**Teaching and Learning Advisory Council (TLAC)**

2014-2015 Annual Report to the Academic Senate

Submitted – April 13, 2015

**Introduction**

The Academic Senate has charged the Teaching and Learning Advisory Council (TLAC) with stimulating the creation of a campus culture that truly values, promotes, recognizes, and rewards excellence in teaching and learning in proportion to its stated significance in the university mission. TLAC is interested in:

1. Engaging the university community in dialogue about what constitutes excellence in teaching and learning.
2. Serving as a resource to the university concerning teaching and learning information, including philosophy, methodology, technology, science of learning information, etc.
3. Determining the needs of faculty members in their quest to achieve teaching and learning outcomes and assisting them to meet those needs.
4. Recommending policies for promoting and improving the impetus for teaching and learning excellence.
5. Networking with committees (where appropriate) to meet shared goals.
6. Recognizing teaching and learning excellence on campus.
7. Providing faculty with opportunities to encounter varied teaching and learning practices and to share expertise.
8. Supporting faculty in acquiring the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching and learning in a culturally diverse campus community.

This report contains a summary of TLAC’s activities fall 2014 through winter 2015. Much of the information in this report can be found or will be posted on TLAC’s website: http://www.nmu.edu/tlac/

During the past academic year, TLAC supported and hosted teaching related presentations, provided NMU’s academic community with peer teaching observations, and awarded conference grants to faculty members to support their teaching. TLAC members also worked with the Provost and the Dean of AIS to support the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) and helped to select NMU’s second teaching and learning scholar.

**Report of Activities**

1. **Meetings**: The council dealt with some of its business via email, and held face-to-face meetings on the following dates: September 12, 2014, October 31, 2014, November 21, 2014, January 30, 2015, March 13, 2015, and will be meeting on April 24, 2015.

2. **New Faculty Orientation**: TLAC participated in the New Faculty Orientation on August 21, 2014 providing an informational table with handouts related to our mission, campus teaching resources, and conference grants.

3**. Teaching Excellence Awards:** Kevin McDonough represented TLAC, reviewed nominees, and participated in the selection of a faculty recipient who was honored in December 2014.

4. **TLAC Conference Grant Awards**: TLAC increased the value of the grants from $1,000 to $1,500 per award for this academic year, and awarded four grants each during the fall and winter semesters, as listed below. Additional details concerning these awards will be posted on the TLAC website.

**Fall 2014 Awardees**

* Dr. Christy Edge (Education)
* Dr. Amy Barnsley (Mathematics/Computer Science)
* Dr. Abby Cameron-Standerford (Education)
* Dr. Melanie Reeves (Education)

**Winter 2015 Awardees**

* Dr. Bethany Bergh; (Education)
* Dr. Kia Richmond (English)
* Mr. Michael Letts (Art and Design)
* Mr. Stephan Larson (Art and Design)

5. **TLAC website**: The website has been updated with resources for faculty and was managed by the TLAC chair, Dr. Cale Polkinghorne.

6. **Peer teaching observations**: TLAC has implemented a program, based on a pilot from previous years, whereby faculty members can request a classroom visit from a TLAC member to help the faculty improve their instruction. More than 20 faculty members requested peer observations during the fall 2014 semester. TLAC had difficulty following through with the 20 requests. The difficulty led to TLAC re-evaluating the program and enhancing the pool of peer observers. TLAC had a call for peer observer volunteers and 19 people will serve as peer observers for the 2015-2016 academic year. Kevin McDonough, Tom Gillespie, Dr. Jill Leonard, and Dr. Cale Polkinghorne are creating a peer observation training session for the 19 volunteers that will take place May 1, 2015.

7. **Teaching engagements**: TLAC supports, sponsors, and co-sponsors events (seminars, workshops, lectures, etc.) that are targeted toward improving teaching and learning by introducing innovative methods, new ideas, philosophies, or other instructional techniques. TLAC's budget helps to support the costs of hosting these teaching engagements (i.e. catering). TLAC hosted the following teaching engagement in 2014-2015:

* ***Active Learning Catalyst Project – Results and Path Forward***- November 13, 2014
  + Led by Active Learning Catalyst Grant Members: Dr. Jill Leonard (Biology), Dr. JD Phillips (Math), and Matt Smock (Instructional Design & Technology).
* ***Introduction to Service-Learning – Design for Learning – Reciprocal Partnerships***- April 17, 2015
  + Led by Patti Clayton (Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning)

The co-chairs wish to recognize the work and active participation of the following council members during the past academic year: Drs. Eugene Wickenheiser (Secretary), Jon Sherman, Josh Sharp, Abby Cameron-Standerford, Kevin McDonough, David Helton, Tawni Ferrarini, and Katie Menard, as well as ex-official members Tom Gillespie, Rachel Harris, Dr. Jill Leonard and Kerry Mohr for her assistance related to TLAC’s budget.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Cale Polkinghorne, Chair TLAC