COMMITTEE ON TEACHING
Annual Report 2016-17

To: Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

The Committee on Teaching (COT) met every other week throughout the academic year to conduct business regarding their charge to foster and promote good teaching, to recommend and evaluate methods of assessing teaching performance, and to oversee instructional support services on campus. It was a highly productive year for the committee. Two major themes occupied the committee throughout the year: 1) engaging with the startup of the new Center for Innovations in Teaching and Learning, and 2) working on the student evaluations of teaching (SET) policy. The committee began to explore potential changes in the context of the COT's new purview over SETs granted in the previous academic year. Members discussed possible changes in UCSC SETs in conjunction with replacement of the campus online evaluation system. During the year COT focused on assessing the current state of SETs, and then created a framework for possible change. To this end, the committee gathered input from stakeholders, including conducting a survey of department chairs and provosts, and hosted a town hall event to elicit feedback on a path forward. Finally, we also adjudicated the selection for the annual Excellence in Teaching Awards, and worked on a number of other ad-hoc issues brought before the committee. A brief overview of the committee's notable work in 2016-17 is provided below.

Center for Innovations in Teaching & Learning
From 2014 through 2016, COT dedicated their attention to designing and promoting a proposal for the establishment of a new teaching center at UCSC. In spring of 2016, with strong support of the Academic Senate and VPAA Lee, the previous CP/EVC Galloway agreed to fund COT's proposal to establish the new *Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning* (CITL), beginning in the 2016-2017 academic year. In July 2016 the new center was officially launched, with Professor Jody Greene as its founding director, to revitalize the university's historical commitment to excellence in teaching.

The CITL aims to support all who teach at UCSC—including graduate students, non-senate faculty, and senate faculty—with resources, professional development opportunities, and advocacy for effectively teaching our students with renew focus, which includes a primary commitment to equity and accessibility for all students attending UCSC; a vast body of the latest research on effective teaching and learning at the post-secondary level; and a wide range of educational technologies that can enhance student learning both in the classroom and beyond.

In its first year, CITL consulted widely with multiple constituencies on campus to assess the full range of professional development needs on campus, working especially closely with the Division of Student Success, the Graduate Division, and the Hispanic Serving Institute working group. CITL staff have designed a range of programs that will roll out in 2017-18, including Certificates for graduate students in culturally responsive teaching, teaching with technology and Universal Design; a Faculty Fellows program that, with significant financial

support from units all over campus, will host twenty-two fellows in the inaugural cohort; a Graduate Pedagogy Fellows Program to train TA trainers within two years for each of the forty graduate programs on campus.

Director Green was a sits-with member of the committee and the committee was able to regularly discuss priorities and goals. In addition, an important ongoing goal for COT was to assist in finding ways to help assure that the center will have permanent support after the initial three-year funded period. The committee continues to work toward establishing a structure for collaboration and divided responsibilities between COT and the new CITL, since several of CITL's new functions overlap with COTs current charge. A distinction between leading on policy (COT), and a focus on research and implementation on specific issues (CITL), evolved over the year, facilitated by regular consultation with Director Green, as well as Senate leadership.

Course Evaluation Policy: A Proposed Shift in Goals and Framework
In response to a request by the VPAA, the committee, in conjunction with the Academic Senate, has accepted a new policy role for course evaluation that mirrors the role the Committee on Admissions & Financial Aid plays in the admission process; the Committee on Teaching will lead the effort to create policy on course evaluation for instruction, in consultation with the VPAA and the following Senate committees: Academic Personnel, Affirmative Action and Diversity, Educational Policy, Graduate Council and the Senate Executive.

Together with the pending adoption of a new online course evaluation system, in 2016-17 this new purview presented the committee an opportunity to reassess how teaching is evaluated at UCSC. We were motivated significantly by research-based concerns that current course evaluations may be significantly impacted by gender and other forms of bias. The committee, therefore, agreed to take on holistic evaluation of the use of SET, and work toward a proposal for a shift toward using SETs mainly as tools for improving teaching and learning, as opposed to the primary tools for personnel actions. A shift of this kind, however, raises many specific questions: SETs are a key part of all promotion and personnel actions, and any change from using the course evaluations would require new measures to be used.

In 2016-17, the committee created a framework and draft menu of possible changes, even as the complexity and multi-faceted nature of the undertaking became ever more apparent. COT worked to defining the range of issues and stakeholders, and then to outline options in three key areas discussed below. The committee spent significant time collecting information about different types of course evaluations that are used at other universities to go beyond student evaluations of instruction, assisted by a GSR Mecaila Smith, while CAAD and CITL assisted in sharing research on bias issues. We consulted with the Chair of CAP and CAAD, as well as VPAA and the divisional Deans. In addition, to gather specific feedback on how course evaluations are now used across campus, COT created, distributed, and analyzed a survey of for department chairs and provosts, for which analysis and synthesis activities have continued over the summer.

The committee will spend 2017-18 on developing a concrete set of proposals and meanwhile,

the committee has also been involved with the process for the campus to move to a new online course evaluation system. The new system should be flexible enough to enable the campus to mold it as we move forward with the changes to the student course evaluation.

Specific Discussion Areas Regarding Course Evaluations
The current literature on student evaluations of teaching, compiled by CITL GSR Mecaila Smith, strongly supports considering proposed SET changes. Recent studies have indicated that course ratings and student learning are largely unrelated. A second area of concern related to SETs is bias: students' evaluations of teacher effectiveness are likely influenced by gender, race/ethnicity, age, etc., as well as by characteristics related to the course (e.g. course difficulty and expected grade), as opposed to mainly characteristics related to teaching or learning. Significant research has found that bias against women faculty is particularly significant. These findings call into question student ratings as a measure of teaching effectiveness for faculty personnel actions, especially where student ratings are the primary measure used.

Evaluation Return Rates
One of the main issues that emerged after the campus move from paper to online evaluations was a dramatic drop in evaluation return rate. Research shows that this change is a common issue at other campuses. The committee discussed at length if response rates are pertinent to course evaluations, if response rates are lower, is the outcome of evaluation likely to differ? If response rates are low, there is research to suggest that differing ways of collecting responses can alter results, based on motivation and engagement of students who do respond. At the same time, other research has suggested general statistical guidelines for minimum response thresholds, based on course size. Based on this research, even fairly low response rates may not be problematic in large classes, however low response rates would render evaluations from small classes meaningless.

The committee concluded that while impact of low response rate may be debatable, the best way to increase confidence in SETs is to bolster student response rates, so that faculty can have access to a plurality of voices and perspectives. The campus currently does not have an official practice regarding response rates, which makes it difficult to compare instruction across faculty members.

Members discussed a number of strategies, along with respective pros and cons, to increase response rates including: 1) instructor introductions and contextualization of evaluations, 2) reminder emails to non-respondent students and to instructors, 3) various forms of incentives, ranging from course-specific (e.g., extra credit or participation credit) to prizes or forms of lottery 5) early or delayed grade viewing, and 6) returning to in-class evaluations, via student's devices or computer labs. These discussions made clear there are multiple points of view on many of these possibilities, and many also have technology implications (i.e., dependent on the capabilities of the online course evaluation system, or campus wireless and device access). The committee will be soliciting broad faculty input in its upcoming 2017-2018 survey, and consider these responses before formulating a proposal.

Time-frames for Course Evaluation deployment
The committee also worked on the issue of time frame for the completion of course

evaluations. Some of the issues with the current system include the potential for students who have dropped a course to, nevertheless, fill out an evaluation, and that the traditional ninth-week time frame is typically a time of maximum stress and overwhelming uncertainty for many students, and may not be an ideal time for students to thoughtfully reflect on their courses. Finally, a larger policy question relates to the purview over evaluation time frames: should departments or individual faculty or instructors have control over evaluation time frames, or should they be standardized? It is anticipated that any adjustment to evaluation time frame may also affect return rates.

Response from the faculty at our town hall event was mixed on this subject. Breakout workshops elicited some ambivalence about the current ninth week paradigm. A number of respondents believed that it matters little when the evaluations are given. However, overall there was a sense that the integrity of a course evaluation which considers courses in their completed state was in evidence. The committee will pose specific questions on these specific issues in the second survey which will be circulated to all faculty and instructors this fall.

Other Measures for the Evaluation of Teaching
If the overall proposal to change the main role of SETs on campus were adopted, such that course evaluations primarily will be constructed to assist instructors in improving their own teaching and student learning, this would then require other ways of evaluating teaching for personnel actions. While what exact measures are ultimately used is not within the purview of COT, the committee sought to gather feedback on this issue, since it bears directly on possible changes to current SETs. We assessed other measures currently most commonly in use, as well as faculty opinions on this broader issue, in our town hall, in COT's department survey, and in our upcoming survey to all faculty.

The current UC Academic Personnel Manual[1] (pg 4-5) specifies that each personnel file must include more than one kind of evidence of teaching effectiveness, and lists a wide range of possible forms of evidence. A recent white paper issued by the CITL and available on the CAP website[2] discusses five non-SET forms of evidence for teaching excellence most commonly used now on campus (personal teaching statements, contributions to graduate education, peer observations, syllabi, and statements on diversity).

The results of our town hall event and completed department survey indicated that beyond course evaluations the most widely used "other" measure are personal statements, followed by course syllabi, teaching materials, and some form of teaching observation. However, the use and prioritization of all these varied widely. In our town hall, faculty expressed significant interest in increasing emphasis on some form of peer evaluation, be it direct observation or peer evaluation of submitted course materials. At the same time, there were also reservations about workload and fairness issues with peer evaluations, suggesting that campus-wide guidance in using such measures would be required if they were to be adopted more widely.

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[1] The UC Academic Personnel Manual may be viewed at http://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/_files/apm/apm-210.pdf

[2] The CAP website may be viewed at https://senate.ucsc.edu/committees/cap-committee-on-academic-personnel/evaluation-of-teaching----citl.pdf

Online Course Evaluation Town hall
On April 19, 2017, the committee hosted a town hall event to discuss the potential changes to SETs. The goal of the event was to inform and solicit feedback from faculty, instructors, and graduate students about the potential changes to course evaluations, which will have widespread impact on all faculty, as well as students, potentially shifting how teaching is assessed on our campus. The town hall brought faculty together to discuss and solicit comments and feedback on the upcoming changes to the course evaluations discussed above.

COT Chair, Matthew McCarthy, delivered a brief introduction outlining the committee's research and consultations to date, and the nature of the various changes under consideration. COT members introduced areas of concern that could be addressed in proposed policy changes and presented on the initial findings from the COT's department survey. CAAD Chair, Miriam Greenberg, discussed CAAD's recent efforts to combat implicit bias in student evaluations of teaching, and shared an overview of recent research on the problem and possible ways to lessen the impact of bias on SETs and, by extension, personnel actions. Jody Greene, Director of the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning, shared some of her own research as the first director of the new center, and introduced a number of resources available to instructors offering guidance course development and revision as well as the current and upcoming initiatives of the new CITL to expand these. She underscored the need for investment in professional development to continue the tradition of excellence in teaching at UCSC and to facilitate the incorporation of innovative pedagogical approaches among faculty broadly.

A breakout session following these presentations specific faculty input in four areas: 1) possible Shift in SET function, 2) increasing return rates, 3) evaluation timing, and 4) other measures of evaluation. Input from each of these breakout discussions was synthesized for use in constructing COT's planned 2017-18 faculty survey.

Online Course Evaluation System Replacement
The current online course evaluation (OCE) tool used by UCSC is part of Sakai (a.k.a., eCommons). The campus has embarked on an effort to select a new OCE tool because Sakai will be deprecated in June 2018. Unfortunately, our new Learning Management System, Canvas, does not provide an OCE functionality.

Great effort went into defining campus needs for a new OCE system, and through consultation with faculty, academic leadership and faculty governance, including the COT, the options were narrowed to four finalists. Subsequent to product demos and with input from faculty, the final decision on which product to choose was made by the Acting Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Martin Berger, in early 2017. *What Do You Think* by CollegeNet emerged as the preferred choice. In 2016-17 COT then remained engaged with the Learning Technologies unit in the planning for the initial configuration of this system for its planned rollout. Throughout the summer of 2017, the campus Procurement Department has been engaged in protracted negotiations with CollegeNet who elected to substantially revise the campus's standard terms of the agreement.

Canvas - Learning Management System Updates
In the summer of 2016, the campus moved the management of our Sakai Learning

Management System (LMS) to a stable provider, Longsight. This was followed by a rollout of our new LMS, Canvas, to run concurrently with the Sakai system so that faculty have ample time to migrate their content from the old system to the new. To date, adoption of Canvas has been strong, and the coming academic year will be dedicated to helping faculty migrate their courses into Canvas. COT will play an integral role in getting the word out to faculty on the need to move off of Sakai / eCommons and the strategic importance of using Canvas in the future.

Excellence in Teaching Awards

COT is charged with the administrative oversight of the Excellence in Teaching Awards (ETA). In adjudicating these awards, we look for evidence that the nominee has thought deeply about teaching and learning, and effectively applies that thinking in the classroom. Over five hundred students nominated one hundred different instructors. We see this as evidence of the strong commitment by UCSC faculty and instructors to their students and their teaching.

The criteria for the selection of the ETA winners is student nominations, augmented by statements of teaching philosophy from the finalists, and letters of support from department chairs. All members of the COT weighed in on the selection of the candidates. After much deliberation, the Committee selected seven instructors to receive teaching awards, including the Ron Ruby Award, awarded to a faculty member in the Physical and Biological Sciences Division. An additional four candidates were chosen to receive letters of Honorable Mention. Chancellor Blumenthal presented the awards to the ETA recipients at a luncheon hosted by the Chancellor's Office at the Arboretum. For more information about each recipient, please see the University News & Events about the ETA.[3]

2016-17 Excellence in Teaching Award Recipients
- Subhas Desa
- Andrew Fisher
- Bruno Marinovic
- Leta Miller
- Ruth Murray-Clay - Ron Ruby Teaching Award in Physical & Biological Sciences Division
- Kiva Silver
- John Tamkun

Honorable Mention
- Giulia Centineo
- Kent Eaton
- Sean Keilen
- Wendy Martyna

In addition, provided comments and feedback on various issues to the Academic Senate and other groups on campus, including:
- Classroom Committee

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[3] The University News & Events website may be viewed at https://news.ucsc.edu/2017/06/teaching-awards.html

- ▪ Systemwide Review of Proposed Revision to Lecturer with Security of Employment
- ▪ Managing Curricular Capacity
- ▪ UC Learning Data Privacy Principles & Recommended Practices

Upcoming Agenda for 2017-18
At the end of year, main items discussed by members for the COTs 2017-18 proactive agenda included:

1) Developing a campus course evaluation policy proposal
The committee will begin this process with the deployment of the faculty survey early in fall 2017, which a subcommittee developed and finalize during the summer. We anticipate continue involvement of the VPAA, CITL, CAAD, and CAP. Based on our work this year, in 2017-18 the committee will formulate concrete proposals on both content and mechanics for the revised SETs.

2) Continue Collaborating with Center for Innovations in Teaching and Learning
The committee is eager to continue to collaborate with the CITL in facilitating the teaching agenda on campus, and a goal will be development of a productive working structure for the relationship between COT and CITL. One high priority is working with CITL on "best practices" documents for use of SETs, including both how to treat quantitative SET questions, as well as possibly more specific information on alternate methods of evaluation. The committee hopes to identify early in the year several specific areas for COT/ CITL collaboration, for example working with CITL on a best practices document noted above for departments to use in evaluating SETs.

3) Implementation of the new online course evaluation system
The committee will work with the Faculty Instructional Technology Center on the implementation of the new OCE system, which we anticipate will be initially deployed using existing SETs, and the move to revised SETs after the system is up and running.

Additional topics discussed included updating COTs charge, working with the University Librarian to establish a role for COT in providing a direct faculty voice in how evolution of libraries may affect teaching, and a possible research paper related to the extensive surveys COT has undertaken.

Finally, one area of ongoing concern that we were not able to address this year involves the way in which decisions are made on campus that impact pedagogy without sufficient consideration for the impact on instruction. Examples include the configuration of large lecture halls, movement in some departments to online delivery of courses that degrade the interpersonal teacher/student relationship, and increases in class size due to budget constraints. In particular given the expected deployment of new policy regarding declaring "impacted" status in some departments, COT is concerned that decisions are being made based on student overcrowding and a lack of resources, but do not adequately consider pedagogical issues. We have communicated these concerns to CEP and will hopefully meet with a representative from CEP in the coming year to discuss them further.

Respectfully Submitted;
COMMITTEE ON TEACHING
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