**Teaching and Learning Advisory Council (TLAC)**

2013-2014 Annual Report to the Academic Senate

Submitted – April 10, 2014

**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 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’s activities fall 2013 through winter 2014. Much of the information in this report can be found or will be posted on TLAC’s website: http://www.nmu.edu/tlac/

During the past academic year, TLAC supported and hosted teaching related presentations, provided NMU’s academic community with teaching-related publications, and awarded conference grants to faculty members to support their teaching. TLAC members also worked with the Provost and the Dean of AIS to create a Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) and helped to select NMU’s first teaching and learning scholar.

**Report of Activities**

1. **Meetings**: The council dealt with some of its business via email, and held face-to-face meetings on the following dates: September 19, 2013, October 31, 2013, November 21, 2013, January 30, 2014, March 20, 2014, and will be meeting on April 24, 2014.

2. **New Faculty Orientation**: TLAC participated in the New Faculty Orientation on August 22, 2013 providing an informational table with handouts related to our mission, campus teaching resources, and conference grants.

3**. Teaching Excellence Awards:** Drs. Lisa Flood and Josh Sharp representing TLAC, reviewed nominees and participated in the selection of two faculty recipients who were honored in December 2013.

4**. Magna Publications**: TLAC reviewed its annual subscription to the Magna Publications, *Teaching Professor* and *On-line Classroom,* and decided to conduct a survey to see how many faculty members actually use these publications. Four questions were added to the CTL survey and the results indicated very few faculty members utilized the publications. TLAC decided to cancel the subscription to both of the Magna Publications. The monies saved by canceling these two subscriptions ($2,200/year) will provide funding for two additional conference grant awards for the 2014-2015 academic year.

5. **TLAC Conference Grant Awards**: TLAC increased the value of the grants to $1000 per award for this academic year, and awarded four grants each during the fall and winter semesters, as listed below. Additional details concerning these awards will be posted on the TLAC website.

**Fall 2013 Awardees**

* Dr. Jason Bishop (School of Health and Human Performance)
* Dr. Robert Goodrich (History, Arts, and Sciences)
* Dr. Lisa Eckert (English)
* Dr. Rebecca Ulland (Modern Languages and Literature)

**Winter 2014 Awardees**

* Dr. David Buhl; (Mathematics)
* Dr. Lori Nelson (Speech)
* Dr. Julie Rochester (School of Health and Human Performance)
* Dr. Heidi Stevenson (English)

6. **TLAC website**: Our website has been updated with resources for faculty and was managed by past TLAC chair, Dr. Gary Stark. TLAC appreciates his efforts to revise/update our website.

7. **Peer teaching evaluations**: TLAC has implemented a program, based on a pilot from the previous year, whereby faculty members can request a classroom visit from a TLAC member to help the faculty improve their instruction and provide peer evaluation documentation required for faculty evaluations. Four requests were made for classroom visits and four different TLAC members conducted peer evaluations. TLAC has been using an evaluation rubric originally shared by Dr. Stark which has proved useful. This form was also provided to Michelle Johnson who is a member of one of TLC’s Learning Circles studying peer evaluation across campus.

8. **Teaching engagements**: TLAC supports, sponsors, and co-sponsors events (seminars, workshops, lectures, etc.) that are targeted toward improving teaching and learning by introducing innovative methods, new ideas, philosophies, or other instructional techniques. TLAC's budget helps to support the costs of hosting these teaching engagements (i.e. catering). Certificates of attendance were provided by the co-chairs. TLAC hosted the following teaching engagement in 2013-2014:

* ***Implementing Active Learning***- December 10, 2013
  + Led by Active Learning Catalyst Grant Members: Mike Martin (Engineering Technology), Dr. Alec Lindsay (Biology), Dr. Qinghong Zhang (Math), and Matt Smock (Instructional Design & Technology).
* ***Emergent Education – Students as Prosumers***- March 18, 2014
  + Led by Drs. Patricia Hogan and Chris Kirk (Health & Human Performance).

1. **Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL):** One goal set by the TLAC chairs was to work toward implementing a Center for Teaching and Learning. Drs. Cale Polkinghorne and Lisa Flood worked with Drs. Leslie Warren and Paul Lang to create a job description for NMU’s first teaching/learning scholar. Drs. Cale Polkinghorne and Gary Stark served on the hiring committee for the teaching/learning scholar and attended five interviews of internal candidates. Dr. Jill Leonard was chosen as the first scholar. Dr. Lisa Flood attended the CTL’s stakeholders breakfast and Dr. Cale Polkinghorne attended meetings with IDT and the teaching/learning scholar to discuss the goals of the new center. Both Drs. Cale Polkinghorne and Lisa Flood met with Dr. Jill Leonard to explore the relationship between TLAC and the CTL. Jill has either sent reports or attended TLAC meetings to keep the Council informed of her activities. Dr. Lisa Flood plans to attend the New Faculty Luncheon and Panel Discussion hosted by the CTL on April 18, 2014 to obtain feedback from faculty (first and second year) about how to improve the new faculty orientation program.

**Report on TLAC Goals for the 2013-14 academic year:**

* 1. Promote use of Magna Resources: On-line Classroom and The Teaching Professor (electronic journals) during the fall of 2013.
* MET: Faculty were reminded via an email and at New Faculty Orientation.
  1. Survey faculty during the winter of 2014 regarding their use and satisfaction with the above publications to determine if usage/benefits justify costs.
     + MET: Items were added to CTL survey as discussed previously.

Publications were not renewed March 28, 2014.

* 1. Plan and implement two Teaching Engagements.
     + MET: as discussed previously.
  2. Pilot hosting “Brown Bag Discussions” to provide opportunities for faculty to meet and discuss pedagogy.
     + NOT MET: To avoid duplication with the Active Learning Coffee Breaks led by Dr. Jill Leonard, TLAC decided to co-hosted one coffee break and Dr. Flood attended several sessions.
  3. Explore the possibility of creating a Center for Teaching Excellence
     + MET: as discussed previously.

The co-chairs wish to recognize the work and active participation of the following council members during the past academic year: Drs. Eugene Wickenheiser (Secretary), Jon Sherman, Josh Sharp, Gary Stark, Abby Cameron-Standerford, Tawni Ferrarini, and John Macdevitt, as well as ex-official members Tom Gillespie, Rachel Harris, and Kerry Mohr for her assistance related to TLAC’s budget.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Cale Polkinghorne, Co-Chair TLAC

Dr. Lisa Flood, Co-Chair TLAC