What is a FIG?

A FIG, or Faculty Interest Group, is an intentional group of people with a mutual interest in a particular aspect of teaching and learning, in particular using, adapting, or adopting High Impact Educational Practices (HIPs).** FIGs can also be used to explore promising new practices. FIGs are open to all instructors, full or part-time, as well as staff with a particular interest in the topic.

FIGs are intended to foster scholarly teaching and research, scholarship, and creative artistry (RSCA) around effective, evidence-based teaching practices to improve student outcomes and success at USM and beyond.

At USM, FIGs offer an opportunity for a collaborative approach to improving teaching as well as producing research, scholarship, and creative activity necessary for promotion and tenure. Other institutions have developed FIGs for similar purposes to good effect. To read more about how high impact practices effect student success, look at: Outcomes of High-Impact Educational Practices: A Literature Review By Brownell & Swaner, C.W. Post Campus of Long Island University. You can access the article via the following link.
http://www.diversityweb.org/DiversityDemocracy/vol12no2/brownell.cfm

Sample foci for FIGs include:

- Building community among students in the classroom or online
- Enhanced Technology in the Classroom (blended, flipped, clickers, etc.)
- Mentoring Students
- Redesigning a gateway course(s)
- Service-Learning
- Strengths-Based Education
- Undergraduate Research

**For more information on HIPs, visit: [http://usm.maine.edu/titleiii/high-impacteducational-practices](http://usm.maine.edu/titleiii/high-impacteducational-practices)
How does it work?
Each FIG has a faculty coordinator who takes responsibility for maintaining the Faculty Interest Group and intersection with High Impact Educational Practices (HIP) Committee, as well as working with appropriate university offices for support and assistance. FIGs are designed to create a structure where members can come together to share best practices, do research about their topic, support each other in practicing their methodology, assess the effect of the method upon student learning, and/or produce scholarship about the method.

Three FIGS will also be eligible for one of the High Impact Practices mini-grants

Resources to support FIGs include:
- $1000 additional compensation for ONE coordinator (if there are two coordinators, “adcomp” is split—i.e., $500 each)
- Modest resources to support convening of FIG meetings and resources to facilitate the work/philosophy proposed (up to $1000)
- BlackBoard site available; Adobe Connect Meeting room Available

Think it might be for you...? Here is what to do!
Please submit the following information in a 2-page (maximum) Word document via the Faculty Commons email address: USMfacultycommons@maine.edu.

Name(s)
Departments/programs/individuals involved in proposed FIG
Proposed FIG name
Description of FIG (purpose, structure, strategies, outcomes including types of participants, frequency of meetings, materials developed)
Description of how the FIG will enhance student learning, engagement and/or retention and any additional possible student outcomes
Additionally, please include a Proposed budget for resources (include projected costs for any relevant materials or services eg. food, equipment, space rentals, honoraria, etc.)
See website for more information on how to do this or email the address above

Proposals will be evaluated in relation to the following criteria:
1. Clear identification of proposed Faculty Interest Group with regard to
   a. Members (e.g., faculty, instructors, students, student success staff, research personnel)
   b. Purpose
   c. Possible/likely outcomes for students and faculty (e.g., student retention, collaborative student/faculty work, such as a paper, other qualitative and/or quantitative measures, publication or other scholarship for the group)
   d. Duration (e.g., one semester, one academic year)
   e. Budget/Resources needed (max $1000)
2. Clear rationale for how the FIG can enhance student learning, engagement, and/or retention and proposed meaning and impact for FIG members, students, and USM.
3. Clear description of proposed activities (e.g., structure for ongoing collaboration; strategies for sharing best practices, support group for practicing and adopting a new teaching approach; scholarly product support) and the budget to support the activities.
4. Interdisciplinary/interdepartmental approach.

Visit us online at: http://usm.maine.edu/facultycommons/faculty-interest-groups