

## Report from the 2021-2022 Center for Teaching & Learning Task Force

Drafted for consideration in March 2022 by Task Force faculty:

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\*NOTE: A draft proposal for a UP Center for Teaching & Learning was presented to the Provost's Council, the Academic Senate, and to the UP faculty for feedback between December and February of 2022. With much helpful feedback, the task force has come to recognize that the long-term success of a new Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) requires more collaborative systems along with clearly defined resources and support to ensure it is realistic, sustainable, and generative for faculty. This report thus proposes that the development of a UP CTL begin with a one-year provisional phase focused on clear benchmarks to meet before proceeding to full operation. These benchmarks focus on ensuring the Center has a realistic and sustainable funding model along with faculty support and an organizational model designed through collaborative structures that clearly serve faculty needs.

In this report, we provide:

1. A rationale, timeline, and recommendations for the CTL project, along with
2. Guidelines and benchmarks for a proposed provisional year.

The report is complemented by two additional documents:

1. A preliminary design concept for a UP CTL and for a Director of Teaching and Learning position based on the initial proposal drafted by the task force; and
2. A summary of feedback from faculty presented with the initial proposal.

## Rationale, Timeline, and Recommendations

There is broad agreement between the administration and faculty that UP, with its primary focus on teaching and learning, would benefit from intentional institutional structures supporting excellent teaching and professional development related to faculty teaching efforts. While UP has many excellent individual teachers, and has had numerous important initiatives to cultivate effective teaching, we have not had the central space and devoted personnel common across higher education for supporting faculty growth towards teaching excellence. With the increasing need to support faculty development and striving to be inclusive, innovative, evidence-based, and mission-driven in our teaching practices, this task force began work in the Fall of 2021 to develop a concept for a formal teaching center to build off the now dormant Teaching and Learning Collaborative.

The task force collected information about teaching centers at other institutions, gathered perspectives from key UP campus constituencies, and explored potential models for a successful center in our particular context. The task force discussed the scope of a center and agreed that while it should be broad enough to include diverse teaching related endeavors, it should focus purposefully on supporting classroom-focused efforts that do not currently have formal support structures (thus leaving other important faculty development initiatives related to research, service, and general professional development to other structures and personnel).

Drawing on this work, in December of 2021 the task force created a preliminary draft model of a Center for Teaching and Learning for feedback from the Provost's Council and the faculty. The initial model proposed a collaborative leadership structure in hopes of avoiding silos and creating opportunities to build on the excellent work already being done at UP (ideally finding efficiencies rather than creating new tasks).

While the outlines of that proposal remain relevant, the task force received several lines of critical feedback that prompted revisions and led the task force to shift toward proposing a provisional phase necessitating attention to long-term sustainability. General points of feedback from the community are summarized elsewhere, but the following were key points of emphasis:

- A center needs to genuinely meet faculty needs, accounting for faculty perspectives thoroughly and generating faculty buy-in before finalizing structures and programming.
- A center needs to prioritize inclusive education, with particular attention to how inclusion, community, and shared commitments to human dignity are central to and aligned with the University mission.
- There is an immediate need for better support for teaching technologies, and the hiring of a Director for Academic Technology Services & Innovation (ATSI) should be undertaken in a way that enhances the work of a center.
- A center will work best if organized with collaborative support from the Academic Senate, particularly as related to the mandate of the Committee on Teaching & Scholarship.

- A center can only help enact the mission if it has adequate resources, particularly related to compensating time and effort while not further stretching faculty nor taking resources away from other faculty development initiatives.

Given this feedback, the task force is now recommending a slower and more intentional process for developing a CTL. The task force feels that it is important to ensure the UP Center for Teaching and Learning has a strong and deeply considered foundation that will provide every chance for long-term success. While the task force has conducted productive work generating useful ideas, given our time and expertise we feel it is necessary to focus our proposal on clear benchmarks for support and resources, complemented by a preliminary design concept that is open to revision. In this report we thus focus on recommendations for a provisional year with specific mandates for 2022-2023 as well as guidelines to shape the potential structure of a center for the longer term.

The recommendations of the task force include:

- a) Hiring a Director of Teaching and Learning (DTL) before the end of the 2021-2022 academic year. This Director would be tasked with shepherding the CTL through a provisional year in 2022-2023 focused on establishing a sustainable long-term model. Assuming benchmarks for moving forward from the provisional year are met, the DTL would continue into a three-year term.
- b) Coordinating the sustainable long-term model for a UP CTL with the Academic Senate, and particularly with the Committee on Teaching & Scholarship. Moving forward from the provisional year should include endorsement from the Academic Senate for a sustainable long-term model (likely to occur at the end of the 2022-2023 academic year).
- c) Undertaking tangible budget and resource planning with priority access to the Office of Development, Provost's Leadership Council, and the Budget Working Group to establish a sustainable long-term funding model based on a combination of institutional support, grants, and benefaction. Any budget and resource planning should not take away from existing professional development initiatives, instead identifying new funding sources. In coordination with the Provost's Office, the task force understands there to currently be three viable funding streams for a UP CTL:
  - a. Endowed funds available to the Provost that can provide an initial year's funding of \$40,000 for 2022-2023, increasing by \$5,000 each subsequent year to an annual contribution of \$60,000. This funding will be sustainable for at least 10 years, and is separate from funds needed to staff courses based on release time for faculty undertaking CTL work.
  - b. Supplemental funding from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) Inclusive Excellence 3 grant initiative that could provide up to three years of funding for collaborative efforts focused on inclusive excellence. While final totals are not yet available, this stream might provide up to \$50,000 for collaborative efforts.
  - c. Donor funds to be identified through priority access for working with the Office of Development. While specific benefactors have not been identified, the Provost believes

- this initiative would be attractive to potential donors in a way that could provide multiple years of complementary funding that would supplement other funding streams.
- d) Providing a physical space and administrative support for the CTL, including central offices for the Director and administrative support. We understand dedicated administrative support may not be a possibility for the 2022-2023 academic year due to budget cycles, but ask that this be a priority for the next budget cycle.
  - e) Limiting programming expectations for a provisional year to inclusive education efforts, including collaboration with the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) Inclusive Excellence 3 grant initiative and faculty team.
  - f) Offering the Director of Teaching and Learning the opportunity to design and pilot a Faculty Fellows program with 2-4 faculty (from at least two different of the College or Schools) engaging projects in priority areas with stipend support equivalent to approximately one month of summer salary. Stipend levels should be standardized to ensure equal compensation for Fellows regardless rank, school, or college, and should be adjusted each year to account for inflation.
  - g) Coordinating the hiring of an ATSI Director with planning for the Center for Teaching and Learning. The ATSI Director should be hired with clear coordination responsibilities for helping a Director of Teaching and Learning establish a center that would enable a constructive ongoing role for academic technology in the organizational structure of the CTL.
  - h) Convening a consultative group for a CTL transitional year that includes (but is not limited to) any Faculty Fellows along with representatives for the pillars in the initial proposal: the Director for Teaching and Learning, a new ATSI Director, an inclusive education representative (potentially a HHMI grant director), an assessment representative (potentially from Institutional Research), and a curriculum design and implementation representative (potentially the Core Director). In order to ensure collaboration with the Academic Senate, the Director of Teaching and Learning should also serve as an ex-officio member of the Committee on Teaching & Scholarship. The consultative group, under the leadership of the Director for Teaching and learning, would specifically be tasked with:
    - a. Visioning with a broad sample of faculty what a realistic, sustainable, and generative center would look like through intentional sessions designed for collaborative input. This should include setting clear priorities and parameters for how the Center can best serve teaching and learning at UP without duplicating other campus efforts.
    - b. Developing a sustainable longer-term organizational concept that integrates relevant campus groups while maintaining a necessarily limited focus on structures to support teaching efforts. This concept should be developed through a series of intentional conversations with key campus constituencies at UP, and through intentional efforts to learn about best practices at other institutions (including visits to peer centers and attendance at conferences such as [the POD Network](#) and the [Lilly Conferences](#)).
    - c. Ensuring the budget model and resources available to the CTL (as noted above) are appropriate and sustainable for long-term success and generative work with faculty.

All these recommendations and tasks would begin with the preliminary design concept for a UP CTL developed by this task force.

## Guidelines and Benchmarks for a Provisional Year

To ensure the UP Center for Teaching and Learning serves the mission of teaching and learning it must be organized and supported in ways that are sustainable and generative. This initiative cannot ask more of an already strained faculty without substantive increases in faculty support. The CTL Task Force, after gathering feedback from faculty, is wary of committing to a new initiative without first seeing tangible progress during the 2022-2023 academic year toward the following benchmarks:

- A sustainable budget and funding model building off the above noted funding streams and instituted through priority access to the Office of Development, the Provost's Leadership Council, and the Budget Working Group. This funding model should not take away from existing and already strained professional development budget lines, including individual faculty development funds and internal grants related to teaching.
- A commitment to replacing any teaching units lost to the appointment of a Director of Teaching and Learning and any Faculty Fellow course release time through intentional discussions and planning with the relevant department chairs and Deans. Priority attention should be given to maintaining full-time staffing as appropriate to teaching demands in relevant departments. Replacements should not default to adjunct staffing without the agreement of the relevant department chair and dean.
- A collaborative leadership model, guided by a Director for Teaching and Learning, that enables efficiencies and mutual benefit in teaching related initiatives including (but not limited to) inclusive excellence, evidence-based practices, assessment for learning, curricular improvements, and teaching technologies.
- A mutually beneficial working relationship with Academic Senate through the Committee on Teaching & Scholarship, delineating points of complementarity and collaboration.
- Commitments to coordinated faculty support around technology through a fully-staffed ATSI department and an ATSI Director tasked specifically with supporting the CTL.
- The design for a Faculty Fellows program that appropriately values faculty effort, enabling faculty to share talents and cultivate interests with appropriate compensation in time and/or salary.
- A productive collaboration with the HHMI Inclusive Excellence 3 grant initiative that leverages available funding into proof of concept for ways a CTL can facilitate tangible improvements in creating inclusive learning experiences that are relevant for promotion and tenure
- Realistic programming priorities that derive from visioning with a broad sample of teaching faculty from across the university.

To support the achievement of these benchmarks, we propose funding be provided during the provisional year for:

- A Director of Teaching and Learning hired with a 1-1 teaching load and offered an additional stipend of one-month salary to be adjusted over time in line with other salary adjustments. As noted above, the departmental home for this Director should receive priority consideration for

full-time replacement faculty pending discussions between the relevant department chair, dean, and the Provost.

- Two to four Faculty Fellows provided with a stipend to start at \$5000, pegged to the most common stipend for a course overload, with the intention of increases over time to stay in line with other salary adjustments;
- The availability of some administrative staff support for priority tasks during 2022-2023, leading into future regular staff support equivalent to 15-20 hours per week.
- Programming around inclusive excellence as teaching that is relevant for promotion and tenure (\*Potentially coordinated with money available through the HHMI Inclusive Excellence 3 grant initiative)
- Events with faculty to facilitate visioning for the longer-term priorities of the CTL.

These benchmarks are intended to be realistic and obtainable, with the hope that a sustainable and generative CTL can begin to serve excellent teaching at UP. If the benchmarks cannot be met, however, we recommend pausing plans for a CTL until there is more substantive support for the initiative.