

COMMITTEE ON TEACHING Annual Report, 2004-05

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 2004-05 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 \$113,781.68 out of requests totaling \$264,881.17. Twenty-five grants were funded out of 45 proposals. The total number of proposals submitted for funding was up about 20% compared to last year, and the acceptance rate was down from 70% to 55%. 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 20 submissions requesting \$35,269.73. Of these, 12 were funded for a total of \$17,248.98.
- **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. Fourteen faculty submitted applications for Course Development Fellowships, with a cumulative budget of \$100,232.00. Six were funded for a total of \$42,028.00.
- **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 11 proposals received for a total of \$129,379.44 requested, COT funded 7 for a total of \$54,504.70.

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 (13 grants); 2) incorporating new technology into the learning process (11 grants); 3) curriculum development (6 grants); 4) acquiring materials or equipment to aid learning (7 grants); and/or 5) faculty development (4 grants). Many grants fell into more than one category. We have also seen a noticeable increase in the number of proposals asking for equipment that COT believes should be funded by departments.

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.

1st Annual Teaching and Learning Symposium

In 2003 the annual teaching convocation was restructured into a mini-symposium with parallel tracks of speakers. Due to the success of that event, we have changed the name of this annual event to the “Annual Teaching and Learning Symposium”.

- This year’s symposium was titled “Engaging Students: Challenges and Solutions for Small and Large Classes.” As a mini-conference, it included short concurrent presentations by UCSC faculty, an exhibit area, and a plenary panel session. The event was held at University Center on February 17, 2005 from 1:00-5:00 pm and was attended by 64 members of the UCSC community.

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.

The date has already been set for the 2006 symposium which will take place at the University Center on February 16, 2006. UCSC Psychology Professor Martin Chemers will be the keynote speaker.

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 9 eligible nominees, COT selected 5 faculty to receive the 2004-05 Excellence in Teaching Award. Chancellor Denton and COT Chair Charlie McDowell presented the awards at a reception held at University House on May 27, 2005. The recipients were: Radhika Mongia from Women’s Studies, Jerome Neu from Humanities, Paul Ortiz from Community Studies, Julie Tannenbaum from Philosophy, and Susana Terrell from Art.

In addition, this year the COT was asked to also make the selection for the Ron Ruby Award for Teaching Excellence in the Division of Physical and Biological Sciences. The award was established as a memoriam to physics Professor Ronald Ruby who died in November 2003. This year’s recipient was Associate Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Grant Pogson.

U.S. Professor of the Year Nomination

COT nominated Professor Manuel Ares of Molecular, Cell & Developmental Biology as Professor of the Year. Professor Ares was recognized for his efforts in bringing undergraduates into the research lab, as well as his outstanding research record.

Budget and Planning Concerns

In 2003-04 the budget included \$120,000 for Instructional Improvement Program (IIP) grants. In 2004-05 this was lowered to \$90,000 with a one-time additional allocation of \$10,000 for 2004-05. The one-time allocation was desperately needed because COT makes awards in early spring before the following year's budget has been established. Consequently, COT made awards for 2004-05 assuming \$120,000 would be available. Without some help, the shortfall would have to come from the 2005-06 award amount which would then be only \$60,000 (\$90,000 minus the \$30,000 shortfall). As reported above, with the one time allocation, carry forward funds, and some returns from unused grants, COT was able to make awards totaling approximately \$113,000 for 2005-06.

Funding for IIP grants has been flat (or declining) for over a decade (without adjusting for inflation). At the same time, similar programs at other campuses have seen substantial increases. COT is pleased that Interim Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies Bill Ladusaw has recommended to the EVC/Provost that the IIP budget for 2005-06 be restored to \$120,000 and increased to \$150,000 starting in 2007.

Miscellaneous

- COT reviewed UCSC's Western Association of Schools and Colleges Educational Effectiveness Report and provided a written response to Interim Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies Bill Ladusaw in a letter dated October 17, 2004. Special thanks to COT member Elizabeth Abrams for her work on the initial draft of that letter.
- COT reviewed the system-wide "resolution on restrictions to research funding sources" and provided a written response to the Senate in a letter dated February 18, 2005.
- COT met with Vice Provost for Information Technology, Larry Merkely to discuss the proposed merger of Media Services and Instruction Computing.
- COT reviewed a proposal for an Instructional Resources Pagelet for the Academic Information Systems team.
- COT Chair McDowell met with Associate Vice Chancellor for Planning and Budget Meredith Michaels to review what funds come to the campus ear-marked for instructional improvement. The conclusion was that there are no longer such funds coming to the campus.
- COT worked with the Center for Teaching Excellence Director Ruth Harris-Barnett on the review of campus programs for graduate student teaching assistant development. This included a survey of current programs and review of proposals for a revised campus wide program.
- COT began a review of how Course and Instructor Evaluations are used on this campus. COT also discussed the pros and cons of moving to an online system for such evaluations. We expect that at least a small number of courses will experiment with online collection of evaluations in 2005-06. One key question is how such a change will affect the response rate.

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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