**Activities, Programs and Efforts Developed in Support of**

**the 2011 Teaching Excellence Initiative (TEI)**

*Updated May 5, 2017*

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Many new programs have been implemented at DU in recent years that are either partly or directly linked to recommendations from the 2011 Faculty Senate Teaching Excellence Initiative. The activities listed below are related to the Office of Teaching and Learning and do not include new programs or changes that have occurred the within individual units or colleges.

**New Faculty Teaching Development Initiative**

The TEI suggested that “new faculty should be encouraged, and enabled, to attend the CTL new faculty workshops.” Starting in 2011, the Office of Teaching and Learning completely revamped the earlier approach to new faculty development (what was previously a New Faculty Orientation day and series of five workshops each fall). Faculty feedback from the previous approach showed concerns related to scheduling difficulties, a wide disparity of backgrounds and needs, the one-time availability of information, and workshops occurring after new faculty had already started teaching.

To address these concerns, the OTL developed an online “course” to be offered in the weeks before classes start. The [New Faculty Workshop](http://otl.du.edu/our-programs/new-faculty-workshop/) (NFW) is structured like a model course with five interactive online weeks, assignments/activities, discussion forums, and live webinar sessions with current DU faculty members. In addition, we offer campus tours and social events at the beginning of the fall term. The NFW is available in August and early September and is roughly based on a 2-hour time commitment for each module, totaling approximately 10 hours to review information and complete the five teaching-related assignments. The weeks are provided with suggested target deadlines to maintain a sense of community, but new faculty can complete the workshop at their own pace from any location. The Provost’s Office has strongly encouraged new faculty to complete the workshop.

Prior to 2011, an estimated 15-25% of new faculty attended at least one of the five face-to-face sessions each year. Since 2011, completion rates of the New Faculty Workshop, where completion means submission of all five assignments, has ranged between 55% and 75%. The New Faculty Workshop also received the [2012 POD Innovation Award](https://podnetwork.org/about-us/grants-and-awards/pod-innovation-award/past-innovation-award-winners/) from the higher education faculty development association in the United States.

Early revisions of the online course took into consideration feedback from surveys and small informal focus groups of both new and early career faculty members. Currently, the workshop is updated each year with faculty and staff input from various sources across campus and a detailed feedback survey of all participants who completed the workshop.

**Evaluation of Teaching Initiative**

* **Priority 1: Meaningful Qualitative Feedback:** The TEI recommended all units develop a practice of incorporating qualitative feedback into the evaluation of teaching. Since 2011, the OTL has created numerous services and programs designed to provide meaningful qualitative feedback and support faculty with the ongoing development of their teaching practice. [An overview of the current programs](http://otl.du.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/OTL-Formative-Teaching-Development-Services.pdf) can be found on the OTL website, including Mid-Quarter Student Feedback Sessions, Mini Grants, Faculty Learning Communities, Faculty Showcase Seminars, and support of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. A new program involving faculty-student partnerships in teaching is currently being piloted.
* **Priority 2: Formative Peer Teaching Reviews:** The TEI recommended facilitating the practice of peer review. Although designed specifically for a non-evaluative different purpose, in 2016 the OTL began a [Peer Classroom Visit Program](http://otl.du.edu/our-programs/peer-classroom-visit-program/) to foster sharing of teaching practice across disciplines. The purpose of this program is to provide a mutually-supportive opportunity for self-reflection and sharing of ideas and practices. It is important to clarify that the OTL program is designed specifically as a voluntary form of gathering meaningful qualitative feedback, not an evaluation of teaching.
* **Priority 3: A** **Framework for Summative Evaluation**: The TEI suggests that what is important is a richness of data collection regarding teaching evaluation and recommended adopting a framework for evaluation. Several steps have been undertaken to further this end.
  + Surveys of practice and perceptions:
    - In Winter quarter of 2013 a Faculty Senate survey about Student Teaching Evaluation forms showed dissatisfaction with the current state. Only 32% of respondents said they were satisfied with the present student teaching evaluation process and 17% agreed that SETs should be the principal method of evaluating teaching. A summary of the survey can be found at: <http://portfolio.du.edu/teachingexcellence/page/44670> (DU community members need to log in)
    - In 2014, the APC and OTL administered a survey to Chairs/Directors to ascertain common teaching evaluation practices and perceptions. Although practices varied widely, and everyone agreed that teaching performance is vital to their departmental success, only 5 of 29 respondents reported that they base less than 50% of their teaching evaluation on SETs. A summary of the survey can be found at: <http://portfolio.du.edu/teachingexcellence/page/44670> (DU community members need to log in)
  + **Teaching Aspirations** – Nearly all recommendations about teaching evaluation from DU and from the literature suggest that the first step is to develop a common understanding of the criteria to be measured. In other words, we can only measure teaching performance in a fair and meaningful way if we have some agreement about what it means to be an effective teacher. Partly to this end, the OTL redirected the efforts of a Faculty Learning Community in 2015 to address the question: *What kind of teaching do we aspire to at DU*? After 6 months of meetings, consulting the literature, speaking with students, and receiving feedback from colleagues, [30 “Teaching Aspirations” statements](https://docs.google.com/document/d/15-pWI3rMQUt-vdzgz5vActklpWjpkWDnBNyalV_zI9E/edit) were created in what is meant to be an ever-evolving customizable document. There are plans underway to continue developing these statements and turn them into a usable format for both teaching self-reflection and possibly departmental adaptation. A full [overview of this project can be found on a Teaching Excellence portfolio site](http://portfolio.du.edu/teachingexcellence/page/44669).
  + **Support for Chairs, Directors and those responsible for evaluating teaching –** Recent efforts to collect and share published best practice and showcase efforts at comprehensive teaching evaluation already occurring on campus include:
    - Starting in 2015, the OTL hosted aseries of workshops highlighting DU programs who are developing comprehensive teaching evaluation methods: *Alternative Methods for Rewarding Teaching,* featuring DU’s Writing Program, The Daniels College of Business and the Morgridge College of Education.
    - [Resources and handouts from these sessions have been collected online](http://portfolio.du.edu/teachingexcellence/page/44670)
    - A new webpage was created to collect resources for Chairs/Directors: [Evaluating Teaching Excellence Toolkit](http://otl.du.edu/teaching-resources/evaluating-teaching-excellence-toolkit/)
    - Two roundtable discussions in 2015 and special sessions with the last two Teaching and Learning Week guest speakers were targeted to Chairs/Directors to continue discussion and share new ideas about alternative methods for evaluating teaching. Feedback surveys indicated that most attendees desired ongoing discussion to support and share best practice in this area.
  + **Support for faculty members in reflecting upon and documenting their teaching practice**.
* The OTL conducts Individual consultations with faculty on developing teaching portfolios and preparing P&T documentation.
* In 2015-16, a new series of workshops were developed to help faculty reflect upon and document evidence of their teaching practice.
  + - *Writing (or Rewriting) a Statement of Teaching Philosophy -* offered every fall quarter
    - *Telling Your Teaching Story: Documenting Evidence of Good Teaching –* offered twice with plans to redesign into more specific workshops (creating an annotated syllabus, writing teaching activity reflections, etc.)
    - *Creating a Teaching Portfolio* –to be offered every summer in conjunction with the Writing Center
* Updated and new website resources for faculty include:
  + - [Writing a Philosophy of Teaching](http://otl.du.edu/teaching-resources/writing-a-teaching-philosophy/)
    - [Creating a Teaching Portfolio](http://otl.du.edu/teaching-resources/creating-a-teaching-portfolio/)
    - <http://portfolio.du.edu/teachingportfolio>

**Departmental Excellence in Teaching Initiative**

During the Spring 2012 through Summer 2013, at the request of the Faculty Senate APC, The Office of Teaching and Learning reallocated a portion of a 20K Grant Program to fund departments in a Teaching Excellence in the Departments Grant Program. Four departments were chosen to see what various approaches they could develop to foster teaching excellence at the departmental level. Project managers met periodically through the grant time period to share updates and ideas and a final panel discussion for the DU community shared highlights and lessons learned from this grant program. Proposals and final reports are available to the university community at <http://portfolio.du.edu/teachingexcellence/page/44668>.

A sample of the major activities undertaken by each department are listed below.

*Department of Anthropology – Project Manager Dean Saitta*

Major activities:

* Identification and analysis of themes in student course evaluations, especially the narrative comments, for the last 5 years
* Outreach to alumni asking them to reflect on their experiences and to identify strengths and weaknesses of departmental teaching
* Development and implementation of a mid-course assessment instrument for all faculty in the department
* Discussion and revisions to the undergraduate program assessment instrument
* Significant analysis and revision of Advanced Anthropology, the required intro course for all M.A. students.
* Conducted first comprehensive analysis of specialized, practical courses offered in Museum and Heritage Studies curriculum.
* Purchased recent book, *Strategies in Teaching Anthropology,* for all faculty

*Department of Mathematics – Project Manager Nic Ormes*

Major activities:

* Administer survey to assess current teaching practices, attitudes, and interests of faculty going forward
* Engage faculty in discussions concerning excellence in teaching in the form of a bi-weekly Teaching Excellence Seminar
* Have faculty inform and be informed by the MATH 1200 Hybrid Project, a separate project funded by the OTL using multiple assessment methods
* Develop a GTA development seminar which would dovetail into further opportunities for teaching development for PhD students
* Course release to develop online resources for upper-division math courses

*Department of Accountancy – Project Manager Sharon Lassar*

Major activities:

* Inventory pedagogical techniques and learning experiences for each required course in the BA program
* Individual meetings with faculty members to map course objectives with program objectives, and to map course objectives with Bloom’s Taxonomy, teaching methods, and assessment methods.
* Held workshops by Accounting faculty about pedagogical techniques
* Engage in self-reflection and develop individual action plans to improve teaching, submitted yearly to Activity Insight
* Class visits and confidential peer feedback conducted by senior instructor of new and adjunct faculty

*Colorado Women’s College, Law and Society Program – Project Manager Tiffani Lennon*

Major activities:

* Identified areas of improvement to the college’s student evaluations of faculty
* Instituted annual peer evaluations for faculty
* Mapped syllabi to the program’s student learning outcomes
* Designed and implemented a post-graduation survey of alumni
* Implemented a virtual monthly “Faculty Conversations” discussion led by a faculty member
* Created a student-faculty portfolio community to share information about teaching and learning
* Focused on Inclusive excellence issues through book clubs and ongoing discussions
* Piloted a learning community for commuter students
* Helped host visiting scholar-teacher presentations

**Other Initiatives**

To date there has been no formal movement related to the University Teaching Fellows and Associates Initiative or the Award for Departmental Excellence in Teaching Initiative.