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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Iowa Community Colleges Collaborate to Train Faculty

If there is one positive that has come out of COVID-19, it is that higher education has had to grow and evolve quicker than ever before to meet the demands of small group and virtual learning brought on by the pandemic. In an effort to ensure that Community College faculty have the knowledge and tools needed to best educate students regardless of face-to-face or virtual instruction, the Iowa Association of Community College Trustees (IACCT) and the 15 Iowa Community College Districts worked together to establish the Iowa Faculty Development Consortium.

The Consortium, funded by a Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund Component 2 Grant, will establish an online database of professional development courses and events that all Community College faculty can access to supplement their instructional methods. The database will include virtual modules that can be downloaded by a faculty member and watched at any time as well as live courses and events that will allow faculty from across the state to participate in discussions regarding best practices and innovative ideas for engaging students across all methods of instruction.

"Collaboration is more important now than ever," said Emily Shields, IACCT Executive Director. "This consortium will allow us to better support Iowa's hard-working Community College educators."

Sarah Dias, Senior Instructional Designer at Indian Hills Community College, will serve as the grant director and IACCT will host the online database on their website that is accessible to all Iowa Community Colleges. The \$275,000 grant hopes to serve more than 3,150 Iowa Community College faculty members over a 17-month period. Representatives from all 15 Iowa Community College Districts will work together to define course topics, create content and identify speakers for live events. Courses included in the online directory will be designed to address best practices for adjunct and full-time faculty teaching credit, non-credit, concurrent enrollment, and adult literacy courses. Possible course topics include: engaging students remotely, utilizing open educational resources (OER), supporting students virtually,

best practices for virtually teaching students with disabilities, effective online delivery, and many more.

“The Chief Academic Officers at all Iowa Community Colleges are excited for the opportunity to leverage professional development resources and expertise from faculty throughout the state,” said Dr. Jill Budde, Indian Hills Community College Vice President of Teaching & Learning. “We know that providing faculty the opportunity to engage in discussions and glean knowledge from each other will only improve teaching strategies and ultimately benefit Iowa Community College students. We are thankful for the GEER 2 Grant to allow us to establish the Iowa Faculty Development Consortium.”

Watch iacct.com for updates on this ongoing initiative.