

Graduate Student Colloquium 2006—Reflecting: Using Discussion, Writing, and Technology to Encourage Student-Centered Learning

Overview

In the spirit of the theme of the 2006 Graduate Student Colloquium—exploring ways to encourage student-centered learning—presenters were recruited for the first time through a call for proposals from UT Austin graduate students, resulting in diverse entries from graduate student instructors in natural sciences, educational psychology, curriculum and instruction, foreign language education, and communications. The May 25 proposal deadline for the September 16 program allowed GSI program staff to provide chosen presenters professional development through feedback, technological support, and practice opportunities.

The day-long colloquium attracted seventy-two graduate students from education, engineering, liberal arts, architecture, business, communications, fine arts, natural sciences, information studies, social work, and several centers and academic areas. The format included dual presentations, a poster session during lunch and breaks, and a networking lunch. With sessions focused on interactivity and discussion, the diversity of the attendees provided for rich interchanges and interdisciplinary perspectives on teaching.

Recommendations

Based on post-colloquium survey responses, GSI staff offers eight recommendations for the 2007 program:

- Dedicate time for poster sessions.
- Emphasize an interdisciplinary perspective for presentations.
- Add more discussion time for presentations.
- Publicize the colloquium through faculty members.
- Reduce the lunch break to 30-45minutes.
- Continue providing all handouts in attendee folders.
- Continue the dual session approach.
- Emphasize the ASPECTS program throughout the day.

GSI staff recommends five administrative adjustments:

- Complete pre-colloquium tasks a week in advance.
- Ensure online program information is up-to-date.
- Continue the *Call for Proposals* format.
- Continue providing an ASPECTS sign-up lap-top table.
- Send out an early reminder regarding cancellations.

Overall, attendees valued the opportunity to engage in discussion with colleagues from many disciplines. The colloquium should maintain emphasis on interactivity, relevance, and theory-practice connections from the perspective of graduate student instructors.