

Teaching Effectiveness Committee

TEC Resolution 2013 - #1 (two pages)

The University Senate Departmental Award for Excellence in Education

Approved by the Teaching Effectiveness Committee on: 2/15/2013.

WHEREAS, current teaching award programs recognize outstanding individual college teachers; the proposed University Senate Departmental Award for Excellence in Education award will recognize an academic department for their exceptional commitment to quality education and will provide funding for a three-year period during which the honored department will initiate faculty development activities to enhance the continued development of effective practices in teaching and learning.

WHEREAS, a proposed University Senate Departmental Award for Excellence in Education award will have significant impact on departmental culture, not just individual behavior, by recognizing the collective performance within an academic unit, and by supporting additional activities targeted to further enhance departmental quality of faculty performance and student learning campus wide.

WHEREAS, this proposed award is consistent with Priority 1 of the 2008 AU Strategic Plan for Elevating Academics which states: "The Auburn University System will elevate undergraduate education and enrich the undergraduate experience." In addition, this would fit into emerging revisions of a new AU Strategic Plan for Elevating Academics.

WHEREAS, a departmental award program can bring unity of purpose by enabling a greater number of faculty members to receive recognition for their efforts around a common purpose and creates incentive for even the best faculty within a department to improve their teaching. It provides the opportunity for life-long learning, a goal of the 21st century, and encourages continued development for faculty as well as students. It helps departments strive for excellence through progress and change. A departmental award can positively impact a departmental culture so that teaching excellence becomes part of the department's identity and "brand". Recognition of this nature can be an excellent tool to recruit students and faculty and to support the department's efforts to publicize its teaching expertise to parents, legislators, accrediting boards, and internal and external granting agencies. In fact, unique models and innovations offer opportunity for collaborative proposals to secure extramural funding.

WHEREAS, The **University Senate Departmental Award for Excellence in Education** will create a continual conversation about teaching excellence in every department. As a result of the application process, departments will engage in in-depth analysis and reflection of their instructional objectives and outcomes. In this way, the award will create a campus-wide community of reflective practitioners, engaged in the *assessment* of student learning outcomes and effective teaching, and innovative thinking directed at the improvement of teaching and learning.

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WHEREAS, a funding model for the **University Senate Departmental Award for Excellence in Education** award is based on initial funding from the VP/Provost office as redirection of savings resulting from the switch to electronic course evaluation from use of hard copy paper forms. In the third and subsequent years, assuming an award is made annually, there would be a need for \$30,000 each year to sustain the program.

WHEREAS, the Senate leadership would meet with Development Officers to explore endowment shell agreements resulting in a named award (therefore, the award name could be modified with input from the donor and the Teaching Effectiveness Committee).

WHEREAS, award administration would be carried out by the The Biggio Center for the Enhancement of teaching and Learning by receipt of the funds, establishment and provision of oversight for the management of the overall accounts and internal transfer distribution of funds to the awarded department.

WHEREAS, selection will be based on: 1) a full description of the department's efforts to improve teaching and learning, 2) evidence of teaching excellence showing the relationship between teaching and improved student learning, and 3) a professional development plan (with budget of the award funds) that outlines three years of proposed teaching and learning enhancement activities.

WHEREAS, the guidelines for the award selection are detailed in the proposal describing the award, that modifications to these guidelines would be approved by the Teaching Effectiveness Committee, and nominations will be due to the chair of Teaching Effectiveness Committee (charged to evaluate and select the award) in the fall.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the University Senate Departmental Award for Excellence in Education be established and launched and announced in the spring of 2013 for the first award to begin in 2014.