

Ep. 078: New Name New Opportunities

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The Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology is transforming, and with its new mission comes a new name... and new opportunities for instructors at Illinois State University. CTLT is now the **Center for Integrated Professional Development**, a hub which combines transformative teaching practices, scholarship, and career advancement under one metaphorical roof.

These are changes a long-time in the planning. Dr. Aondover Tarhule, Illinois State's Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost, joins Jim and Yojanna to discuss the goals of the reimagined unit and his vision for the future of online education at Illinois State. They explore how many of the improvements planned for the Center are based on an in-depth study of both faculty and student needs. They unpack what the term "integrated" means when taking a holistic approach to professional development for faculty, staff, and graduate students.

Transcript

JIM: Hi there. I'm Jim.

YOJANNA: I'm Yojanna,

AONDOVER: And I'm Aondover.

JIM: Welcome to Let's Talk Teaching, a podcast from the Center for Integrated Professional Development here at Illinois State University. I am Jim Gee. I am so happy I nailed that intro because we have changed our name, and that's what we're talking about today. Joining me, returning to our pokey little podcast is Dr. Yojanna Cuenca-Carlino. Who is the Assistant Vice President for Faculty Development, Diversity... Now you go ahead and say it...

YOJANNA: I know I have a long title. Yeah. Faculty Development, Diversity, and Learning.

JIM: See, I should know this by now. And joining us for the first time on our podcast, we're very pleased to have Dr. Aondover Tarhule, who is—I'm gonna get his title correct—who is the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost here at Illinois State?

AONDOVER: Excellent, Jim. Excellent.

JIM: Thank you. Thank you for coming both of you. So, we're really excited to— Yojanna you and I did an episode around the beginning of the year where we talked about what we were planning to do? Well, we've actually started to do it. And we have changed our name from the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology to the Center for Integrated Professional Development. That's nice. It's- it reflects what we're going to be doing. But what we're going to be doing is the more important thing, so can you give me just your initial thoughts on how the change is going and why we're doing this, these changes?

YOJANNA: Sure. And in that previous episode, well... First of all, thank you for having us again. Last time that we talked about, I briefly explained a little bit about the process that we went through to get to where we are today. So, this was like a two-year process in terms of looking at data, faculty surveys, focus groups, but also looking at what other institutions have been doing in better supporting, you know, faculty in a more holistic way, right? And that's the, that's the piece about the integration and the holistic pieces of ED, because when we think about faculty in academia, and instructors, right. They are all not only focusing on the teaching aspects of it, but they also have scholarship, they also have service and also the, the well-being and the, the balance, right, that integration with all of those, and there's instances where their teaching will integrate with their scholarship, or their service might integrate with their teaching as well. So, there are opportunities for- for those integrations and collaborations, you know, that occur across that. So, the vision really for the Center is to provide support for faculty instructors, right? At all levels of their career, what a faculty member at their, you know, who's new to ISU, or is just starting to understand the university, the processes is very different from that seasoned faculty who has been here for, for, years, right. So, we're trying to, to really develop programming that will support faculty across their career stages, and help them grow, right? Because that's, that's a whole the whole goal, we have to engage in a continuous growth. And that means, perhaps thinking about or rethinking our teaching practices or coming up with new ways to study our teaching practices, because that all impacts student's success, right? And the same, our- our scholarship will continue to grow, you know, we as we develop our line of scholarship, or as we seek new, for example, grants to help support, you know, different products that we have. So, those things kind of integrate, and that that is our whole idea. The other piece to it, and we learned a lot about online learning during the pandemic. And it was- it became very clear that as an institution, we needed to also think about reaching other students in you know, through online, online learning and teaching online. It's it's also has to be of quality, teaching online. There are specific ways and evidence-based practices on how to teach online. And so, it's, it's thinking about also, with the idea, of like, student success, right. And, and developing new programs potentially, to roll, to grow our enrollments and so forth. So, that's in general, a very, very brief way, where the Center is.

JIM: Absolutely, and we'll link to that past podcast. So, to- so, people can hear us talk about a little bit more depth. I think the two words that really popped out for me, well, many words popped out for me in that. But data and evidence and- I see the provost nodding I happen to know our Provost has a predilection for asking, okay, what are the numbers? So, Dr. Tarhule, with online programming when we're talking about online offerings for our students on campus? We're not talking about just online courses anymore, are we?

AONDOVER: Oh, no, we're not, Jim. First of all, I like to say thank you so much for having me on this program.

JIM: Thank you.

AONDOVER: It's the first time, I'm honored, and delighted to participate. Before I answer your question, I like to begin by really saying thank you to Yojanna. You know, as you heard

in her explanation to your previous question, her energy and her vision and her leadership and her passion and her advocacy all of those, I can't say enough good things about what Yojanna has done to move not just CTLT, to where we are today, talking about the Center for Integrated Professional Development, but also to move the university in terms of mindset and a different focus on what does Professional Development mean, and what do our faculty need. So, thank you so much. I appreciate what you have done. I am very delighted and appreciative for the time that we've had to work together. So, Jim, to answer your question you asked about online education. So, as Yojanna mentioned, we learned during the pandemic that there's nobody at ISU or there was nobody at ISU dedicated to online education. And so, in March of 2020, when we had to go online, we did it because everybody did it. But we did it because we had to. And we had, as a university, no strategy. And so, this was one of those gaps that became very evident. And so, with Yojanna's leadership, we developed very quickly a vision and a strategy, strategy during a pandemic, for online education. So, we effectively created a new unit in the Center for Integrated Professional Development. And Yojanna ran a very effective and competitive national search. And we're very delighted that Anthony Piña is joining us as the director of that unit. What do we anticipate of that unit? From my perspective, two major goals. Number one is to have the lead contact person who will be the face of online education, who will be the direct contact, who will be that individual that everyone at ISU knows. If I have a need in online education, this is the person I go to. So, the coordinator, the director, the vision for online education. That's huge in itself, because we have two types of challenges with respect to online education at ISU. Number one is our footprint is simply almost nonexistent. We don't have nearly enough of a presence online as we should in terms of the number of programming that we should have. And so, Tony is going to be leading us in that direction. One of the first things I expect him to do is to create a vision, and a strategy for how we expand that footprint. So, that's the first challenge. And that's the first gap. And the second is even amongst the programs that we already have online, there's very little coordination, there's very little synergy. And there is very little help and support for faculty who want to do this. So, these are the things that I expect the new Director for Online Education to focus on. Ultimately, if it works, as well, as I, as I hope I think as I'm confident it will, we will have a very clear strategy about online education that everybody knows where we'll have a resource point. And that everybody knows what they can get and where they can go to get what they need for whatever resources. And then, ultimately, what I like to see is to have more programs that are online degree programs. We have some online programs in the School of Business and in Nursing. I think we can do a lot more than that. So, how many more completely online degree programs? Can we create that cater to demographics out there who are unable to physically be in residence at ISU? So, that's that that's one. And the second is, what have we learned from the pandemic that we can take into the post pandemic landscape? What are those cases? So, I talked about programs, meaning entire degree programs.

JIM: Right.

AONDOVER: And individual courses. What are some of those courses that we did so well, that we think we can continue to do even post pandemic? These are things that need to be

thought about very strategically, with, with a lot of vision with a lot of intentionality. And so, I think those are some of my expectations for the new online unit.

JIM: And we've talked in various episodes. I've talked with you Yojanna and others about the impact of the pandemic and we don't want it, we don't want to minimize what hardship it was. But if you look for silver linings. The proverbial silver linings. We got that data that evidence that we can move forward where I have no doubt that Illinois State University as an institution would have, would have, eventually started to do this, we wouldn't have had a choice. But in some ways, you know, the rubber really met the road during the pandemic. And it kind of gave us some inertia that we're capitalizing on now. Now, online education or online teaching is still teaching, there's still a teaching component to, so, the other half of the house as it were at the Center for Integrated Professional Development, is our Director of Scholarly Teaching who folks on this podcast will know because it's Dr. Jennifer Friberg, who has also been reappointed as the Cross Endowed Chair in The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. So, can you talk, Yojanna, and we've talked about scholarly teaching before, to give us, give us the elevator speech of 30 seconds, and what it is and then how do you see the two sides playing with each other?

YOJANNA: Okay. Well, absolutely. And they should be playing as part of the Integrated piece of the Professional Development. So, that's something that is going to happen externally for those stakeholders, but also internally, as, as a, as an integrated center, right. Before, you know, before, before I answer that question, I also want to acknowledge the many people that work with me, you know, throughout the past two years to actually get to where we are. So, a lot of the, the folks here at the Center, we, we work together, a lot of people and stakeholders from the university work together, you know, to formulate the vision that we, that we're doing today. So, I also wanted to thank, you know, everyone, for for, for their, their contribution. So, one of the big changes also for the center is the combination of scholarly teaching, which is actually utilizing evidence-based teaching practices, right? to inform our teaching, but also for those faculty who want to go and study their own teaching practices have the ability to do that, through the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. So, that's why this, this new unit or subunit, as part of the Center for Integrated Professional Development, it's called scholarly teaching, right? Because it's- is that whole idea about not everyone would want to study, perhaps their teaching, but everyone should be teaching scholarly. And that means there are tons of evidence, practices, a lot of research, talking about the importance, strategies, and ways in which, you know, are effective for teaching our students, we also ran a national search for, for selecting the Director of Scholarly Teaching, and the best person for the job was Dr. Jennifer Friberg, who is a very recognized scholar in the Scholar of Teaching and Learning nationally and internationally, right. So, one of the things that the expectation is that that Tony, and Jen will be working together, Tony, our Director of Online Learning and Chief Online Learning Officer and, uh, you know, Jen, as the Director for Scholarly Teaching. In really thinking about that, what is- what are the evidence-based practices that also occur in online learning? So, it's, it's, it's, internally, there's going to be a lot of integration and also externally, in terms of, of even studying our online practices. And Tony has a lot of great ideas coming up about also ways in which we could actually recognize good

online teaching, you know, just as we recognize, you know, in general teaching, and we have the awards for, for teaching.

AONDOVER: I couldn't agree more. And, Jim, I think they said several things that excite me about the center. First of all, those units should be together, exactly as Yojanna has said, for two important reasons. Number one, we have to think about what our motto of this university is Gladly, We Learn and Teach, remember, we learn is the first part of that motto, right? And so, as we, as teachers, need to also learn, and in particular, in academia, more so than many other industries. Our preparation to the teachers tends to be very minimal, or sometimes nonexistent. Perhaps if you go to an education college, if you were lucky enough to have a degree in education, you learn how to teach. But outside of that, most university lecturers don't formally learn to teach. And so, having this opportunity, this resource, where faculty can avail themselves of the ability and the opportunity to learn, what am I doing? Like, how can I be a better, more effective, more empathetic, more successful teacher? You can't underestimate that. So, as a Center, the Center for Integrated Professional Development is absolutely amazing. So, we often ask the question. Something. And how many times do we wonder who teaches the teachers? And sometimes in academia, we don't do that. So, this is an opportunity to teach the teachers and to provide an opportunity for the teachers to learn. So, that's one of the things that excites me about this. Second is the quality of the leadership that Jennifer Friberg, as Yojanna said, absolutely outstanding scholar, and leader, and an absolutely amazing individual. So, I think she's great in this position, she's uniquely qualified, and I'm very confident that she's going to take us places, and Tony, our new Chief Online Officer, I think he was the most qualified candidate in that, for that position, I'm excited about the ideas that he brings. I'm very excited about the experiences that, that he's going to bring to us. And I'm sure we're going to develop a vision that will take us to the next level, I have no doubt at all about it. So, so much to be excited about. And I hope that the faculty begins to take advantage of this. And then to take that requirement, those expectations about teaching, and put those resources together in a synergistic complementary manner. To the other aspects, Yojanna mentioned holistic requirements and expectations of what a faculty member goes through, time management, research expectations, work life balance, to have all of those resources in one place, essentially a hub where faculty can come to get information and what, whatever they need, whether it's teaching, whether it's research, whether it's time management, work life balances, I think it's going to be great. And I think our faculty is going to love this. And then the final piece to it is, of course, that trajectory, we tend to pay a lot of attention to tenure track faculty, a lot of departments in administration's do that. And we should, because that's the time when faculty are at their most vulnerable, they're still trying to find their place. They're trying to establish their careers. We don't do nearly as much after they get tenure. And that's a very risky point, because we find that some faculty stagnate or they stall at that, at that point, what we're doing with this new center, is to support faculty throughout the trajectory of your professional career. It's not just when you are pre tenure, it is after you have achieved tenure, how do you continue that forward momentum and progress that he established as a pre-tenure faculty? How do you continue to become successful, become a full professor? And after you become a full professor, the life doesn't earn full professorship? How do you become even more regionally known? How do you become even more impactful? How do you make a

greater impact on the society and so on whatever your career goals and aspirations? Maybe these are the things that the Center for Integrated Professional Development they're going to be dealing with. And I think it's going to be amazing for our faculty.

JIM: We're banding about using the phrase hub in the title of the unit. But, you know, we have the sort of this sort of mantra that we're trying to develop, which is that we are your hub for transformative teaching, which is a phrase that we've often used, you know, to provide students with transformative experiences, whether that's through teaching, connecting them with your research, etc. We also want to be a hub for scholarship, and for career advancement, like you were talking about. Dr. Tarhule, really, but the other thing is, as we've said all along, we want to teach them, we want to help them and support them as entire people. We recognize that not only does life not stop when you reach full professor, but life is a big, complicated thing, all through the journey that is not just about your time in the classroom, or your time during doing research. So, Yojanna, I know that there are some things that the new center is not going to do directly, but we're hoping to partner with other units on campus. Did you want to speak a little bit about that?

YOJANNA: Sure. Absolutely. And we have had, for example, we started to do some programs or gathering some resources for the university to help you know faculty. In all these areas, for example, we have a membership for the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity. This year, for the first time, we offer partial scholarships for faculty to participate in the Faculty Success Program, which actually addresses issues with time management, writing routines, all the things that the provost Tarhule was talking about. So, all those resources will continue. It will be actually advertised and promoted through the Center as well. In, in July, we get the data from COACHE survey and that also will help us inform a lot of the Professional Development. Right. That we need for, for teaching and scholarship.

JIM: And for those who aren't familiar, COACHE was a national survey partnering with Harvard, Harvard University's Graduate School of Education, which was a very comprehensive and the first time on our campus, if I remember correctly, survey of faculty needs across the spectrum.

YOJANNA: Correct. And we got a fantastic response rate. Actually, we beat all the other institutions, thank you, or percent, you know, response rate. So, those results will, will be coming in, in July. But the other piece is, yes, as you said, we are going to partner right, with the Office of Research. In fact, we have had various conversations with Dr. Craig McLaughlin and, you know, the AVP for, for research, in terms of how can we help promote and also partner with some offerings through the Center, in partnership with like the Office of Research. So, we started talking about, you know, perhaps doing a session on, on how to use specific, specific research tools, we have heard from faculty that they want more, for example, training on quadratics. So, that's one, one thing that we're looking into, into offering training for grants that they already have, and then you know, through us, but also have panels about what does it mean to be good, we, you know, researcher or like, collaborate with others, and so forth. So, that's one partnership, right? That, that we, that we have established. And we're working now to build that structure. So, this is really the third leg of that center, right

eventually, to get to that piece. Milner, it's another partner. They do great. They have great resources and a range of support for faculty. So, we want to continue, we already partner with them. But we want to make that more visible, I guess, and help, perhaps offer some workshops are supposed to or connect to what they are offered through their website as well. As far as understanding predatory journals, and how to do citation analyses and all those different things that help support the career of faculty. We also partner with Dr. Rosie Hauck, right. You know, and thinking about technology supports for faculty as it relates to teaching as it relates to scholarship and, and all those so all those will be partnerships and HR. HR as it's also thinking about trainings and the training. So, our way of connecting and helping everyone identify resources in our easier way.

JIM: I flippantly, in meetings, kind of use a quote from Miracle on 34th Street, the old Christmas movie, we don't have it here at Macy's will send you down the road to Gimbels. But it's actually more than that it is a true partnership. And in that, in that regard, what we're trying to forge here, I know,

AONDOVER: Let me piggyback on something Yojanna has said which, in terms of what we've heard from faculty, and why we're doing all of this, almost everything we're talking about emerged because we're listening to the fact and the faculty is saying this is what we want. So, last year, in February of '21, academic affairs had a major retreat, we took six months, preparing for the retreat, we had 10 different working groups, addressing different aspects of campus and academic affairs line. And we had in total, about 125 unique individuals involved in these workgroups and discussions. And when we had the retreat, one of the things we had, abundantly, was the need to support faculty. That was when we learned at least, I learned, that we'd never had a systematic survey of faculty expectations and work experiences. So, the program that Yojanna mentioned, COACHE, the collaborative and academic careers in higher education, what it does is to have a very expansive survey of what faculty are feeling. And it's not just our faculty, we have an opportunity to benchmark ourselves against other institutions, more than 300 institutions in that database. I am very delighted that each and every one of our Dean's has asked for more in-depth information about their colleges, so they can benchmark their faculty life experiences and expectations against other colleges that they, their beings will choose. So, not only with that, in the data at the institutional level, that we will be analyzing and developing strategies to each academic college is also getting the data unique to them. So, I think you see here a very concerted effort at different levels of the university to try and figure out what the faculty is experiencing and what the short gaps shortcomings are in those was experiences and how ISU can do that. So, I'm very delighted. And I'd like to stress that point that we are doing this in response to faculty aspirations in response to faculty experiences and what they're telling us in the past. And I should mention that when we talk a lot about how to help a faculty improve, I want to be absolutely crystal clear, and leave no mistake at all. Somebody listening to this might wonder, oh, gosh, maybe ISU doesn't have good instructors, far from it, right? The very fact that we are trying to figure out how we can do that. I think it's a measure of the seriousness that we take education and teaching at this university. If it didn't matter to us, we wouldn't care. I think everybody knows. And I'm sure I don't have to make this point that we pride ourselves on having an individualized focus attention and Student Focus education at

this institution that is well known in the state. And so, we have great teachers. And what we're trying to do is how do we make our teachers even better, right? And in some cases, we know that our teachers are excellent, and they've done a good job. But how can we relieve some of them of the burden of getting there? How can they get to that point, faster, easier, in a more streamlined fashion, so that they have even more time to devote to other aspects of their career development, like research, like building networks, and so on? So, I guess my, my summary here is, everything you hear about everything we're trying to do with this Center is in response to what our faculty is telling us they're like to see. We're trying to meet that response. And, and the second part about the effort we're putting in teaching simply reflects our emphasis and the pride we take in being excellent teachers and in making sure that we continue to be excellent teachers. And we make that process of effective and excellent teaching as easy and as rewarding for our faculty as possible.

JIM: And, and this entire process that we're talking about, doesn't end anytime soon. It's always, you know, just as there's lifelong learning, there is lifelong development and redevelopment of our center. So, it's going to be an iterative process. So, when folks go online to our new URL, which is our web address, which I'm going to have to remember and say here in a couple of minutes, they're going to see largely the same website right now. And we're going to be adding resources, making it easier to find stuff, depending on how you're identifying where you're at in your career, what your interests are, and that sort of thing. And there's some other changes that are going to be taking place too. So, Yojanna, you're going to be moving over to become the chair of the Department of Special Education?

YOJANNA: That's correct.

JIM: Yes. So, congratulations on that. And once you tell us a little bit about who's going to be sure.

YOJANNA: I'm excited and you know, so Dr. Deneca Winfrey Avant, you will be taking over as interim, this coming year. And, and she and I have been working together along with the team as well to talk about all the changes in in the, you know, in the center, and you know, she will continue to work and collaborate with, with all the partners to continue to move this forward, right. So, we have established the first face of the Center, right? As I mentioned, the online scholarly teaching unit, and then it's starting to build the, that, third are formalized, I guess, a little bit better, more the career advancement, the scholarship, in partnership with us. So, you know that that's another change coming up. But the good thing is, I'm still going to be here.

JIM: We and we hope you will be back.

YOJANNA: Absolutely. And I will be sending my faculty also, right? And, and encouraging them to attend. Yes.

AONDOVER: Jim, I don't know if, if I can chip in one more word. I'm really going to miss Yojanna at the Provost Office. She has been a pleasure to work with, as I said before, an out of the box thinker, absolutely boundless energy. But I'm delighted because I know the Department of Special Education is gaining an experienced and a visionary leader. And

she'll continue to be here. So, I hope I continue to, to, to work with her in that sense. But as you mentioned, we will have a new doctor, Dr. Deneca Winfrey Avant taking over. And as you've heard from all the different collaborations and entities and offices that the Center is already working with, this is an institutional transformation, and that transformation is going to continue. We're going to continue to build on a solid foundation that Joanna has laid, and we will work with those different entities and these plans because they were articulated as part of our priorities in the academic affairs retreat. We feel- we expect to continue to be responsive and supportive to our faculty. And so, I would say the best is yet to come. And I'm looking forward to what, what the Center can be. I think it's, it's a very exciting time to be at ISU, and I'm excited.

JIM: By the way Yojanna, thank you so much.

YOJANNA: Thank you.

JIM: That's all the time we have for this episode of Let's Talk Teaching. Find out more about the changes coming to the Center for Integrated Professional Development, and go to our new website, ProDev, that's ProDev.IllinoisState.edu. For Dr. Aondover Tarhule, for Dr. Yojanna Cuenca-Carlino, and for all of my colleagues here at the Center, until we talk again, Happy Teaching!