The 3rd Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU) Provosts Forum centered on innovations in teaching and learning. To highlight the theme of innovation, program sessions used a “flipped classroom” approach rather than lecture-style presentations. Session facilitators shared content in advance, briefly introduced research and case studies, then asked questions that promoted lively discussion.

The APRU Provosts Forum was held on the University of Washington campus in Seattle, Washington, with participants in attendance from 21 universities around the Pacific Rim. The Forum was held in one of the UW’s Active Learning Classrooms, which is a lively and dynamic environment that serves as a center for undergraduate instruction, learning and technology.

Key takeaways

» Research shows active learning techniques modeled for participants lead to better learning outcomes for all students, especially first-generation students and underrepresented minorities.

» Each partner faces many common and some unique challenges to wide scale adoption of innovative teaching practices. There are practical steps faculty can take in the classroom and provosts can take to encourage innovation.

» Opportunities for continued dialogue and partnership include collaboration across a global network of centers for teaching and learning.

» Participants share a common vision that the future of higher education will involve innovating to increase personalized, on-demand, engaging learning opportunities.

Participating Universities

California Institute of Technology
Chulalongkorn University
Kyoto University
National University of Singapore
Osaka University
Peking University
Seoul National University
Tecnológico de Monterrey
Tohoku University
Tsinghua University
University of Auckland
University of British Columbia
University of California, Davis
University of California, Los Angeles
University of Hawaii at Manoa
University of Hong Kong
University of Oregon
University of Science and Technology of China
University of Sydney
University of Washington
Waseda University
Session I: Research on teaching and learning
Facilitator: Scott Freeman, principal lecturer, UW Biology
This session introduced critical research on undergraduate learning and modeled activities to promote active learning, with a strong emphasis on innovative and practical tools that University faculty and administrators can use.

Session II: High-impact innovations in practice
Facilitator: Stefan Stoll, assistant professor, UW Chemistry and Karen Freisem, instructional consultant, UW Center for Teaching & Learning
In this session, facilitators demonstrated examples of high-impact, low-effort methods that improve student learning. Participants discussed and shared examples of best practices at their own institutions.

Session III: Active learning in different classroom environments
Facilitator: Matt McGarrity, principal lecturer, UW Communication and Robin Chin Roemer, instructional design & outreach services librarian, UW Libraries
This session encouraged participants to identify and discuss strategies for successful active learning across a variety of learning contexts and environments, with special emphasis on skills instruction and the role of educational technology.

Session IV: What can provosts do to encourage better teaching and learning?
Facilitator: Gerald J. Baldasty, UW interim provost and executive vice president
This session outlined strategies provosts can use to encourage innovative teaching at their universities. Tactics discussed included advocacy, leadership, partnership, strategic rewards, communication and incentives. The facilitator argued that catalyzing innovative teaching is an opportunity for provosts to take a more hands-on role to connect universities to share best practices.

Session V: How can APRU institutions collaborate to advance teaching and learning across campuses?
Facilitator: Beth Kalikoff, director, UW Center for Teaching & Learning and Yusuke Morita, associate director, Waseda Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology
This session discussed the Waseda/UW Joint Center for Teaching, Learning, & Technology. After that, the facilitators invited participants to identify existing and potential partnerships across APRU institutions.

Session VI: Innovations and the university
Facilitator: Vikram Jandhyala, UW vice provost for innovation
In this session facilitators introduced key aspects of innovation and outlined how to promote an innovative mindset. Then groups applied design thinking to a university setting to re-imagine what a future university designed from the ground up might look like.

Session VII: Public-private partnerships
Facilitator: Vikram Jandhyala, UW vice provost for innovation and Lara Littlefield, UW chief advancement officer for innovation
Public-private partnerships are critical at a time when public funds for higher education are challenging, and private enterprises are focusing on shorter term gains. This session focused on challenges, opportunities and guided brainstorming around building innovative public-private partnerships.