

Xavier University and the Carnegie Teaching Academy Campus Program

Outcomes of Part One

Introduction.

Xavier University's participation in the Carnegie Teaching Academy Campus Program was a natural "next step," given conditions, discussions, and initiatives on Xavier's campus. This report briefly describes these factors and the activities of Xavier's Scholarship of Teaching Discussion Group. This group of faculty met regularly during the 1998-1999 academic year to (a) define the "scholarship of teaching," (b) explore campus conditions that support or inhibit faculty from doing the scholarship of teaching, and (c) develop plans for continuing the group's work in the next academic year.

Campus Conditions, Discussion, and Initiatives.

In 1996, Xavier was one of the small liberal arts institutions that joined 12 research institutions already involved in the American Association for Higher Education's (AAHE) Teaching Initiative. Local manifestations of the AAHE Teaching Initiative took the form of a modest number of teaching circles-both disciplinary and interdisciplinary-as well as course portfolio working groups. One working group, in particular, was comprised of 22 faculty members, including three chairpersons and two members of the university promotion and tenure committee. The work of this group included an examination of ideas and issues surrounding Ernest Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. Much of the discussion in the group ultimately informed the individual work of faculty members as they developed their course portfolios.

Beginning in 1997, Xavier's faculty and administrators engaged in a yearlong study of campus faculty development issues. These campus-wide discussions resulted in the identification of four faculty development needs, including the need to:

1. promote the scholarship of teaching by creating a campus culture where teaching is made public, discussed, examined, improved, and rewarded;
2. implement a faculty development program that encourages and supports the use of technology in the classroom;
3. establish communities of faculty and students whose conversations are focused on specific teaching and learning problems and opportunities; and
4. establish communities of faculty and students engaged in research using information technology and other resources.

Perhaps of most relevance to the Carnegie Campus Program are the needs one and three identified above. Through a grant from The Bush Foundation, the Center for the Advancement of Teaching, the focal point for faculty development at Xavier, has developed initiatives aimed at addressing these needs.

The recent attention given to the scholarship of teaching was "jump-started" at the Fall 1998 Faculty Institute, a meeting of all university faculty members before classes began. Dr. C. Ann Trower of Harvard University's Graduate School of Education spoke to the faculty about her research on the promotion and tenure system, and faculty employment arrangements. Dr. Trower's presentation provided a context for breakout sessions, one of which was titled "The Scholarship of Teaching." As noted by Dr. Elizabeth A. Barron, Xavier's Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, "(The faculty) responses indicate a particular interest in continued discussion of the scholarship of teaching . . ."

Among the many campus discussions ranging from the place of service learning in the curriculum to the establishment of a minor in creative writing, Xavier's faculty have been especially focused on issues regarding faculty load and the criteria for promotion and tenure. An ad hoc committee created in 1994, worked for two years to examine institutional perceptions and policies regarding the promotion and tenure process, and well as to participate in the national discussion on faculty roles and rewards. In a report submitted to Dr. Norman C. Francis, Xavier's president, the committee discussed its findings and outlined models for a new promotion and tenure process. In 1998, Dr. Francis appointed a second ad hoc committee to prepare revised criteria for recommendation to the University administration and faculty. In August 1999, at the University's Faculty Institute, this committee presented its recommendations. Of particular relevance to this report is a new guideline recommended for inclusion in a section titled "Scholarship." It reads:

As scholarship advances knowledge, so the progression from discovery through peer evaluation and review to "publication," or making one's scholarship public, most vitally serves that end, whether for traditional research forms (where articles and conference papers "make public" the results or inquiry), the creative output of the fine arts (where performance, art work, and text "make public" outcomes of different forms of investigation, or the "scholarship of teaching," here defined as making public, in conference presentation or pedagogical journal, for example, results from studying a problem about an issue of teaching or learning through methods consistent with disciplinary epistemologies, with the end of enhancing student learning ..."

The Scholarship of Teaching Discussion Group.

The Center for the Advancement of Teaching invited all university faculty members to participate in The Scholarship of Teaching Discussion Group -- the local manifestation of the Carnegie Teaching Academy Campus Program. This group, comprised of seven faculty members representing five academic departments, included two departmental chairpersons, the chair of the aforementioned ad hoc committee on promotion and tenure guidelines and criteria, and the Director of the Center for the Advancement of Teaching (who is also a member of the faculty). The group explored "scholarship of teaching" definitions and, through a synthesis of ideas, agreed upon the following definition:

The scholarship of teaching is hypothesis-driven, methodologically rigorous, peer reviewed, and a publicly presented reflection upon teaching and learning whose ultimate goal is the improvement of student learning.

The most pressing point of discussion concerned the last statement, namely, that the scholarship of teaching has as its ultimate goal the improvement of student learning. The discussion was reduced to one concerned with the explicit versus the implicit. The faculty members who agreed that any accurate "scholarship of teaching" definition would imply that student learning was its goal, also argued that leaving something so important as student learning to be understood implicitly was to diminish its importance. Thus, the definition was written so as to include reference to this "ultimate goal." It is worthwhile noting that the two

definitions which emerged in different campus conversations (i.e., an ad hoc committee and the Scholarship of Teaching Discussion Group) each make explicit reference to this "ultimate goal."

In later discussions, the group identified six key structures, policies, and practices at Xavier that support the scholarship of teaching. These include:

- There is a teaching culture at Xavier such that faculty already discuss teaching formally and informally;
- The ongoing analysis, review, and reflection on teaching is expected of all faculty, with subsequent implementation of specific revisions;
- There is an emphasis on assessment and student learning at Xavier;
- Xavier's current administration supports the concept of the "scholarship of teaching";
- Teaching has traditionally served a primary role in faculty evaluation;
- There exists at Xavier an institutional desire to be "current" in, for example, pedagogy, assessment, and technology.

The group also considered the structures, policies, and practices (and faculty perceptions) at Xavier that inhibit the scholarship of teaching.

These include:

- Xavier's tradition of teaching is one that supports good teaching, not the scholarship of teaching;
- The work load at Xavier compromises scholarship of any form;
- Inadequate support is provided for faculty engaged in the scholarship of teaching;
- There is concern that teaching faculty may be considered second-rate citizens because the scholarship of teaching is not a *bona fide* form of scholarship;
- Some faculty regard the attention given to the scholarship of teaching as little more than a fad;
- Faculty are still unclear about the meaning of the scholarship of teaching; and
- Faculty are inadequately prepared to do the scholarship of teaching.

Looking Ahead: Year Two of the Carnegie Teaching Academy Campus Program at Xavier.

Perhaps the most significant outcome of the yearlong discussion was recognition of the need to provide an infrastructure that, in principle, models the infrastructure provided for traditional scholarship. The faculty group identified the following as necessary components of this infrastructure:

1. Models for designing and conducting classroom research;
2. A community of faculty meeting regularly to discuss the scholarly work they are doing;
3. Release time or stipends for those faculty who wish conduct research on teaching and learning;
4. Information on teaching journals and their publication guidelines; and
5. Information on opportunities to give papers on teaching at conferences and symposia.

It is the aim of the Center for the Advancement of Teaching to promote and facilitate the implementation of the above mentioned recommendations during the 1999-2000 academic year.

The Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs has pledged its support of Xavier's continued participation in the Carnegie Teaching Academy Campus Program and the specific implementation plans outlined above. Dr. Elizabeth A. Barron, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs serves as the contact person in this regard. Dr. Barron can be reached at:

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