

## **Task Force for the Recognition of Teaching Excellence: Dana Hammer, Chair**

### **Committee Members:**

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### **The charges were to:**

1. Identify methods for faculty development and encouragement of the Scholarship of Assessment, Learning and Teaching (SALT).
2. Identify and collect “Best Practices” of methods to assess teaching excellence, Recommend means by which teaching excellence can be acknowledged and rewarded by the college/school and university.
3. Share the task force findings and recommendations via a manuscript or resource tool kit.

The task force has accumulated a great deal of information which will be available in a White Paper that is ready for submission. The task force stated that it is important to recognize teaching excellence for the goals of improved student learning and faculty retention. It is also necessary to create valid and reliable methods by which to judge and recognize teaching excellence.

This executive summary of a more comprehensive white paper (to be submitted to AJPE) serves not only as a final report of this task force, but also as a call to action for schools and colleges of pharmacy to enhance their faculty development efforts in the area of teaching, and review their teaching award criteria and practices with an aim toward greater emphasis, clarity and evidence-based models. The white paper explores the concept of teaching excellence, provides an extensive background on teaching awards, addresses each of the charges, and concludes with recommendations and next steps for the academy to continue this important work.

Although there is no one definition of teaching excellence, the task force collected information and references regarding characteristics that define teaching excellence and developed a list of these attributes. These include positive student-faculty contact, effective active learning, achievable expectations, respects diverse talents and ways of learning, effective communication skills, and commitment to teaching well.

The task force also collected information regarding teaching awards and determined that there is a common assumption that teaching awards foster a commitment to teaching

improvement. But such is not necessarily the case. The task force determined what other incentives exist and the impact/perception regarding teaching awards. They further addressed faculty development and the scholarship of assessment, learning and teaching. In addition, ideas of how to develop faculty into excellent teachers by becoming a scholarly teacher were explored. The distinction between scholarly teaching, the scholarship of teaching, and educational research, and training and mentoring needed for faculty to develop in these areas was discussed. The task force also identified challenges and barriers to this development, and suggested methods by which this work can be recognized.

The task force further explored how teaching excellence should be assessed and determined that there are 3 primary categories of sources of evidence/data used to measure teaching excellence (1) students/learners and alumni, (2) peers, administrators, and/or instructional specialists, and (3) the teacher him/herself in the form of self-assessment and reflection. A teaching portfolio can serve as the data repository about one's teaching. The task force summarized these sources and provided recommendations for their use.

How teaching excellence should be acknowledged and rewarded was also a topic of discussion. The topics addressed included: (1) the purpose of the recognition; (2) the criteria for teaching excellence; (3) the source of the nominations and the final recognition; (4) determination process for selecting the winners; (5) the right number and mix of awards; (6) how often to give the awards; (7) the form of the actual award.

#### Recommendations

1. There should be an expectation that ALL teaching faculty engage in professional development to improve theirs and others' teaching, with an emphasis on a scholarly, collaborative approach
2. Schools and Colleges of Pharmacy should provide more than a single award to recognize teaching excellence
  - a. If providing a single award, however, the criteria should be comprehensive and multiple sources of data should be used in the selection process
  - b. If providing more than a single award, awards should be based on different criteria and employ different methods of selection
3. Criteria and selection process for the awards should be known to faculty
4. Criteria should ensure that many different faculty members over time are eligible for the awards
5. The selection process should include broad representation and valid methods of selection
6. The award itself should be significant and include multiple components