THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PROVOST’S TEACHING FELLOWS INITIATIVE
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BACKGROUND
The Provost’s Teaching Fellows (PTF) Program was created as a sustainable structure in which faculty could be incentivized to continue to develop and refine their craft, and further share their practice and lessons learned with their peers as they work collectively to advance the teaching mission of the university.

The Program’s structure was initially developed in Summer-2013 by a faculty task force charged by Senior Vice Provost David Laud. The Program was officially launched on October 14, 2013 with the Provost announcing the inaugural cohort of nine Senior Fellows and eleven Fellows and the Program’s vision and mission:

Vision: The vision of the Provost’s Teaching Fellows is to have a broad, positive and sustained impact on the quality of teaching across the campus through the identification, development, and support of talented, forward-thinking and service-oriented faculty dedicated to furthering innovative teaching.

Mission: The mission of the Provost’s Teaching Fellows Program is to create and sustain a community of practice committed to fostering a culture of pedagogical excellence in order to enhance student learning at the University of Texas at Austin.

www.utsouthwest.edu/know/2013/10/15/16-inagural-provosts-teaching-fellows-named/

In its first year, the PTF has undertaken significant roles, including planning and facilitating campus wide conversation on teaching, initiating Learning Communities, serving as reviewers for the 2013-14 Curriculum Innovation Grant Program, and participating in PFT programs planning meetings and informal conversations around pedagogical focus areas.

GOALS
The goals for the PTF Program are to:
1. Enhance student learning;
2. Validate our efforts through the scholarship on teaching and learning;
3. Collaborate as scholars across intra-institutional boundaries;
4. Create learning communities;
5. Share pedagogical scholarship with the broader academic community;
6. Commit as Fellows to refining our own practice;
7. Commit as Senior Fellows in the operational governance of the Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL).

At the heart of the program lies scholarly inquiry into what constitutes excellence in faculty teaching and student learning. Fellows are expected to adopt an evidence-based approach to teaching that may take the form of empirical research. In turn, they are expected to serve the larger academic community by sharing their knowledge of effective teaching and learning in different forums and venues. The Fellows are also expected to support other faculty interested in improving their teaching. Finally, Fellows are expected to take leadership roles curating Learning Communities, thereby assuring the transfer of pedagogical skills and knowledge.

STRUCTURE AND FELLOWS RESPONSIBILITIES

Structure: The structure of the Program and the functions/responsibilities of the members are articulated in Figure 1. Faculty who are selected to join the Program serve initial two-year terms as either Senior Teaching Fellows or as Teaching Fellows. Teaching Fellows improve their craft or develop support programs via initiatives that are funded for up to $25,000 over a two-year period. Teaching Fellows have the opportunity to continue in the Program after the two-year initiative by advancing to Senior Fellows in further service to the Program. Senior Fellows serve the program in various capacities, including mentoring Fellows in executing their initiative, developing campus Learning Communities around important issues in teaching and learning, evaluating UT Curriculum Innovation Grant proposals, and providing guidance in the governance of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). Members progressing to Distinguished Senior Fellow have reduced detailed involvement, but continue to serve as ambassadors and mentors for the Program.

Members: Table 1 identifies the inaugural Senior Fellows, and Table 2 identifies the inaugural Fellows with brief descriptions of their initiatives. It is anticipated that ten Fellows will be identified as the next cohort for 2014-15.

Website: Greater details on each of the PTF members can be found on the organizational website at: http://ctl.utexas.edu/innovators/provost-teaching-fellows/

FIRST YEAR ACTIVITIES
In addition to continuing to refine the structure of the PTF Program and Fellows executing their individual initiatives, the members have been extensively engaged over the first year in campus-wide activities focusing on excellence in teaching and learning:

- Peer Observation Learning Community - Developed Portal Summer -2014 (http://ctl.utexas.edu/innovators/professional-development/peer-observation-learning-community/)
- Invitation to Serve as Senior Fellows Board Member Spring -2014 (http://ctl.utexas.edu/innovators/provost-teaching-fellows/meet-the-fellows)
- Facilitator at the Campus Conversations Spring -2014 (http://www.utexas.edu/center/poor-spring-conversations/index)
- Facilitators for Campus Conversations Fall 2014 (http://www.utexas.edu/center/poor-conversations)
- Peer Observation Campus Conversations Spring 2014 (http://www.utexas.edu/centers/provost-teaching-fellows/peer-observation-campus-conversations)