

2014

Teaching Effectiveness Committee Annual Report May 2014

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

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Teaching Effectiveness Committee

Annual Report

May 2014

Charge to the Committee:

The Teaching Effectiveness Committee shall promote good teaching at the University by: conducting and reporting to the Faculty Senate an annual audit of programs, activities, policies, etc., which are available at the University to support good teaching; serving as an advisory committee to the Instructional Development Program; undertaking each year, in cooperation with other interested parties, an initiative designed to improve teaching practices at the University. The Director of the Instructional Development Program and the Director of Information and Instructional Technology Services shall serve as *ex officio* members of this committee.

2013-14 members of TEC

Jing Jian Xiao, HDF

Mary MacDonald, LIB

Rita Marcoux, PHP

Helen Mederer, SOC

Nedra Reynolds, WRT, chair

Bette Erickson, Director of IDP, *ex officio*

David Porter, Information and Technology Services, *ex officio*

David Hayes, Director, Academic Enhancement Center, *ad hoc* appointee

Diane Goldsmith, Director of Learning, Assessment and Online Education, *ad hoc* appointee

This year's Teaching Effectiveness Committee met on November 5, 2013; December 3, 2013; and April 9, 2014. Vice-Provost Laura Beauvais met with the TEC for part of each meeting.

The TEC continued this year to focus on the IDEA surveys and ways to make them more useful for all instructors, particularly as they plan for future classes. A representative from IDEA, Dr. Shelley Chapman, presented to faculty on September 18, 2013. In her multiple workshops, she shared how to interpret adjusted scores and other ways to make the instrument more meaningful.

As a follow-up to Dr. Chapman's visit, one member of the TEC, Professor Mary MacDonald, attended an IDEA workshop in Jacksonville, Florida in February 2014. Funded by the Provost's office, her participation makes her a resource for URI faculty who want assistance with filling out the FIF, interpreting results, or incorporating changes based on feedback from students.

The TEC also followed up on Dr. Chapman's visit by exploring how URI could move to online implementation of the IDEA surveys--a change that would address several problems with the current delivery (namely, several months' delay in receiving students' ratings). This spring semester, the TEC also turned to the topic of coordinating and centralizing teaching resources.

Recommendations

1. *Online IDEAs*

The TEC strongly supports a move to online implementation of the IDEA instrument for Spring 2015 or Fall 2015 and is prepared to contribute to this transition through faculty training and managing expectations. The first step, already underway, is to put all faculty email accounts on the same platform. That change, as well as mobile delivery, will increase response rates significantly; therefore, the TEC recommended waiting until 2015 when faculty email addresses have all migrated to the new system and mechanisms for mobile delivery have been tested adequately. If students can access the surveys from their smart phones or other electronic devices, then class time will not be necessary for completing the surveys.

The TEC will provide language for syllabi that states the importance of students' participation and the role of IDEA results in shaping instructors' assignments or activities. We will ask the Provost's office to include a template or sample passage about the IDEAs on the recommended Syllabus Statements for faculty. The committee also discussed best practices for filling out the Faculty Information Forms (FIF) and will disseminate that information to all instructors.

2. *Resources to Support Teaching*

As a longer-term initiative, the TEC would like to see a higher profile for **teaching** on URI's main web pages and within the organizational structure of URI's website. Currently, the heading of "teaching" does not appear at all on URI's home page, and instructors at all ranks find it difficult to find typical teaching information: how or where to reserve equipment, find mentoring, see announcements about upcoming workshop or CFPs, or refer to manuals or policies.

In January 2014, two members of TEC and Vice-Provost Beauvais met with Kerri Hicks, Senior Information Technologist in Communications and Marketing, about options for centralizing teaching resources on URI's website. That effort is ongoing.

The TEC would also like to see similar "one-stop shopping" for all those who teach at URI by helping to bring together all related centers and services. At its April 9 meeting, the TEC reviewed a draft proposal on the establishment of an Office for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning. This proposal focuses on integrating all existing resources for teaching, including professional development for all instructors; assessment; online learning; diversity and multicultural teaching; support for teaching initiatives (e.g., Grand Challenge); and media and technology services. Our committee recommended that a faculty development professional to be a leader in this new office, someone who is an active member of the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education and who will coordinate with those personnel who focus on assessment and/or online education.