

Davis Division of the Academic Senate
Staff Summary of Responses
Recognizing Teaching Work Group Report

Overall, committees support initiatives that recognize and reward teaching and endorse all efforts to improve the quality of undergraduate education at UC Davis and reward faculty for teaching.

There were three main concerns with the report:

1. How to best evaluate teaching: student evaluations, peer evaluations, or awards

The fair evaluation of a teaching record for merit action is more challenging than a research or service record. CAP acknowledged that “more needs to be done to standardize the metrics for evaluating and documenting teaching records so that outstanding performance and effort are properly and justifiably encouraged and rewarded.”

Committees saw value in both student and peer evaluations. CAP expressed concern that asking all students in a class to provide an evaluation is flawed, as students who do not regularly attend the class make the “resultant evaluation a less accurate reflection of teaching effectiveness and performance.”

It is not clear to UGC whether the three suggested student evaluation questions would yield information beyond what can be obtained via validated questionnaires. Students may endorse components of the course that they like, but this does not prove whether the students advanced their knowledge of the subject.

Graduate Council advocated for a reassessment of the weight placed on student evaluations, and a potential expansion of peer evaluation of faculty teaching. Conversely, L&S FEC argued that more awards and team-based peer evaluations would take up faculty time with the possibility of little value or reward.

Response was mixed regarding the importance of awards when evaluating teaching. According to UGC, standards and procedures for peer review of teaching should be clarified and colleges should establish additional teaching awards. On the other hand, Graduate Council thought some other mechanisms for recognition besides awards should be explored, noting that it is not a realistic expectation for a large number of faculty members who do excel in teaching or mentoring to win these awards.

2. The importance of focusing on and mentoring junior faculty

Because the enhanced peer review will increase the workload for faculty, the Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC) recommends focusing predominantly on mentoring junior faculty.

Graduate Council noted more attention should be paid to addressing graduate student teaching, mentoring, and thesis/dissertation supervision. Assessment of the quality and success of these critical activities, as well as the uniformity or lack thereof, and other related graduate education topics, require careful consideration for inclusion in merit and promotion dossiers.

UGC did not endorse the suggestion that assistant professors should be singled out for additional scrutiny and noted that involving undergraduates in research should be recognized, as should mentoring and innovation in teaching.

3. The importance of teaching in the merit and promotions process

There was consensus that excellence in teaching should be rewarded in the merit and promotion process. However, FWC noted that CAP “needs a constant reminder of the value of teaching as part of the merit [and] promotion process,” while CAP stated that recommendations for CAP and FPC have already been the practice for CAP for the past few years. According to CAP, FPC may need to be reminded that they need to follow similar guidelines when the teaching performance is weighted in merit actions.

Enclosure:

Response Report: Recognizing Teaching Work Group Report



Davis Division Academic Senate

Request for Consultation Responses

Recognizing Teaching Work Group Report

April 10, 2014

Earlier this year, Chair Nachtergaele asked a group of Senate members to serve on the Recognizing Teaching Work Group. The work group's report "Counting Teaching in Merits and Promotions" is now available for review. Chair Nachtergaele is requesting committee review and feedback before any further action is initiated. He will also be discussing the report during the March 13th Executive Council Meeting.

Affirmative Action & Diversity

April 11, 2014 9:39 AM

While the report mentions that "The importance of rewarding efforts to promote diversity is made explicit in APM. 210-1.d-(1), which states: "Teaching, research, professional and public service contributions that promote diversity and equal opportunity are to be encouraged and given recognition in the evaluation of the candidate's qualifications."", it would be more impactful if there was an explicit suggestion that CAP and FPC's consider faculty efforts to develop courses and materials that promote diversity in teaching as one mode of achieving accelerated actions. In addition to teaching awards, other activities such as receipt of the "Provost's fellowship for diversity in teaching" might be added as evidence of outstanding efforts in teaching.

CAP Oversight Committee

March 21, 2014 1:19 PM

Response continued on next page.

Recognizing Teaching Workgroup Report

The Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP) reviewed the Recognizing Teaching Workgroup Report and appreciated the mission and the effort of the Workgroup. CAP has the following comments on the recommendations in this report.

1. Student evaluation as it is presently done is a valuable source of information on the teaching performance of faculty members, at least for CAP. The proposed inclusion of three additional questions that require more substantial writing by the students on the teaching effectiveness and performance is a good idea and can be accomplished if the evaluation is done online instead of in class. However, the proposal to require all students of a class to provide their respective evaluation is seriously flawed as the evaluations provided by those students who do not regularly attend the class make the resultant evaluation a less accurate reflection of teaching effectiveness and performance.
2. Substantial and standardized peer evaluations based on (with suitable modification for each college or program) the template included in this report are good idea.
3. The recommendations for CAP and FPC have already been the practice for CAP for the past few years. CAP may need to remind FPC that they need to follow similar guidelines when the teaching performance is weighted in merit actions.
4. CAP recognizes that compared with the evaluation of research and service records, a "quantitative" and fair evaluation of a teaching record for merit action is more challenging. More needs to be done to standardize the metrics for evaluating and documenting teaching records so that outstanding performance and effort are properly and justifiably encouraged and rewarded.

Council of School & College Faculty Chairs (LS: SOC SCI)

April 7, 2014 6:12 PM

At today's meeting of the L&S Executive we discussed this report. We have no strong objections to it, but our impression was that, in our departments, teaching is both appreciated and of high quality. This is evident in student evaluations (both numerical and written), in faculty members' syllabuses and SmartSites, and in their statements of teaching philosophy and methods in their merit/ promotion packets. The report advocates more awards, more team-based peer evaluations, etc., which would take up faculty time, possibly for very little value. But having a report that celebrates teaching is all right with us. It's unlikely to do much damage.

Faculty Welfare

March 19, 2014 10:40 AM

The FWC supports all initiatives to recognize the value of, and reward, teaching accomplishments. The committee supports the targeted recommendations in this report, in particular increasing the visibility of teaching through more prestigious awards. Because the enhanced peer review will increase the workload for faculty, the committee recommends focusing predominantly on mentoring junior faculty. Most importantly, CAP needs a constant reminder of the value of teaching as part of the merit/promotion process. Official recognition and reward for excellent teaching is the most effective tool to encourage all faculty to improve their teaching skills.

Graduate Council

April 11, 2014 12:49 PM

Response continued on next page.

April 10, 2014

RFC: Recognizing Teaching Work Group Report

The Graduate Council accepted the recommendations of the Academic Planning and Development (APD) Committee in consideration of the above-mentioned Academic Senate Request for Consultation (AS RFC).

The Graduate Council accepted the recommendations, as follows, from the APD Committee.

The APD appreciated the thought and effort that went into making the report, and the thorough consideration of ways of documenting undergraduate teaching. APD noted more attention should be paid to addressing graduate student teaching, mentoring, and thesis/dissertation supervision. Assessment of the quality and success of these critical activities, as well as the uniformity or lack thereof, and other related graduate education topics, require careful consideration for inclusion in merit and promotion dossiers. One example activity is evaluating the effectiveness of mentoring regarding preparation for Qualifying Exams. APD also discussed the need for a reassessment of the weight placed on student evaluations, and a potential expansion of peer evaluation of faculty teaching.

APD agreed that teaching and mentoring excellence should be duly recognized within accelerated merit and promotion decisions, with documentation of formal recognition such as teaching and mentoring awards; but also adds that for normative merits and promotions (and even accelerations), some other mechanisms for recognition besides awards should be explored. It is not a realistic expectation for a large number of faculty members who do excel in teaching or mentoring, or have such aspirations, to win these awards. Sufficient motivations should also be provided for this larger set of faculty members.

The Graduate Council submits the APD committee's comments, as accepted by consensus, as the Council's assessment of the "Recognizing Teaching Work Group Report" RFC.

Sincerely,



Rachael E. Goodhue, Chair
Graduate Council

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C: Gina Anderson, Academic Senate Executive Director

Undergraduate Council

March 26, 2014 10:05 AM

UGC Response to the Teaching Work Group Report

Undergraduate Council congratulates the Teaching Work Group on their report detailing recommendations to increase the University's commitment to effective teaching. UGC strongly endorses any and all efforts to improve the quality of undergraduate education at UC Davis and to reward faculty for teaching well.

UGC endorses the following recommendations:

1. Involving undergraduates in research should be recognized, as should mentoring and innovation in teaching.
2. Standards and procedures for peer review of teaching should be clarified.
3. The UC Senate should discuss procedures for course evaluations.
4. Colleges should establish additional teaching awards.
5. Excellence in teaching should be rewarded in the merit and promotion process.

In terms of specific proposals, UGC has concerns about the following:

1. "Suggestions include having the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning do assessments, measuring learning outcomes, reviewing both curriculum development and the incorporation of innovative teaching methods."

While UGC agrees that CETL should assist faculty in developing assessment tools. However, the Senate should not transfer authority to review faculty to the administration.

2. Assistant Professors Should be Evaluated more often; and by more than one faculty member.

UGC does not endorse the suggestion that assistant professors should be singled out for additional scrutiny.

3. "Teaching evaluation forms should include these three questions:

1. What did you like best (or: find most effective) about this course (include both class and labs/sections)?

2. What did you like least (or: find least effective) about this course, and what suggestions do you have for improving it?

3. What did you find most challenging?"

UGC believes that individual programs should design course assessment metrics that best suit their individual needs. UGC encourages programs to adopt validated course evaluation questionnaires. It is not clear that these three questions would yield information beyond what can be obtained via validated questionnaires. Students may endorse components of the course that they like, but which are not particularly useful in terms of advancing their knowledge of a subject.

4. Buyouts from teaching should be limited.

UGC does not support limits on course reductions that allow faculty to pursue research or service."

