

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT REPORT

AY 2024/2025

International University of Japan
Faculty Development Committee (FDC)
(Prepared by the Faculty Development Sub Committee (FDSC))
November 2025

Members of the Faculty Development Sub Committee AY 2024/2025

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- Xu, Chengwei, Assistant Professor, Graduate School of International Relations (GSIR)
- Chuang, Hong Wei, Associate Professor, Graduate School of International Management (GSIM)
- Crooks, Anthony, Professor, Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR)

We, the FDSC members, consciously implemented faculty development activities in AY 2024/2025 with the following priorities:

- (a) Improve teaching methods
 - (b) Deepening knowledge about students' mental and physical health

Table of Contents

Section A. Faculty Development Activity in AY 2024/2025	4
(a) Improving teaching methods	4
(b) Deepening knowledge about students' mental and physical health	9
(c) Other items.....	14
Conclusion.....	16
Challenges for Faculty Development Activities in the Next Academic Year	17
Section B. Summary of FDC and FDSC Meetings AY 2024/2025	19
Section C. IUJ FD Annual Plan AY 2025/2026	20

Section A. Faculty Development Activity in AY 2024/2025

(a) Improving teaching methods

FDSC held a seminar on “Improving Teaching Methods,” which is one of this year’s priority policy for Faculty Development (FD) activities. The overview and results of the seminar, as well as opinions and comments related to it, are summarized below.

I. Overview and Results of the FD Seminar

<Seminar 1>

Title: Sharing teaching method used by highly evaluated faculty members for **elective courses** in GSIR, GSIM and CLEAR.

Date: 2:40 PM-4:10 PM on Tuesday, December 3, 2024

Place: Classroom 205

Speakers: Prof. Xu (GSIR), Prof. Sheehan (GSIM), Prof. Crooks (CLEAR)

Contents:

Section I Presentations (20 minutes×3 (GSIR, GSIM, CLEAR))

How the presenters have improved their teaching methods and have conducted classes.

Section II Q&A and Discussion (30 minutes)

(Total: 90 minutes)

Number of Participants:

The number of participants on site was 10 (8 faculty members and 2 staff members including presenters).

<Seminar 2>

Title: Sharing teaching methods used by highly evaluated faculty members for **core courses** in GSIR and GSIM.

Date: 1:00 PM-2:00 PM on Wednesday, March 5, 2025

Place: Classroom 205

Speakers: Prof. Cooray (GSIR), Prof. Hirose (GSIM)

Contents:

Section I Presentations (20 minutes×2 (GSIR, GSIM))

Contents: How the presenters have improved their teaching methods and have conducted classes.

Section II Q&A and Discussion (20 minutes)

(Total: 60 minutes)

Number of Participants:

The number of participants on site was 11 (8 faculty members and 3 staff members including presenters).

<Seminar 3>

Title: Sharing tips for thesis / research report guidance methods from faculty members with a high evaluation for Advanced/Research Seminars in GSIR and GSIM

Date: 2:40 PM-3:40 PM on Friday, April 11, 2025

Place: Classroom 205

Speakers: Prof. Jung (GSIR), Prof. Chuang (GSIM)

Contents:

Section I Presentations (20 minutes×2 (GSIR, GSIM))

What the presenters are attentive to when guiding students in writing theses or research reports, and what initiatives the presenters are taking to improve their guidance.

Section II Q&A and Discussion (20 minutes)

(Total: 60 minutes)

Number of Participants:

The number of participants on site was 12 (9 faculty members and 3 staff members including presenters).

II. Comments and opinions from each subcommittee member of GSIR, GSIM, CLEAR regarding those

FD seminars

1. Summary of Learnings

GSIR:

Multiple seminars focus on different angles of teaching and learning. We especially learned from Prof Chuang about how to guide supervisees more effectively regarding research. There were four key learning points:

- First, clarity and structure are fundamental to helping students progress systematically through the research process. Each stage of the Advanced Seminar sequence has specific goals: formulating the main piece and research hypothesis in spring, collecting and analyzing data in fall, and producing the final manuscript in winter. Regular meetings—both one-on-one and in groups—ensure students remain focused and receive consistent direction.
- Second, maintaining research integrity and fair assessment is another core principle. Students are reminded of the importance of academic honesty, proper citation, and data privacy, as well as the need to avoid plagiarism. Assessment emphasizes logical reasoning and clear writing, with quality valued more highly than quantity.
- Third, timely feedback plays a crucial role in fostering student growth. Supervisors should respond to research questions within twenty-four hours and provide feedback that is both constructive and specific, helping students identify concrete steps for improvement. Finally, creating a supportive research environment involves connecting students with useful resources, such as the GSIM Student Information Web Page, and providing tailored guidance on data analysis and communication skills. Supervisors should encourage students to present their findings effectively in both written and oral formats. Overall, effective research supervision combines structure, integrity, responsiveness, and mentorship to help students produce rigorous and meaningful academic work.

Prof. Sheehan's presentation explored distinctions between elective and core courses, the balance between student satisfaction and learning, effective teaching practices, and ongoing pedagogical challenges. Elective courses, he argued, typically attract students with higher motivation and prior experience in the subject area. These courses are characterized by flexible content design, smaller class sizes, and a grading environment that often produces slightly higher GPAs compared to core courses.

Prof. Sheehan then examined the dual goals of maximizing student satisfaction and maximizing learning. He noted that while these aims are sometimes viewed as separate, research indicates a positive correlation between them; students who are more satisfied tend to learn more, and those who learn more tend to be more satisfied. Drawing from engagement, self-determination, and social cognitive theories, he links satisfaction to enhanced mental health, increased engagement and retention, improved institutional reputation, and even profitability.

Focusing on his own teaching practices, Prof. Sheehan outlined strategies that have worked for him: learning and using students' names, responding quickly to inquiries, encouraging student talk, rewarding participation strategically, providing detailed instructions and feedback, and using peer evaluations to promote accountability in group work. He also emphasized connecting coursework to real-world job outcomes and fostering a sense of community through shared experiences and time spent together outside of class.

GSIM:

The seminar for supervisee guidance provided knowledge and insights gained focus on the importance of well-defined research questions, hypotheses, and methodical planning from the project's inception. In particular, the first step is to gain understanding that ambiguity in research questions leads to unfocused data collection and analysis. The goal is to articulate the research problem so precisely that a clear path to answering it emerges. Students need to learn techniques for logical organization of research papers and for structuring oral presentations. This includes ensuring a smooth, traceable flow of argument from background to conclusion. Finally, insights into crafting abstracts, introductions, and conclusions that clearly convey the research's significance and findings.

CLEAR:

Prof. Crooks found Prof. Sheehan and Prof. Xu's presentations in Fall 2024 to be of great value, especially how they explored how to approach teaching in a more personalized way, taking greater consideration of students' needs.

2. Reflection within Your Organization

GSIR:

These seminars provide a great platform for teachers to learn from each other and improve their teaching methods. This ultimately would improve student satisfaction, which is a core factor of a university's reputation and sustainable development.

GSIM:

The communication breakdown between some Graduate School of International Management students and their supervisors represents a critical and persistent risk to academic progression and institutional reputation. The challenge is centered on the breakdown of the timely feedback loop and the lack of a supportive research environment that encourages proactive communication.

CLEAR:

As the CLEAR faculty members addresses specific challenges for students (e.g., increasing language proficiency), we often must take into account students' very personal, and frequently emotional, states. Developing language skills can be a process fraught with difficulties and addressing our students' needs holistically and humanistically is a challenge we face regularly.

3. Challenges / Points for Improvement

GSIR:

Challenge 1: Limited participation in these seminars by faculty members. We should promote participation.

Challenge 2: Many factors influencing student satisfaction—such as institutional image and campus climate—lie beyond the instructor's control. How could we incorporate these challenges into the university's long-term development in order to improve student satisfaction?

Challenge 3: Consistency between teaching and practice. We teach a lot of advanced knowledge and management principles to students to improve their own organization. Sometimes students feel what we teach is not consistent with what we have done. For example, we teach student marketing theories but the university's marketing practices may not match what we teach. We also teach sustainable development and digital transformation, while our university's practice (and also Minami-Uonuma City's practices) lag behind the practices that are taught to our students.

GSIM:

The primary challenges for seminars often revolve around maintaining engagement and managing diverse skill levels, while FD activities struggle with faculty time constraints and a lack of practical, relevant content. Key suggestions for next year include implementing more structured skill-building and peer learning in seminars, and offering flexible, needs-based workshops with ongoing support for faculty members.

CLEAR:

While Prof. Crooks thinks the suggestions that Prof. Sheehan, Xu, (and Prof. Crooks) offered were of significant value, low attendance at these seminars by the overall university faculty members is one of the most important challenges we face. If faculty members do not attend such seminars, they are not exposed to the ideas presented in the seminars, and thus faculty do not raise subsequent related issues or call for further topics for seminars. This means that the few representatives from each faculty member (GSIR, GSIM, CLEAR) must transfer the content of each seminar to the non-attending faculty members, which is difficult to do.

Nonetheless, Prof. Crooks believes that CLEAR faculty members have a good grounding in understanding students' needs, all faculty members having qualified in the field of Education, a field in which many of these factors are addressed. Still, it would have been good if more CLEAR members could have attended as a 'refresher' and been exposed to the perspectives of GSIR and GSIM faculty members.

(b) Deepening knowledge about students' mental and physical health

Following the revision of MEXT regulations, the definition of Faculty Development (FD) has been expanded to include elements of "administration" and "management."

In response to this revision, the FDSC planned to conduct an FD/SD (Faculty Development/Staff Development) seminar and decided, during the subcommittee meeting, to hold a seminar on the theme focusing on the Physical and Mental Well-Being of Students as part of faculty and staff members' administrative responsibilities. The overview and results of the seminar, as well as opinions and comments related to it, are summarized below.

I. Overview and Results of the FD/SD Seminar

Title: Workshop on Duty of Care Responsibility for Safety in Educational Settings (Part1)

Understanding Reasonable Accommodation for Individuals with Special Needs (Part2)

Date: 2:40 PM-3:40 PM on Wednesday, October 2, 2024

Place: Classroom 303

Speaker: Counselor SEKI

Contents:

Part 1 Student's Physical Well-being

Theme: Duty of Care Responsibility for Safety in Educational Settings

Purpose: To reaffirm the importance of ensuring student safety (preventing harm to life and physical well-being), which not only protects the students but also shields faculty, staff, and the university from legal risks.

Overview: • Review legal responsibilities concerning school safety (school accidents) by examining past court cases to understand how courts assess negligence.
• Discuss the OSS department's response to previous incidents at our university (case studies).

Q&A and Discussion

Part 2 Student's Mental Well-being

Theme: Understanding Reasonable Accommodation for Individuals with Special Needs

Purpose: To provide a clearer understanding of the new law and IUJ's updated policies on accommodating individuals with disabilities, ensuring a supportive learning environment.

Overview: • An Introduction to the Act on Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities and IUJ's Support Policy were given.
• Examples from other institutions were used to demonstrate effective accommodations for students with special needs.
• Case studies addressed developmental disorders and mental health conditions, and participants engaged in group discussions and assuming roles as students, faculty, or staff to propose reasonable accommodations based on their findings.

Q&A and Discussion

(Total: 60 minutes)

Number of Participants:

The number of participants on site was 22 (8 faculty members and 14 staff members including presenters).

II. Comments and opinions from each subcommittee member of GSIR, GSIM, CLEAR regarding the FD/SD seminars

1. Summary of Learnings

GSIR:

Speaker Counselor Seki-san presented important information to understand students' physical and mental wellbeing. In particular he noted some benchmarking practices in other organizations. Also, Seki-san talked about how to understand and support students with stress and mental disorders. Example from other organizations could be good benchmarks IUJ could learn from and make improvements.

GSIM:

The seminar provided deep knowledge on how these three pillars are inseparable. A primary takeaway is the understanding that academic performance is not purely a measure of intelligence or effort but is heavily influenced by non-cognitive factors. Learning about the specific effects of common student issues like sleep deprivation, social isolation, and performance anxiety on executive functions (memory, focus, and critical thinking) was valuable. Knowledge on the value of basic physical health components—such as adequate nutrition and movement—as essential prerequisites for cognitive function, not just secondary concerns were also shared. For example, understanding that providing brief "micro-breaks" during class can dramatically improve student focus.

CLEAR:

Counselor Sekihara's seminar was very detailed and comprehensive, alerting us not only to many of the legal issues faced by the university, faculty, and staff members, but also to ways to accommodate best the needs of all those involved in the university who have disabilities.

2. Reflection within Your Organization

GSIR:

It is a great improvement that the University has started to take action on these issues, including a counselor's room and experts to support students.

GSIM:

The seminar equipped participants with practical knowledge on moving beyond anecdotal observations by using existing campus data to identify students in distress early such as early warning indicators. Gaining insights into specific, measurable indicators that signal a student is at risk of withdrawal or academic failure before they reach a crisis point was of great value. Another positive aspect was learning about ethical referral pathways.

We also learned about standardized procedures for ethically and responsibly referring students to appropriate campus resources, ensuring faculty and staff members know their role as "first responders" rather than clinicians.

CLEAR:

As professionals in the field of Education, we have been trained to be aware of and address students with learning difficulties, but we may not always have a thorough understanding of how to meet the needs of students with other disabilities. As we now (2025) have a first-year student who requires the use of a wheelchair, the CLEAR faculty has acknowledged the provision of physical assistance offered to students such as these (seats placed in corridors, mini ramps for ease of access to and from doors that lead outside university buildings).

However, it might be wise to consider installing some electronic doors to enter/exit the university buildings. Many of the entry/exit doors in our buildings can be challenging to open. Even an able-bodied person requires significant strength to pull open these doors, and these are certainly not user-friendly for disabled students, staff, or faculty. In some situations, this is **doubly difficult** as some entry/exit points have **two** sets of doors, both of which must be opened to gain access to or exit from a building. While I understand that such door combinations help the university during our harsh winters (e.g., keeping buildings temperatures consistent), they are not suitable for disabled individuals. They may even lead to serious accidents or incidents in emergencies.

We also have another elevator close to the OAA and OACS offices that, at least since 2009, when I joined IUJ, has not been in service. It might also be wise to reactivate that elevator for individuals with disabilities.

Although Counselor Sekihara's seminar had reasonable attendance, I think much of what he presented – especially in the second half of his session – is essential information for all faculty and staff. Perhaps this information, like that provided annually by PEC, should be ***mandatory*** for all IUJ employees.

3. Challenges / Points for Improvement

GSIR:

Many factors of physical and mental health cannot be managed by the University. For example, on long snowy days, students who do not drive have difficulty going shopping and picking up their children from school. Thus, it is difficult for students to buy fresh food and go for some social or sports activities, such as swimming. To improve students' mental and physical well-being, there is a need to systematically review, reflect, and call for action.

GSIM:

Key challenges in addressing student wellness via seminars and FD are faculty time constraints and confusion over professional boundaries. Faculty members fear overstepping their roles, and seminars struggle with student stigma and balancing rigor with flexibility. Two main points for improvement. First, mandate short, scenario-based "red flag" training for all faculty, clarifying the "recognize and refer" role. Require professors to proactively integrate wellness into course design via clear syllabus statements, resilience-building assignments (e.g., reflection logs), and structured peer support.

CLEAR:

As noted above, Prof. Crooks thinks Counselor Sekihara should continue to offer his seminars and perhaps make some content (especially matters involving students) mandatory for everyone.

(c) Other items

I. Other FD activities

CLEAR:

Our individual CLEAR members are actively involved in personal development programs through research and associated reading, conference attendance, online programs and courses, and other learning opportunities. However, as very few CLEAR faculty members attended the FD members in the past year, CLEAR Director would like to see an increase in their participation. Offering the FD seminars at times more convenient for faculty members (e.g., lunchtime) would help boost attendance.

II. Other opinions and comments regarding FD activities

GSIR:

If we agree that professors can contribute to the university and society in three dimensions —teaching, research, and social services —we could also consider how to improve professors’ research (e.g., publications) and their engagement with the local community (e.g., active involvement in local development).

CLEAR:

Prof. Crooks also thinks promoting upcoming seminars in a solution-based format may help encourage faculty attendance. For example, if the sessions can be promoted in a style in which faculty can see that problems can be overcome, or improvements can be made by attending the workshops (e.g. Do you want your students to engage with each other in class? This seminar will...”; “Do you have trouble grouping students for workshop activities? This seminar will offer suggestions how to...”). In short, Prof. Crooks believes faculty members want to attend workshops that clearly state how practical outcomes can be obtained.

Prof. Crooks is also aware that most CLEAR courses (apart from first-year Academic English classes) are elective for students, and it would be valuable if we could be offered strategies to enhance student enrollment, especially in courses in students’ second year of studies. For example, we have very valuable second-year courses in the ELP (English for Research Writing, English for Thesis Writing), in which places go unfilled. We are unsure why this occurs, but we suspect that it is because students’ credits towards graduation are capped for language courses. The students who are in the most need of English courses (e.g., those who are deemed ‘non-exempt’ and who must take Academic English in their first year) are often absent from the higher-level writing courses in their second year.

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a major concern now (especially for the ELP), a seminar on that topic **must** be introduced. It does not need to cover the ‘negatives’ of AI, but a session on how the use of AI can benefit our students’ learning experience.

Prof. Crooks also suggested that IUJ consider having **an annual, whole-university day** to exchange ideas and offer seminars and workshops. Holding this day in the Orientation period (i.e., September) would be wise. One goal of this day would be for all faculty and staff members to gather to understand better what our faculties and departments offer and what staff and instructors do. When Prof. Crooks worked at a university in Australia his institution had such an event, and it provided enlightening insights into aspects of the university that we did not know about.

Finally, Prof. Crooks feels that **new IUJ faculty members** require **a thorough Orientation** to their respective faculty and university administrative matters (salaries, allowances, research allowances, essential deadlines throughout the year etc.). Much of the ‘orientation’ given in IUJ is very ‘piecemeal’ – this orientation relies on people learning things from other faculty members or staff members, often little by little. An official, comprehensive ‘**Orientation to IUJ**’ would serve new IUJ faculty member well.

Conclusion

In the 2024/2025 academic year, the Faculty Development Subcommittee (FDSC) organized two seminars for faculty members focusing on improving teaching methods. Faculty members who received high student evaluations for their elective and core courses shared their teaching approaches, providing participants with valuable insights and practical tips that could be applied to their own classes.

In addition, another seminar was held in a similar format, where faculty members who had received high evaluations from students for their thesis and research report guidance shared their supervisory methods.

According to the survey results, overall satisfaction with the seminar content was high; however, the low participation rate among faculty members was identified as an issue. To address this, the FDSC plans to hold FD seminars during lunchtime next academic year to see if this approach can improve faculty attendance.

In the questionnaire from the FD seminar, a faculty member commented that differences in English proficiency among students can significantly affect exam performance and that the faculty member wished to design tests assessing subject knowledge rather than language ability.

In response, FDSC members noted that students from English-speaking countries tend to perform better in writing tasks, while some Southeast Asian students, though highly knowledgeable, struggle with academic writing. The ELP team discussed the issue from an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) perspective and The FDSC decided to request Prof. Williams to serve as a speaker for next academic year's FD seminar to propose strategies for designing exams accessible to students with different English levels.

The FD Committee also discussed the topic, emphasizing the global relevance of this challenge. Some members argued that English proficiency should not heavily influence assessment, while others stressed its importance.

The FDSC proposes to continue discussions and address the issue again in next academic year's FD seminar.

In accordance with the revision of MEXT regulations, an FD/SD seminar was held for the first time this academic year. Counselor Sekihara conducted a seminar focusing on the Physical and Mental

Well-Being of Students, which attracted a large number of faculty and staff participants. The questionnaire results showed that the seminar content was well received overall.

According to participants' feedback, while the overall content was excellent, some participants found it difficult to fully understand the legal terminology used by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. The group discussion component was highly appreciated; however, it was noted that the case study was somewhat complex, and simpler examples might have been more effective. In addition, some participants suggested that certain discussions may have been challenging because students might wish to keep certain matters confidential.

Based on the outcomes of this seminar, the FDSC plans to continue organizing FD/SD seminars in the next academic year.

Finally, as FD activities have progressed, more complex issues have begun to emerge.

The FD Committee and FD Subcommittee will continue discussions on these issues to contribute to the improvement of education across the university as well as the enhancement of individual faculty members' teaching practices.

Challenges for Faculty Development Activities in the Next Academic Year

1. Limited Faculty Participation in FD Seminars

Problems: Although valuable insights are often shared in FD seminars, the limited number of participants restricts the extent to which such knowledge can be disseminated among other faculty members.

Causes: Time constraints, lack of perceived practical relevance, and insufficient promotion.

Suggestions for improvement: Promote seminars in a solution-oriented format (e.g., "Do you want your students to engage more in class? This seminar will show how to...").

2. Consistency Between Teaching and University Practice

There is a perceived inconsistency between what is taught and what is practiced at IUJ. Faculty members teach advanced knowledge and management principles, but students sometimes feel these are not consistent with IUJ's own practices. For example, while marketing theories are taught in class, IUJ's marketing practices may not align with them. Similarly, courses on sustainable development and

digital transformation contrast with slower progress in these areas at both IUJ and Minami-Uonuma City.

3. English Language Program

Prof. Crooks pointed out that most CLEAR courses, except for first-year Academic English, are elective. In contrast, second-year courses such as English for Research Writing and English for Thesis Writing often have unfilled places, even though they are valuable. The reason might be that credits for language courses are capped, and the students most in need (those who took Academic English in their first year) often do not take higher-level courses in the second year.

4. New Faculty Orientation

Prof. Crooks expressed concern that IUJ's current orientation for new faculty members is fragmented and depends on informal information sharing. He emphasized the need for an official and comprehensive orientation that includes faculty- and university-related administrative matters such as salaries, allowances, research funds, and key annual deadlines.

5. AI Use by Students

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a major issue—especially in the English Language Program—Prof. Crooks suggested introducing a seminar on AI. The session should not focus only on the negative aspects but also on how AI can positively contribute to students' learning experiences.

6. Improving professors' research output (e.g., publications) and encouraging their involvement in local community development

It was mentioned that professors contribute to the university and society through three main dimensions: teaching, research, and social service. Improving professors' research output (e.g., publications) and encouraging their involvement in local community development were highlighted as areas for further consideration.

7. University Communication and Collaboration

Prof. Crooks proposed the idea of having an annual, university-wide day during the Orientation period (September) for all faculty and staff members to gather, exchange ideas, and learn about what each office, graduate school, and center does. He referred to his experience at an Australian university where such an event helped faculty members gain a better understanding of the university as a whole.

Section B. Summary of FDC and FDSC Meetings AY 2024/2025

1. FDC meeting

	Date	Agenda item	Report item
1st	12/11/2024	1) Faculty Development Report AY 2023/2024 2) Course Evaluations	No report item
2nd	6/24/2025	1) 2025 2026 IUJ Faculty Development (FD) Annual Plan	1) Report on Faculty Development Seminar

2. FDFC meeting

	Date	Agenda item	Report item
1st	9/27/2024	1) Faculty Development (FD) / Staff Development (SD) Seminar Focusing on the Physical and Mental Well-Being of Students 2) 2023 Faculty Development Activity Report	1) 2023/2024 Faculty Development Seminar
2nd	11/11/2024	1) Making a Faculty Development Activity Report 2023/2024 2) 2024/2025 Faculty Development Seminars	1) Report on Faculty Development (FD) / Staff Development (SD) Seminar
3rd	1/22/2025	1) 2nd Faculty Development Seminar AY 2024/2025	1) Report on 1st IUJ Faculty Development Committee Meeting Academic Year 2024/2025 2) Report on the 1st Faculty Development Seminar AY 2024/2025
4th	3/5/2025	1) 3rd Faculty Development Seminar AY 2024/2025	No report item
5th	6/26/2025	No agenda item	1) 2024/2025 Faculty Development Seminar 2) 2025/2026 Faculty Development Activity Plan

Section C. IUJ FD Annual Plan AY 2025/2026

The FDC decided the following annual goals and FD activity priorities for AY 2024/2025.

1. Annual goals

The annual goals for FD in the 2025/2026 academic year are as follows:

- A Faculty Development Seminar will be held once every term.
- A joint FD/SD seminar will be held once a year.
- A summary of each Faculty Development Seminar will be distributed to all faculty members for their reference.
- The course evaluation results from the 2024/2025 academic year will be reviewed to ensure that all IUJ courses were well received by students, and measures will be taken if any problematic cases are found.

2. FD activity priority policies

Priority will be given to the following activities in the 2025/2026 academic year:

- a) Improving teaching methods and thesis/research report guidance by conducting FD seminars to share tips on how highly evaluated faculty members conduct classes and provide thesis and research report guidance.
- b) Discussing the impact of Student's English proficiency on the test (examination).

"How to design the tests that reflect content mastery, not just English ability"
- c) Conducting an FD/SD seminar on how to care for students' mental health (understanding student's mental health care) and how to practice mindfulness.