

**Summary of Activities of the Focus on Teaching Committee, 2003-2004**  
**By David K. Jones, Chair, Focus on Teaching Committee**

The members of the committee were:

David Jones (Chair), representative of the social sciences division  
Theresa Adams, Director of the Writing Across the Curriculum Program, *ex-officio*  
Ben Budde, representative of the natural sciences and mathematics division  
Bob Cowles, representative of the education department (spring)  
Chapin Deel, student member  
Terre Folger, representative of the education department (fall)  
Angela Gerling, representative of the library, *ex-officio*  
Keith Hardeman, representative of the humanities division  
Marcie McCauslin, student member  
Bob Seelinger, Dean of Faculty, *ex-officio*  
Wayne Zade, Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence, *ex-officio*

**Committee Activities during the 2003-2004 Academic Year**

The committee met 16 times during the academic year (10 times in the fall and 6 times in the spring), mostly on a weekly basis, to discuss issues relating to teaching on campus. Each meeting lasted approximately one hour. Some preparation, including reading materials sent by the chair, was necessary for each meeting, though preparation time was probably not extensive. On a scale from 1-5, I would suggest that the committee rates a 3 in terms of workload and difficulty of assignments and responsibilities. The committee discussed a number of topics related to teaching during the year, including but not limited to:

1. Addressing issues related to the Center for Teaching Excellence, including discussing and approving CTE workshops and faculty discussions about teaching issues.
2. Addressing issues related to the writing across the curriculum program.
3. Developing a proposal for the “student success initiative” set of proposals to President Lamkin. The proposals were made to develop programs paid for by a \$100,000 gift to the college.
4. Advising the Center for Leadership and Service about issues related to the academic component of the mission of the CLS.

5. Discussing faculty development issues, including reading and the teaching of and learning about diversity issues.
6. Discussing a number of teaching issues, including critical thinking, service learning, issues of teaching with technology, and the NSSE results.

In the fall semester, the committee spent several meetings discussing the writing across the curriculum program, developing goals and requirements for the program. The committee addressed each of six questions about the WAC program posed to it by the Executive Committee. To aid in the work on this task, the committee consulted with several members of the curriculum committee, including Debbie Perkowski, Ted Jaeger, and David Collins. The committee's proposal was then sent to the Curriculum Committee, which largely adopted what the committee has proposed (notably though omitting the part of the proposal dealing with compensation for faculty teaching WI and WI/O courses), and the proposal was eventually adopted by the faculty.

Additionally, in the fall semester, the committee discussed the results of various assessments, including the National Survey of Student Engagement and the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal. Results of committee discussions were then further discussed by presenters at CTE workshops with the rest of the faculty. The committee also discussed the state of the service learning and leadership certification programs with David Humphrey and Bob Hansen.

During the course of both semesters, the committee discussed numerous aspects of teaching with technology, including the use of an anti-plagiarism system (the committee endorsed the use of Turnitin.com), course management systems (the committee endorsed buying the CMS system called ANGEL, and both online learning (with guest Dr. Burks Oakley) and the use of various technological tools for teaching (with Teresa Fort and Duane Casady on two occasions).

The spring semester was dominated by work on a proposal for "student success initiative," a program funded by a \$100,000 gift to the college. Initially, a subcommittee composed of Wayne Zade, Keith Hardeman, and Chapin Deel began work on the proposal and developed an idea for four projects: 1) grants for faculty to develop their use of technology to enhance learning and teaching, 2) money for visiting faculty appointments to address diversity issues on campus, 3) travel funds for faculty to

pedagogical conferences, and 4) money for writing across the curriculum workshops and conferences. Over the course of the spring semester, the committee added a fifth idea: developing faculty training programs to teach reading skills. To further develop the ideas, the committee met with Linda Aulgur (reading) and with Bill Young, Judy Schaneman, Elisa Rizo-Arbuckle, and Cindi Elliott (diversity) to further develop the proposals. Because of a lack of money and competition from other proposals, it was eventually decided to focus specifically on the reading and diversity proposals, and the committee reluctantly decided to drop the other initiatives from the proposal (hoping that they would be funded in the future in some other way). Eventually, the proposal was supported by the Social Academic Council and approved by President Lamkin for funding next year.

### **Still to Do**

The committee should continue to work with John Langton, the Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence and the Coordinator of the Mentoring Program, on a number of issues identified last year. These include:

1. Developing faculty workshops on a number of teaching issues, including continuing the “teaching in the tiers” series of workshops.
2. Developing grant proposals for funding faculty development projects.
3. Further developing resource materials (including web resources) for faculty.
4. Finding ways to bring more outside speakers to campus to speak on teaching issues.
5. Finding ways to recognize teaching excellence on campus.

Respectfully submitted,

David Jones, Chair, 2003-2004