

(RE)ENVISIONING A UNIVERSITY TEACHING CENTER

TO MEET THE NEEDS OF NEW LEARNERS AND ONLINE LEARNERS WITH A FOCUS ON EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted higher education and thrust online learning to the forefront. Students have come to expect the flexibility that online learning offers, and instructors have become more proficient in online teaching. Iowa State University leveraged this disruption to create a central unit to support all course modalities, including online offerings, across the institution. Previously some, but not all, colleges provided varying levels of support for online courses and degree programs.

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NEW STRUCTURE

Built upon existing strength of the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching.

Four units developed to support the continuum of teaching formats (face-to-face to online).



Figure 1

The reorganization built on the existing strength and outstanding reputation of the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching by increasing their capacity (Figure 1).

It was informed by a thorough review of distance education at ISU over a 24-month period. This included input from a working group, an institutional taskforce, the institution's external governing body, and external consultants.

The center grew from a staff of 15 to a staff of 45 to meet these increased responsibilities. The (Re)envisioned teaching center launched in January 2023.

The reorganization resulted in numerous changes to existing business processes, structure, and performance metrics. In partnership with University Human Resources, the CELT leadership team developed an extensive employee handbook that provides consistent onboarding, transparency in staff policies and procedures, and many examples to help employees succeed.

External to the unit, strategic collaborations, and interactions with administrators, faculty, staff, and students spanning six academic colleges, and student affairs units has helped enable forward progress.