



May 26, 2017

TO: The Academic Senate  
 FROM: Karen Huxtable  
 Chair, Committee on Effective Teaching

SUBJECT: Annual Report of the Committee on Effective Teaching, 2016–2017

**I. Membership**

The membership of the Committee on Effective Teaching consists of:

Karen Huxtable	Chair	(BBS)
Vince Ng	Vice-Chair	(ECS)
Shelby Hibbs	Committee Appointee	(A&H)
Sean McComber	Committee Appointee	(ATEC)
Gregg Dieckmann	Committee Appointee	(NSM)
Galia Cohen	Committee Appointee	(EPPS)
Angela McNulty	Committee Appointee	(IS)
Rebecca Files	Committee Appointee	(JSOM)
Jonathan Schueler	Student Appointee	
Pramukh Sai Atluri	Student Appointee	
Simon Kane	Technical Expert	
Darren Crone	Technical Expert	

RUO  
 Paul Diehl Associate Provost

Ex-Officio members:

Andrew Blanchard	Dean of Undergraduate Education (UG ED)
Marion Underwood	Dean of Graduate Education
Natalie Ring	Associate Dean UG ED (A&H)
Eric Farrar	Associate Dean UG ED (ATEC)
Melanie Spence	Associate Dean UG ED (BBS)
Simeon Ntafos	Associate Dean UG ED (ECS)
Sarah Maxwell	Associate Dean UG ED (EPPS)
Tonja Wissinger	Associate Dean UG ED (IS)
Marilyn Kaplan	Associate Dean UG ED (JSOM)
Dennis Miller	Associate Dean UG ED (NSM)

**II. Meetings**

The committee met 6 times, on October 6, November 15, January 27, February 24, March 24, and April 28. The subcommittees for the Regents’ Outstanding Teaching Awards and the President’s Teaching Awards met separately in January and March.

### III. Actions Taken

1. *The competitions for all University level teaching awards will be managed by the Committee. It will forward its recommendations for award winners to the President.*
  - a. The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) now manages the process of creating award categories (for President and Provost approval), soliciting award nominations, creating awards selection committees, identifying evidence of teaching effectiveness, and running committee meetings. CET was consulted for approval on these guidelines and procedures. CET members are encouraged to promote development of new teaching awards in their schools.
  - b. A subcommittee of four members of CET served on the committees that solicited nominations and selected candidates who were put forward for the ROTA and five President's Faculty and TA Awards.
  
2. At our first planning meeting, committee members expressed concern about students' general levels of preparedness for achieving course goals even in entry-level courses. Students come to campus unprepared for note-taking or identifying the main ideas in a passage of text, lacking life skills and ability to solve their own problems, and generally lacking a common culture. Addressing these deficits in the first year already seems too late.
  - a. CET suggested that CTL develop a workshop to address these issues. In February, Dr. Cirulli Lanham presented a workshop for faculty and TAs called ***They Get Younger Every Year! The challenges of teaching and reaching Millennials.***
  - b. Jonathan Schueler suggested that CET develop a plan to promote informal faculty-student relationships/mentorships to help students feel connected. Various plans for matching volunteer faculty members with groups or lists of students were considered. Members of Student Government have agreed to take on this idea next year and will work with CET to develop a plan.
  
3. *The Committee will receive annual reports from each individual School Committee on Effective Teaching and will facilitate and evaluate the work of the School committees. The Committee will forward the individual School reports and its summary evaluation report annually to the Executive Vice President and Provost (Provost).*
  - a. CET worked with the Provost's Technology Group to send reminders about best practices for end of semester student evaluations of teaching (SET) to all faculty. A number of faculty members responded with concerns about the validity and usefulness of SET. To address these concerns, CTL has received approval from the Provost for a Task Force on SETs for next year.
  - b. We will follow the same procedure for requesting information from the deans as we did last year.

The questions we asked were as follows:

1. Does your school have a standing Teaching Effectiveness Committee? If yes,
  - a. Who appoints the members?
  - b. How often does it meet?
  - c. What is the charge of the committee?
2. Which instructors are evaluated by your school's Teaching Effectiveness Committee?
3. When are the evaluations conducted?
  - a. How often are instructors evaluated if they have priority?
  - b. Are instructors evaluated if they do not have priority (e.g., tenured faculty)? If so, what is the schedule for that?
  - c. How is the evaluation included in or connected to the annual review, third year, and tenure evaluation process?
4. By what methods are instructors evaluated (i.e., which tools, measures, or methods of observation are used)?
  - a. What course materials are examined (e.g., syllabus, exams, assignments, student artifacts)? Please specify.
5. Who conducts the evaluations? How are members of the evaluation committee selected?
6. How are evaluation results communicated to the instructor (i.e., what is the feedback process)? Please indicate timing of feedback and whether it is formative or summative.

Responses from the Deans or their designees are attached, as received throughout the spring semester (Appendix A). Replies were received from BBS, IS, JSOM, ATEC, EPPS, and NSM.

4. *The Committee will create and refine procedures for the training of and monitoring of the teaching effectiveness of graduate teaching assistants.*
  - a. CET members agreed to suggest more intensive and targeted orientation sessions for graduate TAs in August within their schools. CTL will work closely with ATEC, AH, and NSM to develop their TA orientations and follow-up programming.
5. *The Committee will receive complaints about and requests for improvements in the teaching environments on campus and pass on recommendations for improvements to the University administration.*
  - a. A complaint was made by Dr. Angela McNulty about Classroom Buildings 1 and 2. Ongoing problems with dead rodents and larger animals and the resulting smell has caused a sometimes overwhelming bad smell. This concern was immediately forwarded to the Academic Council and Senate.
6. *The Committee will encourage and review the funding of projects in the use of new technology and new teaching methods, both on campus and by transmission to*

*remote sites. It will also advise the University administration and Academic Senate on ways to ease the transition to "the high tech classroom."*

- a. We have forwarded the existing rubric used for peer evaluation of online teaching to Dr. Darren Crone. His team will review the form and make recommendations, if needed, for modification or for how it may be used most effectively.
7. *As part of the general requirement to improve awareness of new ideas and new technologies, the Committee will occasionally invite renowned speakers to give seminars on campus.*
    - a. CET suggested that CTL invite cognitive psychologist Dr. Stephen Chew to offer faculty and TA workshops in February. These were very well received. Next year's speakers will include Robert Duke, Linda Hodges, Jay Howard, and Therese Huston.
  8. Committee members expressed concern about providing greater support for Lecturers. Committee members suggested that UT Rio Grande Valley and Richland Community College both offer good models that we can examine for ideas. Similarly, we can look into providing greater support for faculty of all ranks who are new to UTD, and consider providing regular opportunities for interaction among faculty across schools.
    - a. A Lecturer Needs Survey will be created and distributed by CTL to identify what supportive programming lecturers would welcome as well as when and how it should be offered. An essential aspect of distributing this survey will be identifying and continually updating the names and schools of all part-time and full-time Lecturers. CET members agreed that this also will be handled by CTL.

#### **IV. Recommendations for Following Year**

1. Student participation in this committee is valued, but students appointed by SGA do not always attend CET meetings. Next year and in the future, CET will request replacement representatives if students' schedules interfere with their ability to participate.
2. Other CET members have expressed a desire to participate in all meetings, but scheduling sometimes interferes with classes and other obligations. This is the case for committee appointees and for associate deans. Now that CTL has meeting space in the library, CET will meet on the first Friday of every month from 12-1pm. Lunch will be provided by CTL.

#### **V. Appendices**

**Responses from BBS, IS, JSOM, ATEC, NSM, and EPPS are appear below.  
Responses were not received from ECS nor AH.**

## BBS

1. Does your school have a standing Teaching Effectiveness Committee? *Yes*
  - a. Who appoints the members? *As specified in the BBS Bylaws (approved 9/5/14) the Dean appoints the Chair of the Teaching Effectiveness Committee, and the Dean appoints the other members of the TEC in consultation with the Chair. appoint is appointed each year by the Dean, and members of the committee will be appointed by the Dean in consultation with the Chair for one year terms, renewable.*
  - b. How often does it meet? *Face-to-face meetings are scheduled as needed; in recent years the committee has agreed to conduct most of its meetings via email, to reduce the travel burden for members housed primarily in locations other than on the main campus in Richardson.*
  - c. What is the charge of the committee? *The TEC is charged with conducting systematic evaluations of teaching to be communicated to the faculty member and relevant administrators. The TEC prioritizes evaluations to ensure that evaluations of T and TT faculty are available in the early fall of the year of their promotion review.*
  
2. Which instructors are evaluated by your school's Teaching Effectiveness Committee? *Instructors at all levels can be and have been evaluated by the TEC, but evaluations of T and TT instructors have priority, as described below.*
  
3. When are the evaluations conducted? *The TEC schedules evaluations of T and TT faculty according to those who will be reviewed for promotion the following year to ensure that at least two teaching evaluations are available for inclusion in the candidate's portfolio at the time of the promotion review.*
  - a. How often are instructors evaluated if they have priority? *At least twice in the year prior to their review.*
  - b. Are instructors evaluated if they do not have priority (e.g., tenured faculty)? If so, what is the schedule for that? *Review of tenured faculty is not conducted on a set schedule, but rather is contingent on the need for such reviews and the number of other priority reviews being conducted in a given year.*
  - c. How is the evaluation included in or connected to the annual review, third year, and tenure evaluation process? *Evaluation reports (co-signed by the TEC member and the faculty member, who may add comments prior to signing the report) are disseminated to BBS associate deans and to the head of the faculty member's BBS area; reports also*

*are included in the portfolios of T and TT candidates for review and/or promotion for consideration by the ad hoc promotion review committee.*

4. By what methods are instructors evaluated (i.e., which tools, measures, or methods of observation are used)? *In October of 2014, the TEC voted in favor of a proposal by its Chair at that time, Professor and Associate Dean Marion Underwood, to conduct classroom observations using one of two forms required by the UT System Regents; I've attached these (Example A: "Peer Observation for Formative Assessment of Teaching" and Example B: "Classroom Observation Form"). After completing the observation form the observer and instructor meet within a few weeks to discuss and co-sign the form (with additional comments from the instructor if requested).*

a. What course materials are examined (e.g., syllabus, exams, assignments, student artifacts)? Please specify. *Observers review syllabi posted on Coursebook and also request materials such as exams, assignments, and slides presented during class sessions.*

5. Who conducts the evaluations? How are members of the evaluation committee selected? *The Chair and members of the TEC consult to distribute an equal number of evaluation assignments to each member of the TEC, based on factors including availability, interest, and avoiding having more than one report by a single observer.*

6. How are evaluation results communicated to the instructor (i.e., what is the feedback process)? Please indicate timing of feedback and whether it is formative or summative. *Feedback is formative and is provided in a face-to-face meeting between the instructor and the evaluator. At this meeting they review the printed copy of the evaluation report and discuss or clarify the evaluator's comments. The instructor then has the opportunity to add comments to the report, after which the instructor and the evaluator sign and date the report.*

## **School of Interdisciplinary Studies Committee on Effective Teaching Report**

4/19/17

Submitted by Erin Smith, Chair

The School of Interdisciplinary Studies (IS) has a standing Teaching Effectiveness Committee. It was convened in the fall of 2013 as the Peer Teaching Evaluation Committee to establish a system for annual peer observations / assessments of teaching. The 5 members (from IS and the Teacher Development Center) volunteered for service on the committee at a School faculty meeting. The committee was charged with researching systems of peer evaluation at other institutions, creating a program for peer observation/assessment, producing a training/orientation presentation about the assessment process, and piloting the program in the spring of 2014. The committee met four times in the fall of 2014, twice in the spring of 2014, and roughly once a year since then to maintain / assess the program. The program of annual observations continues, with changes to accommodate feedback from participants.

Evaluations involve every participating instructor being observed by a peer once a year and also serving as a peer observer for a colleague once a year. Most observations occur during the spring semester. This system spreads the work and time commitment necessary to do good assessment widely, rather than concentrating it in the hands of a few committee members. In addition, it gives all participating instructors a sense of ownership and investment in the process. Most observers report that they learn as much from the process as the instructor being observed. They also find that the time commitment to do one observation each year is reasonable.

Participation in the peer evaluation program is voluntary for everyone—tenured, tenure-track, and full-time non-tenure track. We put all instructors (that is, T and NTT) in the same pool because of the small number of faculty in IS. Assignments of peer observers are based on schedules, content areas, and disciplines (the approaches and methodologies of Interdisciplinary Studies instructors range widely). These assignments change each year. The committee chair informally accommodates instructors' concerns about awkward collegial relationships (based on rank or friendships, for example). We cast these annual peer observations/assessments as one part of a larger teaching portfolio that might include student evaluations, self-evaluations, voluntary additional peer observations, videotaped classes, statements of teaching philosophy, etc.

The observations/assessments involve: (1) a brief pre-observation meeting the week before the mutually agreed-upon class to observe; (2) the classroom observation; and (3) a post-observation meeting to discuss the written report of the classroom observation. By mutual agreement, the pre- and post-observation meetings can be by phone or skype. Observers are required to use one of two University-approved forms (Form A or Form B), although many chose to add additional materials (most commonly a narrative of what they observed in the class).

At the pre-observation meeting, the instructor provides the syllabus, course readings and materials for that day of class, and discusses any pedagogic challenges or concerns. Observers do not assess student artifacts or exams, although they do have copies of all assignments and course materials for the class period observed.

Post-observation meetings involve a brief discussion of the written report of the class observation, which the instructor receives at least 24 hours before the meeting. These meetings occur in the week following the observation. Both instructor and observer sign

the report, and it is submitted to the Dean's office. Instructors who wish to append a response or additional materials are encouraged to do so. These reports and discussion are largely formative—that is, feedback to guide improvement in teaching. However, instructors can include these reports in their portfolios for promotion, where they serve a more summative purpose as evidence of teaching excellence.

Peer observations/assessments were required in the spring of 2014 (12 IS instructors participated), and participation was voluntary in subsequent years. 6 instructors participated in 2016-17. Although participation is voluntary, lecturers who wish to apply for promotion are required to submit peer observations from the prior two years as part of their portfolios. Tenure-track and tenured faculty evaluations as part of third-year, tenure, and promotion reviews are separate from this peer observation system, and are undertaken by two members of the review/promotion committee (mostly tenured faculty from Schools outside IS). Observation/assessment reports are reviewed by the Dean as part of the annual review process.

At the urging of the Center for Teaching and Learning, Interdisciplinary Studies is setting up an award for teaching excellence, to be awarded for the first time in the 2017-18 school year. A 4-person committee of volunteers was formed at a February faculty meeting to establish the application process and criteria for the award. That committee had its first meeting in April of 2017 and is circulating a proposal to the larger faculty this spring.

**JSOM**

1. Does your school have a standing Teaching Effectiveness Committee? Yes

a. Who appoints the members?

The Dean

b. How often does it meet?

Once or twice in fall and once in spring.

c. What is the charge of the committee?

This is a SOM standing faculty committee which reviews the quality of teaching in the School's programs and makes recommendations for improvement. It is also responsible for the selection of the School's annual Teaching Excellence Award recipients.

2. Which instructors are evaluated by your school's Teaching Effectiveness Committee?

Faculty that are being evaluated for promotion and faculty that are nominated for teaching awards. Those nominated for teaching awards are recommended by the Area Coordinator and students.

3. When are the evaluations conducted?

a. How often are instructors evaluated if they have priority?

Candidates for promotion have classroom evaluations done twice by two different above rank faculty. All others are evaluated by the Area Coordinator and Dean during annual evaluations. Primary information used is student evaluations, class size and type of course taught.

b. Are instructors evaluated if they do not have priority (e.g., tenured faculty)? If so, what is the schedule for that?

Classroom evaluations are conducted as they are needed, i.e, if we identify issues with a particular instructor/course that require further attention. Evaluations are done annually using student evaluations, class size and type of course taught.

c. How is the evaluation included in or connected to the annual review, third year, and tenure evaluation process?

Classroom evaluations are considered in the evaluation of teaching in the third year, tenure and full professor promotion cases.

4. By what methods are instructors evaluated (i.e., which tools, measures, or methods of observation are used)?

a. What course materials are examined (e.g., syllabus, exams, assignments, student artifacts)? Please specify.

The committee evaluates teaching based on student evaluations and comments, course syllabi, diversity of courses taught and periodic classroom evaluations.

5. Who conducts the evaluations? How are members of the evaluation committee selected?

- Above rank faculty conducts classroom observations and evaluations. Members of evaluation committee are selected by the chair of the committee in consultation with the area coordinator.
6. How are evaluation results communicated to the instructor (i.e., what is the feedback process)? Please indicate timing of feedback and whether it is formative or summative.

Classroom evaluations are communicated back to the instructor via the forms provided by the Provost's office for documenting classroom evaluation. Annual evaluations of teaching are communicated back to the faculty again using the forms for annual evaluations.

**ATEC**

Hello Karen,

I'm trying to find answers to the questions. As you now, ATEC is a new school, and many policies and procedures are not yet in place or well established. I've asked on of the ATEC Associate Deans to fill in what ever information we have. I'm hoping by next year we will be able to borrow and implement some of the best practices that your committee identifies.

Anne Balsamo

**NSM**

Dear Karen,

I had thought I had already answered this email. Unfortunately, as it stands currently, we do not have a committee on teaching effectiveness. This will be rectified in the near future.

bruce

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## EPPS

1. At the moment we have no TEC. At the current time there is nothing in our bylaws that requires one, but we plan to change the bylaws to require such a committee. We did have a functioning TEC at one time from the late 1990s to about 2010, however as the faculty in EPPS expanded it became impossible for the members of the TEC to keep pace with evaluations. For that reason, the work of the committee was delegated to the program heads (see below). As we recognize the need to reestablish a TEC for EPPS, we will examine what we consider to be best practices of those Schools currently operating with a TEC and consult with them as necessary. However, in order to avoid similar problems as experienced in the past, we expect the program heads will continue to play a lead role.
2. NA
3. NA
4. Even though we do not have a TEC, we do conduct regular evaluations of faculty. These evaluations are done through the regular third year and promotion and tenure process whereby members of the third year and p and t committees evaluate the in-class performance of instructors through classroom visits, and assessment of teaching performance using subjective observational assessment. Similar assessments are performed by the individual program heads for selected instructors, including a mix of senior lecturer, tenure-track and tenured faculty done on a yearly basis as part of the annual performance review. The evaluations are conducted by at or above rank faculty of colleagues, with those conducting the evaluations selected by the program head in consultation with the associate program head and faculty. All results are communicated in writing and in person to the instructor or faculty member being reviewed.
5. See Number 4 above
6. See Number 4 above

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