

Two L&C Faculty Members Participate in Research Project Funded by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

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GODFREY - L&C faculty members Stephen Blount and Stephanie Fernandes have been selected as two of 23 participants in the Global Skills College Completion (GSCC) 2.0, a research and development project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

More than 150 educators applied internationally. Of those, 23 Faculty Fellows were chosen from 21 two- and four-year institutions in 19 states to participate in the one-of-a-kind professional training project. "The network of GSCC educators and college experts is committed to the idea that improving our nation's graduation rates starts with the professors who teach basic skills in mathematics and English," Marisa Klages, GSCC 2.0 project director, said. "We will help the faculty members in this cohort to examine and analyze their personal teaching patterns and guide them through the testing and adaptation of new tactics in order to create a more engaging, inspiring and effective classroom."

GSCC 2.0 will afford the second cohort of developmental writing and math educators the opportunity to discover their own teaching pattern and, by working online with peers and expert teachers, to improve their practice and the learning outcomes of their students. "More than anything, Global Skills has encouraged me to reflect more on whether my learning objectives are aligned with what is actually going on in the classroom," said Blount, who teaches English in L&C's Liberal Arts department. "To one degree or another, there's a conceptual gap between what we as teachers think we're teaching, what our students are actually learning, and what we're actually doing in the classroom. Global Skills is teaching me to be more aware of these differences and how I, as a teacher, might bridge these gaps and align my actual teaching with my teaching goals."

This year's project launched Aug. 6 when Blount and Fernandes, who teaches mathematics at L&C, met with the members of GSCC's second cohort, their coaches and the project staff at an intensive four-day retreat at the New Community College on West 40th Street in New York.

Each of the instructors were asked to look closely at what they are doing in the classroom and to figure out how they can do it better by using a set of themes that were developed by GSCC's first cohort, which was charged with gathering information about their most effective teaching practices.

The faculty members, a quarter of which are adjunct faculty, then returned to their campus to begin work. Each month, the full GSCC 2.0 faculty meets for two to three days in a cross-discipline online forum. Another way that instructors are able to examine their practices is through check-ins, which are weekly tasks given to students to see how they are progressing.

Each week, Blount and Fernandes post a detailed description of their classroom events online and tag portions of them with the themes created in the first cohort. Then, two colleagues within the content-specific GSCC teams provide feedback using appreciative inquiry to help Blount and Fernandes reflect deeper on their teaching practices.

"The weekly lesson posting has allowed me to reflect deeper on my teaching techniques and closely examine the daily classroom activities," Fernandes said. "The in-depth awareness and discussions of these activities will hopefully lead to a more purpose-

driven instruction. It has been intriguing to see my personal teaching patterns, and I look forward to analyzing the data and using the analysis to improve the classroom experience for my students."

Six times during the yearlong training period, each faculty member will be videotaped in the classroom while their fellow participants observe his or her teaching practices. In addition, four faculty members from the first cohort will serve as coaches.

Those wanting more information about GSCC 2.0 can visit www.globalskillscc.org.

For more information about Lewis and Clark, visit www.lc.edu.

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Photo: Stephen Blount, faculty in Lewis and Clark Community College's Liberal Arts department, and Stephanie Fernandes, L&C mathematics faculty member, have been selected as two of 23 participants in the Global Skills College Completion 2.0. Photo by S. Paige Allen

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