

## Spring 2002 Advisory Group

The Spring 2002 Advisory Group comprised faculty members representing the Library, College of Arts and Sciences (A&S), and College of Pharmacy. The specific A&S departments with faculty representation included:

- African-American Studies
- Biology
- Business
- Chemistry
- Communications
- Computer Sciences and Computer Engineering
- Division of Education
- English
- History
- Languages
- Mathematics
- Philosophy
- Physics/Engineering
- Political Science
- Theology

Faculty members from both divisions of the College of Pharmacy – Division of Clinical & Administrative Sciences, and Division of Basic Pharmaceutical Sciences – served on the Spring 2002 Advisory Group.

Because of the large number of faculty members who volunteered to serve, the group was divided into six subgroups. Four luncheons were held during the Spring 2002 semester; a subgroup, or in one instance, two subgroups, were invited to join the Center staff at each luncheon.

We've compiled the minutes of the Advisory Group luncheons; we provide them here, including a summary, for your consumption.

During the Fall 2002 semester, we've asked the members of the Advisory Group to help the Center in two specific ways:

- Given the breadth and variety of comments and suggestions that we received during the Spring 2002 Advisory Group luncheons, what, in your opinion, or the two or three most prominent or significant themes that emerge? In affect, to what should we pay the closest attention?
- The Center staff members have begun to think about another grant proposal. We want to develop a proposal around a concept or theme that is determined by the faculty. Thus, we need your input.

## **Summary of Spring 2002 Advisory Group recommendations**

We thought it would only be fair if, just as we've asked the members of the Fall 2002 Advisory Group, we tried to extract two or three major themes from the Spring 2002 semester Advisory Group meetings' notes.

But instead of two or three, we identified four major themes. They are (in no particular order):

- Evaluation and assessment
- The scholarship of teaching
- Faculty showcases
- Department dialogue.

### **Evaluation and assessment**

Here, there are two objects of the evaluation and assessment: students' learning and faculty members' teaching.

### **The scholarship of teaching**

As with traditional research, an institutional infrastructure is necessary to promote, support, and sustain research in teaching and learning. Members of the Advisory Group emphasized again the need to develop such an infrastructure for research in teaching and learning.

### **Faculty showcases**

Xavier is an outstanding institution, in part because of its dedicated, hard working, and extraordinarily creative faculty. Regrettably, as Xavier has grown and our work has become more complex and diverse, faculty members often are unaware of what new work their departmental colleagues, let alone colleagues across campus in another department, are doing in their both their research and teaching.

### **Departmental dialogue**

But for a small number of instances, the Center has focused its efforts on providing a broad set of professional development opportunities for the entire faculty. It has not, to any great extent, developed specific collaborations or initiatives with academic departments, divisions, or colleges. The Advisory Group members clearly point to this as an avenue to which the Center should give serious and thoughtful consideration.

## **New staff member in the Center for the Advancement of Teaching**

During the Spring 2002 semester, we asked members of the Advisory Group, “What do you think of the Center creating a new staff position for a person with expertise in teaching and learning theory, assessment and evaluation, and classroom research?”

The answers to this question were surprising mixed. But the overall recommendations of the Advisory Group are (1) (as one member put it) “This is a fabulous idea.” and (2) the preference appears to be for hiring a person with expertise in teaching and learning theory, and not assessment *per se*.

The Advisory Group also provided wise advise as concerns this staff position, including:

If the Center hires from outside the university, it would be important that this person work with a faculty member in order to understand Xavier's culture, especially its teaching and learning culture.

Don't hire a theoretician, as regards teaching and learning. We need a nuts-and-bolts kind of person.

We need someone who will work very closely with faculty, and less so with university programs and such.

We need someone to give regular workshops having to do with teaching and learning.

## ***A Compilation of the Spring 2002 Advisory Group Members' Responses***

### **In what ways could the Center better serve your professional goals and those of your department?**

1. Equip more classrooms with IT resources.
2. Adopt a "production model" whereby faculty members are the content experts and IT staff members provide the technical and production expertise.
3. Provide technology training (*e.g.*, Banner) for chairs.
4. Assist faculty and departments in assessing student learning.
5. Develop an evaluation tool to assist chairs who evaluate their faculty members' teaching.
6. Develop a peer review mechanism that could assist chairs (or departments) in evaluating faculty members' teaching.
7. Establish a calendar early enough so that faculty can schedule classes around Center events such as those that provide an interchange of ideas among faculty about, for example, teaching.
8. Obtain grants that provide release time for faculty to pursue teaching, learning, and research projects.
9. Develop an infrastructure that assists faculty interested in doing the scholarship of teaching (it was noted that a lot of faculty have ideas for teaching and learning that, if developed, could lead to something that is publishable).
10. Establish something akin to the Science Education Research Group (SERG), perhaps an Education Research Group.
11. Perhaps Faculty Institute may be a venue for highlighting faculty innovations in teaching and learning.
12. Can the Center help a department like English vie for a more coherent space for faculty offices, the Writing Center, and classrooms, including computer labs?
13. Could the Center survey faculty about what they think our students need help with?
14. We need to do a better job of advertising the Center's services.
15. Perhaps we could give brief presentations and invite dialogue with faculty at departmental meetings.
16. Perhaps the Center could develop partnerships with departments to help them pursue specific goals, projects, *etc.*
17. The Center may be viewed by faculty as "passing the buck" with regard to assisting faculty with BlackBoard.
18. Host events at which faculty could showcase their particular approaches and methods to teaching and student learning.
19. Is there anything the Center can do to help resolve the institutional issue regarding faculty load?
20. The Center has focused too much on technology. You need to meet faculty members where they are, and they're not using the technology in the way the Center's promotes its use.
21. Perhaps the Center could promote more dialogue among faculty about research; work with the Center for Undergraduate Research in this regard; showcase faculty research.
22. Help faculty deal with the shifting research culture.
23. There is need for more clarity in the Center's role. Is it's "domain" teaching, as its name implies? Or is the Center a focal point for faculty development in general?
24. The Center should focus just on teaching.
25. Develop a small grants program to support faculty travel to pedagogy conferences.
26. Facilitate departmental retreats; help lead these retreats; give direction for the retreats.
27. Continue to advertise in a variety of ways.
28. Create a calendar of events.
29. Focus on the process of mentoring.
30. Help faculty understand and succeed in the tenure and promotion process.
31. Assist faculty in writing tenure letters. Consider hosting a workshop on this.
32. The Center has a challenge in getting senior faculty members to the Center. Perhaps the Center could come to departmental meetings; help us understand how to apply better teaching and learning principles and practices to our classes.

33. The College of Pharmacy has often questioned whether the Center is doing anything that really benefits the COP's needs in particular. Most of the College's courses are team-taught. How can team teaching be an effective approach? Also, the curriculum is very content driven. How can a professional school add new life to this sort of curriculum?
34. The Chemistry Department is beginning to discuss the place and practice of peer review of teaching. Perhaps the Center could help the department in this area.
35. Chairs need more information, help, and models on how to evaluate faculty members' teaching.
36. The Center should keep in front of faculty the literature on college teaching and learning.

## **What do you think of the Center creating a new staff position for a person with expertise in teaching and learning theory, assessment and evaluation, and classroom research?**

(Some of the points noted above were also mentioned in the context of this question.)

1. Each department must assess its students' learning. This person could be very helpful in this.
2. Faculty members need help in assessing the degree to which course learning objectives have been met
3. The University has a program review process in place. This person could be very helpful in improving this process.
4. This is a fabulous idea.
5. I need help in advancing my teaching. This person would be a good resource for this.
6. Faculty members may utilize this person for improving their teaching by having him or her videotape them in the classroom and evaluating what they see on the tape.
7. This person may interview students in classes as a means of helping faculty improve their teaching.
8. In the College of Pharmacy, faculty in the Clinical Sciences Division, in particular, need help in improving their teaching.
9. This staff person could be utilized by chairs who need to advise faculty members who they have determined need to improve their teaching. Consulting with this staff person could be a requirement imposed on such faculty by the chair.
10. Perhaps all first- and second-year faculty members should work at some point in time with this staff member.
11. In Chemistry, there is discussion on how a chair's evaluation of a faculty member's teaching can be more thorough, helpful, and accurate. Perhaps this new staff member would be a key person in this discussion or eventual process.
12. Consider, rather than hiring from outside, using Xavier faculty members who have release time to do this. The faculty member could promote a distinctly discipline-based initiative for, say, a three-year period.
13. Perhaps you could hire from outside the university and find someone who could teach in a department too.
14. If the Center hires from outside the university, it would be important that this person work with a faculty member in order to understand Xavier's culture, especially its teaching and learning culture.
15. I'm learning as I go. I could really use some expert help.
16. Having someone with expertise in assessment is critical.
17. We are desperately in need of new and different forms of assessment. There are lots of intangibles that we need to get a handle on. For example, what influences a student to attend graduate school?
18. We need to give more thought to having a better evaluation system of faculty teaching. What role might peer review have in this? (The Chemistry Department is beginning to discuss this.)
19. Don't hire a theoretician, as regards teaching and learning. We need a nuts-and-bolts kind of person.
20. We need someone who will work very closely with faculty, and less so with university programs and such.
21. We need someone to give regular workshops having to do with teaching and learning.
22. We need to enable faculty to do assessment. Faculty members know much less about this than they do about teaching.
23. Focus on assessment, not evaluation.
24. We need to expose faculty to a larger variety of teaching methods.
25. If you must choose, an individual with expertise in teaching and learning theory, methods, and practice is preferable to someone with expertise in assessment
26. This person could help new faculty develop their teaching abilities; could offer workshops.

### **Should we issue all 7 RFPs at once or dole them out one-by-one over several weeks?**

1. Issue all 7 at once so faculty members can pick and choose according to their particular interests.
2. Provide a brief description or abstract to help faculty navigate the RFPs.
3. Send the RFPs as 7 different attachments.

### **Should part-time faculty at Xavier be eligible for support from grants such as the Bush-Hewlett or Mellon grant?**

1. No. Part-time faculty members are on the outside of all other XU activities. The same should be true with regard to the Center.
2. Maybe. Determine the level of commitment to XU based on, for example, how many years they've served.
3. No. Don't give the administration any more reason to justify keeping adjuncts instead of hiring full-time faculty.
4. Yes, but give preference to full-time faculty members.
5. Yes, if you have the chair's endorsement.
6. Yes, especially if the part-time faculty member has longevity at Xavier.

### **Should new faculty members be required to attend Center's workshops and other events having to do with teaching and learning?**

1. Yes, don't let new faculty members experiment on students.
2. Consider offering an extended faculty orientation in which you could address more of the teaching and learning issues.
3. Consider holding workshops on Tuesdays at 5 p.m. so the new faculty members can schedule the workshops in advance.
4. Exposure to teaching and learning workshops and so forth is also a part of acculturating new faculty to Xavier.