Notes from the Academy of Distinguished Teaching Scholar Interviews with UF College Associate Deans – 2014

Teaching Peer Assessment

QUESTION:

Does your college have a standardized and reliable procedure for conducting peer teaching assessment of your faculty both for face-to-face and online courses?

RESPONSE NOTES:

Public Health

They have a college-wide peer assessment carried out by all chairs, using a common form to report on 1-2 classroom visits. Assessors (sometimes outside but usually faculty from within the department/college) rate faculty and provide comments and suggestions. This report is discussed with the chair, who should help the faculty member devise a plan to address teaching issues, and it is also added to the annual evaluation packet. The results vary by department.

In general, however, there is little useful feedback in peer assessment. Course syllabi also should be reviewed every five years. The College also has an annual teaching award, but most faculty in Public Health are not competitive for campus-wide teacher/advisor awards that require substantial undergraduate teaching, because they teach only at the graduate level.

Nursing

Faculty submit a narrative as a part of their annual self-assessment and they can ask for peer evaluation (which she states is "fairly meaningless")

Fine Arts

Only in School of Art and Art History. [Not standardized due to differences in types of courses offered; not included in T + P packet.]

Warrington School of Business Administration

Warrington has been developing its *Teaching, Learning and Assessment Center* for many years (Dr. Tawnya Means). The college has an established peer assessment process, involving a 3-person committee who works together to assess course materials and visit the classroom. Like most peer assessments, they are unfailingly positive. We

discussed the problems with course evaluations in general, such as the drop in participation when student evaluations went online, since no incentives are allowed to encourage students to participate. The content of those evaluations also needs to be revised. Teaching assessments could be improved by referring to the "Quality Matters" program (in which UF supposedly participates) and to the UF standards and markers of excellence, which currently focus only on online teaching.

PHHP

There are peer teaching assessments of the faculty within each department for face-to-face courses. We are unaware of any peer teaching assessments for online courses.

Yes. Once a year a peer observer attends a class session and fills out a form with Likert scales and comment sections. One-of-one discussion is then provided by the peer who observed the session.

We are not aware of any training provided for faculty on how they can effectively conduct peer teaching assessment.

Law School

The deans responded that their training for teaching was basically hit or miss. They suggested the possibility of an e-newsletter (similar the Faculty Updates) and also wondered if the ADTS would host a series of enrichment programs on teaching.

The Law School, has a peer review system for pre-tenure faculty. Members of the T&P committee visit classes and follow up with a written evaluation and a discussion. They also have a process for faculty not on a tenure-track. There is no standardized process for post-tenure visits. **There is no training for peer evaluators; they are selected based on subject area and their status as a recognized teacher.**

Design & Construction

No standardized and reliable procedures for conducting peer teaching assessment of faculty both for face-to-face and online courses are in place.

Liberal Arts & Sciences

No comments that I could find. Do have the Teaching *Center* (primarily TA and student learning (http://www.teachingcenter.ufl.edu/index.html) focused).

Agricultural and Life Sciences

CALS has done some training sessions at the CALS Teaching Enhancement Symposium and as part of CALS Teachers College (11 week course for faculty) but it has not been done on a regular basis for all faculty. Have the CALS Teaching Resource Center (http://cals.ufl.edu/trc/teaching-resources-home.php).

The Academy of Distinguished Teaching Scholars

and

Office of Faculty Development and Teaching Excellence

A Campus-wide Conversation on the Peer Review of Teaching

A One-Day Faculty/Administrator Workshop

Background and Justification

The University of Florida has a long commitment of valuing teaching by promoting improvement of teacher performance with the ultimate goal to enhance student learning outcomes. With 16 colleges, teaching programs at the University of Florida vary greatly with respect to their diverse educational objectives and professional cultures. Peer review of teaching serves to complement student evaluations, administrator comments, and alumni feedback by providing an assessment of learning (summative assessment) which allows summative evaluation for tenure and promotion. Another primary goal of teaching peer review has been to provide a framework allowing assessment for learning (formative assessment) and modification of teaching behavior which ultimately improves student learning. Interviews conducted by the Academy of Distinguished Teacher Scholars (ADTS) in 2014 with the Academic Program Associate Deans in the 16 colleges indicated significant differences in both faculty and administrator perceptions of the value of peer review of teaching. Likewise, differences exist between procedures followed for conducting teaching peer observations, training provided to faculty to be effective peer observers, and reporting the results. The UF Faculty Senate Welfare Council is developing an opinion paper regarding the status of teaching peer review of teaching at UF.

The objectives of this one-day workshop are to:

- Provide a national perspective on the peer review of teaching.
- Share faculty & administration experiences regarding the strengths and limitations of procedures currently used for teaching peer assessment/evaluation of both live and web-based courses.
- Discuss the teaching peer assessment procedures currently used across colleges.
- Discuss the current usefulness of teaching peer evaluation documentation in the T&P process.
- Develop initial strategies for improving both formative and summative teaching peer evaluation at UF.

Draft Workshop Format

Morning Session (Open to all faculty)

Workshop Overview and Objectives
Dr. Michael Kane

Keynote: *National Perspective on Peer Review of Teaching.*
Dr. Daniel Bernstein, University of Kansas

Peer Teaching Evaluation in the T&P Process
Academic Personnel Board & College T&P Committee Member Panel

Perceptions on Peer Review of Teaching at UF
Administrator/Faculty Panel

Current Methods of Peer Review of Teaching across Colleges
Administrator/Faculty Panel

Afternoon Session (participants selected by colleges)

Breakout Groups (ADTS members as moderators)

Strategies to Develop Effective Teaching Peer Assessment Procedures

Coupling Formative and Summative Teaching Evaluation

Training Faculty to Be Effective Peer Reviewers/Observers

Deliverables:

Report*: Strategic Enhancement of Student Learning Outcomes through Effective Teaching Peer Evaluation*

Follow-up workshops or committee projects (based on report recommendations)

An exceptional educational environment is fundamental to achieving the mission of the University of Florida. An exceptional educational environment requires a long standing commitment to the pursuit and the transfer of new ideas both inside and outside of the classroom through effective instructional techniques. The Welfare Council of the Faculty Senate, the Academy of Distinguished Teaching Scholars, and the Office of Faculty Development and Teaching Excellence support the assessment of instructional quality and effectiveness to ensure the University of Florida is providing an effective learning environment and to recognize teaching excellence. We believe in a holistic/comprehensive assessment of teaching effectiveness incorporating information from the instructor in the form of teaching statements/portfolios, student evaluations and peer assessments.

Peer Assessments: The primary intent of peer assessment is to provide a process for improving teaching effectiveness (formulative evaluation). Our joint position is that peer assessments should be conducted a minimum of two times for each course taught by the instructor during the tenure probationary period. If after the second review the peer assessment committee has deemed the instructor to have achieved satisfactory or distinction in teaching, then additional assessments of teaching may not be warranted during the pretenure period. The individual reports of the assessment committee should not be part of the tenure and promotion or annual assessment of the faculty member. At the end of the pretenure period, a summary report of the committee could be included in section xxx. Thereafter formulative evaluation through peer assessment should be conducted at least once per class every 3-5 years or when triggered by performance that dips below 1SD of departmental and college means from the online student evaluations.

Online Student Evaluations: Student evaluations of teaching effectiveness are important components of the overall assessment of instructional quality. Faculty are encouraged to follow best practice guidelines for enhancing participation in the online student evaluation process. Faculty and units that do not feel the standardized questions provide adequate information to be useful in enhancing instructional effectiveness are encouraged to create additional student assessments in a manner consistent with UF student evaluation policies (ie. anonymity protection). Our joint position is that Online instructor evaluations that fall I -2SD from the departmental or college mean, whichever is lower require peer assessment in the following term – 1SD of the departmental and college mean, whichever is lower on two consecutive terms require a peer assessment.

Teaching statements/portfolios: