THE COMMITTEE ON TEACHING

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES: 2013-14

The Committee on Teaching is broadly charged with

1) stimulating and aiding campus academic departments in strengthening their efforts to foster, recognize, and reward good teaching;

2) initiating, receiving, and funding proposals for teaching and instructional improvement and development;

3) undertaking activities to improve teaching and learning on the campus;

4) studying problems concerning the improvement of teaching on the campus and its recognition through promotion and tenure, and making appropriate recommendations to the Berkeley Division.

To fulfill these charges, the Committee consults on a number of grant programs, recognizes excellence in teaching through the Distinguished Teaching Awards, co-hosts ceremonies to promote interest in and awareness of good teaching, co-sponsors workshops and discussions on teaching practices, and makes recommendations to improve teaching and the climate for teaching on the Berkeley campus.

Once again this year, the committee carried out its work via two sub-committees. A DTA subcommittee worked solely on the DTA selection and nomination process. A Policy subcommittee worked on the evaluation of teaching effectiveness, electronic Course Evaluations, and online education.

Grant Programs

In 2013-14, the Committee on Teaching continued its consultation on the campus's Instructional Improvement Grant program. The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) administered the grant program without deadlines, accepting applications on a rolling basis between August 14, 2013, and May 9, 2014.

*Instructional Improvement Grants* provide rapid access to modest funds (up to $3000) for small-scale projects to improve existing courses, develop new courses, evaluate instruction, and assess curricular needs. In 2013-14, 38 applications requesting $70,192 were received from faculty for course and curriculum improvements; 34 or 90%, of the applicants were awarded full or partial funding, with a total of $60,060 distributed.
Distinguished Teaching Awards

Each year, the Committee solicits and reviews nominations for faculty Distinguished Teaching Awards (DTA) for approval by the Divisional Council. This year the Committee nominated who subsequently received the award. Those three faculty members are: Eugene Chiang (Astronomy, Earth & Planetary Science), Munis Faruqui (South and Southeast Asian Studies), and Ron Hassner (Political Science).

The selection of DTA nominees is a two-stage process. In stage one, during fall semester, departments initiate nominations by submitting a brief nominating letter, a chronological list of courses taught during the last eight semesters of residence, a summary of teaching evaluations, and raw data from student evaluations in representative recent courses. Following a full review by the Committee, approximately 1/3 of the candidates are then selected for stage two. Additional documentation is required at this stage, and following a pre-arranged schedule, each finalist is observed in a classroom or lab setting by at least two members of the Committee on Teaching. The award recipients are announced later in the spring.

Ceremonies and Events

On April 23, 2014, the Committee again hosted the campus Teaching Awards ceremony at Zellerbach Playhouse. At that ceremony, recipients of 2014 Distinguished Teaching Awards were honored. The Committee hosted the reception that immediately followed the Teaching Awards ceremony.

Dialogues: A Colloquium Series on Teaching

Co-sponsored with the Center for Teaching and Learning, a series of four campus dialogues around important teaching and learning issues were held throughout the year. Guest facilitators included: Alan Schoenfeld (Mathematics Education); Steve Tollefson (College Writing Programs); Philip Stark, Elizabeth Purdom, Cari Kaufman (Statistics) and Gary Firestone, (Molecular and Cell Biology, COT); and Ula Taylor (African American Studies). Topics ranged from how students think, to evaluating student writing, to peer observation of teaching, to mentoring faculty.

Online Education at Berkeley

The Committee reviewed its findings from the guests who visited with the Committee last year. Based on the status of online education and the needs of our faculty, the COT intends to use the findings from last year to begin crafting a living resource document for faculty that pulls together campus-wide information about online education (i.e., how to get involved, finances and costs, examples from other Berkeley faculty, intellectual property issues). This project will continue into next year.

Evaluation of Teaching
The Committee continued its work that emerged from the Statistics pilot of peer observation of teaching. Extending that work, the Committee drafted a document recommending a teaching dossier be developed to support the case for one’s teaching effectiveness at specific steps (midcareer, tenure, full). It presented versions of the report to DIVCO and the Academic Senate Chair. Revised versions were shared with the Academic Senate Chair, BIR, and CEP for additional feedback before another DIVCO meeting.

**Online Evaluation of Courses**

Educational Technology Services (ETS) continued to utilize the expertise of the Committee in reaching out for feedback on the questions and question banks developed for the electronic course evaluations initiative. The Committee provided ongoing input on the questions and question banks, and in the future, the Center for Teaching and Learning will confer with the COT on question and question bank revisions based on questions/concerns expressed by departments in administering the electronic Course Evaluations.

**Committee Representation**

Representatives of the COT sat on the following external campus committees:
- Online Evaluation of Courses Steering Committee
- Facilities and Management Committee
- Center for Teaching and Learning Special Faculty Advisors
- LMS Steering Committee (for the new bCourses)

**The Future**

In 2014-2015 the Committee will continue to consult with the Center for Teaching and Learning on several of its programs (including the Instructional Improvement Grants, Presidential Chair Fellows program); it will again select nominees for the Distinguished Teaching Award.

The Committee also intends to continue co-sponsoring teaching related events (like Dialogues), as well as work related to the recommendations for a teaching dossier as part of the review process, and online education resources for faculty. The Committee is interested in designing and conducting research to evaluate the impact of the teaching dossier.

The Committee on Teaching welcomes suggestions about its mission and activities from members of the campus community.

Respectfully submitted,

Karl Britto, French & Comparative Literature
Cindy Cox, Music
Gary Firestone, ESPM
Satish Rao, EECS
Ole Hald, Mathematics
Glynda Hull, Education (Chair)
Edward Miguel, Economics
Juan Pestana, CEE
Eileen Lacey, IB
Karen Feldman, German

Xiao Peng, Undergraduate
Ruvani Fonseka, Graduate

Richard Freishtat, Staff Representative