

2019 Recommendations from Provost's
Advisory Council on Instructional
Excellence *and* Subsequent Activities

An Update for the Senate
Educational Policies Committee

Assoc Vice Provost Cynthia Golden
Vice Provost Laurie Kirsch
18 May 2020

Advisory Council Members 2019-20

- **Laurie Kirsch (Chair)**, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, Development, and Diversity
- **Neal Benedict**, Associate Professor, Department of Pharmacy and Therapeutics, School of Pharmacy
- **Jim Coyle**, Professor, Department of Communication Science and Disorders, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
- **Bonnie Falcione**, Associate Professor, Department of Pharmacy and Therapeutics, School of Pharmacy, Co-Chair, Senate Educational Policies Committee
- **Paul Gartside**, Professor, Department of Mathematics, Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences
- **Cynthia Golden**, Assoc. Vice Provost and Exec. Director, University Center for Teaching and Learning
- **Giselle Hamad**, Professor, Department of Surgery, School of Medicine
- **Jana Iverson**, Professor, Department of Psychology, Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences
- **Andrew Lotz**, Lecturer II, Department of Political Science, Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences
- **Zhi-Hong Mao**, Professor, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Swanson School of Engineering
- **Mary Ohmer**, Associate Professor, School of Social Work
- **William Pamerleau**, Professor, Division of Humanities, University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg
- **Charles Perfetti**, Director, Learning Research and Development Center
- **Jennifer Russell**, Associate Professor, Department of Learning Sciences & Policy, School of Education
- **Taylor Seybolt**, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs
- **Alan Sved**, Professor, Department of Neuroscience, Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences
- **Lu-in Wang**, Professor, School of Law
- **Brett Wells**, Senior Lecturer, Department of French & Italian Languages and Literatures, Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences

Charge to the Council in Fall 2018

“...provide recommendations to me and to the Teaching Center about expanding the ways in which we as a university assess teaching. Research suggests that experimenting with additional ways of measuring and assessing teaching, beyond student opinion surveys, can be valuable and help instructors to improve and refine their teaching practices.”

-- Provost Ann Cudd

Historical Context

- Assessment of Teaching has been required as far back as 1994: “ensure that regular student and peer evaluation of teaching policies are implemented.”
- Office of Measurement and Evaluation of Teaching (OMET) administers student surveys. Use of OMET’s services is not mandatory, but gathering some form of student input is.
- Practices for assessing teaching vary by academic unit.
- Governance and practices surrounding the implementation and use of student surveys vary by academic unit.
- OMET moved surveys to online administration in 2013.
- Assessment of Teaching and Student Surveys have been a frequent agenda item for SEPC, Student Government, OTP and the Teaching Center over last several years.

Council Process

- Invited guest speakers from Nursing, Engineering, and Teaching Center
- Benchmarked other institutions
- Considered research findings
- Discussed value and importance of assessment to faculty and to students, as well as own experiences and perspectives
- Developed recommendations
- Submitted report to Provost in Summer 2019
- Met with Provost Cudd in October 2019

Moving Forward

- Provost Cudd letter of 4 November 2019 to ACIE: *“I am pleased to accept the report and its basic recommendation to ask the deans of the Schools and presidents of the regional campuses to work with their faculty to develop action plans for their units to be submitted to me. I also endorse your guiding principles....”*
- Provost shared report with COD
- COD discussed recommendations in detail at retreat on 10 January 2020
- Second COD discussion at meeting on 30 January 2020, during which COD endorsed guiding principles and recommendations **with requested clarifications or elaborations noted in blue on next slides**

Guiding Principles

- A culture of continuous improvement that recognizes the value of a multi-faceted assessment process should be a central component of the teaching practice of all academic units
- Assessment efforts should focus on pursuing excellence, at the individual and unit levels
- Recognize the value of student input
- Use multiple forms of assessment, including input from students and from peers
- Discipline-specific implementations will be needed. Approaches may vary for faculty at different career stages, and for full-time and part-time faculty. Units need flexibility to design their own assessment approaches
- Faculty engagement is critical

7 Specific Recommendations

1. Each academic unit will develop its own processes, criteria and an **action plan** for evaluating teaching performance
 - a) Consult Teaching Center staff
 - b) Submit plan to OTP for approval **no later than 31 December 2020 with an implementation target of no later than Fall 2021**
2. Required assessment data:
 - a) Student input (all levels)
 - b) Input from faculty colleagues
 - c) Representative teaching materials
 - d) Self-assessment

Specific Recommendations

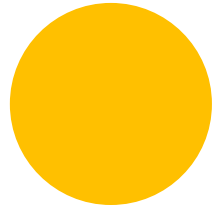
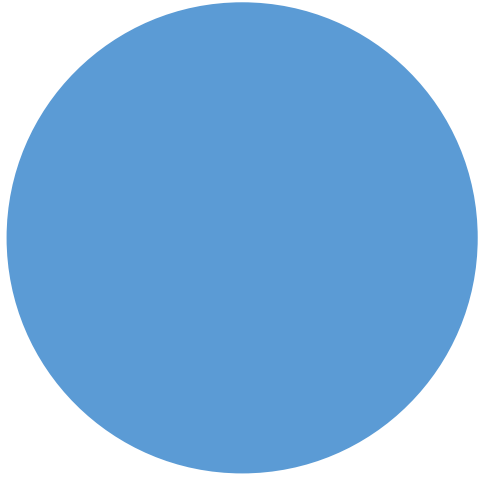
3. Plan should describe how faculty were engaged in the process as well as future engagement
4. Teaching Center will provide resources (sample plans, effective practices) and consulting. Teaching Center will also facilitate engagement across units to promote awareness, learning, and sharing of best practices
5. Work to raise faculty awareness about student surveys (how to use input, get high response rates, educate on potential for bias). Teaching Center will work with units to standardize small set of questions (e.g., Dietrich School model), allowing units to add additional questions

Specific Recommendations

6. Develop guidance for faculty about teaching expectations and use of assessment data to be included in annual reviews, in dossiers for tenure (for TS faculty), and for promotion (for T/TS/AS faculty)
 - Units should clarify specific requirements for evidence of teaching effectiveness to be submitted as part of annual review documentation and as part of promotion and tenure dossiers. This includes determining whether each course or a subset of courses taught by an instructor should be evaluated by students, the frequency of gathering input from colleagues, etc.
7. All deans and campus presidents should be given access to their school or campus Student Opinion of Teaching Survey results. This includes quantitative and qualitative responses.

Next Steps

- Senate Educational Policies Committee
- Faculty Assembly
- Provost memo to formally document charge, process, expectations, and required actions



Thank You!

