El Paso Community College’s Teachership Academy is a ten-month professional development program designed to provide faculty a cohort experience while focusing on Teaching and Learning and providing them the opportunity to implement what they have learned through an Action Research Project conducted in their classes as the culmination of the Academy experience. The goals of this Academy are to: 1) Enhance teaching skills for participants, 2) Enhance the learning of participants’ students, and 3) Prepare Academy Graduates to become Mentor teachers who serve to assist other faculty at the college with their instructional and developmental needs.

The Teachership Academy was initiated during the 2008-2009 academic year in order to provide Full-time and Adjunct faculty the opportunity for professional growth through a high caliber structured approach. The ten-month curriculum was researched by the founding Steering Committee members, all of which were faculty themselves, and has remained as a faculty-driven activity. Faculty is selected through an application process, including a Nomination from their respective Dean to ensure that they are aware of the applicants’ interest and can support them through the ten-month experience which might include providing substitutes to cover their classes on the afternoon of the third Thursday of each month when the Teachership Academy sessions are conducted. A cohort of 20-25 participants is accepted into the Academy each academic year with the Academy running from August to May. In this program, faculty participate in activities geared to enhancing their teaching skills, including learning new techniques to make their classes more interactive and thus making student success more likely in their courses.

As of May 2011, three cohorts of 20 Faculty have completed the Teachership Academy, with all participants completing an action research project. Given the cohort of 20 faculty per year and assuming that each graduate teaches between 2-5 classes (depending on their Full-time/Adjunct status) with an average of 30 students per class per semester, an average of 12,600 students have already been exposed to the new techniques and training since the inception of this program. The number of students benefitting by the teaching techniques provided by this Academy will grow exponentially and the results of this Academy experience promise to be far-reaching.

The Steering Committee is currently in the process of developing Phase II of this program that will start in fall 2012. Phase II will also be a ten-month program where faculty will be involved in additional teaching methodology sessions and will continue their Action Research Project in order to publish their findings in the Teachership Academy Chronicle created at El Paso Community College. Only Teachership Academy graduates from Phase I will be eligible to apply for Phase II. It is anticipated that Phase II will be available every other year while Phase I will be offered on an ongoing basis.

For more information about the Teachership Academy Program at El Paso Community College, please see the website at www.epcc.edu/teachershipacademy.