

November 2001

## ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

From the Office of the Associate Dean Vol. 5 No. 9

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### Course Content Decisions

Letting students make decisions pushes faculty into new and less comfortable positions, but none does that quite as effectively as the thought that students might be involved in making decisions about course content. The proposal is that students be *involved* in the process, that they have *some say*, not that beginning students or even advanced ones sit down and tell you what content should be covered in the course and then cover it for themselves and their peers.

Students already make some content decisions. We let them decide on the topics for their papers and projects (and we are amazed at how inept they are at those decisions and how often they ask us to just tell them what we want). From there you might move to something like asking students (in groups or individually) to provide input as to what topics, problems, or readings they would like you to discuss in the exam review session and then design the review session based on that input.

Some course structures and formats allow flexibility as to what needs to be covered. In a theme-based first-year senior seminar, an elective course, a senior seminar, even a required course for non-majors, students might be able to offer some input. You could have them start by writing about what they hope to learn or need to know as a consequence of taking the course. Then you might give them a list of potential content areas and have them select those that they feel are most relevant to their learning needs and those of most interest to them. - From *The Teaching Professor*, January 2001.

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*Josh St. Peters, Sophomore in Agricultural Communications, was elected Vice President of the National Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow.*

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### Selected for Leadership Program

Three ACES faculty are a part of Class 11 of the ESCOP/ACOP Leadership Development Program in 2001-2002. Michael Mazzocco (Agricultural and Consumer Economics), Donald Bullock (Crop Sciences), and Jesse Thompson (Academic Programs) began the program in September, attending a five-day leadership development workshop in Indianapolis. Through out the academic year, they will participate in various activities and complete a project that enables them to learn more about how the university operates and about their own skills. The program culminates next March with a seminar in Washington, D.C. on the working of various governmental agencies.

The program is sponsored jointly by the Experiment Station and Academic Programs Sections of the Board on Agriculture, National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges. Previously, 32 faculty in ACES have completed the program. Their participation is funded by the College.

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### Academy of Teaching Excellence Room

The new ACES Academy of Teaching Excellence room is open daily for faculty to use. From small group meetings related to teaching and learning, to viewing and analyzing a video tape of your teaching, to checking out resources on many topics, you are encouraged to utilize this excellent resource. Stop by 115 ACES Library, Information and Alumni Center soon!

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### Faculty Teaching History

A new web site that was developed by the Division of Management Information is now available at <https://www-s.dmi.uiuc.edu/course/>. Anyone with a valid UIUC net ID and Password can enter the web site and view the teaching history by instructor or course for courses taught since Fall 1987. The table format can easily be used for annual performance assessment reports as well as Promotion and Tenure documents. This new site replaces the former Seven Year Teaching History site.

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### Teacher Evaluation Checklist

Another mechanism to identify teacher behaviors that describe instructor performance is to ask students to mark which of the 39 words or phrases describe you as a teacher. Instructors can readily identify their strengths as perceived by students (the words and phrases are all desirable characteristics) and identify which of those behaviors *not* marked are traits they would like to acquire.

### Teacher Evaluation Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/> Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> Friendly
<input type="checkbox"/> Approachable	<input type="checkbox"/> Fun
<input type="checkbox"/> Available	<input type="checkbox"/> Great
<input type="checkbox"/> Caring	<input type="checkbox"/> Helpful
<input type="checkbox"/> Challenging	<input type="checkbox"/> Humorous
<input type="checkbox"/> Clear	<input type="checkbox"/> Inspiring
<input type="checkbox"/> Committed	<input type="checkbox"/> Interested
<input type="checkbox"/> Communicator	<input type="checkbox"/> Interesting
<input type="checkbox"/> Concerned	<input type="checkbox"/> Knowledgeable
<input type="checkbox"/> Creative	<input type="checkbox"/> Lectures Well
<input type="checkbox"/> Dedicated	<input type="checkbox"/> Motivating
<input type="checkbox"/> Demanding	<input type="checkbox"/> Organized
<input type="checkbox"/> Effective	<input type="checkbox"/> Outstanding
<input type="checkbox"/> Encouraging	<input type="checkbox"/> Patient
<input type="checkbox"/> Energetic	<input type="checkbox"/> Personable
<input type="checkbox"/> Engaging	<input type="checkbox"/> Prepared
<input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiastic	<input type="checkbox"/> Respectful
<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Stimulating
<input type="checkbox"/> Exciting	<input type="checkbox"/> Understanding

Fair

Adapted from work by Joe Lowman, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1995.

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## Early Feedback

While end-of-course student ratings can be valuable, the instructor has no opportunity to make mid-semester changes based on student feedback. If you have never used an early feedback instrument, here are ten questions that can be used to gain some insight about the current semester and make changes now. Students can respond on a Likert-type scale of 1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Agree, and 4=Strongly Agree.

My instructor:

1. Seems knowledgeable about the course.
2. Explains things clearly.
3. Is prepared and organized.
4. Shows enthusiasm when teaching.
5. Is dedicated to teaching.
6. Challenges me to give my best effort.
7. Uses fair grading procedures.
8. Demonstrates concern for students.
9. Is an effective teacher overall.
10. Overall, this is a high quality class.

Adapted from Joe Lowman, *Mastering the Techniques of Teaching*, 1995.

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## Demanding Teaching

Great teaching is demanding, but most teaching that is demanding is not great. Professors may be demanding to demonstrate their own brilliance rather than to force the students to transcend their own normal limitations. Sometimes

professors demand knowledge of minutiae, sometimes of their own pet theories, sometimes of traditional categories. Some demand meaningless work. Insisting that the students perform at an impossibly erudite level is a way of shifting the responsibility for failure to them. A fine line often exists between demanding that the students perform at their best and treating their efforts with contempt or cruelty.

- Julius Getman, *In the Company of Scholars*, 1992.

## Senior Survey

The results of the 2001 Chancellors Senior Survey can be viewed at <http://www.oir.uiuc.edu/assessment/index.html>.

## Assessing Faculty Performance: Measures of Outreach and Extension

During the 2000-01 academic year, faculty in ACES participated in a comprehensive survey addressing faculty performance assessment. This is the fourth article intended to provide discussion and thought on how faculty in each of the seven ACES departments might consider improvements in the annual performance systems currently utilized. This article is based only on aggregate data of the College, not individual department ratings.

Faculty responded to 19 statements related to how outreach and Extension performance should be measured. On the seven-point scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, respondents rated these performance measures highest: impact of the program (6.0); responsiveness to needs of clientele (5.9); use of research in programs (5.8); leadership on teams and task forces (5.6); and peer evaluation of programs (5.5).

The next 12 items were all rated above 4.8 on the scale, indicating that they should be used in performance assessment. The items rated *lowest* were external funds generated and use of distance learning technology, both rated at 4.3. However, these items should still be considered in faculty performance assessment, since they were rated above the midpoint of the scale.

What suggestions can be derived from these results? Performance assessment in outreach and Extension is probably based more on impact and responsiveness to identified needs and collaboration with other groups and agencies. These measures can be more difficult to quantify than many teaching and research performance measures. The quality of programs should be based on the use of research, and publications and presentations are also appropriate indicators of outreach and Extension performance.

Research provides undergraduates a hands-on opportunity to put education to work. Further, it introduces the student not only to research methodology but also to the discipline needed for evaluating and reporting data. Orville G. Bentley, dean emeritus of the College, in *Illinois Research*, Fall 1991

## Teaching College #5

Twenty-six faculty and graduate student are completing their participation in the fifth ACES Teaching College. Participants include:

Meredith Agle	Grad Asst	FSHN
Tera Auchtung	Grad Asst	ANSCI
Robert Belton	Post Doc	ANSCI
Erica Carlson	Grad Asst	CR SCI
Kelly Cook	Grad Asst	CR SCI
Hao Feng	Asst Prof	FSHN
Rita Frerichs	Grad Asst	HCD
Hamish Gow	Asst Prof	ACE
Chris Harbourt	Grad Asst	AG ENG
Troy Jesse	Grad Asst	AG ENG
Chris Kaelke	Grad Asst	NRES
Amy Kaleita	Grad Asst	AG ENG
Ani Katchova	Asst Prof	ACE

Jason Kwiatkowski	Grad Asst	AG ENG
Kris Lambert	Asst Prof	CR SCI
Jaslean LaTaillade	Asst Prof	HCD
Soo Lee	Asst Prof	FSHN
YoungSoo Lee	Teaching Asst	FSHN
Laura Maupin	Grad Asst	CR SCI
Mani Nakamura	Asst Prof	FSHN
Joost Pennings	Assoc Prof	ACE
Nasib Qureshi	Assoc Prof	FSHN
Larry Steckel	Grad Asst	CR SCI
Adriana Umana-Taylor	Asst Prof	HCD
Benjamin Tracy	Asst Prof	CR SCI
Bryan Young	Grad Asst	CR SCI

Instructors for the course are: Cleo D'Arcy, Phil Buriak, Shelly Schmidt, Bruce Litchfield, R. Kirby Barrick and graduate assistant, Annie Hernandez. The course is funded by the Academy of Teaching Excellence, ACES Academic Programs, the Warren K. Wessels Fund, and the Provosts Initiative on Teaching Advancement.

## Expo a Success

More than 700 students attended the ACES Career Expo in early October, meeting with nearly 90 companies who provide internship and employment opportunities for ACES students. Thanks to faculty and staff who took time to visit Expo, showing support for our students and our business and industry partners.

## Plan of Assistance for Students on Probation

Each semester, a small proportion of ACES students are placed on academic probation. While we would like to think that the students can get back on track by themselves, history has shown us that most need some help. Oftentimes the student on probation just needs some strong encouragement to take specific steps toward correcting the situation. Inserted in this issue of *Academic Programs* is a sample Plan of Assistance to be used by students in working with their advisor. The intent of the Plan of Assistance is to help students clearly identify their situation, consider the resources that are available to them at UIUC and in ACES, and make concrete plans for eliminating the problems and renewing their academic good standing status. Feel free to use and adapt this sample with those students who are on probation, as well as those who are showing signs of academic problems. The sample was adapted from a form used at Concordia College.

Just think of the tragedy of teaching children not to doubt. Clarence Darrow

## ACES Students Earn Scholarships

A total of 969 scholarships were awarded to ACES students from scholarship funds in the college and departments, for a total of \$825,000. This represents an increase of more than \$25,000 over the previous year. The 800 scholarships awarded by the college include 172 Jonathan Baldwin Turner Merit Scholarships, the largest single scholarship program. Thanks to all who make these outstanding scholarship programs possible for our excellent undergraduate students.

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Urbana, IL 61801

## PLAN OF ASSISTANCE

; Fall ; Spring ; Summer \_\_\_\_\_ Year

Print  
Name  
Number

ID

Class Level/Rank \_\_\_\_\_ Major/Option \_\_\_\_\_

As a student on probation, I understand that my continued registration and financial aid at UIUC depend on the successful completion of these contractual agreements.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I must fill out the following form.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I must register for a Study Skills course.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I must register for and not drop the following courses: \_\_\_\_\_

Failure to meet the satisfactory progress standard during this term may disqualify me from attending UIUC.

I think these behaviors/factors contributed  
these resources to improve:  
to my probationary status:

- 1.
- 2.

I will use

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- 3.
- 4.

To remove my probationary status, I intend to:

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Review my course load to determine appropriateness.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Repeat a class in which I received a D or an F grade.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Meet with my advisor regularly to evaluate how Im progressing  
\_\_\_\_\_ weekly \_\_\_\_\_ bi-weekly \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Attend classes regularly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Change my major.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Increase my GPA from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Complete work for EX grades.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

In addition, I will utilize the following goals and strategies:

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Review the number of work hours and make adjustments as necessary.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Participate in counseling or other referral resources as recommended.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Design and implement a time management plan.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Take a leave of absence
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Students Signature-Date/Advisors Signature-Date