Advancing Pedagogical Wellness and Inclusion at UCI

UCI Faculty Academy for Teaching Excellence (FATE)

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Support Faculty Mental Health and Well-Being

- **Create a culture of well-being** from all levels, starting with administrators, and including faculty, staff, and students. From our survey, we found that faculty lacked the time and energy to engage with the resources that would help them increase knowledge around inclusive and well-being practices. This means the campus should invest in **faculty well-being to support teaching strategies that increase inclusivity in the classroom, which will increase student wellness**. In order to do this, we recommend the following:
  - **Conduct a comprehensive survey** of faculty and staff campus-wide to evaluate the level of burnout and identify the primary factors contributing to burnout. The results of this survey would help to inform of specific needs that could be addressed through interventions or potential policy change.
  - **Create a Faculty Well-Being Committee** with cross-campus collaborators to tackle specific issues related to well-being in the workplace. This can be done either through the Academic Senate (Note: does not include HS faculty) or the Academic Planning Group, but needs to consider all levels and types of faculty. One suggestion would be to create a subcommittee of Faculty Well-Being under the Committee on Faculty Welfare.
  - **Increase pedagogical support (e.g. Executive Assistant, Project Manager, Instructional Designer) for each School** to support faculty with administrative tasks when teaching courses (e.g. ordering textbooks, setting up courses, supply needs, IT needs, ensuring classroom space, organizing guest speakers in classes). To address inclusivity among faculty, this support staff person would greatly help all faculty, but also those with potential (in)visible disabilities to manage setting up their courses and to deal with logistics.
  - **Centralize websites for student wellness resources.** Currently, there are several separate websites such as:
    - Be well: https://shc.uci.edu/wellness-resources
    - Campus assist list: https://whcs.uci.edu/do-you-need-help/campus-assist-list
    - UCI Center for Student Wellness & Health Promotion: https://studentwellness.uci.edu/
    - Wellness Initiative in Social Ecology Resource List: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1nF0wpEDV48FMwze16XGDph1BSzHYD5MMjuUM-lik6f8/edit#gid=820745545

Incentivize Teaching Quality

- **Allow faculty to create their own goals to focus on during their review cycle and allow flexibility in which areas they work on from cycle to cycle.** Currently, merit and promotion are focused heavily on research productivity. As a Research 1 institution,
- there is recognition that scholarship must be a significant component of the Merit and Promotion (M&P) process. However, this focus has the additional impact of narrowing the review of faculty portfolios toward their scholarly productivity with the potential to discourage teaching

development and scholarship. We recommend that the M&P process be more responsive to the current times and context. Specifically, we recommend allowing faculty to create goals utilizing flexible options and choices to focus on during their review cycle. Individual faculty could develop a personal plan for their review cycle, in conjunction with their Department Chair/Dean in order to ensure the Schools Mission and Strategic Plan are taken into account, which allows the faculty member to consider their individual professional goals and create an individualized plan for success to be measured at the following review.

  - If such a new model is not possible, consider establishing a transparent system of universal benchmarks within our process so we can strategize on how best to accomplish those goals successfully

- **Create smaller benchmarks for recognizing teaching**. For example, giving more teaching excellence awards throughout the year (preferably with a small stipend) more frequently may help faculty feel more motivated to teach well. These can be departmental, campus, or DTEI awards that consistently recognize quality teaching each quarter instead of solely at the end of the year. Another example could be highlighting Excellent Faculty teaching at the campus-level (i.e. professor of the month).

- **Expand guidelines for Reflective Teaching Statements with suggested topics …**
  - **Allow teaching professional development and participation in Faculty Learning Communities to count as evidence toward teaching.** The purpose of this is to prioritize the quality of teaching over the quantity of professional development training that faculty write on their merit and promotion files.

Create Space for Prioritization of Teaching

- **Designate specific time periods where faculty are highly encouraged to focus on teaching professional development.** This could be (for example) during sabbatical, merit & review time frame, or establishing one day per quarter as a teaching professional development day. This would set time aside for this purpose rather than representing an extra activity that faculty have to work into their already overloaded schedule. This teaching development day could include DTEI workshops/events, mental health first aid training, departmental training, or university-wide faculty learning community events.

- **Establish university-wide and department-specific support for faculty learning communities (FLCs).** DTEI can partner with departments to create both broad and discipline-specific faculty learning communities to allow consistent space and time for teaching development and growth. FLCs could be topic focused and open to all faculty based on interest each quarter. This will be most effective if the FLCs are prioritized from the top with something like university-wide events once per quarter that provide faculty with the time and space to focus on their teaching in collaboration with a supportive community of their colleagues.

- **Develop a grant program for a one-time course release for pedagogical development.** Faculty would apply, use the time to revise or create new courses and implement best pedagogical practices, and report back on accomplishments at the end of the granting period.

Revisit previous Inclusion and Well-Being Recommendations (see Full Report Appendix B)

Honor historical efforts. Significant labor has gone into Inclusion and Well-Being Recommendations previously and that effort too often feels unacknowledged with no concrete action steps to implement such recommendation - invest in the work that has already been done to advance this effort at UCI

Full Report: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aXnLmxF9mXZBZZ3qF-ybvltEAGzatDAV/view?usp=sharing