

# THE TEACHER

## The Excellence in Teaching at NGCSU Newsletter

1999-2000, Issue #4

### **The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Teaching Excellence at NGCSU Faculty Retreat**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Teaching Excellence Faculty Retreat was held on March 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> at Gold Creek Resort. Forty-one NGCSU faculty and administrators attended the two-day retreat. The focus of the retreat was “Assessment Strategies for the College Classroom”. Dr. Christy Price and Ms. Lynn Boettler from Dalton State College were the keynote speakers. Our own faculty facilitated the following small group sessions:

- Developing Student and Course Portfolios (Catherine Chastain & Judy O’Neal)
- Take Home Essays and Exams (Toni Barnette)
- Assessment Strategies for Questionnaires, Discussions and Oral Presentations (Mary Lou Frank & Toni Bellon)
- Student Presentations and Peer Evaluation (Vicki McCard & Dee Steglin)
- Developing Rubrics for Assessment (Judy O’Neal & Toni Bellon)
- WebCT and Web-based Assessments (Georgia Mann & Harrietta Richard)
- Assessing Research Projects and Action Research (Toni Barnette & Marlene Anthony)

The dinner speaker was Dr. Dorothy Zinsmeister from the Board of Regents. See the insert included with this newsletter for a variety of candid shots taken over the two day period.

### **Team Reports on AAHE Conference in New Orleans**

#### **AAHE Conference**

Recently the RDPTL was able to send a team of people to the American Association of Higher Education Conference on Roles and Rewards in New Orleans. The team coordinated their schedules in order to attend the greatest number of sessions. Each team member was then asked to report on the best ideas they encountered during the conference. Articles representing these ideas were in the last newsletter and are continued in this issue.

#### **In this issue:**

- Teaching Excellence Faculty Retreat
- Team reports on AAHE Conference
- Last Campus Conversations of the year upcoming

#### **Scholarship of Engagement**

**by Dr. Susan Gannaway, Department Head, Teacher Education**

Since all of us have recently completed faculty activity reports and described our “service”, the reframing of this component of our work as “the scholarship of engagement” was an intriguing concept. Committees have struggled with how to tell people what to include here, and tried to set guidelines for “what counts”. The presenters who were promulgating and describing a scholarship of engagement described the following characteristics:

- There is a direct connection between the academic discipline and the immediate community
- The connection involves the application of the academic

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## Scholarship (con't from Page 1)

discipline in the resolution of community issues (collecting data, developing improvement plans, serving on task forces, solving problems)

- There is often an explicit human service component (described on some campuses as “service learning”)
- There is a public aspect to this scholarship—meaning that the activity has an output which can and should be described to an appropriate audience. It may be published, but the publication forum may not be an academic journal. This output can and should be evaluated for relevance and significance.

In my own field, I see faculty members engaging in activities of the sort just described. They serve on accreditation teams for other institutions. They conduct feasibility studies, which lead to program development (like the Regents’ new program proposals). They consult with area schools, identifying opportunities that benefit both the schools and our students. They produce conferences for the larger community. These activities, which we lump with advising and committee service, represent a different dimension of professional life.

Both are important to the function of the university. We might want to consider whether the description given by these presenters could help us better define and evaluate the service component of the NGCSU faculty mission.

### **Institutional Guidelines for Faculty Rewards: Drafting Cohesive Document Policy Statements by Dr. Linda Roberts-Betsch, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs**

Dr. Diamond reviewed the items that should be considered in developing policies on promotion and tenure at departmental and school/college levels. Promotion and tenure guidelines should include:

1. Cohesion between the institutional mission’s priorities and unique characteristics, the departmental mission and priorities, and the faculty member’s activities that support the institutional and departmental missions.
2. Research and teaching priorities of the department/institution.
3. Procedures, timelines, and eligibility for promotion and tenure.
  - There should be procedures for early tenure decisions.
  - The review process time should be specified.
  - Can the tenure clock be stopped and under what conditions?
  - Are tenure and promotion decisions separate or are they

combined?

- Is collegiality a factor? If so, how is it defined and documented?

-Are external reviews to be done and under what conditions? Is there funding available to pay external reviewers?

4. The range of activities that qualify as scholarly, professional, or creative, and under what conditions. Diamond gave six factors to use in evaluating the merit of scholarly and professional work :

(a) The activity requires a high level of discipline-related expertise.

(b) The activity breaks new ground, is innovative.

(c) The activity can be replicated or elaborated.

(b) The work and its results can be documented.

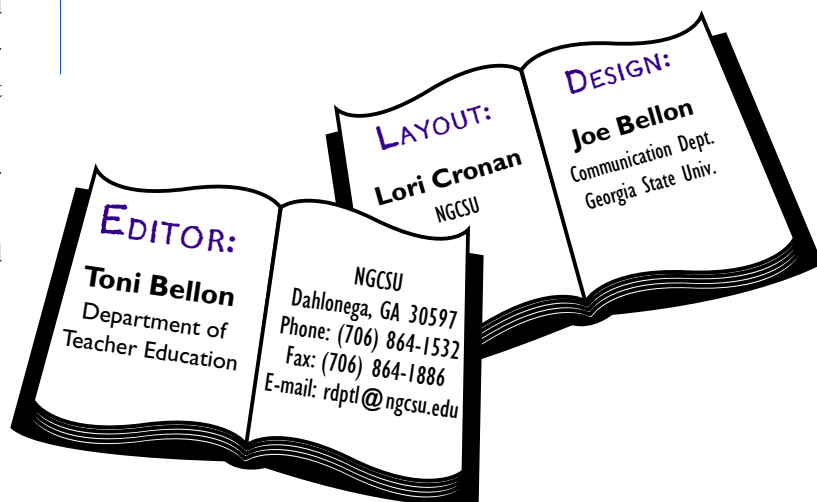
(e) The work and its results can be peer-reviewed.

(f) The activity has significance or impact.

(Reference – Diamond, R. (1994). Serving on Promotion and Tenure Committees: A Faculty Guide. Anker Publishing Co., Bolton, MA.

5. Promotion and tenure criteria. Differential weights for different activities of the university/department mission (i.e. teaching, service, and scholarship). These should take into account disciplinary differences and differences in individual assignments.
6. Guidelines and policies for documentation.
7. Description of the appeal process.

Diamond stressed the need for a formal orientation plan for faculty serving on P&T committees and for the faculty reward system to actively support the “articulated mission statements of the institution and of the unit in which faculty work.” Faculty should fully understand the criteria by which decisions will be made.



**Candid Snapshots from the 2nd Annual Teaching Excellence Faculty Retreat**



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## Life on the Tenure Track: a Triple Bind of Time, Criteria, and Collegiality

by Dr. D. Brian Mann, Assistant Professor of French

One of the main foci of AAHE commissioned papers for this conference, the essence of this session was the establishment once and for all that the tenure process is seriously if not terminally flawed, yet it continues in ignorance of and disregard for changes in society and the academy. Discussions followed in these areas:

- Pretenure experiences on the tenure track:  
A brainstorming session between the largely administrative crowd and a few TT faculty arrived at the conclusion (easily) that great expectations for research, teaching, and development are almost immediately reduced to a besieged effort to merely survive the process. There is a tremendous gap between the vision of the profession and its reality, especially for graduate students coming out of research universities into teaching institutions. Punishing workloads without proper orientation, lack of mentoring, vague expectations, lack of community, and the mysterious and seemingly arbitrary decisions of P/T committees are described as the reality of an academic career:
- Concerns about tenure:  
Expectations for performance are not only vague, shifting, and difficult to understand, but feedback on performance is often antiseptic or nonexistent. The difference between yearly evaluation and tenure evaluation is not clear. Turnover of personnel on P/T committees and in departments often results in these shifts in expectation, and there is no recourse for these inconsistencies. These concerns and the difficulties from which they result are often magnified for women and minorities.
- Concerns about Community:  
Expectations of collegiality are often met with fragmentation of, turf wars, incivility. Expectations of junior faculty are often higher than that of senior faculty, yet nobody seems to have time for mentoring or orientation. There is competition for funding, in evaluations, and even for responsibilities, yet the “in medias res” nature of the new faculty appointment leaves him/her without a context for the current state of affairs in his/her department.
- Concerns about Integrated Life:  
The primary concern here is work spilling into personal time. Senior faculty and administrators alike often seem oblivious to their new faculty member’s need to be **trained**

in the procedures and processes of the new environment. If training is not forthcoming, frustration, bitterness, and failure are often the result, and simply giving junior faculty more to do in order to train them is not the answer.

### Possible solutions:

#### Tenure process:

- Consistent messages, clear criteria for P/T processes
- Rethinking hiring procedures: i.e., do we need a SENIOR faculty member for this position?
- More, better, and more consistent mentoring, and not just for crises.
- Sample dossiers and “tenure tutors” made available for the preparation process.,
- Deans should meet with Jr. faculty on the subject
- Involve Jr. faculty in P/T committees “ex officio”
- 3<sup>rd</sup> yr. Confidential dossier review

#### Community collegiality:

- Colloquia for sharing and clarifying expectations.
- Faculty get-togethers before the first semester starts.
- Pay new faculty to arrive early for comprehensive training (2 weeks)
- Hire on personality and fit, not just credentials
- Early establishment of email accounts, mentoring relationships.

## Course Portfolios

by Dr. Catherine Chastain, Assistant Professor of Art History

I attended a workshop on course portfolios. The presenters defined the course portfolio as a dossier of documents related to one specific course. There are a variety of reasons for creating portfolios. Some plausible reasons include a) a portfolio that is used as a reflection journal for faculty interested in developing and improving teaching strategies, b) a portfolio that charts student learning over a period of semesters, and c) a portfolio that will be used as a component of a faculty evaluation process. What is included in the dossier depends on the purpose. For instance, a developmental portfolio might include notes on teaching strategies that need fine-tuning, and plans for re-working them. A portfolio intended to chart student learning might include pre-course and post-course assessment exams, samples of the best and worst student work, and grade distributions. Finally, an evaluation portfolio might include syllabi, student evaluations, and peer reviews. The presenters stressed that institutions often use course portfolios for a combination of reasons. An evaluation portfolio, for instance, might need to document efforts to improve teaching as well as chart student learning.

## Infusing Diversity into the Professorate: A New Perspective

by Dr. D. Brian Mann, Assistant Professor of French

An intriguing effort to redefine the conflicts that are existent today in the realm of faculty/administrative diversity, this presentation offered a statistically-based look at not just diversity issues per se, but differing perceptions of what diversity issues are. Compiled from some 33,000 faculty responses to a survey, data were shared regarding the relationship between gender, nationality, discipline, teaching method, and the degree of diversity on campus. Discussion and conclusions centered of the following:

- It is the faculty and administration that have the most trouble with diversity, not the students.
- Reflecting what anthropologists have known for decades, it is culture itself that determines the individual response to multiculturalism and the hierarchy of a society and its institutions.
- As subsets of a given “culture,” there are “contexts” that reflect individuals and demographic subsets within that

culture, i.e. gender, class, etc.

- These “contexts” have to do with the following as it pertains to a given demographic group as well as individuals within it:
  1. The degree of directness with which a given demographic group communicates,
  2. Whether or not and how it responds to non-verbal communication,
  3. How important personal commitment is to such a group,
  4. The group’s response to time and schedules,
  5. The degree of formality inherent to the group,
  6. The importance of team-building and compartmentalization of tasks,
  7. Territoriality
- This “multicontextuality” can be used not only to study the learning styles of students as they pertain to ethnicity, genders, and class, but can also explain the still startling degree to which the white male paradigm still dominates the academy.

## The last opportunity to discuss!

The last campus conversations will be held on Tuesday, April 25<sup>th</sup> from 12:30 pm – 2pm in the Dining Hall (room to be announced). Lunch will be provided for all participants at no charge.

During this time, groups will be formed to investigate a variety of topics. Each group will develop suggestions for supporting present efforts and removing existing barriers. The following is a short summary of topics to be discussed. If you would like to be included in a group, please e-mail [tbellon@ngcsu.edu](mailto:tbellon@ngcsu.edu).

1. **Increasing available time for scholarship of teaching** - Scholarship of teaching is hindered by course loads and committee assignments. There is little time for: course design, professional development, implementation, evaluation, and sharing.
2. **Encouraging mentoring efforts** - New faculty members at NGCSU are provided with orientation sessions during the fall semester. A mentoring program for volunteers presently exists. These efforts require ongoing support.
3. **Awards & recognition for scholarship and excellence in teaching** - There are few opportunities for recognition at NGCSU. The funds from the BOR, which support the plaque and monetary awards for innovations in teaching, are not included in next year’s budget.
4. **Coordinating faculty development efforts** - Coordination of activities could make attaining campus goals a unified effort.

Suggestions include: sending faculty teams to conferences, providing cross campus collaborative opportunities, release time for mentoring in areas such as instruction, promotion, portfolio development, and technology.

5. **Linking stages of professional development with evaluation & expectations** - The faculty evaluation process is presently being revised. It is unclear if the new evaluation will take into account stages of professional development.
6. **Excellence in teaching at NGCSU** - NGCSU has a web site and newsletter related to teaching. Funds from the BOR supporting these efforts as well as the Faculty Retreat are not included in the next year’s budget.

NGCSU has joined the Carnegie Teaching Academy. Membership in this national effort indicates a commitment to an ongoing development.

The redesigned library/technology center includes space for a teaching and learning center. Presently there are no funds for a position to oversee this center.
7. **Developing professionalism among faculty & students** - There is a perceived lack of professionalism among students. Suggestions include: developing a freshman advisory committee, providing sessions on professionalism, and creating campus-wide expectations and requirements for faculty and students.