UCMERCED

February 2008

Volume 1, Issue 1

News from the Center for Research on Teaching Excellence

Accreditation timeline through the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)

Letter of Intent for Initial Accreditation (August 1, 2008)

Capacity and Preparatory Report (July 15, 2009)

Capacity and Preparatory Review Site Visit (Fall 2009)

Educational Effectiveness Report (Nov. 18, 2010)

Educational Effectiveness Review Site Visit (Spring 2011)

Initial Accreditation Decision (June 2011)

For more information see:

WASC's main site at http://www.wascweb.org/
UCM accreditation at http://accreditation.ucmerced.edu

Inside this Issue

Teaching & Research Connections	2
Faculty Workshops	2
Mini-grant Opportunities	2
Faculty's Role in Accreditation	3
Research & Assessment	3
Services for Teaching Assistants	3
Staff Biographies	4
CRTE Services	4

Christopher's Story

I am delighted to announce that UC Merced's Center for Research on Teaching Excellence (CRTE) is open for business. Considerable effort in planning and implementation has established this resource to support colleagues in their quest to ensure successful teaching. Led by its director, Dr Robert Ochsner, the Center will help colleagues to conduct research on teaching methods and effectiveness, to achieve influential dissemination of the results, and to import the best practices from other excellent institutions of higher learning. The Center is a significant link between the two wings – research and teaching – that will carry UC Merced to the heights that we all aspire to.

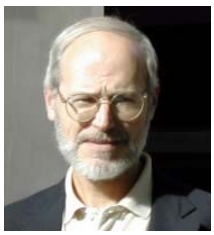
Several ***workshops*** are planned for the coming months, along with opportunities for faculty to apply for ***mini grants*** in support and recognition of their commitment to effective student learning. In addition, many of the workshops will help faculty to prepare for the next steps in the WASC accreditation process. The newsletter and individual announcements will alert you to these various opportunities.

I look forward to participating in many of the scheduled events, and to celebrating a uniquely supportive environment for all teachers, researchers and learners in the UC Merced community.

Christopher Viney
Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Education & Professor of Engineering

The Center's Mission and Future

Our Center's mission is to engage the entire UC Merced academic community in the scholarly practices of teaching and learning. Part of what makes UC Merced a premier research university is our dedication to innovative research. The fundamental concepts behind research excellence can inform our teaching practices, including the rigorous analysis and understanding of student learning. To support this potential alignment of established research methods with the design and delivery of effective instruction, we will be offering workshops, grant support, and consultations--support that is outlined in greater detail in this newsletter and at our website <crte.ucmerced.edu>. This evidence-based focus on teaching and learning has potential application to all disciplines and faculty, with the shared research goal of understanding how all students can excel. We look forward to collaborating with you on building a strong community of teaching and learning scholars.



Robert Ochsner
Director of the Center

Interested in providing suggestions?

The Center is in the process of launching several faculty-driven programs, including mini-grants, instructor resources and workshops. A survey will be emailed to all faculty, requesting suggestions to further our understanding of faculty needs and interests. Your feedback is greatly appreciated and will play a critical role in the development of future Center programs. Please take about 15 minutes to complete this survey.

"UC Merced has an unprecedented opportunity to be a Research One university that is also a 'Teaching One' university and we should rise to that challenge."

Mike Dawson,
School of Natural Sciences

Teaching & Research: Connecting the Two Effectivelv

"The research that I do is inevitably tied to how I present science. That mindset is going to spill-over into the classroom." "You can try all kinds of things in a class, but you don't always necessarily know that they work. As a physicist, you want to do controlled experiments on the classroom to confirm student learning."

Kevin Mitchell, School of Natural Sciences

Ruth Mostern
School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts

"It's challenging to balance scholarship and teaching, given that faculty are evaluated largely on their research even though much of our time spent is teaching. One way that I would like to deal with the contradiction is to write articles that deal with classroom pedagogy. In this way, I can turn the classroom into a research opportunity, and, by doing so, I can rationalize devoting more time and energy to thinking about teaching. It also brings greater visibility to teaching."

Faculty Workshop Schedules

Titles and Presentation Leaders	Week of
Who are our students? Maximizing our teaching impact. Laura Martin & Anne Zanzucchi	February 25
Who are First Generation and Generation 1.5 students? Influences on teaching and learning. Mary S. Smith	March 3
What is our role in WASC accreditation? What the faculty needs to know. Karen Dunn-Haley	March 10
How can my lectures be more effective? Enriching lectures with active learning. Karen Dunn-Haley & Laura Martin	March 17
How can rubrics save time, enhance student learning, and improve your teaching? Mike Truong	March 31
How is Disability Services a Teaching Resource? Karen Dunn-Haley & Brad Neily	April 7
How can I increase my grant proposal success? Tying student learning to research. Robert Ochsner & Laura Martin	Fall 2008

Need money or support for teaching projects? We've got it!

Mini-grants: Priority will be given to proposals that evaluate evidence-based learning through performance outcomes. Project proposals may be submitted any time after March 1, 2008; the maximum award will be $5000.

Center Fellows: These fellowships are intended for new or recently hired instructional faculty. Fellows will receive a one-course release for no more than $7,000 that may be applied to the fellow's teaching responsibilities or allocated to the fellow's school for any instructional purpose. Applications for Fall semester 2008 must be submitted before July 1, 2008.

For more information, visit our website at <crte.ucmerced.edu> or contact the Center's Director, Robert Ochsner.

What can faculty contribute to accreditation and the continuous improvement of student learning?

Senate faculty participation in the WASC accreditation process is critical to our institutional success. There are several reasons accreditation is important besides assurance of quality and adherence to academic standards. Accreditation determines a school's eligibility for participation in federal (Title IV) and state financial aid programs. Our students' ability to transfer academic credits with ease or have coursework accepted when applying to graduate school may rest on our accreditation status. The following are faculty ideas for how to participate.

"At minimum, we need to have learning objectives and outcomes in our syllabi. Beyond that, we need to find ways to capture what students are learning and get evidence of that across courses, programs, and disciplines."

Greg Camfield, School of Social Sciences, Humanities & Arts

Lara Kueppers, School of Natural Sciences

"I feel what I am missing is a really good picture of who our students are and what our challenges are. It would be nice to understand more concretely what kinds of things you can do in your courses to achieve those things that you want to achieve with our students."

How does the Center support the valuable work of our graduate teaching assistants?

- Orientation to UC Merced
- Videotaping teaching
- Instructional workshops
- Individual support for teaching initiatives
- Consultation and workshops for international teaching assistants
- Assistance developing teaching materials and methods

Investigating Student Learning: Simple Methods

There are many reasons to investigate student learning, though the best reason may be to determine if your learning objectives – the goals you have for your instruction – are realized in the course outcomes, or the evidence that students are truly learning. Assessment provides the impetus to assure student learning. As Diane Halpern (2003) suggests, this entails giving students "our vision of teaching and learning." That may be as simple saying to them, "'here's what I am doing and why.'" The following are local perspectives.

Robin DeLugan
School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts

"It is important to not wait until mid-term to assess how students are doing. This can be done simply by providing writing exercises, quizzes, evaluations, or other forms of feedback and/or encouraging students to come to office hours. I try to communicate that the students' success is important to me… that I care."

"My lectures include objectives and outcomes in initial slides: "I ask myself 'what do I expect them to know' and then I turn it into a statement – it gives them a guide on how to study. It works for me, too, what level do I expect my students to be at? We're not just giving them work … we're giving them goals and focus."

Jennifer Manilay, School of Natural Sciences

Sean Malloy, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts

"The fact that we serve such a large number of first-generation students is one of the things I like best about being at U.C. Merced. I've had more joy out of students here than any other university I have taught at."

Staff Biographies

Robert Ochsner, Ph.D. (Applied Linguistics), Director
rochsner@ucmerced.edu | (209) 228-4171 | COB 301

Robert has taught in public and private colleges and universities for over 30 years and has 25 years of administrative experience. He has published widely on the scholarship of teaching and learning. As the Center's Director, he looks forward to supporting faculty, lecturers, and TAs as they evaluate their teaching strengths and examine evidence of student learning.

Karen Dunn-Haley, Ph.D. (History), Faculty Development Coordinator
kdunn-haley@ucmerced.edu | (209) 201-3805 | COB 215

Karen's academic career includes teaching U.S. history, administering a faculty mentoring program, and assisting with a number of curricular and public history-related projects. Her primary responsibilities in the Center entail presenting workshops on teaching effectiveness and WASC requirements, consulting with faculty in the School of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts, and developing an instructional mentoring program for new faculty.

Laura Martin, Ph.D. (Biology), Faculty Development Coordinator
lmartin@ucmerced.edu | (209) 228-4629 | COB 221

Laura has worked as a university lecturer, outreach education specialist, middle school science teacher and marine ecologist. As an assessment and faculty development coordinator focused on the School of Natural Science and School of Engineering, Laura hopes to excite instructors about the rewards of applying their research skills to help students becomes capable, self-motivated, evidence-demanding learners. She is happy to provide ideas, strategies and tools to achieve this and is available anytime for personal consultations.

Mike Truong, Ph.D. (Ethnic Studies), Faculty Development Coordinator
mtruong@ucmerced.edu | (209) 217-7249 | COB 215

Mike has taught Writing, Ethnic Studies, Sociology, and other social science courses at the community college and university settings. His primary responsibilities in the Center include consulting with faculty and TAs in the School of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts on instructional technology, active learning methods, and various assessment tools.

Mary Smith, MA (TESOL), English Language Institute Coordinator
msmith5@ucmerced.edu | (209) 217-7250 | COB 213

Mary has taught English in Spain, China, and the U.S. to varied groups including recent immigrants, international graduate students, teachers of English, and U.S. undergraduates. Her primary goal of facilitating language learners in reaching their own objectives fits with her responsibilities in the Center; these include presenting workshops on Generation 1.5 students, coordinating services for English language learners, and overseeing the Summer Bridge program.

Adriana Signorini, MA (TESOL), English Language Institute Specialist
asignorini@ucmerced.edu | (209) 658-5248 | COB 213

In 2002, Adriana moved to Merced from Argentina where she had helped found and direct an English language institute. Since then, she has worked with different groups of English language learners in the higher education context, including Generation 1.5 and international students. Her primary responsibility in the Center is to assist in the planning and delivery of the services and programs offered by the English Language Institute.

Anne Zanzucchi, Ph.D. (English), Assessment Coordinator
azanzucchi@ucmerced.edu | (209) 217-7228 | COB 343

Anne has taught literature and writing in a variety of academic disciplines and cultural contexts. She also has experience with instructional technology, assessment, and various evidence-based learning methods. In addition to consulting for the School of Engineering, she hopes to contribute and support campus awareness and endorsement of outcomes-based learning, online systems of course and instructional evaluation, and other assessment models.

University of California, Merced

Center for Research on Teaching Excellence

Office: 167 Kolligian Library
Phone: (209) 228-7950
Fax: (209) 228-4128
General email: crte@ucmerced.edu

Robert Ochsner,
Director of CRTE
rochsner@ucmerced.edu
(209) 217-7186

Juana Dumagan,
Administrative Assistant
jdumagan@ucmerced.edu
(209) 228-7950

For more information about resources & upcoming events

please visit:

crte.ucmerced.edu

CRTE Services

Faculty development
Instructional workshops
Grant opportunities
Videotape analysis of lectures
Faculty orientation
Syllabus design consultation
Instructional mentoring
Survey design consultation