

Aug, 2005

Recommendations for a Teaching and Learning Center at Emory University

I. Introduction

The University Advisory Council on Teaching (UACT) was created in the spring of 1998, following the 1997 Commission on Teaching's report, *Teaching at Emory*. The report suggested an agenda for the future of the university, to balance and value teaching at the same level as research. The report urged a commitment to both teaching and research in hopes of closing the "gap between [a] rhetoric of commitment to teaching and the reality of a lack of structured support for teaching."¹ *Teaching at Emory* outlined ten recommendations for immediate action, including the affirmation of teaching from the offices of both the President and Provost, the cultivation of a lively intellectual community across schools and divisions, the expansion of teaching aids and technology, awards for teaching excellence, and the development of a university-wide teaching center, as well as individual teaching centers for each school within Emory.

In the seven years since *Teaching at Emory* was released: the University Teaching Fund (UTF) was created to underwrite innovation in teaching pedagogy and curriculum development; Emory College established the Center for Teaching and Curriculum (CTC) to address the specific teaching needs of undergraduate faculty; and UACT was created to bring together representatives from each school to engage the increasingly large population of excellent teachers at Emory. Furthermore, teaching awards given by Emory and Oxford Colleges and the professional schools were established to recognize and encourage excellent teaching.

Intellectual exchanges regarding teaching among faculty and students have been fostered by the creation of these institutions. Instruction in utilizing technology in the classroom is offered through UACT programs, Instructional Technology Division (ITD), the Woodruff Libraries, and school-based programs. Through UACT-sponsored workshops, ongoing faculty training provides information on issues such as diversity in the classroom, writing across the curriculum, instructional design, and pedagogical theory. Regular UACT programming topics include instruction on building a teaching

¹ *Teaching at Emory*. Report of the Commission on Teaching at Emory University 1997: 23.

portfolio and dealing with pressures of advancement and tenure—all designed to improve and support teaching at Emory.

In the fall of 2003, UACT conducted a survey to gauge faculty opinion on the effectiveness of its programming, visibility on campus, and potential faculty needs. Despite agreement among many faculty that UACT provides a valuable service, some needs remain unmet. In particular, faculty identified the need for initial orientation for new faculty; ongoing faculty development for established faculty; one-on-one evaluations of teaching; teaching retreats; more in-depth instruction on teaching with technology; more evaluation of and training for mentoring of undergraduate and graduate students; and more instruction on using service-learning. They suggested better advertising of UACT events and better connections to the Oxford campus. Many faculty also suggested that the next logical step in improving and expanding teaching resources should be the centralization of university teaching resources in a staffed, university-wide teaching center. A centralized institution for teaching development would further affirm the importance of teaching at Emory, greatly improve communication across schools and disciplines, and avoid duplication of and assist in coordinating programming, speakers, and workshops. It would also provide a visible location for individual faculty to seek help with questions about teaching and obtain information regarding teaching and learning styles. Finally, incorporating a research component into the center could greatly contribute to the body of knowledge on teaching, learning, and faculty development, identify successful programming models, and help determine the efficacy of Emory faculty resources.

II. The Charge to UACT

Emory University's Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Earl Lewis, asked UACT to examine existing campus resources, gaps in faculty training, and the current academic climate as the foundation on which to develop a teaching center. This center could build on Emory's needs and strengths, offer tailored resources for Emory faculty and students, and specifically address pressing faculty needs. During the 2004-2005 academic year, UACT undertook an examination of both the needs and concerns of faculty across all schools to determine if Emory would be well served by a centralized

teaching center and if so, the configuration that would best address the needs identified by the faculty.

III. UACT Programming and Discussions Regarding a University-Wide Teaching Center

UACT devoted its entire Roundtable Luncheon² programming in the 2004-2005 academic year to providing a forum in which faculty could share their preferences and discuss the Emory University Teaching and Learning Center. These discussions allowed faculty to weigh in on their support of and the ideal configuration of a teaching center. At these luncheons, faculty members stressed the need for more comprehensive faculty orientation and development, especially for new and junior faculty, teaching and classroom development for all faculty, including adjunct professors, professional evaluation of teaching and educational and training programs, and balanced emphasis on both teaching and learning.

Faculty discussed the need to better integrate teaching resources for faculty in the undergraduate and graduate schools, as well as for graduate assistants and post-doctoral teaching. They identified a need provide a cohesive teaching community across all of Emory by organizing interdisciplinary and cross-school scholarship and funding resources, and monitoring and sustaining interdisciplinary seminars and programming. Faculty posit that a university-wide center may offer better coordination of teaching and learning resources across campus and may provide better leverage for acquiring external funding. A centralized center would also be able to connect faculty working in similar areas or on related projects at various schools for collaboration. Some faculty members, however, were concerned with how a centralized center would be able to focus on specific school needs while simultaneously identifying general trends in teaching and providing resources across schools and departments.

The *Teaching at Emory* report notes, “regardless of discipline, certain common values and practices characterize teaching: a concern for engaging students, the excitement and anxiety surrounding digital learning, the limitations and importance of the classroom lecture, and the thrill and exhilaration of a seminar that not only transfers

² See Appendix I for a luncheon dates and participants.

knowledge but also creates it.”³ Recognizing that teaching styles can be discipline-specific and take many and varied forms, UACT and Provost Lewis encouraged deans and faculty from each school to compile a list of needs, resources, concerns, and hopes regarding a university teaching center. The following section summarizes the reports from the committees of each school⁴.

IV. School Discussions

IV.A. Emory College

Faculty from the College feel that the unique nature of undergraduate teaching is well served by the CTC, the Emory Center for Interactive Teaching (ECIT), and the Emory College Language Center. Faculty are concerned that a university-wide teaching center could interfere with, or even dismantle, these successful centers and their established programs. However, Emory College faculty are not entirely averse to a university-wide teaching center. They stress that any such center must have a dual focus on both undergraduate and graduate and professional school teaching. Given the strength of teaching resources in the College, faculty are also concerned about how to ensure use of and create incentives for a university-wide center.

IV.B. Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

Faculty would like to see increased support for graduate student teaching. Previous discussions reflect faculty concern about the quality of orientation and training of graduate teaching assistants. There is a desire to revamp and update the Teaching Assistant Training and Teaching Opportunity (TATTO) Program. Faculty also point out that TATTO is department-specific, making coordination of training for graduate students across the university difficult.

IV.C. Oxford College

Oxford College is currently working to identify and address their teaching and learning resources by establishing two new centers on its campus: the Center for

³ *Teaching at Emory*. Report of the Commission on Teaching at Emory University, 1997: 5.

⁴ See Appendix II for a list of faculty participants by school.

Academic Excellence (CAE) and the Pierce Institute for Leadership and Community Engagement. The goal of the CAE is to take the place of and expand upon the work of Oxford's Advisory Council on Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development (ACT) in providing resources for teaching and learning. The CAE will fill a perceived need for increased support for course and curriculum development, expanded interdisciplinary collaboration (on both the Oxford and Atlanta campuses), a post-doctoral teaching fellowship program, and enhanced faculty development in teaching. The Pierce Institute will provide resources and support for student development needs through the integration of academic study, leadership development, community activism, and expanded Theory Practice/Service Learning programs.

Faculty involved in discussions regarding a university teaching center suggest that Oxford College and the CAE would be the ideal home for the placement of a central Emory University teaching center. Although Oxford faculty recognize that this proposal may not be feasible, they are generally supportive of a university-wide center model, combined with effective school-specific centers like its own upcoming CAE. Faculty also believe that a university-wide center could better attract outside funding for teaching development and provide better opportunities for across-school collaborations than smaller, school-specific organizations.

IV.D. Goizueta Business School

The Business School faculty express concern about the ability of a university-wide teaching center to address their specific school needs. Faculty provided no additional insight or suggestions for incorporating their needs into a larger structure, nor a model for an individual Business School center.

IV.E. School of Law

Law School faculty express concern regarding faculty training, including teaching resources for adjunct faculty and training and support for full-time junior faculty, specifically immediately prior to and just following receipt of tenure. Adjunct professors may require more instructional services in course and curriculum development, syllabus construction, lecturing, classroom etiquette, and test construction. Faculty suggest

increasing the availability of training in teaching skills, both through seminar settings and self-instruction, training in and practice of teaching skills before new and adjunct faculty enter the classroom, and scheduling new and adjunct faculty for informal classroom visits with faculty deemed to be highly effective teachers. Other suggestions for faculty orientation and training include resources for evaluating teaching, exam construction and grading, improving student performance, and incorporating technology into teaching.

Junior faculty are concerned with their ability to maintain excellent teaching skills and course materials while keeping up with activities needed for tenure and promotion preparation. Opportunities for the evaluation of teaching performance and effectiveness need to occur in a non-threatening and confidential manner. There is a concern among some faculty that evaluations performed by senior faculty or school administrators could be less neutral or even punitive in nature. Evaluations could be conducted either by teaching center staff, or faculty interested in peer evaluations could be matched with faculty from different schools to provide more constructive feedback. One-on-one course reviews with educational professionals, surveying other schools of law for course and curriculum comparison, and on-call staff available for teaching consultations would also help Law School faculty maintain excellent teaching.

Law School faculty are also concerned about student writing skills. One faculty member wishes Emory College's Writing Center were a resource more readily available to their graduate students; writing across the curriculum resources and tutorials may be beneficial for faculty as well. Faculty also see the need for increased communication across schools, due to dual-degree programs and the number of students from other schools enrolling in cross-listed law courses. Also, given the large number of international students, faculty would like to establish stronger ties with the University offices that provide resources for English as Second Language (ESL).

IV.F. School of Medicine

Faculty in the School of Medicine generally support the notion of a university-wide teaching center, which would improve collaboration with the other schools in the University, foster effective faculty and classroom development, and improve teaching in the school. However, due to the specific nature of teaching in the Health Sciences,

faculty would like to have a center within the school in order to ensure faculty training and the particular resources for teaching in medicine. Faculty emphasize the need for training in course and class development not only in classroom teaching, but also in small-group and bedside teaching. Faculty would also benefit from personnel with expertise in the area of Adult Learning, in order to familiarize faculty with the importance of learning styles to successfully teach older or non-traditional students. Observational and hands-on training are needed for curriculum development and evaluation. Faculty also want methods for evaluating and improving performance, both for themselves and for students, through student knowledge assessments, course evaluations, and peer evaluations.

Resources and training in information technology, along with the ability to retrieve medical records, photographic, and audio/video information for case-based learning and teaching would be very helpful for students and faculty. Audio/visual communication tools for teleconferencing between teaching sites (Grady Hospital, Crawford-Long Hospital, Yerkes Primate Research Institute, etc), to broadcast conferences, increase communication between the school and external sites (i.e. Georgia Technical Institute), and bring “live” patients into classroom from remote sites⁵ would greatly expand and improve the educational process.

IV.G. Woodruff School of Nursing

Faculty believe they need new faculty orientation specifically for the School of Nursing, along with training in and practice of teaching skills before new and adjunct faculty enter the classroom. They feel that the University orientation only provides a top-down introduction to the general Emory and campus environment but fails to familiarize new faculty with their own schools and departments. Faculty suggest programs that would include both mentor training and mentoring of new, junior, and adjunct faculty along with training in and practice of teaching skills before new and adjunct faculty enter the classroom. Faculty also expressed concern that students new to Emory need more specific orientation information, not only to familiarize students with the campus layout and available programs and activities but also to inform students about opportunities,

⁵ Given informed consent considerations.

programs, courses, and electives within their school. Faculty would like expanded opportunities for students to receive instruction in writing, classroom skills, and study skills, such as time management and task prioritization.

Faculty particularly emphasize the need for training in the different modes of teaching that occur in a discipline that combines classroom learning with clinical experience. More instruction in, and resources for, small and large group teaching, in addition to instruction in bedside and classroom teaching, need to be developed. Faculty also want training in curriculum and initial course development, writing syllabi, and lecture assistance. Faculty forums demonstrating teaching techniques by example would be very useful in this aspect.

Faculty would also like to have tools and adequate training to evaluate teaching methods and practice, with student assessments separate from the current end-of-semester evaluation, to better tailor teaching techniques to each individual class. One suggested method for teaching evaluation is automatic response systems in pilot classes to test student reactions to classroom information and presentation. Other desired skills training include test development acuity and analysis and statistical analysis for course evaluations. Nursing faculty suggest that having access to or employing a test writer within the teaching center would be ideal for their school. However, they stress that adequate training in new evaluation methods and technologies must occur before these types of programs or trainings are fully implemented and evaluated for efficacy.

Faculty would also like to see more grants and funding available, specifically for research projects on the scholarship of teaching and teaching excellence, as well as training in writing research grant proposals for these topics, and preparing manuscripts for publication. Committee members would also like to see more formal faculty development instruction in compiling teaching portfolios and preparing for tenure.

Faculty members also see a need to provide training for both faculty and staff to take better advantage of available technological resources. They suggest both hands-on and online training in the use of classroom technology, particularly emphasizing the need for hands-on training. Faculty are also concerned with University software and would like to have the opportunity to provide input into the choice of software.

IV.H. Rollins School of Public Health

Faculty and staff see a need for orientation and training for new faculty members and classroom training for adjunct faculty to improve teaching skills. Faculty are concerned that new faculty were unfamiliar with even the basic elective courses offered in their departments and schools. An orientation similar to the TATTO program and training in electronic media, among others, could be incorporated into faculty schedules. Many faculty believe that some training, especially for curriculum design, course descriptions and materials, syllabus development, and handling conflict in the classroom could be self-taught either through written materials or online tutorials. Teaching center staff should be available to provide one-on-one guidance in course and curriculum design, as well as lecture assistance and other faculty needs.

Doctoral-level Public Health students, required to participate in the TATTO program prior to beginning classroom instruction, may also need to have access to either a separate program specific to health sciences classroom training, or modules developed within the existing TATTO program focusing on the health sciences classroom. In addition, RSPH master's level students often act in a teaching support or assistant role, offering technology training, monitoring labs, proctoring exams, and leading discussion groups. These students need to be able to access the TATTO program, or take part in a similar program.

Faculty also suggest additional funding for course development, much like the mini-grants that the University Teaching Fund offers; an Emory Teaching Center could provide coordination of internal and external grant funding information, as well as assistance with application procedures. Because some courses and degree programs occur across disciplines (e.g. MBA/MPH programs, cross-listed courses, etc.), faculty would like to improve communication across schools to enhance cross-disciplinary programs and classes.

Faculty are concerned that some members may be unwilling or unable to use teaching center resources. They suggest the possibility of providing incentives for program participation and/or using resources in the classroom. Information on the efficacy of a teaching center, its resources and application could be provided by follow-up and evaluation of a teaching center, especially in its first years of existence. Faculty

also want to know whether participation in training or orientations might be mandated or used for disciplinary action. Although there was little discussion of what Public Health faculty might want from the center in this role, faculty do agree that this aspect of a university-wide center might meet resistance from schools wishing to maintain autonomy regarding faculty development and discipline. There are also concerns regarding the location of a university-wide center. A centrally located, free-standing center would be the best of all possibilities so as not to alienate or breed resentment in faculty from different schools and different parts of campus, and to ensure campus-wide, cross-disciplinary use of the center.

IV.I. Candler School of Theology

School of Theology faculty identify several gaps in resources a university teaching center might fill. These include training in course development, syllabus planning, small- and large-group discussion and classroom dynamics, teaching styles, and diversity in the classroom. Some faculty feel uncomfortable discussing teaching styles or asking assistance from colleagues and note a lack of opportunity to collaborate or receive mentoring or classroom observations from senior faculty or master teachers. School of Theology faculty believe the teaching center should provide training programs and seminars to increase effective teaching and mentoring skills. Resources include information and instruction in optimal class size and diverse teaching styles, training in curriculum and course design, increased availability of supervised learning experiences through summer internships or community immersion, and better integration of teaching and faculty advisement, to better relate to and help develop student goals.

They also suggest allotting time off from teaching in order to provide leadership to the center by appointing faculty teaching fellows, or providing teaching associates to assist faculty in course development and preparation of class materials. Faculty would like to see organized and targeted training and instruction that would fit more easily into busy faculty schedules, as well as discipline-specific and cross-disciplinary training and programs. In addition, faculty would like a teaching center to provide assistance in locating and applying for teaching development grants.

Faculty believe any teaching center should have a clear mission and purpose with which to carry out its functions and a comprehensive agenda to focus teaching center goals on faculty needs. In order for a teaching center to provide resources to enhance pedagogical strengths and increase teaching and learning effectiveness, they envision a centrally located organization staffed by an executive director, faculty and student fellows, and administrative assistants for administration and finance, and communication and technology. Center space should include: offices for administrative officers; a mid-size conference room where faculty can convene for workshops and seminars; smaller conference rooms for one-on-one consultations or faculty mentoring meetings; a library to house teaching resources and to provide faculty with space to read or work; and equipment and supplies that can be easily transported across campus for on-site consultations.

V. Conclusion

Faculty strongly support a central teaching and learning center that would coordinate University-wide activities. Emory faculty want center staff with expertise in (1) teaching and learning theories to help faculty members design curricula, syllabi, and courses for traditional and non-traditional classroom settings and (2) evaluating student and faculty performance and provide feedback for improvement through all stages of teaching appointments for faculty across disciplines. They also want a center that coordinates funding and grant-writing activities for teaching and learning training and research to expand opportunities for faculty and document successful programming.

Concerns were raised regarding center logistics and individual school autonomy. School liaisons within the center or a satellite center in each school could provide coordination between the teaching center and each school, as well as resources tailored to specific disciplines; professionals devoted to full-time center administration would allow faculty to fully concentrate on their teaching and research activities. Faculty believe evaluation of center operations after the initial two, three, and five years will effectively measure how and by whom the center's resources are used, to highlight any gaps in services or resources and build on the expertise of the faculty, staff, and administrators involved in the creation of the center.

VI. Future Plans

UACT's goal for the 2005-2006 academic year is to provide the Provost with a more formal proposal for the creation of an Emory University Teaching and Learning Center. As stated in this report, UACT has devoted this year to gathering information regarding a teaching center, focusing on the needs of the Emory community. For the 2005-2006 academic year, UACT has invited directors and staff from successful teaching and learning centers at peer universities to come speak with the Emory community about their experiences within their schools' teaching centers. In an effort to engage a diverse group of Emory faculty in these conversations, each visiting director will be accompanied by a faculty member from that university who can attest to the importance and utility of the centers at their school. UACT is seeking faculty co-sponsorship for these guests from Oxford College, Goizueta Business School, the Law School, and other schools and departments at Emory. Visiting directors and the teaching centers they represent were chosen in an effort to illustrate the wide range of models for a teaching center that are successful within the context of the research university. Through these speaking engagements, UACT hopes to identify the best model for a center at Emory as well as a strategy for bringing it into existence.

Fall semester 2005 brings the directors from The Center for Teaching and Learning at Stanford University and the University of Michigan's Center for Research on Teaching and Learning. These universities were chosen not only because of their outstanding work in faculty assistance and development but also because these teaching centers have been operating for well over twenty-five years. The visiting directors have been involved with their teaching centers for a combined total of 40 years, bringing with them prolific snapshots of the centers' development over the years, including keys to providing effective interdisciplinary frameworks, programming, and resources. The structure of The Center for Teaching and Learning at Stanford ensures that all Stanford faculty have adequate access to pertinent programs, resources, and by staffing three Associate Directors who represent, respectively, the Humanities, Social Sciences and Technology, and Science and Engineering. Using a different model, the Center for Research on Teaching and Learning at the University of Michigan provides multidisciplinary programming for faculty through its innovative Theatre Program. By

engaging local professional and student actors well versed in research concerning teacher/student classroom experiences, the Theatre Program easily adapts to the particular classroom and topical needs of Michigan faculty.

In Spring 2006 the directors for Columbia University's Center for Education, Research, and Teaching and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Center for Teaching and Learning will visit Emory. These speakers will attest to their ability to offer ongoing effective resources and programming to support the many stages of university faculty careers. Columbia's Center for Education, Research, and Teaching, in providing resources for faculty and students in the health sciences, addresses the distinctions between traditional and non-traditional classroom settings and provides faculty assistance and workshops for lecture-based, case-based, small-group, and laboratory teaching. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Center for Teaching and Learning focuses on maintaining excellent faculty by providing training and assistance for all stages in the career cycle, from graduate teaching assistants to tenured professors.

This report, Claire Sterk's appointment to the newly created post of Senior Vice Provost for Academic Planning and Faculty Development, and UACT's careful examination of successful teaching center models reflects Emory's support for teaching and learning. UACT will continue to consult with the Office of the Provost and with university faculty to develop a formal proposal to establish a teaching center here at Emory, to incorporate best practices into establishing a teaching center, including faculty resources, center structure, and funding. The University Advisory Council on Teaching is committed to designing an Emory University Teaching and Learning Center that meets the unique needs of our schools, one that will nurture teaching and demonstrate the commitment of the University to the importance of teaching at Emory.

Appendix I

Roundtable Luncheon Dates and Participants

September 21, 2004 Roundtable Luncheon Participants by School/Affiliation:

Emory College/GSAS

Patrick Allitt
Arri Eisen
Dorothy Fletcher
Tom Flynn
Anne Kelley
Pat Marsteller
Doug Mills
Wendy Newby
Daphne Norton
Preetha Ram
Niall Slater

School of Law

Mel Gutterman

School of Medicine

Michael Lubin
Alan Otsuki
Carol Reis-Starr

Woodruff School of Nursing

Michael Neville

Rollins School of Public Health

Kimberly Hagen
David Kleinbaum
Richard Levinson

Office of the Provost

Paul Jean
Donna Troka (UACT)

October 27, 2004 Roundtable Luncheon Participants by School/Affiliation:

Emory College/GSAS

Patrick Allitt
Bob DeHaan
Arri Eisen
Hazel Gold
Anne Kelley
Jim Morey
Wendy Newby
Sara Radell
Beth Seelig

Emory Center for Ethics

Kathy Kinlaw

Woodruff Libraries

Chris Baldaserra
Andy Ditzler
Frances Maley
Nancy Reinhold
Maurice York

Goizueta Business School

Steve Walton

School of Law

Jennifer Romig

School of Medicine

Douglas Ander
Bill Branch
Gordon Churchward
Margo Kuisis
Yu-Hua Li (Yerkes Primate Research Center)
Michael Lubin
Kirk Ziegler

Woodruff School of Nursing

Kelly Brewer
Michael Neville
Debbie Ryan

Candler School of Theology

Liz Bounds
Mary Elizabeth Moore

Office of the Provost

Paul Jean
Harriet King
Kim Loudermilk
Anne Sinkey (UACT)
Donna Troka (UACT)

Appendix II

School-Specific Needs Assessment Participants (February through May 2005)

Emory College and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

Hazel Gold
Anne Kelly
Eleanor Main
Jim Morey
Niall Slater

Oxford College

Penny England
Myra Frady
Lynn Harwell
Steve Henderson
Sharon Lewis
Kent Linville
Kitty McNeil
Patti Owen-Smith
Gretchen Schulz
Jennie Taylor
Cathi Wentworth

School of Law

Robert Ahdieh
Mel Gutterman
Bruce Maloy
Jennifer Romig
Julie Seaman

School of Medicine

William Branch
Gordon Churchward
Bill Eley
Michael Lubin
William McDonald
J. Alan Otsuki
Kyle Petersen
Barbara Petit

Woodruff School of Nursing

Corrine Abraham
Pam Altman
Holly Brown
Elizabeth Downes

Leslie Holmes
Michael Neville

Rollins School of Public Health

Adam Atherly
Chip Barnett
Kara Brown
Madge Donnellan
Robie Freeman-Burks
Kevin Gele
Lenette Golding
David Holtgrave
Mitchell Klein
David Kleinbaum
Melissa Krancer
Richard Levinson
Bob Lyles
Suzanne Mason
Harriet Ruskin
Shannon Shelton
Iris Smith
Catherine Strate
Jody Usher
Rachel Wilson
Kathryn Yount

Candler School of Theology

Russ Richey
Gail O'Day
Luther Smith
Carol Newsom
Joy McDougall
David Jenkins
Alice Rogers
Thomas Thangaraj
Ted Brelsford