



May 1, 2017

THE COMMITTEE ON TEACHING REPORT OF ACTIVITIES: 2016-2017

This Committee has at least five Senate members, of which a minimum of two should be past recipients of the Distinguished Teaching Award, and two student members, one undergraduate and one graduate.

Duties

1. Encourage and aid departments to strengthen their efforts to foster, recognize, and reward good teaching;
2. Nominate members of the Faculty for approval by the Divisional Council to receive Distinguished Teaching Awards and other awards as appropriate. Upon request from the Chancellor or members of the Chancellor's cabinet, solicit and submit nominations of faculty members as potential recipients of external awards for teaching.
3. Undertake special activities to improve teaching and learning on campus.
4. Study issues concerning teaching on the campus and make recommendations to the Berkeley Division.

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

This year, the committee's work was broken down into two areas - the Distinguished Teaching Award selection process and teaching-related issues on campus. These areas included: (1) Data privacy and principles for students as they utilize third-party tools in courses, with Jenn Stringer, Associate CIO and Director of Educational Technology Services. COT agreed to support the effort to educate faculty about these potential issues and make a decision-making resource for faculty available to help decide if a third-party tool adequately protects student privacy data; (2) Looking closely at student evaluations of teaching (SETs), particularly response rate issues with

online evaluations, as well as weighing in on a proposed course inclusivity question from VPF Hermalin. The Committee also met with Prof. Rodolfo Mendoza-Denton to discuss the usefulness of a question on inclusivity on end-of-semester online teaching evaluations.

Distinguished Teaching Award

Each year, the Committee solicits and reviews nominations for faculty Distinguished Teaching Awards (DTA) for approval by the Divisional Council. Five faculty members were selected: Ian Duncan (English), Khalid Kadir (International & Area Studies), Michael Manga (Earth & Planetary Science), Carlos Norena (History), Tarek Zohdi (Mechanical Engineering).

The selection of DTA recipients is a two-stage process. In stage one, during the 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 1/3-1/4 of the candidates are then selected for stage two. Additional documentation is required at this stage, and following a prearranged 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 19, 2017, the Committee again hosted the campus Distinguished Teaching Award ceremony at Sibley Auditorium. At that ceremony, recipients of 2017 Distinguished Teaching Award were honored. The Committee hosted the reception that immediately followed the Teaching Award ceremony. The Committee also participated in the Banquet sponsored by Chancellor Dirks and the Academic Senate, and organized by University Development and Alumni Relations.

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. The theme for the year was "Feedback." Each Dialogue featured at least one faculty presenter, and time devoted to faculty-led discussion of teaching topics related to student evaluations of teaching as feedback, feedback from faculty to faculty, faculty to student, and student to student. COT Chair O'Reilly served as one of three faculty curators, helping to guide and shape the discussion across the series.

Evaluation of Teaching

The Committee composed a memo sent to Senate Chair Powell, VP for Faculty Hermalin and VCUE Koshland regarding issues with the administration and analysis of course evaluations administered online. The memo sought endorsement and further action related to increasing response rate and quality, as well as addressing bias and trolling responses in evaluations.

Furthermore, the Committee met with Associate Dean for Equity and Inclusion Rudy Mendoza-Denton for a conversation about assessing class inclusivity potentially within, or outside of, student evaluations of teaching. This aspect of Committee work is expected to continue next year.

Participation/ Interaction with other Committees.

IT Governance Committee - Committee representative sits on the campus IT Governance Committee that is intended to facilitate collaboration among campus leadership in the prioritization, funding, design and use of IT to ensure cost effective support of UC Berkeley's teaching, learning, research and administrative strategic priorities. Committee meets twice a year for 2 hours each meeting.

Campus Committee on Classroom Policy and Management (CCCPM) – Committee representative sits on CCCPM that oversees and approves policy issues related to classroom use, scheduling, and management. Topics may include, but are not limited to, the long-range plan for classrooms, recovery of classroom facilities following major disasters, summer use, construction and design standards for classrooms, renovation plans, and instructional technology in classrooms. Committee meets three times a year for 2 hours each meeting.

Grant Programs

In 2016-2017, the Committee on Teaching continued to provide consultation as needed on the campus Instructional Improvement Grant program. The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) administers the grant program without deadlines, accepting applications on a rolling basis between August 12 and May 8.

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 2016-17, 20 proposals were submitted with 15 funded for a total of \$29,098.22.

The Future

In 2017-2018 the Committee will again select recipients for the Distinguished Teaching Award (with formal endorsement of DIVCO); it will continue to consult on the administration of the Instructional Improvement Grant program, as requested by the CTL.

The Committee also intends to continue co-sponsoring teaching related events (like Dialogues), as well as work related to its interest in improving the quality of evaluating teaching effectiveness across faculty on campus.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Oliver O'Reilly, Mechanical Engineering (Chair)

Linda Chio, ChemE (Graduate Student)

Laurent El Ghaoui, EECS and IEOR

Kristina Hill, Landscape Architecture

Line Mikkelsen, Linguistics

Debarati Sanyal, French

Jagdeep Sekhon, Legal Studies (Undergraduate student)

K. Peter Vollhardt, Chemistry

Richard Freishtat, Staff Representative (Center for Teaching and Learning)