

2025-2026 Youngstown State University INSTITUTE FOR TEACHING & LEARNING Annual Report

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Executive Summary

During the 2025-2026 academic year, ITL:

- **Engaged Campus Stakeholders:** Reached a total headcount of 718 participants, with over 100 faculty and staff members engaging for the first time.
- **Led Impactful AI Training Events:** Hosted the largest event in ITL history (124 participants) and facilitated over 700 hours of AI-related training.
- **Supported Faculty-Led Initiatives:** Partnered with 9 faculty members to lead workshops and book groups.
- **Streamlined Continuous Improvement Processes:** Maintained 80%+ assessment report submission rates and reduced the Student Course Feedback Survey to 10 questions.
- **Planned for Future Growth:** Hired a full-time Assistant Director of Faculty Development.



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Vision, Mission, and Values

VISION: The Institute for Teaching and Learning will be a catalyst towards a dynamic, learning-centered environment focused on teaching excellence in service of our core purpose – student learning.

MISSION: The Institute for Teaching and Learning leverages data and best practice to guide innovative, inclusive, and integrative teaching. ITL elevates reflective practice and a focus on student learning towards student success.

VALUES: The Institute for Teaching and Learning values the centrality of student success, intentional collaborations, advocacy for systemic support of teaching and learning, equity and inclusion, continuous improvement and lifelong learning, and transparency.

Institute Staff and Key Contributors

Hillary Fuhrman, Assistant Provost, Teaching & Learning

Matt Dieter, Assistant Director, Faculty Development

Alison Kaufman, Assistant Director, Assessment

Stephanie Richardson, Coordinator, Continuous Improvement

2025-26 STUDENT STAFF: **Lisa Fitzgerald Green**, Graduate Assistant Intern

2025-26 YSU PROGRAMMING PARTNERS: **Laura Beadling** (English & World Languages), **Rosalyn Donaldson** (IT Training Services), **Erin Driscoll** (Student Affairs), **Amanda Fehlbaum** (Humanities & Social Sciences) **Sara Fugett** (Career Exploration & Development), **Sarah Gary** (Management & Marketing), **David Graham** (Student Success), **Mike Greco** (Academic Success Center), **Gina McGranahan** (Accessibility Services), **Francine Packard** (Student Counseling Services), **Joe Palardy** (Lariccia School of Accounting & Finance), **Nicole Pettitt** (English & World Languages), **Christina Saenger** (Williamson College of Business Administration), **Stephanie Smith** (Art), **Kristine Still** (Academic Affairs), **Alan Tomhave** (Beeghly College of Liberal Arts, Social Sciences & Education), **Sev Van slambrouck** (Research Services), **Cynthia Vigliotti** (English & World Languages), **Mark Vopat** (Humanities & Social Sciences), **Cary Wecht** (Strategic Communication & Marketing), **Siqing Wei** (Rayen School of Engineering)

2025-26 ACADEMIC SENATE TEACHING & LEARNING COMMITTEE: **Joe Alberti** (YSU Online), **Snjezana Balaz** (Physics, Astronomy, Geological, & Environmental Sciences), **Amy Fluker** (Humanities & Social Sciences), **Hillary Fuhrman** (ITL), **Jessi Hinz** (Management & Marketing), **Cryshanna Jackson Leftwich** (Humanities & Social Sciences), **Alison Kaufman** (ITL), **Monica Merrill** (Criminal Justice & Consumer Science), **Michelle Nelson** (Art), **Tomi Ovaska** (Lariccia School of Accounting & Finance), **Debra Wallace** (Nursing), **Cary Wecht** – Committee Chair (Strategic Communication & Marketing), **Sharyn Zembower** (IT Customer Services)

2025-26 ASSESSMENT COUNCIL: **Diana Awad Scrocco** (English & World Languages), **Hillary Fuhrman** (ITL), **Michael Greco** (Academic Success Center), **John Hazy** (Criminal Justice & Consumer Science), **Alison Kaufman** (ITL), **Robert Korenic** (School of Computer Science, Information, & Engineering Technology), **Melissa McKenney** (Financial Aid), **Ryan McNicholas** (Campus Recreation), **Stephanie Smith** (Art), **Xiaolou Yang** (Lariccia School of Accounting & Finance)

Strategic Alignment: Academic Distinction & Discovery of Knowledge

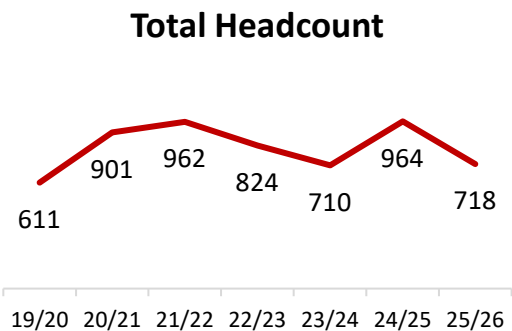
Highlighted ITL achievements in 2025-2026 aligned with institutional themes in the Plan for Academic Actions.

Implement a continuous, purposeful strategy to improve teaching, learning and any area identified for national research distinction.

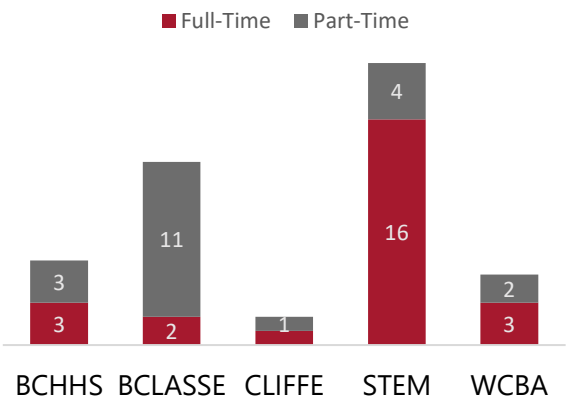
Highlighted Achievements

Despite having a vacant Faculty Development position for the entire academic year, ITL managed to still effectively program by partnering with campus stakeholders for programming and supporting external travel to conferences. More than **100** new faculty and staff engaged with ITL for the first time during 2025-2026, with a total headcount of **718** – while these participation numbers are slightly down from the previous year, ITL is particularly proud of a few achievements:

- **HOSTED** the largest faculty development event in ITL history, the YSU AI Conference on Teaching and Learning with **124** participants.
- **PARTNERED** with **seven** YSU Faculty Members to offer workshops for their colleagues and **two** YSU faculty members to lead book groups with their colleagues.
- **SUPPORTED** travel for **27** faculty to the NEXT Conference at University of Akron and **15** faculty to the Lilly Conference in Austin, Texas.



Count of First-Time Faculty Interactions 2025-26



Additionally, a significant ITL project over the past year was the **Faculty Writing Fellows**. This initiative was focused on the development of discipline-specific Writing 2 courses. The program, which grew out of participation in a Sensemaking Training provided through a Lumina Foundation grant directed by Elizabeth Wardle at Miami University, partnered English faculty with disciplinary faculty to improve writing instruction within specific fields. The program focused on developing ENGL 1551 Writing 2 courses in Art, STEM, and Criminal Justice, joining an already developed Engineering course.

Participants met weekly throughout Fall 2025, shared readings and resources, discussed writing pedagogy, reviewed assignments, and worked collaboratively on integrating writing more intentionally into disciplinary

curricula. Pilot courses for all four of the sections started in spring 2026, with significant outreach to advisors, deans, and departments to recruit students and promote enrollment.

Focus for 2026-2027

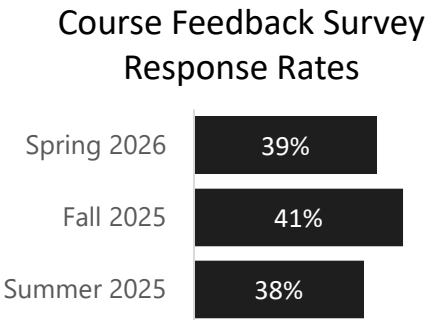
ITL is excited to announce the hiring of a full-time Assistant Director, Faculty Development. [Matt Dieter](#) started in June 2026 and brings decades of experience in education to YSU. Along with regular ITL programming, a key focus of Matt’s for the upcoming year will be the launch and support of the peer teaching review process. ITL is excited for the campus impact of an additional full time professional dedicated to faculty development!

Implement continuous and regular assessment of student learning outcomes and best teaching practices to ensure that every student has a fair and equal opportunity to succeed.

Highlighted Achievements

ITL values the centrality of student success, and the assessment of student learning and satisfaction remains critical to ITL’s programming. Over the past year, ITL has been a driving force in improving university wide continuous improvement processes.

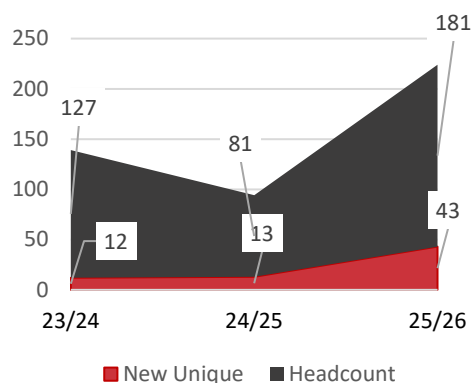
Updates to Course Feedback Tool: In Spring 2026, the [Student Course Feedback Survey](#) was reduced to 10 questions. Questions were chosen by the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee after reviewing analysis completed by faculty, Matt Lindberg. ITL anticipates this shortened tool driving a higher response rate and providing faculty with a broader range of student perspectives. ITL staff also worked within the Watermark system to streamline the reporting of results, to make it easier for faculty members to act based on student feedback.



Partnership with Student Success: ITL grew interactions with professional staff. Notably, in Summer 2025, ITL staff shared student survey data at the **Student Success Advising Summit** for 82 people, 15 of which engaged with ITL for the first time. ITL has continued to partner with the Division of Student Success to develop a plan for assessing the new advising model.

Strategic Data Collection: ITL administered the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in Spring 2026. To align with strategic priorities, the survey, typically only available to bachelor’s degree seeking students, was administered to an oversample of associate degree seeking students. Additionally, the [Career & Workforce Preparation Topical Module](#) was added to the survey.

ITL Interaction with Campus Staff Members



A more detailed summary of the assessment of student learning can be found in the [Assessment of Student Learning Summary](#) later in this report.

Focus for 2026-2027

ITL Staff continue to look for ways to optimize assessment and evaluation processes through various Watermark processes. In Summer 2026, ITL staff are working with a Watermark consultant to optimize reporting through Faculty Success. Additionally, in the 2026-27 academic year, co-curricular and academic programs will be reporting assessment updates through the new Watermark Planning and Self-Study tool.

Improve student, faculty, and staff access to advanced technologies, equipment, and facilities.

Highlighted Achievements

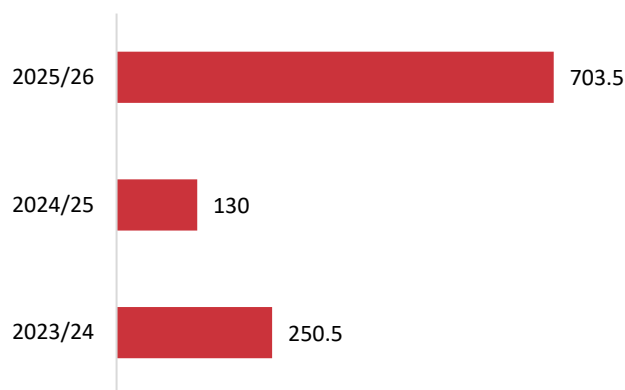
ITL continues to strategically partner with YSU Online, IT Training Services, and other campus stakeholders (via service on University Committees, such as the Academic Senate Technology Committee) to support the intersection of technology and pedagogy. Over the past academic year, ITL supported ITS and YSU Online in their Digital Accessibility Compliance efforts. Additionally, ITL led efforts to train faculty and staff on using AI in teaching and learning.

During the 2025-2026 academic year, ITL led or supported travel for **157** YSU faculty, staff, and administrators in over **700** training hours related to AI – through [faculty led book groups](#), [workshops](#), [a campus-hosted conference](#), and travel to both [Akron](#) and [Austin](#).

Focus for 2026-2027

ITL leadership continues to serve on university committees, as well as meet regularly as a part of the Academic Continuity Team, a group made up of the leaders of ITL, IT Training Services, and YSU Online, to coordinate relevant training initiatives related to technology-based learning. ITL anticipates continued programming related to AI in Teaching and Learning, and support for faculty in digital accessibility.

Total AI Training Hours



Programming Highlights

With a vacant faculty development staff position, ITL still managed to program in a meaningful way, focusing on partnerships with faculty stakeholders and supporting travel opportunities for faculty.

Lilly Conference on College and University Teaching

In collaboration with college and department funds, ITL co-sponsored 15 faculty to attend the nationally recognized Lilly Conference on College and University Teaching—a dynamic forum where educators explore innovative, research-driven strategies to elevate student learning and advance scholarly teaching. The conference was held in Austin, Texas in May 2026.

Faculty participants included: **Courtney Borruso** (WCBA), **Louise Campbell** (WCBA), **Dawna Cerney** (BCLASSE), **Jeff Coldren** (BCLASSE), **Cryshanna Jackson Leftwich** (BCLASSE), **Hailong Jiang** (STEM), **Farhana Mueez** (BCHHS), **Michelle Nelson** (CLIFFE), **Erica Neuman** (WCBA), **Alica Prieto** (STEM), **Sam Shannon** (STEM), **Andrea Snyder** (BCLASSE), **Meri Surdoval-Fetkovich** (BCHHS), **Zack White** (STEM), and **Jennifer Yensel** (BCLASSE)



Participants reflect on what they learned from attending the conference:



Start with learning outcomes, not the tool. ...Begin with what you want students to learn, then decide if and where AI fits.

One session explored the use of academic posters as a culminating project, offering an engaging alternative to traditional papers and presentations while helping students develop professional communication skills.

Grading "the human, not the homework": this is a framework for assessing student understanding instead of assignment submission.



NEXT (New Exploration in Teaching) Conference

In March 2026, ITL sponsored 29 university faculty and staff to attend the [NEXT Conference](#), hosted by the University of Akron. The theme of the conference was, "Designing for Authenticity: Assessment, AI, and the Future of Learning." Four YSU faculty - **Diana Awad Scrocco**, **Jay Gordon**, **Siqing Wei**, and **Courtney Poullas**, and two YSU staff – **Rachel Faerber-Ovaska** and **Stephanie Adams**, presented at the conference.

YSU Conference on AI in Teaching & Learning

On May 7, 2026, ITL in partnership with the AAC&U Conference Team (Hillary Fuhrman, Sebastian Giraldo, Joseph Palardy, Richard Rogers, Christina Saenger, and Mark Vopat) hosted 124 faculty and staff for the YSU Conference on AI in Teaching & Learning. **The largest professional development event in ITL's history!**

The conference featured 13 breakout sessions organized into 4 tracks: *AI Efficiencies*, *Co-Pilot*, *Integrity Perspectives*, and *AI Assignment Design* ([Conference Schedule](#)). Guest speaker, Adam Pryor, delivered the keynote address, *AI in the Classroom: Practical Strategies for Today’s Faculty*.



Participants reflect on what they learned from attending the conference:

“

It was interesting to learn how AI is used in various disciplines around YSU. There were a few practically useful techniques that I would like to incorporate in my own teaching.

I learned something from each presentation that I attended. The speakers were all well-versed and interesting.

There is little that we can do to prevent students from outsourcing their work to AI, but we can incorporate techniques that make them pause and consider if that is the best course of action.

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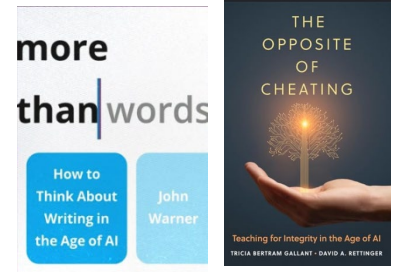
New Faculty Academy

Twenty-one new full-time faculty members participated in at least one session of the 2025-2026 New Faculty Academy, with **16** new faculty participating in multiple academy sessions. Monthly sessions invited guest speakers to share information with new faculty on topics critical to supporting their success in their new role. Monthly topics and guest speakers are listed below:

September	October	November	January	February	March
Focus on Accessibility with Rosalyn Donaldson	Supporting Students’ Mental Health with Francine Packard	Preparing for and Using Student Course Feedback with ITL Staff	Collaborative Student Engagement with Sarah Gary	Getting Involved with Student Organizations with Erin Driscoll	Research and Funding Resources with Sev Van slambrouck

Faculty Led Book Groups

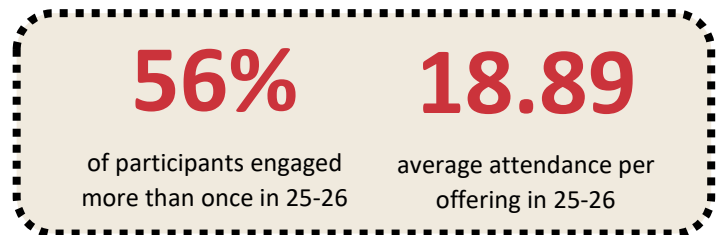
In Fall 2025, **Stephanie Smith** (Art) led a group of **11** faculty in reading and discussing [More Than Words: How to Think About Writing in the Age of AI](#). In Spring 2026, **Laura Beadling** (English & World Languages) led a group of **15** faculty in reading and discussing [The Opposite of Cheating: Teaching for Integrity in the Age of AI](#). This is the first time ITL book groups were led by YSU faculty members!



Faculty-Led Workshops

ITL focused this year on partnering with YSU faculty members to lead workshops. The following faculty members led their colleagues in professional development opportunities this past year:

- **Alan Tomhave** and **Mark Vopat**: Teaching Controversial Issues in the Age of SB1
- **Amanda Fehlbaum**: Introduction to Team Based Learning
- **Joeseeph Palardy**: Integrating AI Tools into Academic Research: A Hands-On Workshop
- **Nicole Pettitt** and **Cynthia Vigliotti**: Supporting International Students (three workshop series)
- **Siqing Wei**: Using CATME to Better Manage Teams



Additional ITL Programming (participants)

In addition to the programming highlighted above, ITL offered a variety of additional opportunities:

Assessment & Data Focused

- Completing Co-Curricular Assessment in Watermark (6)
- Student Affairs Annual Report in Watermark (9)
- Co-Curricular Assessment Working Group: Student Employee Assessment (9)
- Student Success Summit - First Year & Advising Data (82)
- Student Affairs Annual Report in Watermark (9)
- Lunch & Learn: Admissions, Registration, and Financial Support (4)
- Lunch & Learn: Advising, Goal Setting, and Classroom Experiences (7)
- Lunch & Learn: Experiences Outside the Classroom (9)

Faculty Development Focused

- Developing an Interactive Syllabus (10)
- Part Time Faculty Orientation (14/Summer, 6/Spring)
- Full Time Faculty Orientation (20)
- Tenure & Promotion Workshop (13/Summer, 23/Spring)
- YSU 1500 New Instructor Training: Generative AI to Support Teaching & Modeling Active Learning (14)
- YSU 1500 Returning Instructor Training: Modeling Active Learning (23)

Continuous Improvement Processes

Assessment of Student Learning Summary

Annual reporting on the assessment of student learning by both academic and co-curricular programs is an essential tool for evaluating student learning and identifying ways that ITL can provide targeted support, workshops, and resources for both faculty and staff that encourage student success. Both academic and co-curricular units continued to engage in the assessment of student learning, with submission rates remaining above 80% in 2025:

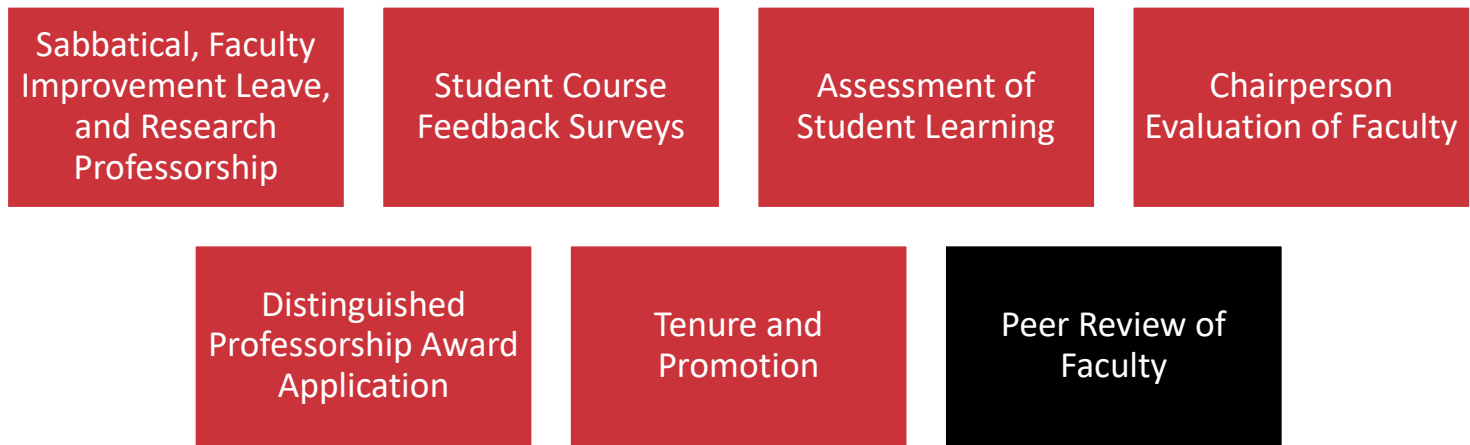
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Academic	59%	<i>Listening Tour</i>	80%	70%	77%	75%	79%	87%	84%
Co-Curricular	88%	71%	90%	75%	75%	86%	90%	91%	82%

Highlights from this past academic year:

- **LAUNCHED** the transition to Watermark Planning and Self-Study, with a successful pilot during the past academic year, and a full implementation coming for the upcoming academic year.
- **COLLABORATED** with assessment leaders across Ohio public institutions to discuss trends in assessment as well as updated Higher Learning Commission (HLC) criteria.
- **ADMINISTERED** the Spring 2026 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to first-year and senior students with a **21.4%** response rate, featuring targeted modules for career preparation.
- **PARTNERED** with Academic Success and Career Exploration staff to pilot a new evaluation tool capturing student learning outcomes within student employment.

Watermark Process Updates

With a growing number of Watermark processes being managed by ITL, staff have worked hard to improve processes and develop resources to support faculty, staff, and administrators. These Watermark processes are currently managed by ITL (in **red**), with an additional process being added this upcoming year (in **black**):



Highlights from this past academic year:

- **REVISED** *Faculty Activities Report* based on feedback from previous year's chairperson evaluation to more accurately reflect professional accomplishments in Faculty Success.
- **SURVEYED** faculty who recently completed the chairperson evaluation process. The feedback received helped identify faculty activity categories and fields that could be enhanced to better support reporting and evaluation needs.

Looking Forward to 2026-2027

Since 2019, the Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL) has served as a vital campus resource for faculty, staff, and students. Building on a successful first seven years of foundational programming, ITL will continue to expand impact on campus. In the upcoming academic year, ITL will maintain a commitment to professional development while focusing on the following initiatives:

Faculty Development & Support

- **Programming Growth:** With the addition of a full-time Assistant Director of Faculty Development, ITL will expand targeted programming and resources for both full-time and part-time faculty.
- **Peer Review Training:** In alignment with the [Advance Ohio Higher Education Act](#), ITL will lead the campus implementation of the new peer review process, providing comprehensive training and ongoing support for faculty.
- **Spring 2027 ITL Conference:** Building on the momentum and success of the [YSU AI Conference on Teaching and Learning](#), ITL is exploring the development of a new, one-day professional development conference to be hosted in May 2027.

Data Dissemination & Continuous Improvement Processes

- **NSSE Data Dissemination:** ITL will widely share National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data across campus. Efforts will focus on insights regarding academic advising, career preparation, and the associate-degree student experience to campus stakeholders.
- **Implementation of Planning & Self-Study:** ITL will continue to implement [Watermark Planning and Self Study](#) for academic and co-curricular assessment reporting. ITL will work with programs (including Associates and Certificate programs) to align student learning outcome assessment with other strategic priorities and institutional learning outcomes.
- **Watermark Optimization:** ITL staff will work with Watermark consultants to implement any suggestions to improve processes via various Watermark platforms.
- **Faculty Annual Evaluation:** ITL staff will work with campus stakeholders to redesign the faculty annual evaluation processes in alignment with the [Advance Ohio Higher Education Act](#).

