

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TEACHING PRINCIPLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

April 30, 2003

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A Report to the Senate Assembly by the members of the 2002-03 Academic Affairs Advisory Committee (AAAC):

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AAAC wishes to acknowledge and thank past members of AAAC who contributed significantly to the evolving process of developing these principles including especially Morton Brown, Jean L. Loup and Richard L. Sears.

Preamble

As an educational institution, the University of Michigan is dedicated to fostering best practices for effective teaching at all levels of instruction.

The following principles and responsibilities have been established to guide faculty, administrators, and staff in their efforts to sustain and strengthen a supportive educational environment for our undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. This document was developed by the Academic Affairs Advisory Committee¹ in consultation with the Office of the Provost.

Section 1: Individual faculty responsibilities

- Strive for excellence in teaching as well as in research and service.
- Provide stimulating, challenging and rigorous instruction.
- Foster student independence, intellectual curiosity and the ability to reason.
- Seek feedback from students and peers.
- Regularly examine the organization of each course taught and explore ways to improve teaching effectiveness.
- Design and teach courses to enhance the curriculum and to prepare students for subsequent courses and work in their field.
- Design new curricular initiatives and innovations, including the use of information technology to enhance learning and teaching, within and across disciplines.
- Consider innovative and risk-taking courses, such as those involving active learning, community service and learning, interdisciplinary interests, specialized topics, open classrooms, and other methods.
- Convey and demonstrate to students the ethical standards and expectations of the discipline or profession.
- Encourage freedom of inquiry and broad differences of opinions on debatable matters.

Section 2: Institutional responsibilities

- Include quality of teaching at both undergraduate and graduate levels in decisions involving hiring, tenure, promotions, salary adjustments and other forms of recognition.
- Establish written procedures by which teaching evaluations are conducted for tenure and promotion decisions. Provide regular feedback to the faculty based on these means.
- Determine teaching loads and evaluation criteria in light of the added demands that innovative and risk-taking courses place on the faculty.
- Evaluate and document teaching of faculty, preferably using multiple source of evidence. Include teaching done in venues beyond the classroom (i.e., student advising, dissertation committees).
- Involve faculty in determining how teaching will be evaluated.
- Provide opportunities for appropriate and effective team teaching, especially between faculty members of different academic ranks and with varying amounts of teaching experience.
- Encourage the design of new curricula and innovations within and across disciplines. Connect learning across disciplines by reducing barriers that prevent access between fields and by encouraging units to share resources and collaborate in teaching and curriculum development.
- Support, strengthen, and encourage faculty to take advantage of University programs and unit programs supporting their teaching.

Section 3: Joint responsibilities

- Project the sense that teaching matters, that time and effort given to teaching can be well spent.
- Provide teaching orientation as well as mentoring in the performance of instructional duties for junior faculty, including those not on the tenure track who have teaching responsibilities.
- Place increased emphasis on improved data and evaluation for excellence in teaching and learning.
- Employ multiple options for teaching evaluation, such as peer reviews, teaching portfolios, student evaluations, and pedagogical colloquia.
- Ensure effective means for faculty to share information to assist each other with teaching.
- Encourage graduate and professional programs whose strong scholarly activity includes high-quality research on effective teaching and mentoring
- Assure that faculty at all ranks and graduate teaching associates have every opportunity to become more reflective and scholarly in their teaching practices.

Section 4: Rewarding excellence in teaching

- Recognize the efforts of unit-wide achievements in teaching and curricular improvement.
- Provide adequate and highly publicized funding for the enhancement of faculty teaching skills.
- Encourage structured opportunities for faculty to work on issues of teaching and pedagogy (e.g., sabbaticals).
- Recognize achievements in teaching that rise to an outstanding level, as described, at least in part, in this document, and enable faculty to share their expertise with the entire campus community.
- Periodically review the reward system so that it reflects unit and individual contributions to the University's overall mission of teaching, research and service.

¹ With special thanks to and in memory of Professor Jacqueline E. Lawson, who contributed significantly to its creation as a member of AAAC and as Chair of the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA).