

COMMITTEE ON TEACHING Annual Report, 2007-08

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.

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 \$87,547.15 out of requests totaling \$238,354.05. Twenty-five grants were funded out of 45 proposals. Awarded funding was approximately 38% of the total requested. 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 \$2,000. In the year-long competition for Mini-grants, there were 22 submissions requesting \$25,707.21. Of these, 16 were funded for a total \$16,347.21.
- **Course Development Fellowships** provide \$7437.50-\$9325 (depending on division) to cover one course release for the fellowship recipient. For the first time, guidelines allowed requests for partial summer salaries for course development projects, rather than course relief during the academic year. Course Development Fellows use the course release or summer salary 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 \$115,546.28. Six were funded for a total of \$46,512.50.
- **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 9 proposals received for a total of \$102,859.34 requested, COT funded 3 for a total of \$24,687.44.

The Committee notes that less money is allocated now (\$90,000 per year—not including carry forward and returned funds) than previously. Up through 2003-04, the annual budget was \$120,000, at which time the budget was cut to \$90,000 a year. The Undergraduate Dean supplemented this with a \$10,000 one-time grant to soften the blow so that in 2004-05 the budget amount was \$100,000. Although the exact percentages vary from year to year, it is interesting to note that in 1998-99, 70% of all requests were funded. There has been a clear downward trend and this year only 37% of requests were funded.

Annual Teaching and Learning Symposium

The Committee on Teaching selected the theme “Maintaining Excellence with Growing Classes” for this year’s Symposium. The format and content of the symposium was informed by an online survey conducted by the Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence, Ruth Harris-Barnett. The Symposium began with a plenary session featuring three faculty speakers, followed by five break-out roundtable-style discussions on various topics related to large courses. A resources fair, simultaneous with the break-out session and extending past the end of the sessions, provided demonstrations of technologies useful in large course instruction. The Symposium was attended by about 43 individuals overall.

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 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.

From a pool of 15 eligible nominees COT selected five faculty to receive the Excellence in Teaching Award for 2007-08, and one faculty member to receive the Ron Ruby Award for Teaching Excellence in the Division of Physical and Biological Sciences. In addition, seven nominees were recognized with Honorable Mentions. The remaining two nominees had withdrawn from the competition. Chancellor Blumenthal and COT Chair Elisabeth Cameron presented the awards at a reception held at the University House on May 28, 2008. The recipients were:

- Tandy Beal, Dance Lecturer in the Theater Arts Department
- Walter Campbell, Lecturer in German in the Language Program
- Pascale Garaud, Assistant Professor, Applied Math and Statistics Department
- Wesley Mackey, Lecturer in the Computer Sciences Department
- Jennifer Parker, Assistant Professor in the Art Department
- Daniel R. Palleros, Lecturer in Chemistry

This year, all the awards went to lecturers or assistant professors. In the last ten years, however, 20% of the awards have gone to lecturers, 12% to assistant professors, 13% to associate professors and 56% to professors, leaving the Committee to conclude that this year’s distribution was a fluke.

U.S. Professor of the Year Nomination

COT nominated Ana Marie Seara, lecturer in the Language Program, for the U.S. Professor of the Year program and acknowledged her during the Teaching Awards ceremony on May 28th, 2008.

Course/Instructor Evaluations

Following the work of the Committee on Teaching from previous years, this year's COT continued to pursue an online system for collecting, storing, and analyzing course/instructor evaluations. To that end, COT invited the chair of the Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP) to discuss such a system with the committee. Under the guidance of the director of CTE, Ruth Harris-Barnett, an on-line test project is currently underway.

Advising the Academic Senate

A major task for the Committee on Teaching, as for any Academic Senate Committee, is reading, discussing, and writing formal responses to various documents presented to the Committee by the Academic Senate. These included:

- Graduate Student Role at UC
- Instruction Workload
- International Education Abroad Ad Hoc Committee Report
- Strategic Academic Plan Part A
- Professional School Pre-Proposals (4)
- Remote/Online Instruction
- Creating a UC Cyberinfrastructure
- Implementation of Academic Plan

In reading all of these reports, COT notes that there is a consistent lack of focus or emphasis on teaching. Since teaching is the first item in the mission of this University, we find this trend to be disturbing.

Acknowledgements

The Committee would like to thank Ruth Harris-Barnett, Director for the Center for Teaching Excellence, and Henry Burnett, Director of Media Services, for their invaluable contributions to the Committee. The Committee on Teaching thanks Roxanne Monnet for her many years of expert and exceptional service to the Committee. We thank Tammi Blake for excellent service during the last quarter of the year.

Respectfully submitted,

COMMITTEE ON TEACHING

Doris Ash
Kevin Karplus
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REPRESENTATIVES

Henry Burnett, Director of Media Services
Ruth Harris-Barnett, Director of CTE
Rachel Dewey, NSTF
Carly Friedman, GSA

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