

Enhancement of faculty teaching skills and advising (including TA's)

For a large Tier 1 University, having resources where faculty and teaching assistants can go for help is critical. In addition, advising undergraduates so they can efficiently navigate through their chosen degree program is beneficial to all concerned.

Our sister Universities subscribe to this philosophy and have created Teaching Centers worthy of emulation . Below are a few of those that warrant closer inspection:

Mission Statements from other Teaching Centers

University of North Carolina. Support teaching and learning at all levels and in all contexts in which instruction occurs in the university (The Center is designed to assist our faculty members across the spectrum of their professional development. It provides:

- Resources to those faculty members wishing to improve their effectiveness in instruction and mentoring.
- Support and guidance for designing, funding and undertaking successful research on campus.
- Advice and training for those faculty members taking on leadership roles on campus, whatever those leadership positions might be.
 - <http://ctl.unc.edu/atc2.html>

University of Texas

- The primary purpose of the Center for Teaching Excellence is to assist the teaching staff of the University of Texas at Austin in providing instruction that is consistent with the best information on quality teaching and learning at the post-secondary level.

To accomplish this mission, the Center provides both basic and advanced information about the teaching/learning process through an array of formats, including group seminars, classes, self-study materials and individual consultation on specific questions.

 - <http://www.utexas.edu/academic/cte/information.html>

University of Virginia

- Support, guide, and catalyze effective teaching in every school of the University, ensuring... teaching excellence in the face of the formidable challenges of a rapidly changing environment as we move into the 21st century
 - <http://trc.virginia.edu/mission.htm>

Carnegie Mellon

- To improve the quality of education at Carnegie Mellon by providing teaching support to faculty and graduate students.
 - <http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/eberly/index.html>

While the above institutions are those typically mentioned in pedagogical circles, one school closer to home has created an excellent Teaching Center and a model UF should consider. This is the *University of Central Florida's Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning*.

Their goals are to:

We dedicate ourselves to the success of our faculty and students.

We promote 1) excellence in teaching and learning, 2) successful research and creative activities, 3) professional advancement, and 4) collaborative endeavors.

- <http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/>

UF's Teaching Center

In early 1995, UF's Teaching Center, UCET was created. It was a welcomed resource for those that seeking to enhance their teaching skills. Some of the services it provided included:

Faculty Fellow Program (FFP), ostensibly one of the most effective strategies for increasing pedagogical interest and activity campus-wide.

Mid-Term Teaching and Learning Feedback Program, which supports real-time reflection on teaching and learning strategies, i.e., while change in the classroom can occur in real time.

Tailored workshops to focus attention on pedagogical effective and efficient practices for both campus and online teaching and learning environments.

Consultation assistance to faculty and GTAs for integrating web and internet communications tools and strategies into their courses.

Unfortunately it was closed in 2004. We currently have a Faculty Development Office under the Provost which provides several services that UCET had implemented. However, with College T&P committees scrutinizing teaching more and more, our recommendation is as follows:

RECOMMENDATION

To reinstitute UF's Teaching Center as soon as practicable. However, to further increase its effectiveness, a plan to support ***increased collaboration*** with the other college-specific faculty centers at UF should be investigated. This collaboration will help create a network of College centers - effectively leveraging college and campus resources (including national resources) for faculty and GTAs, campus wide.

With regards to Advising, we believe this responsibility should fall on the Colleges or more appropriately the Departments, where specific questions on degree programs can be addressed.

