



Office of
Teaching & Learning

2025 - 2028

STRATEGIC PLAN

Celebrating 25 years in 2024, the Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) at the University of Denver (DU) serves as the central hub for faculty development across disciplines and modalities. In the next three years we will be striving toward three strategic priorities:
1) Teaching effectiveness, 2) Belonging, & 3) Adaptability.

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Executive Summary

Celebrating 25 years in 2024, the Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) at the University of Denver (DU) serves as the central hub for faculty development across disciplines and modalities. Positioned under Faculty Affairs in the Office of the Provost, OTL supports inclusive, evidence-based teaching practices aligned with DU's strategic imperatives from Impact 2025.

Mission

The OTL's mission is to support faculty in advancing transformative, inclusive, and impactful teaching and learning to fulfill DU's educational promise. This mission was revised through a collaborative process beginning in 2021 and approved in 2022.

Faculty Learning Outcomes (FLOs)

Five categories of FLOs guide OTL's programming:

- Community: Fostering belonging and leadership.
- Teacher Scholar: Advancing scholarly teaching and student learning.
- Course Design: Promoting intentional, inclusive, and tech-integrated course development.
- Inclusive Excellence: Addressing bias and promoting identity-affirming practices.
- Assessment: Creating measurable outcomes and using data for improvement.

Strategic Goals (2025–2028)

Goal 1: Teaching Effectiveness

Empower faculty to engage students through inclusive, reflective, and evidence-informed teaching.

- Amplify teaching narratives and showcase effective practices.
- Embed reflection and documentation in professional development.
- Use LMS data to inform course design.
- Contribute to institutional efforts like APT revisions.

Goal 2: Belonging and Connectedness

Build a learning community that fosters faculty morale and inclusion.

- Expand interdisciplinary engagement through FLCs and CoPs.
- Create identity-affirming spaces and storytelling opportunities.
- Promote inclusive learning environments and responsive assessment.

Goal 3: Adaptability

Equip faculty to navigate change confidently and creatively.

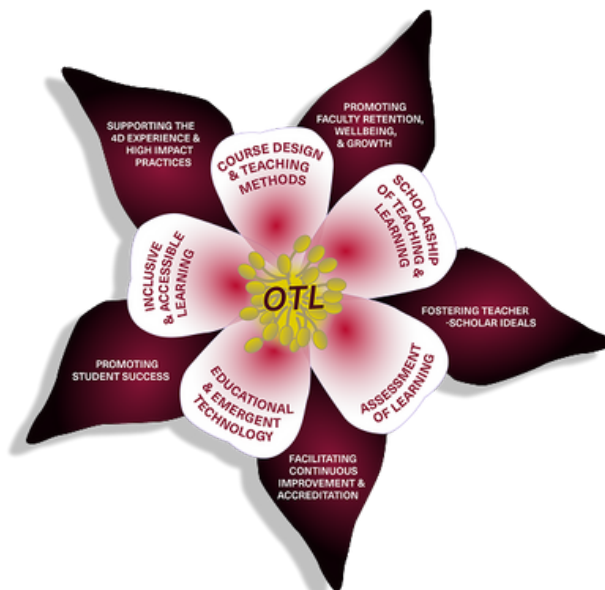
- Integrate adaptability into all programming.
- Normalize experimentation and reflective growth.
- Strengthen institutional agility through partnerships and internal expertise.

Overview

Originally called the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Office for Teaching and Learning began at DU in 1999 and celebrated its 25th anniversary in April 2024.

The OTL is housed within the Office of the Provost under Faculty Affairs and serves as the central hub of teaching and learning expertise, and provides professional development for faculty of all series and ranks across campus. Our suite of services and programs supports growth in the domains of course design, facilitation, inclusive teaching, teaching with technology, implementing high-impact practices, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, assessment, Universal Design for Learning and accessibility in the classroom.

THE MISSION OF THE OFFICE OF
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SUPPORT FACULTY IN THE
ADVANCEMENT OF TRANSFORMATIVE,
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DISCIPLINES AND MODALITIES TO
ACTUALIZE DU'S EDUCATIONAL
PROMISE TO ALL STUDENTS.



The work of the Office of Teaching and Learning is aligned with the strategic imperatives distilled from Impact 2025.

One: Ensure a bold, sustainable future for the next generation through our financial, reputational, and operational practices.

The OTL supports the development and retention of faculty, equipping them to engage in cutting edge educational practices.

Two: Create a unique global, holistic, '4D' student experience.

Any curricular innovation should include robust faculty development. Our office supports faculty as they innovate in the classroom to deliver the 4D experience through High Impact Practices such as the use of ePortfolios.

Three: Cultivate an exceptionally diverse, inclusive, equitable and welcoming community.

DU's commitment to DEI efforts is embedded in many areas of the university. The OTL is unique in that our programming supports changes to practice that lead to more inclusive classrooms.

Four: Define and model a global, engaged research university.

The OTL facilitates DU's commitment to the teacher-scholar model by cultivating a culture of life-long learning and the practice of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

Five: Ensure academic excellence with a signature portfolio of academic program and a relentless pursuit of quality.

The OTL is a critical partner for excellence in the university classroom regardless of modality.

Mission

Beginning in 2021, the Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) initiated a reflective and collaborative process to revise its mission and define Faculty Learning Outcomes (FLOs). The journey began with Appreciative Inquiry interviews involving key stakeholders ("Friends of the OTL"), which surfaced themes of community, support, empathy, and a desire for deeper faculty engagement and visibility.

The revised mission was crafted using Taking Flight (Cruz, Parker, Smentkowski, & Smitherman, 2020) as a conceptual guide along with DU Impact 2025. The mission was reviewed and approved by the Faculty Advisory Board and published online in 2022.

Faculty Learning Outcomes (FLOs)

Through a series of retreats and mini-retreats in 2022 and 2023, the team identified five categories of FLOs, each aligned with the mission and containing 2–4 specific outcomes. The Faculty Learning Outcome Assessment Framework (Hurney et al., 2016) was used to structure outcome development.

Faculty will make progress toward:	
Community	• Developing a sense of community and belonging with colleagues • Becoming effective teaching and learning leaders and change agents at DU
Teacher-Scholar	• Engaging with a community of teacher-scholars, contributing to the culture of scholarship of teaching and learning at DU, and serving as teacher-scholar advocates in their unit • Exploration in advancing new ways of understanding and evaluating student learning • Transforming and integrating scholarly teaching, subject matter expertise and research, into the systematic inquiry and application of scholarship of teaching and learning
Course Design	• Intentionally design a course in which all of the components (outcomes, assessments, and activities) align with each other to result in important and lasting learning for students. • Intentionally choose and effectively utilize Canvas, e-portfolios, and other ed-tech tools • Implement teaching practices that promote student learning and engagement. • Design courses that reflect key principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and inclusive pedagogies.
Inclusive Excellence	• Recognizing assumptions, stereotypes, and biases in the learning environment as a result of reflexive practices and student feedback. • Adapting course content, activities, and assessments during the academic term to be responsive and accessible to all student needs. • Facilitating inclusive opportunities for the expression of cultural and social identities.
Assessment	• Create clear, specific, measurable and transparent learning outcomes. • Evaluate and use assessment data for decision making.

During the 2023–2024 academic year, the OTL prioritized a subset of these outcomes for strategic focus, forming an assessment subcommittee to refine, measure, and report on progress. Their findings were shared at the 2025 summer retreat, marking a key milestone in aligning the OTL's programming with its mission and values.

Strategic Planning & Goals

The 2025 retreat focused on reviewing the past year's assessment findings, completing a SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) analysis, and consideration of DU's strategic imperatives. These data sources along with a consideration of current university-level teaching and learning environment, led to the development of three goals, each with 3-4 objectives.

GOAL 1. *Promote a culture where faculty are empowered to be **effective teachers** who engage students in accessible, inclusive, collaborative, and reflective learning experiences.*

- 1.1 Amplify evidence of teaching effectiveness across the university by sharing faculty narratives, showcasing examples of effective teaching, and creating opportunities for reflection and dialogue through OTL programming and events.
- 1.2 Create opportunities for faculty to develop deliverables that highlight effective teaching by embedding reflection, documentation, and evidence-building into OTL courses, workshops, and micro-credential pathways.
- 1.3 Leverage Canvas and course design consultations to improve teaching effectiveness by using insights from LMS data to inform programming and support faculty in aligning course design with inclusive, student-centered practices.
- 1.4 Engage the university in conversations about evidence-informed approaches to teaching effectiveness by contributing to institutional efforts—such as APT revisions and strategic planning—that define, support, and reward excellent teaching.

Goal 2. *Advance a learning community where faculty experience a strong sense of **belonging and connectedness**, by building a network of meaningful learning relationships. Promote improved morale and feelings of inclusion through intentional programming and relational infrastructure.*

- 2.1 Build networks of learning relationships by providing and expanding opportunities for faculty engagement in interdisciplinary programs, such as Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs) and Communities of Practice (CoPs) and facilitating cross-campus collaborations with campus partners.
- 2.2 Provide inclusive, identity-affirming spaces by facilitating reflective practice and story-sharing sessions that support identity-based faculty groups, expanding access to professional development, and hosting faculty celebrations to showcase their commitment.
- 2.3 Foster inclusive and accessible learning environments by integrating teaching practices that promote inclusive learning and become skilled at implementing responsive and accessible assessment practices.

Goal 3. *Develop capacity for **adaptability** by helping faculty embrace experimentation in response to ongoing change. The OTL strives to equip faculty to navigate emerging technologies, changing student needs, and shifting educational landscapes. This goal aims to prepare faculty to respond confidently and creatively to change, ensuring resilient and inclusive teaching practices.*

- 3.1 Highlight adaptability as a core theme across faculty development programs by integrating adaptability into the design, facilitation, and assessment of OTL programming, including workshops, institutes, and learning communities, with a focus on emerging technologies, inclusive practices, and pedagogical resilience.
- 3.2 Empower faculty to experiment, reflect, and grow through change by creating opportunities to explore new tools and strategies, share stories of adaptation, and engage in reflective practice—normalizing experimentation and learning from failure.
- 3.3 Strengthen institutional and organizational capacity for agile teaching by building internal expertise and cultivating cross-campus partnerships to ensure the OTL remains responsive to evolving needs, while facilitating collaborations that help faculty navigate change and align with broader institutional priorities.

GOAL 1

Promote a culture where faculty are empowered to be effective teachers who engage students in accessible, inclusive, collaborative, and reflective learning experiences.

What do we mean by teaching effectiveness?

At the University of Denver, teaching effectiveness is not a fixed standard but a dynamic and diverse expression of our shared commitment to student learning. It reflects the teacher-scholar model, where disciplinary expertise and evidence-based pedagogical practices converge to support diverse learners in achieving meaningful academic outcomes. Faculty design courses with clear learning goals, accessible syllabi and materials, aligned assessments, and intentional instructional strategies that are responsive to disciplinary norms. Instructional technology is leveraged to create coherent and engaging learning experiences.

Teaching effectiveness at DU also embraces equity and Universal Design for Learning, ensuring all learners feel seen, supported, and empowered. Across disciplines, faculty apply inclusive principles in ways that reflect the unique demands of their fields. They help students grow within their disciplinary context through consistent, helpful, and timely feedback that supports academic development and fosters deeper engagement.

Reflective practice is central to teaching effectiveness. Faculty refine their teaching through student input, peer engagement, and professional development. Their commitment is evident not only in classroom practices but also in contributions to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) and active engagement in institutional initiatives that promote teaching and learning effectiveness.

What is the need in this area?

The University of Denver stands at a pivotal moment to reaffirm and expand its commitment to teaching effectiveness as a core expression of the teacher-scholar model. Nationally, higher education faces growing scrutiny over its value and relevance, fueled by rising costs, shifting public trust, and increasing demands for career-aligned learning. Our recent R1 designation brings both pride and responsibility, raising important questions about how teaching will be supported and recognized alongside research.

The current efforts to revise Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure (APT) guidelines offers a timely opportunity to focus on how teaching is defined, documented, and rewarded. This moment is further shaped by the university's strategic initiatives which emphasize holistic student development, public good, and faculty engagement.

As we prepare for the 2030 Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accreditation review, DU must demonstrate a clear and sustained commitment to inclusive, reflective, and collaborative teaching. By investing in faculty development, amplifying teaching narratives, and aligning institutional practices with evolving student needs, DU can lead with integrity and innovation, ensuring that teaching remains central to our mission and impact.

What has already been done in this area?

The Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) has led a wide range of initiatives to support teaching effectiveness at DU, grounded in inclusive, reflective, and evidence-based practices. Signature offerings such as the Course Design Institute, and micro-credential programs like Teaching for Inclusion and Equity, Teaching and Learning Online, Foundations of Teaching, and Adjunct Teaching Excellence. OTL's guidance on tools like Canvas and Digication helps faculty design accessible, engaging, and integrative learning experiences. OTL has also launched innovative programming such as Teaching with AI, the UDL Your Course Series, and short courses that promote inclusive course design and responsiveness to student needs.

In addition to its core programming, OTL has collaborated across the university to advance institutional efforts that align with DU's teacher-scholar model. The Neurodiversity Institute, developed in partnership with the Learning Effectiveness Program, supports faculty in creating learning environments that affirm neurodiverse students. The Departmental Action Teams (DATs) initiative has helped academic units examine and revise their teaching evaluation practices in alignment with the Teaching Quality Framework. Lastly, OTL also contributes to the Provost Conference Series, which brings together faculty, staff, and students to explore timely and transformative themes in teaching and learning—such as Universal Design for Learning, generative AI, and inclusive assessment.

GOAL 2

Advance a learning community where faculty experience a strong sense of belonging and connectedness, by building a network of meaningful learning relationships. Promote improved morale and feelings of inclusion through intentional programming and relational infrastructure.

What do we mean by belonging?

Our work is grounded in the belief that we all learn more effectively when we learn together, and that the academic community thrives when its people are connected and supported. We cultivate a culture of belonging by building networks of learning relationships, fostering inclusive and accessible environments, and making visible the collaborative work that strengthens the vibrant teaching and learning community. At the University of Denver, belonging refers to our commitment to creating a relational culture where all its constituents – faculty, staff, students, administrators, and community partners – feel seen, supported, and valued; and diverse identities are affirmed and included. Through these connections, community members can share their stories, build trust, and engage in reflective practice. These connections enable the co-creation of a community where everyone contributes to and benefits from its shared growth. It is through collaborative learning that supports innovation and excellence in teaching by creating environments where faculty feel safe to experiment, reflect, and grow.

What is the need in this area?

It is our belief that belonging is a strategic necessity for the vitality of University of Denver's teaching and learning ecosystem. Fostering belonging at the University of Denver is essential to cultivating a thriving, inclusive academic community where faculty can flourish. National research data, such as that of COACHE survey, as well as internal data, indicate that minoritized faculty often experience lower levels of belonging, which contributes to higher turnover, diminished morale, and weaker institutional commitment. At DU, there is a clear need to provide opportunities for faculty to engage in programs that foster sustained relationships across campus units.

Fostering belonging is both a moral and educational imperative – when faculty feel connected and supported, they are more likely to engage in high-impact, inclusive, and reflective teaching that benefits the entire DU community. Therefore, it is crucial that faculty and staff are supported in collaborative, adaptive learning communities that promote shared expertise and innovation. Belonging is more than fostering a sense of connection; it is aligning with DU's broader goals of inclusive excellence and student success, thereby enhancing the university's ability to retain talent, foster innovation, and build a culture of shared purpose.

What has already been done in this area?

The OTL has laid a strong foundation for fostering belonging through a comprehensive suite of programs, resources, and relational practices. Central to this work are Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs) and Communities of Practice (CoPs), which cultivate long-term, cross-disciplinary relationships among faculty. The OTL also used a cohort model to promote integrative, reflective learning via the ePortfolio Innovations Circle (ePIC).

In addition to structured programming, the OTL offers personalized support through consultations and drop-in sessions—both in-person and virtual—creating ongoing opportunities for connection and growth. These efforts are amplified through storytelling and visibility initiatives, including faculty showcases, testimonials, and an enhanced web presence. Collectively, these initiatives have contributed to the development of a network of learning relationships that extends across campus and beyond.

GOAL 3

Develop capacity for adaptability by helping faculty embrace experimentation in response to ongoing change. The OTL strives to equip faculty to navigate emerging technologies, changing student needs, and shifting educational landscapes. This goal aims to prepare faculty to respond confidently and creatively to change, ensuring resilient and inclusive teaching practices

What do we mean by adaptability?

Adaptability is the ability to respond effectively to change, whether technological, pedagogical, or in response to threats to higher education. We want to empower faculty to see themselves as learners, open to change, and less fearful of failure.

As higher education continues to evolve, it will require a willingness to adjust our courses, assignments, assessments, materials, and modalities. Faculty will be challenged to try new approaches, tools, and strategies, even when outcomes are uncertain. Faculty development programs that create capacity to adjust quickly and confidently to internal and external shifts in the teaching and learning environment will cultivate a mindset of being nimble and responsive to changing student needs, institutional priorities, and broader societal trends.

What is the need in this area?

The higher education landscape is rapidly evolving and has changed at an accelerated pace in recent history. For example, AI and emerging technologies are disrupting traditional teaching models, accessibility needs and accommodation requirements are expanding, and diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts face increasing political and legal challenges.

The rapid rate of change has left many university faculty feeling exhausted, burned out, and frustrated over the constant need for revision of course activities and materials to keep pace with cascading challenges to higher education. Rather than constantly recreating the wheel, faculty must be equipped to keep pace and nimbly adapt to a multitude of changes, in addition to leading through these changes.

The changing educational environment necessitates continual growth and development for faculty that can be facilitated by teaching and learning centers. As an office, the OTL must remain responsive, committing to ongoing development of our internal expertise and creating space for faculty to learn, experiment, and adapt. This work is essential to maintaining high-quality, inclusive, and future-ready education.

What has already been done in this area?

The Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) has a strong track record of responding proactively to change and supporting faculty through evolving educational landscapes. Recent high-profile examples include the shift to online teaching during the pandemic and response to generative AI in the classroom.

The OTL played a central role in supporting faculty during the rapid shift to online learning during COVID-19, offering just-in-time training, consultations, and resources. We were able to facilitate DU in reaching the goal of 100% of all spring 2020 courses being published in Canvas.

As generative AI tools emerged, OTL launched timely programming, including workshops, webinars, series, campus-wide conversations, Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs), and Communities of Practice (CoPs), to help faculty explore pedagogical implications and experiment with new technologies.

The OTL engages in continual, data-driven improvement through biennial needs assessment surveys to understand changing faculty development needs. We have made changes to topics and modalities of offerings, in addition to adjustments in hours and staff availability to ensure we are meeting faculty needs.

This foundation positions OTL to lead the next phase of adaptability work by deepening its internal expertise, expanding cross-campus collaborations, and embedding adaptability into all aspects of faculty development.

Key Performance Indicators

Goal 1: Teaching Effectiveness

Objectives	Indicators	Timeline
Amplify evidence of teaching effectiveness across the university by sharing faculty narratives, showcasing examples of effective teaching, and creating opportunities for reflection and dialogue through OTL programming and events.	• Examples of effective teaching practices shared with university community • Increased opportunities for faculty to share their effective teaching practices with others.	Ongoing (2025-2028)
Create opportunities for faculty to develop deliverables that highlight effective teaching by embedding reflection, documentation, and evidence-building into OTL courses, workshops, and micro-credential pathways.	• Engagement in OTL events such as CDI, NDI, Foundations of Teaching course, or other OTL programming. • Collection of deliverables regarding effective teaching that can be shared.	• Measured annually • Collected annually
Leverage Canvas and course design consultations to improve teaching effectiveness by using insights from LMS data to inform programming and support faculty in aligning course design with inclusive, student-centered practices.	• Increased use of Canvas analytics dashboard to inform effective teaching practices & development of programs based on dashboard findings. • Engagement in Canvas Academy by individuals and department/programs.	• Beginning 2025-2026 • Measured annually
Engage the university in conversations about evidence-informed approaches to teaching effectiveness by contributing to institutional efforts—such as APT revisions and strategic planning—that define, support, and reward excellent teaching.	• Inclusion of OTL in APT committee discussions • Development of Teaching Effectiveness white paper	• Beginning 2025 • By 2028

Key Performance Indicators

Goal 2: Belonging & Connectedness

Objectives	Indicators	Timeline
Build networks of learning relationships by providing and expanding opportunities for faculty engagement in interdisciplinary programs, such as Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs) and Communities of Practice (CoPs) and facilitating cross-campus collaborations with campus partners.	- Attendance data from FLCs and CoPs - Faculty feedback from program evaluations indicating feelings of belonging	- Measured and collected annually - Collected following programs & biennial needs assessment survey 2026, 2028
Provide inclusive, identity-affirming spaces by facilitating reflective practice and story-sharing sessions that support identity-based faculty groups, expanding access to professional development, and hosting faculty celebrations to showcase their commitment.	- Attendance data from related programs - Faculty feedback from program evaluations indicating feelings of belonging	- Measured annually - Collected following program completion
Foster inclusive and accessible learning environments by integrating teaching practices that promote inclusive learning and become skilled at implementing responsive and accessible assessment practices.	- Collection of deliverables regarding inclusive teaching that can be shared - Student feedback from Student-Faculty Partnerships	- Collected annually - Collected following program completion

Key Performance Indicators

Goal 3: Adaptability

Objectives	Indicators	Timeline
Embed adaptability as a core theme across faculty development programs. Integrate adaptability into the design, facilitation, and assessment of OTL programming, including workshops, institutes, and learning communities, with a focus on emerging technologies, inclusive practices, and pedagogical resilience.	• Number of programs with adaptability as a theme • Inclusion of adaptability in program assessments • Participant feedback and post-program surveys	• Reported annually • Beginning 2025-26 • Collected following program completion
Empower faculty to experiment, reflect, and grow through change. Support faculty in developing a growth mindset by creating opportunities to explore new tools and strategies, share stories of adaptation, and engage in reflective practice—normalizing experimentation and learning from failure.	• Participation in FLCs, CoPs, and storytelling initiatives • Qualitative feedback from faculty reflections • Number of faculty-led sessions or showcases on experimentation	• Measured annually • Collected following program completion • Reported annually
Strengthen institutional and organizational capacity for agile teaching. Build internal expertise and cross-campus partnerships to ensure the OTL remains responsive to evolving needs, while facilitating collaborations that help faculty navigate change and align with broader institutional priorities.	• Number of cross-unit collaborations (e.g., with IT, DCSE, Accessibility) • Internal PD sessions completed by OTL staff • Biennial adaptability needs assessment survey results	• Reported annually • Reported annually • 2026, 2028