to make CAFÉ a place for sharing best practices, including faculty both inside and outside of North Central College.

In 2019, CAFÉ was tasked with coordinating the annual Associated Colleges of the Chicago Area (ACCA) symposium, which brings together faculty across disciplines and institutions for a dynamic exchange of innovative pedagogical strategies. CAFÉ's goal was to host a successful event involving both ACCA and non-ACCA presenters and attendees.

CHALLENGE

The challenge for CAFÉ was that there were no processes in place to connect with non-ACCA schools. As the aim for this year was to expand the reach from only ACCA-registered institutions to include colleges and universities that had previously not known about or attended the event, research was needed to identify key contacts at the relevant institutions. Specifically, an emphasis was placed on inviting faculty from community colleges for the first time.

SOLUTION

The first step was to compile media lists with detailed contact information for non-ACCA colleges and universities. We targeted specific faculty and staff at those institutions, including the following titles: Vice President of Teaching, Learning, and Student Development, Director of Faculty Development and Student Success, and Assistant Dean for Faculty Development. These individuals were selected due to their connections to faculty and staff within their organizations that would potentially be interested in attending CAFÉ's event.

The emphasis was then placed on email messaging, reaching out to everyone on the newly created non-ACCA media lists as well as those already employed at or attending an ACCA institution. The messaging prior to the event included but was not limited to:

External Outreach

- initial email containing introductory information about the event to solicit proposals and registration
- follow-up reminder emails for both proposal submissions and registration deadlines
- acceptance emails for presenters
- informational email for all registrants regarding the overall event
- contacting local newspapers regarding coverage
- announcing the event at an ACCA meeting

Internal Outreach

- external outreach email messaging was sent to faculty
- email messaging stressing the importance of North Central representation
- designing and distributing flyers to faculty mailboxes
- announcing the event at internal faculty meetings

In an effort to continue to uphold North Central's advocacy of sustainability as well as to support accessibility for all attendees, two Google Folders were created for all necessary information regarding the event. The first folder included the forms for proposal submission, registration, and additional packets and flyers with detailed scheduling of the event. An additional folder was created to house supplemental materials provided by presenters. A digital survey was given to attendees at the conclusion of the event, and an email thanking everyone for attending was sent out the following week.

RESULTS

During the event, Cardinal PR was on site taking photos for future marketing collateral. We also helped CAFÉ create a framework for how to approach the outreach for future symposiums.

In addition to the featured Keynote speaker, the event showcased 58 unique presenters across 45 presentations, and hosted a total of 109 attendees from over a dozen colleges and universities.

For next year's conference, similar tactics will be enacted to target graduate students at both ACCA and non-ACCA institutions. The purpose will be to invite the next generation of faculty in higher education to exchange ideas and insights to improve teaching strategies and foster student learning. By attending and presenting, graduate students will contribute fresh perspectives as well as gain access to the expertise of practiced professionals, improving the effectiveness of the event overall.