



## University of Toronto TORONTO ONTARIO M5S 1A1

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT AND PROVOST

March 7, 2002

## Memorandum

To: Planning and Budget Committee

From: Adel Sedra, Vice-President and Provost

*Adel S. Sedra*Item Identification

Allocations from the Academic Priorities Fund in support of the establishment of the Office of Teaching Advancement

Sponsor

Adel Sedra, Vice-President and Provost

Jurisdictional Information

The Planning and Budget Committee is responsible for approving allocations from the Academic Priorities Fund.

Highlights and Resource Implications

In June 2000, the Provost received a report he had commissioned from Professors Carol Rolheiser and Marilyn Laiken of OISE/UT which made a number of recommendations regarding ways of enhancing teaching at the University of Toronto. In his administrative response to that report produced in June 2001 (see Appendix A), the Provost signalled his intention to establish a centre and a director to oversee teaching development. In January 2002, he announced the appointment of Professor Ken Bartlett as the first Director of the Office of Teaching Advancement. The Office is to be located within the Resource Centre for Academic Technology (RCAT) in Robarts Library.

Funding is being requested to support the operations of the Office, including the Director's stipend and release time, staffing, and supplies. In addition, the funding requested will help to support a program of teaching advancement, involving workshops, conferences, and presentations. (Budget Attached)

Recommendation

That the Planning and Budget Committee recommends to the Academic Board approval of \$182,948 in base funding from the Academic Priorities Fund for the Office of Teaching Advancement.

## **Office of Teaching Advancement Budget**

### **STAFF**

Director's Stipend, Research Support and Replacement Teaching	\$47,900
Graduate Students' support to the Director	10,000
Office Administrator (salary and benefits)	60,000
Receptionist- shared with RCAT 50% (salary & benefits)	20,048
<b>TOTAL STAFF</b>	<b>\$137,948</b>

### **PROGRAMS**

Mentors' expenses	\$20,000
Outside guest speaker/visitor honoraria/expenses	5,000
Inside guest speaker honoraria	1,000
Conference Travel	5,000
Program Materials/Hospitality	4,000
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>

### **OFFICE EXPENSES**

Printing/Supplies	\$10,000
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<b>TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET</b>	<b>\$182,948</b>
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## THE OFFICE OF TEACHING ADVANCEMENT

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The University of Toronto is one of the great research-intensive public universities of Canada and North America; it also teaches over 50,000 students. Consequently, the need to ensure that there be appropriate recognition of excellence in teaching and the means to build excellence in the classroom across the institution is of the greatest importance.

In June 2000, the Provost received a report he had commissioned on ways of improving teaching development at the University of Toronto. The report, written by Professors Marilyn Laiken and Carol Rolheiser of OISE/UT, provided a highly informed analysis of models of teaching development in other universities and a well-reasoned proposal for the provision of teaching development at this University. In making its recommendations, the report's authors recognized that, in a University as large and complex as ours, there is no "one-size-fits-all" prescription for helping faculty members to achieve their full potential. It also acknowledged the centrality of excellence in teaching and research to our academic mission.

In Fall 2000, the Provost (serving as Chair) appointed a committee of Deans and senior members of the University community to review the report and determine what strategies outlined in the report would best serve the needs of our faculty. The members of this committee were: Derek Allen, Dean of Arts, Trinity College; Carl Amrhein, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science; Michael Charles, Dean of the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering, Ron Daniels, Dean, Faculty of Law; Michael Fullan, Dean of OISE/UT; Paul Gooch, Vice-Provost; Carole Moore, Chief Librarian; and Carolyn Tuohy, Deputy-Provost.

The committee came to a number of conclusions about what would work best in this institution. It was clear that a central resource to help faculty members develop effective teaching skills would be an asset to divisions. Currently, there are few formalized or systematic means, either across or within divisions, by which individual faculty members can develop or improve their teaching ability. At the same time, it is important that a teaching service not duplicate initiatives already in place within divisions. Its principal orientation must be a practical one: to provide both one-on-one coaching and workshops, in response to requests from within the University, whether these be individuals, departments, or faculties. In conclusion, the committee endorsed the report's recommendation to establish an office for teaching development and the appointment of a director to oversee this unit.

The Committee also saw many potential synergies in the work of the office of teaching advancement and the Resource Centre for Academic Technology (RCAT), a unit whose mandate is to serve the needs of faculty and graduate students who wish help in using technology in their teaching and research. There are resources and expertise in RCAT which will undoubtedly benefit the work of the Centre, and *vice versa*. In framing his response to the report, the Provost concluded that any centrally-based teaching support unit should be located in the Robarts Library, in close proximity to RCAT. The Provost also strongly supported another important principle articulated in the report, that of acknowledging excellence in teaching.

### **Role of the Director and the Office of Teaching Advancement**

The committee then embarked on a search for the first Director of this centre for teaching support. In January 2002, the Provost announced the appointment of Ken Bartlett, a Professor of History, as the first Director of the Office of Teaching Advancement (OTA). In describing his goals for the Office, Professor Bartlett states:

“the true objective of the proposed Office of Teaching Advancement is nothing short of changing the culture of the University of Toronto to reflect the importance of teaching to the institution and to provide mechanisms by which individual faculty members, or whole departments or divisions, might address the issue of teaching excellence in a collegial manner, without threat or insensitivity: this I see as the major objective of the new position . . . To achieve this ambitious objective the University of Toronto must create an office that will be seen as part of the academic mission of the university and work intimately with individual faculty members, departments and other offices offering instructional support to develop a clear recognition that teaching is an important part of an academic's career and that every assistance will be provided to assist in the advancement of teaching. The office, then, should be university wide, report directly to the Provost and be identified as the central coordinating service for teaching advancement . . . The fundamental responsibility of the Director is to change the university culture to institutionalize teaching excellence and advancement at all levels by working with individuals, departments and divisions to focus resources and rewards on the classroom.”

As noted above, the Director of the OTA will work primarily with faculty members themselves but will also work closely with Principals, Deans, Directors and Chairs in achieving the objectives of the unit.

The promotion of teaching excellence must begin with the recruitment process of new faculty and persist throughout a faculty member's career. Evidence and assessment of teaching ability and potential should be integral and vital parts of the search process. Once hired, inexperienced teachers should be given clear advice and assigned a teaching mentor and, if necessary, referred to the OTA for assistance. They should be assured that the intent is to build and reward excellence over time rather than to intimidate them at the beginning of their careers. Throughout their careers, faculty members should be rewarded for excellence in teaching.

Seminars on particular aspects of teaching, such as small group discussion, large class lecturing, effective laboratory demonstration, application of new media technology, among others, will be held throughout the year to support the OTA's mandate of promoting excellence in teaching throughout faculty members' careers. The Office will be available to chairs who wish to refer colleagues. The Office will provide assistance using a practical and collegial approach.

The OTA will also work to develop a system of mentorship in which there will be accomplished teachers in each department who will provide support to those in need of teaching support in their units. They would also serve to refer colleagues in need of additional support to the OTA.

The OTA will provide a rubric under which these teaching mentors will receive information about teaching development and receive direction for their work. Some funding is being requested for expenses related to the work of the teaching mentors.

The OTA will be a clearinghouse for information regarding teaching and its support, whether opportunities for professional development, targeted workshops, technological applications or any other of the many superb initiatives currently in place throughout the university. The OTA will organize specific events, as needed, either at the university or divisional level. In addition, the Office will help to coordinate activities of other offices across campus engaged in instructional support and work collaboratively with these units to promote best practice.

Working with our public affairs and advancement personnel, as well as with academic administrators, the Director of the OTA would like to explore a number of avenues for promoting excellence in teaching, including public lectures by our great teachers, and a much higher profile for teaching awards. Such initiatives would help reinforce the connection between excellence in teaching and research, public awareness of our excellent teachers and the importance that the University places on teaching.

The Office of Teaching Advancement will also assume responsibility for the Teaching Assistants' Training Program, and hopes to have a role in broader training of teaching assistants, with the participation of the departments and divisions involved.

Staffing needs for the OTA are modest. The unit will share the services of a receptionist with the RCAT. In order that the Director can continue to be actively engaged in teaching at all levels, he will require academic instructional support, such as a senior graduate student who can assist with marking, course organization, lecturing or research. An administrative assistant would be required to keep the accounts, do the scheduling of the Director's meetings and OTA events, prepare documentation and publicity, collect information and statistics, and create an efficient working environment for the office. The budget would also include funds for honoraria for conferences, guest speakers, and other miscellaneous expenses.

## Appendix A

### PROVOST'S ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSE TO REPORT ON THE SUPPORT AND ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

I was very pleased to receive this report. It provides a highly informed analysis of models of teaching development in other universities and a well-reasoned proposal for the provision of teaching development at this University. In making its recommendations, the report's authors have shown sensitivity to the pedagogical needs as well as the diverse curricular landscape of our University. The report recognizes that, in a University as large and complex as ours, there is no "one-size-fits-all" prescription for helping faculty members to achieve their full potential. It also acknowledges the centrality of excellence in teaching and research to our academic mission.

The report includes a proposal which envisages a multi-pronged approach to the enhancement of teaching, including the establishment of a teaching service headed by a director, a group of consultants to support the work of this unit, and an Academy of Distinguished University Teaching to formally recognize outstanding teaching. The proposal also outlines a governance structure and range of activities for its program.

In Fall 2000, I appointed a committee of Deans and senior members of the University community to review the report and determine what strategies outlined in the report would best serve the needs of our faculty. The members of this committee are: Derek Allen, Dean of Arts, Trinity College; Carl Amrhein, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science; Michael Charles, Dean of the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering, Ron Daniels, Dean, Faculty of Law; Michael Fullan, Dean of OISE/UT; Paul Gooch, Vice-Provost; Carole Moore, Chief Librarian; and Carolyn Tuohy, Deputy-Provost. I have had the benefit of their counsel in framing my response. This committee will continue to meet to oversee the implementation of key aspects of the report, as outlined below.

I endorse the proposal to create a Centre for the Support of Teaching and to appoint a director and will move to achieve these goals within the next few months. It is clear from the discussions within the implementation committee that a central resource to help faculty members develop effective teaching skills would be an asset to divisions. Currently, there are few formalized or systematic means, either across or within divisions, by which individual faculty members can develop or improve their teaching ability. At the same time, it is important that a teaching service not duplicate initiatives already in place within divisions. Its principal orientation must be a practical one: to provide both one-on-one coaching and workshops, in response to requests from within the University, whether these be individuals, departments, or faculties.

There are many potential synergies in the work of the Centre for the Support of Teaching and the soon to be established Resource Centre for Academic Technology (RCAT), a unit whose mandate is to serve the needs of faculty and graduate students who wish help in

using technology in their teaching and research. There will be resources and expertise in RCAT which will undoubtedly benefit the work of the Centre, and *vice versa*.

Accordingly, I am proposing that the Centre for the Support of Teaching be located in the Robarts Library, in close proximity to RCAT.

In addition, I would like to signal my strong support for the principle of acknowledging excellence in teaching, and intend to consider more ways in which the University can recognize truly exceptional teachers, ideally at a level of distinction comparable to that of University Professors.

In my opinion, any decisions about implementation of other recommendations contained in the report should follow the appointment of a director and the establishment of a teaching development program. Based on this experience, we can then determine how best to invest resources in teaching development.

In conclusion, I would like to express my great appreciation to Professors Carolyn Rolheiser and Marilyn Laiken of OISE/UT and all those who participated in this project. Your report has provided a valuable analytical foundation for an important initiative in our University.

June 12, 2001