

Teaching and Learning Advisory Council (TLAC) 2012-2013 Annual Report to the Academic Senate

Introduction

The Academic Senate has charged the Teaching and Learning Advisory Council (TLAC) with stimulating the creation of a campus culture that truly values, promotes, recognizes, and rewards excellence in teaching and learning in proportion to its stated significance in the university mission. TLAC is interested in:

1. Engaging the university community in dialogue about what constitutes excellence in teaching and learning
2. Serving as a resource to the university concerning teaching and learning information, including philosophy, methodology, technology, science of learning information, etc.
3. Determining the needs of faculty members in their quest to achieve teaching and learning outcomes and assisting them to meet those needs
4. Recommending policies for promoting and improving the impetus for teaching and learning excellence
5. Networking with committees (where appropriate) to meet shared goals
6. Recognizing teaching and learning excellence on campus
7. Providing faculty with opportunities to encounter varied teaching and learning practices and to share its expertise.
8. Supporting faculty in acquiring the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching and learning in a culturally diverse campus community.

This report contains a summary of TLAC activities Fall 2012 through Winter 2013. Much of the information found in this report can be found and/or will be posted at TLAC's website: <http://www.nmu.edu/tlac/>

In the period of this report, TLAC, supported and hosted teaching- and learning-related presentations, provided the NMU's academic community with teaching-related publications, and awarded grants to faculty members in support of growth in their teaching. TLAC also reviewed and considered its mission and its efforts to fulfill the mission.

Report of Activities

TLAC activities for Fall 2012 and Winter 2013 are listed below.

1. New Faculty Orientation: TLAC participated with an informational table for New Faculty Orientation, August, 2012.
2. Meetings: The council dealt with some of its business via Email, and had face-to-face meetings on the following dates: September 14, 2012, October 5, 2012, October 19, 2012, November 2, 2012, January 25, 2013, February 15, 2013, March 22, 2013, and April 19, 2013.
3. Self-examination and resultant actions: TLAC reviewed its subscription to *Teaching Professor* and *On-line Classroom* and has decided to conduct a survey

in the upcoming year to determine if these publications best meet the needs of the faculty.

TLAC spent considerable time discussing its mission, and the question of whether or not outcome assessment activities fit within the mission, and concluded the following: outcome assessment tasks are beyond the purview of TLAC. Additionally, The council concluded that the level of detail and coordination between sought outcomes, the analysis of the outcomes, and the assessment of the same, necessitate infrastructure that is dedicated to this task. TLAC also discussed the existing level of on-campus support for teaching and concluded that, outside of the technological support for instruction, we are lacking infrastructure dedicated to teaching and teaching improvement. The council therefore makes the following recommendation.

TLAC recommends that NMU creates and staffs an office dedicated to teaching support and improvement and teaching assessment. With respect to supporting teaching, the office would do such things as helping faculty with the mechanics of teaching, e.g. developing courses and materials (e.g. syllabi), structuring classes, incorporating different ways of learning into the classroom, among others (e.g. classroom management), with the tasks adjusted and updated based on the needs of the faculty who need instructional help. The expectation is that the office will be staffed full-time, and that the office would (ideally) be colocated with the office of Instructional Design and Technology (IDT) in order to coordinate and complement its efforts with the technological educational support offered by IDT. The outcome assessment function of the proposed office would encompass the variety of tasks required to obtain, process, and analyze the results of the outcome assessment tasks related to teaching.

The recommendation reported here will be made to the Provost, and others who are in a position to act on this recommendation.

TLAC also agreed to support presentations initiated by the AQIP and Assessment Coordinator that will help faculty understand how to assess student learning in ways that connect with their outcome assessment responsibilities. In this light, TLAC supported the following workshops in the period of this report:

- Course Learning Outcomes, Dr. Sandi Poindexter (AQIP and Assessment Coordinator, NMU; two workshops) December 14, 2012, January 8, 2013.
4. TLAC Conference Grant Awards: TLAC increased the value of the grant awards to \$900 for this academic year, and awarded four grants in each of the Fall and Winter semesters, as listed below. Additional details concerning the awards will be posted on the TLAC website.

Fall 2012 Awardees

- Dr. Marguerite Moore (Health, Physical Education and Recreation Department): to attend and present at The NATA Athletic Training Educators' Conference, Dallas, Texas.
- Dr. Christi Edge (School of Education): to attend and present at the American Reading Forum Annual Conference, Sanibel Island, Florida.
- Mr. Brian Myers (Health, Physical Education and Recreation Department): to attend the National Association for Sport and Physical Education Physical Education Teacher Education Conference, Las Vegas, Nevada.
- Dr. Jon Sherman (Modern Languages and Literature): to attend the 128th annual convention of the Modern Languages Association, Boston, Massachusetts.

Winter 2013 Awardees

- Dr. Lisa Flood (Nursing): to attend and present at the Drexel University Simulation Conference, Clearwater, Florida.
- Dr. Kia Jane Richmond (English): to attend and present at the annual conference of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Las Vegas, Nevada.
- Dr. Julie Higbie (Nursing): to attend and present at a Conference sponsored by the Drexel University Nursing Education Institute, New Orleans, Louisiana.
- Dr. Hugo Eyzaguirre (Economics), to attend the conference, *Creative Ideas for Your Basic Economics Course*, Tampa, Florida.

5. TLAC website: TLAC's website has been kept up to date with resources for faculty and, with the appreciation of the council, was managed by past TLAC chair, Dr. Gary Stark.
6. Colleague evaluation: in the absence of an entity to help professors improve their classroom instruction, aside from classroom visits that are part of a faculty member's evaluation, TLAC piloted an initiative whereby faculty members can request a classroom visit from a volunteer faculty member to help the requesting member improve their instruction. The piloted initiative also sought faculty volunteers to conduct the visits. Four requests were made for classroom visits; five existing faculty members and one emeritus faculty member offered to conduct visits. Three class visits were conducted. TLAC did not assess the pilot and the initiative may be re-visited next year.
7. Teaching engagements: TLAC supports, sponsors, and co-sponsors events (practical seminars, workshops, lectures, etc.) that are targeted toward improving teaching and learning at NMU by introducing innovative methods, new ideas and philosophies, or other techniques. TLAC supported the following events in 2012-2013.

- C.R.E.A.T.E (Consider, Read, Elucidate the hypotheses, Analyze and interpret the data, and Think of the next Experiment) strategy for teaching, Dr. Sally Hoskins (City College of New York; two workshops), September 27 and 28, 2012.
- Flipping Classes and Courses, Instructional Design and Technology (two workshops), December 12, 2012, and January 8, 2013.

TLAC's 2012-2013 budget: The TLAC budget was spent on Conference Grants, Teaching Engagements (catering, presentation recording, travel, an honorarium), and subscriptions to *Teaching Professor* and *On-line Classroom*.

The chair hereby recognizes the hard work and participation of the following council members during the period covered by this report: Douglas Black, Dave Bonsall, Joan Cowell, Lisa Flood, Kurt Galbreath, Tom Gillespie, Cale Polkington, Jon Sherman, and Gary Stark, and the hard work of Kerry Mohr in dealing with the TLAC budget.

Respectfully submitted,

Eugene Wickenheiser (2012/3 TLAC chair), 20 April 2013