

COMMITTEE ON TEACHING Annual Report, 2003-04

To the Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division:

The Committee on Teaching (COT) met regularly every other week throughout the academic year to deal with an extensive agenda related to its charge to foster and promote good teaching, to recommend and evaluate methods for assessing teaching performance, and to oversee instructional support services on campus. The work and accomplishments of the Committee during the 2003-04 year are summarized below.

Instructional Improvement Program Grants

The Instructional Improvement Program (IIP) provides seed money in the form of grants to encourage experimentation with new ideas in teaching and learning at the undergraduate level. One of the regular charges of COT is to adjudicate applications for Instructional Improvement Program (IIP) 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.

COT awarded a total of \$129,521.70 in IIP funding out of requests totaling \$212,395.04. Twenty-six grants were funded out of 37 proposals. The total number of proposals submitted for funding was down significantly (about 30%) compared to last year, although the acceptance rate was slightly higher (up from 60 to 70%). IIP grants fell into the following categories:

- **Mini-grants** are available throughout the year when COT is in session. They support small-scale projects designed to improve undergraduate instruction. Mini-grants have a maximum budget of \$2000. In the year-long competition for Mini-grants, there were 19 submissions requesting approximately \$28,782.50. Of these, 14 were funded for a total of \$20,243.70.
- **Course Development Fellowships** provide \$6463-\$8100 (depending on division) to cover one course release for the fellowship recipient. Course Development Fellows use the course release to develop a new undergraduate course or program in their departments or to make significant revisions in an older course. Six faculty submitted applications for Course Development Fellowships, with a cumulative budget of \$42,028.00. Four were funded for a total of \$29,102.00.
- **Major Grants** are for major projects aimed at improving undergraduate education. These involve incorporating instructional technology, creating new course materials, or designing interactive or collaborative learning activities. Of the 12 proposals received for a total of \$141,584.54 requested, COT funded eight for a total of \$80,176.00.

Successfully funded IIP grants aimed to improve instruction through one of five basic approaches: 1) introducing a new pedagogical approach not previously used in a course

(15 grants); 2) incorporating new technology into the learning process (13 grants); 3) curriculum development (6 grants); 4) acquiring materials or equipment to aid learning (6 grants); and/or 5) faculty development (1 grant). Many grants fell into more than one category. For example, nine grants combined the use of new technologies with the development of new pedagogical approaches.

The Committee continued to carefully scrutinize grant assessment plans. Proposals that based their assessment primarily on measures of student satisfaction received a less-favorable review than those that were based on comprehensive assessments of student learning (performance outcomes). Successful examples of performance-based assessments include pre- and post-tests, evaluation of writing portfolios, and following student performance in subsequent courses.

Eleven proposals were turned down for funding. The two most common reasons for proposals being unsuccessful were 1) requests for items that are listed as ineligible in the Call for Proposals (4 proposals); and 2) requests for equipment not justified in terms of student learning (4 proposals).

Tenth Annual Convocation of Teaching

This year's convocation, titled "Expanding the Classroom Walls: Teaching with Technology," followed a new format. As a mini-conference, it included short concurrent presentations by UCSC faculty, an exhibit area, and a keynote speaker. The event was held at University Center on February 12, 2004 from 1:00-5:00 pm and was attended by 66 members of the UCSC community, 6 corporate exhibitors, and several UCSC exhibitors. Highlights of the 2004 Convocation include:

- Donations from exhibitors helped fund the event.
- Dr. Bernard R. Gifford of UC Berkeley and the Distributed Learning Workshop provided the keynote address.
- Electronic pre-registration was available on the CTE Web site; 47 people pre-registered.

Feedback from attendees was highly positive, particularly praising the practical nature of the presentations and the opportunity for informal exchange of idea about teaching strategies.

Excellence in Teaching Awards

In selecting recipients for this award, COT considered nomination letters from students, endorsement letters from department chairs, and statements on teaching from the nominees themselves. Nominees who had already received an Excellence in Teaching Award within the last 5 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.

From a pool of 15 eligible nominees, COT selected 8 faculty to receive the 2003-04 Excellence in Teaching Award. Acting Chancellor Chemers and COT Chair Habicht Mauche presented the awards at a reception held at University House on May 28, 2004.

The recipients were: Manuel Ares, Jr., MCD Biology; Peter Kenez, History; Gildas Hamel, Languages; Anatole Leikin, Music; Kevin Karplus, Biomolecular Engineering; Anthony Pratkanis, Psychology, Jenny Keller, Science Communication; and Peter Young, Physics.

In addition, 7 faculty were recognized with Honorable Mention certificates: Selena Brody, Psychology/College Ten; David Draper, Applied Math and Statistics; Frederic Lieberman, Music; Kasey Mohammad, Literature; Jennifer Parker, Art; Hilde Schwartz, Earth Sciences; and Bangteng Xu, Mathematics.

U.S. Professor of the Year Nomination

COT nominated Professor Lori Kletzer of Economics as Professor of the Year. Professor Kletzer was recognized for her efforts in the use of writing in Economics courses, and for her ability to incorporate real-world issues into her courses. The nomination packet forwarded to the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) included letters of support from Acting Chancellor Chemers, Interim Dean Hutchinson, faculty colleagues and former students.

Instructor Evaluation Form Review

This year COT undertook an assessment of the standard UCSC Scantron Instructor Evaluation form, administered by CTE. This form was designed by COT in 1996-97 and was intended for use across departments. It is currently in use by 20 departments and 3 colleges on campus. CTE processes close to 35,000 standard Instructor Evaluation Forms each year. The intended purpose of the form is to provide useful and valid information to instructors for improving their teaching, as well as to inform the promotion and tenure process.

In undertaking our review, COT studied research on student rating systems nationwide and sought input from departments, colleges and other stakeholders on campus (including Academic Human Resources, Committee on Educational Policy and the Committee on Academic Personnel). We circulated drafts of two possible revisions for critique and comment. We considered this diverse input carefully. In the end, we found that the current form holds up quite well under close scrutiny and decided to make only a few, but significant, changes to the form. We believe that these changes make the Instructor Evaluation form clearer for students to understand and more accurately reflective of an instructor's teaching and will provide better contextual information for interpreting results. The revised COT Instructor Evaluation Form will be available in Fall 2004 from CTE.

The most frequent comment we received to our request for feedback on the proposed revisions to the standardized form was that faculty and departments desire more choice in designing the form they use. Unfortunately, it is not economically feasible to provide fully customized Scantron forms for each department or program on campus. However, converting the current Scantron form to an on-line evaluation system might allow for this kind of expanded choice. The increasing sophistication of course management software programs, such as WebCT, combined with the expanded potential of AIS, may make

such a campus-wide system feasible in the near future. However, a number of faculty concerns and logistical challenges remain to be resolved. From COT's perspective, response rate is currently the most serious obstacle to the widespread adoption of on-line instructor evaluation systems. Without systematic incentive programs or coercion, response rates for on-line evaluations drop to about 30% on most campuses, as compared to an average rate of 70% for paper forms administered in the classroom. Nevertheless, COT remains open to working with specific departments that wish to pilot on-line evaluation systems. We believe that such programs will be most successful if developed in collaboration with AHR, IT, COT and CAP to ensure adoption of widespread campus standards and to minimize duplication of effort across programs.

Budget and Planning Concerns

Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies Lynda Goff recommended to the EVC/Provost a permanent reduction of Instructional Improvement Program (IIP) Funds from \$120,000 to \$90,000 per year, beginning 2004-05. COT is cognizant that given the current budget crisis some cuts to this program are necessary and inevitable. However, we are deeply concerned about two matters related to these proposed reductions.

- The proposed cuts represent a 25% reduction in permanent funding for IIP. This level of reduction seems high relative to other cuts to programs across campus, which have been more in the range of 10-15%. Such a cut would represent a significant reduction in administrative support for innovation in undergraduate teaching and learning on this campus. The budget for IIP has remained stagnant at \$120K per year for over a decade, despite a dramatic increase in the number of faculty FTE over the same period. The cost of supporting individual instructional initiatives also continues to grow since most now incorporate some form of new instructional technology. Deans, department chairs and faculty have expressed concern to COT that requests that were routinely supported by IIP in the past are now being denied funding. As a result of the proposed cuts, IIP will become even more competitive and even fewer faculty proposals will be supported.
- COT was not adequately consulted regarding these proposed cuts. The VP/DUE made these recommendations to the EVC/Provost without any prior discussion with our committee. COT recognizes that the administration has ultimate authority over the distribution and allocation of IIP funds. However, COT has been delegated authority to set guidelines, review proposals, and recommend funding for IIP initiatives. Respect for campus principles of joint governance would indicate that COT should be consulted in regards to any proposed policy or funding changes related to this program.

In June, the out-going and in-coming chairs of COT met with Interim VP/DUE William Ladusaw. VP/Dean Ladusaw listened to our concerns and agreed to consult more closely with COT on matters that fall under our joint purview, including IIP, the Center for Teaching Excellence and the Excellence in Teaching Awards program.

Systemwide Meeting Initiative

In March, COT sent a letter to the various senate committees charged with teaching and instructional support on other UC campuses to explore the possibility of convening a systemwide meeting to discuss issues that affect all our campuses and to initiate collective action on these issues. The two concerns that we specifically identified as possible topics of discussion were:

- Adoption of UC-wide standards for on-line course management systems.
- Adoption of UC-wide policies and standards for on-line instructor evaluation systems

As of June, the Committee had received responses from only two campuses. COT may follow up on this initiative in 2004-05.

Miscellaneous

Chair Habicht Mauche served as COT representative to the campus-wide Learning Technologies Committee (LTC) chaired by CTE Director Harris-Barnett. This administrative committee reports to Vice Provost Larry Merkley and is charged with identifying and assessing the set of technology-based services presently offered to instructors and to identify problems encountered by faculty and assess instructional needs for technology support. This committee met once a month throughout the year.

COT Chair Habicht Mauche once again served as the UCSC representative to the UCOP Teaching, Learning and Technology Center (TLtC) collaborative grants review panel, which funded intercampus implementation projects with up to \$75,000 a year for up to three years. One new planning proposal from UCSC, submitted by Assistant Professor Judith Scott of Education, was funded this year. Unfortunately, TLtC subsequently was forced to cancel its collaborative grants program due to system-wide budget cuts.

Acknowledgements

The Committee would like to thank Ruth Harris-Barnett, Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence and Henry Burnett, Director of Media Services for their invaluable contributions to the Committee. The Committee on Teaching was expertly staffed by Jan Carmichael from the Academic Senate Office.

Respectfully submitted,

COMMITTEE ON TEACHING

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