

Grand Valley State University
Faculty Teaching and Learning Center Advisory Committee (FTLC-AC)
2012-2013 Year End Report

To: Figen Mekik, Chair of ECS/UAS
Tonya Parker, Vice-Chair of ECS/UAS

From: Joy Washburn, Chair of FTLC-AC

Date: April 19, 2013

2012-2013 Faculty Teaching & Learning Center Advisory Committee Members

CLAS: Deborah Herrington (CHM), Heather Gulgin (MOV), Janel Pettes-Guikema (MLL),
and Darren Walhof (PLS)

SCB: Vijay Gondhalekar

CCPS: Michael Scantlebury (HTM)

COE: Lisa Perhamus (Winter 2013) and David Bair (Fall 2012 - sabbatical Winter 2013)

PCEC: Scott Grissom

CHP: Laurie Stickler

KCON: Joy Washburn

BCOIS: Lindsay Ellis

University Libraries: Kyle Felker

Student Senate Representative: Sarah Hay

Ex Officio Members: Christine Rener (FTLC Director), Kurt Ellenberger (FTLC Associate
Director, Grants), Dana Munk (FTLC Part-time Faculty Support),
Patricia Stow Bolea (FTLC Faculty Fellow), Kathryn Stieler (FTLC
Faculty Fellow), Kim Kenward (IT)

Academic Year 2012-13 Charges

Charge #1: Support Dr. Christine Rener, the FTLC Director and meet with the FTLC-AC staff to execute goals for the 2012-13 academic year

- A. Dr. Rener shared important upcoming events at scheduled FTLC-AC meetings
- B. Committee members report FTLC information to their respective colleges
- C. Committee members encourage faculty in their colleges to participate in FTLC events and take advantage of resources available through FTLC-AC
- D. Some committee members assisted Dr. Rener as needed in the planning/implementation of the Fall 2012 Teaching Conference
- E. Dr. Ellenberger (Associate Director) chaired the FTLC Grants Sub-Committee and was assisted by four members of FTLC-AC who served on this sub-committee. This sub-committee reviewed three cycles of FTLC grant applications. During 2012-13, a total of 29 grant applications were reviewed and grant funds of \$171,996.76 were disbursed.

- F. Patricia Stow Bolea (Faculty Fellow) chaired the FTLC Teaching Awards Sub-Committee and five members of FTLC-AC served on this sub-committee. This sub-committee reviewed the nominees for each of the FTLC Teaching Awards and selected recipients for each award. The names of the recipients can be found at <http://www.gvsu.edu/provost/2013-honorees-67.htm>

Charge #2: Support ECS/UAS and Faculty Personnel Policies Committee in considering policy revisions concerning the use of student evaluations (perceptions) of teaching/learning at GVSU

- *Create and develop more consistent evaluation tools and/or more consistent use of these evaluations across the whole university. Please work with the Graduate Council to create and develop consistent “student evaluation” tools for graduate level courses*
- *Provide guidance to ECS/UAS on the value of standardizing the tools for and uses of student evaluations across all units.*

- A. From September 2011 through April 2013, FTLC-AC members studied multiple platforms and/or tools that could be used to administer student evaluations of teaching and learning on the GVSU campus. We determined that many platforms do not include recommended questions to use when students evaluate teaching/learning, the exception being the IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction system ~ this system includes 18 pre-determined questions that must be used. The questions included with the IDEA system have been determined to produce reliable and valid data. However, there are platforms which would simplify the distribution of the evaluations to students as the evaluations could be distributed on Blackboard and/or have compatibility with mobile devices (smart phones or tablets). The platforms without recommended questions would need to have questions selected and entered into the program that could be used for all courses at GVSU. Or a data bank of questions would need to be developed for those platforms that do have suggested questions if the decision is made to not have standard questions for all evaluations.
- B. The committee unanimously recommended to ECS/UAS that either the Blackboard Enterprise platform or the IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction System be used at GVSU in order to assess student evaluation of teaching and learning. Both have merit and are suited for use within the GVSU community. [See memo from FTLC-AC to ECS/UAS dated April 12, 2013 for further details]
- C. Rationale for Recommendation: Lack of consistency between and among the various units/departments/colleges in regards to collecting data on student evaluations of teaching and learning is confusing to students. Students have multiple evaluations to complete at the end of each term and the variances between each evaluation can be confusing, particularly since some are administered via Blackboard and others are done via pencil/paper. Use of a single process and/or instrument would benefit students as there would be a normed expectation consistent between and among courses taken by the students.
- D. FTLC-AC did not work specifically work with the Graduate Council as we focused upon the identification and recommendation of tools/platforms that could be used to assess student evaluation of teaching/learning. After receiving feedback from ECS/UAS regarding the April 2013 recommendations on tools/platforms for student evaluation, contact with the Graduate Council can be initiated to discuss how either Blackboard Enterprise or the IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction system could be used with graduate level courses. It is recommended that this aspect of the charge be carried over to FTLC-AC charge for 2013-14. In addition, it must be noted that both platforms are suitable for use in either undergraduate or graduate courses.

- E. In regards to the other aspects of this charge, FTLC-AC members held a brainstorming session at the last scheduled meeting on April 8, 2013 for the purpose of generating ideas/thoughts related to this charge. It is quite likely that these ideas/thoughts could possibly be integrated into the 2013-14 charge for FTLC-AC. Some of the ideas generated included:
- a. Revisit the question...does every single course (and instructor) need to be evaluated every single semester? What is the purpose of having every course and instructor evaluated every semester? [current policy in GVSU Faculty Handbook requires that every course and faculty person be evaluated every semester]
 - b. How do we increase student response rates?
 - c. Question development for student evaluation tools if not using a standardized tool like IDEA. Some of the items to consider:
 - i. How to develop or identify questions so that reliable and valid data is generated?
 - ii. What is the maximum number of questions that should be asked?
 - iii. Should there be a character limit for open ended questions? (tweets are limited to 140 characters; abstracts generally have a word or character limit)
 - iv. Should there be specific and consistent questions asked on all student evaluation of teaching/learning tools?
 - d. Review and disseminate best practices for interpretations of tools/data and how that information should be used for tenure and promotion and annual review
 - e. Discussion of peer evaluations of faculty members for personnel ~ currently, practices are inconsistent between units/departments.
- F. Additional work on this charge remains. It is recommended that this charge be revised or adapted as needed for 2013-14.

Additional Actions in 2012-13

FTLC-AC members voted to meet from Noon-2pm on the third Monday of each month for regular meetings beginning in Fall 2013 (used Survey Monkey so members could vote anonymously). Meetings will be held at a single site (will be held on the Allendale campus in Fall terms and Grand Rapids campus in Winter terms or vice-versa). The rationale for this meeting change was to allow for more in-depth meetings (1 hour is rather short in regards to getting things accomplished) and to make it easier for the sub-committees for grants, teaching awards and/or taskforces related to FTLC-AC to meet on other Mondays during the academic year during approximately the same time frame.