Committee on Teaching
2009-10 Annual Report

To the Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division,

The Committee on Teaching (COT) met regularly every other week throughout the academic year to deal with the extensive agenda related to the charge to foster and promote good teaching, to recommend and evaluate methods of assessing teaching performance, to oversee instructional support services on campus, and to advise the Academic Senate as requested.

Change to COT Bylaws
At the October 27th meeting, COT voted to accept the following changes to the COT bylaws:

- Changing the name of the ‘Center for Teaching Excellence’ to the ‘Center for Teaching and Learning’.
- Inviting the Director of Learning Technologies to “sit with” the committee, since the Director of Media Services position has been eliminated.

Center for Teaching and Learning
One of the mandates of the Committee is to provide direction to the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) in matters regarding COT business, and when required, in any matters concerning instructional support. In the absence of a permanent director for the Center, Jessica Fiske Bailey, Assistant Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education, was invited to sit with the Committee in the CTL director’s stead. COT also consulted with Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education, Bill Ladusaw, in fall quarter, about his goals for the Center for Teaching and Learning, and his vision for the strategic reorganization of the teaching and learning infrastructure here on campus.

Instructional Improvement Program Grants
The Committee on Teaching is charged with adjudicating Instructional Improvement Grants. Adjudication of IIP grant proposals is a responsibility that COT takes very seriously and on which it spends a great deal of its time throughout the year. The COT made several significant changes to the Instructional Improvement Program (IIP) this year. It decided to concentrate its efforts on consulting on and adjudicating major grants and disbanded the mini-grant program. The committee determined that major grants could have a larger and more long-lasting impact on students and undergraduate education than mini-grants.

The Committee modified this year’s call to solicit projects that addressed two new initiatives on campus—eCommons (aka Sakai, the new Learning Management System), and GE Reform. The committee hosted a pre-proposal workshop facilitated by COT members, a CTL representative, and a Sakai representative for
interested faculty members, to provide feedback and guidance to strengthen individual faculty proposals.

In reviewing the pre-proposals, COT noticed that many of the proposals request some form of course release. The committee discussed the advisability of funding course release in a climate where departments can barely offer enough courses to meet student need. COT decided that instead of granting course release to individual faculty members, it would grant the funds to the faculty member’s department, specifically earmarked to support the proposed initiative. It is then up to the individual departments to determine the best balance between faculty release time and the curricular needs of the department.

The committee awarded $68,200 in funding (out of a total of $79,510 requested). Criteria the committee used in adjudicating the proposals included impact on the implementation of eCommons and GE requirements, extent of faculty collaboration, integration of participatory learning techniques, and the willingness to mentor others on using the new Learning Management System.

**Excellence in Teaching Awards**
The Excellence in Teaching Awards recognize faculty who engage students through innovative course design, special learning techniques and materials, and their own personal qualities as teachers and mentors. Students nominate faculty and the COT selects awardees. From a pool of 20 eligible nominees, COT selected five faculty to receive the Excellence in Teaching Award for 2009-10, and one faculty member to receive the Ron Ruby Award for Teaching Excellence in the Division of Physical and Biological Sciences. In addition, three nominees were recognized with Honorable Mentions. The Excellence in Teaching Awards ceremony was combined with the Student Achievement Awards ceremony on June 4 and the awards were presented by Chancellor Blumenthal. The recipients were as follows:

**Teaching Awards:**
- Cyrus Bazeghi, Computer Engineering
- Jennifer A. Gonzalez, History of Art and Visual Culture
- Gey-Hong Gweon, Physics
- Catherine Ramirez, American Studies
- Susan Watrous, College Eight

**Ron Ruby award:**
- Richard Mitchell, Mathematics

**Letters of honorable mention:**
- Rodney Ogawa, Education
- Frank Ramirez, Language Program
- Gustavo Vazquez, Film and Digital Media
• Patricia Zavella, Latin American and Latino Studies

A letter of commendation for being selected by students to receive an award for their teaching was sent to remaining faculty who were nominated.

COT set a goal of increasing student nominations of exceptional faculty. The committee worked with Matt Palm, Student Union Assembly (SUA)’s Commissioner of Academic Affairs, to advertise the process among students in large classes and College governments and on Facebook. As a result of SUA’s efforts and cooperation, COT received 24 nominations for 20 instructors. Nominees who had already received an Excellence in Teaching Awards within the last five years were excluded from consideration. Only nominees who were up to date in submitting narrative performance evaluations, as reported by the Registrar, were considered for an award.

The committee will continue to discuss ways to increase the number of submissions in the future, including sending the call for nominations out through the Student Affairs portal.

COT also discussed the creation of a “Lifetime Achievement Award” for teaching. Emeriti faculty would be eligible for this award, and ideally nominations would come from either COT or the department. The nominees would then be sent out to the alumni for voting. COT members were in strong support of creating an award to recognize longstanding excellence in teaching.

Annual Teaching and Learning Symposium
No Teaching and Learning Symposium was held this year due to the limited staffing in the CTL where the work of organizing the symposium resides. The committee did participate as a sponsor of several workshops for faculty on speaking up to bias, which were unfortunately not well attended.

Learning Management System (LMS)
Throughout the year, COT participated in training sessions and provided feedback on the new Learning Management System (LMS). In addition, several COT members participated on an individual basis in this process. The Learning Technology Group began Sakai implementation over the summer.

Miscellanea
Throughout the year, the committee also responded to the following system-wide and local issues:

• Campus Strategic Framework for Technology Planning
• Undergraduate Educational Effectiveness Task Force
• Joint Senate-Administration EAP Task Force Report
• Report on Remote and Online Instruction and Residency
• Report from Humanities Advisory Task Force on Reconstitution
• Commission on the Future Recommendations

On February 23rd, Pablo Reguerin, Executive Director of Retention Services, and Director of Educational Opportunity Programs, attended a Committee on Teaching meeting to talk about a reorganization in Student Affairs and the creation of a Retention Services unit.

Acknowledgements
The Committee would like to thank Jessica Fiske Bailey, Assistant Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education, who is charged with overseeing the Center for Teaching and Learning in this time of transition, and Jim Phillips, Director of Learning Technologies, for their invaluable contributions to the Committee. The Committee on Teaching also thanks Stephanie Casher for exceptional guidance and support during this academic year.

Respectfully submitted,

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