TE EEC
Teaching Effectiveness & Enhancement Committee

TEEC HING

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Teaching Excellence, Innovation & Effectiveness - Part Two
Faculty development, career advancement, student success & institutional changes relating to faculty work and development

So any thoughts on how faculty should try to, I don't want to use the word manage, but how do you cope,

Navigate.

Navigate through such a jungle?

Yea, I actually think it's an individual issue. I think we tend to lump all faculty together as if everyone is the same and I actually think in what we are really talking about is work load, so not teaching load but overall work load, what we value in terms of what faculty do, where we would like to see faculty put their efforts and how we acknowledge and reward that. And I think that is differential. I think it varies from individual to individual, department to department and college to college. So, I think the answer isn't as easy as how do you as a faculty member navigate that. I think the answer is very complicated. Its, any given faculty member should negotiate, and I mean that in the best possible sense, collaboratively work out with the department chair and with approval of the dean, the workload that makes sense for him or her at this particular point in their career. And I think as careers proceed those things will change. I have seen a lot of faculty who are very active scholars early on in their career and as they complete projects, and their attention shifts to maybe more service as they receive tenure and take on more service loads within the university and professional organizations that their scholarly agendas become less important to them and they rediscover the joy of teaching that first brought them here. And I think we have to be willing sort of on an annual basis to renegotiate these workload agreements from faculty member to faculty member. And that is one thing we are going to be working on in the coming year, is not such a rigid view of faculty workload here at NKU, and I think once we individualize it more we will still maintain equity, it can't be a free for all, but there has to be accountability, so that if someone's workload includes time for a significant amount of research and that research doesn't materialize, then that can't continue, so I worry that with a rigid system we begin to resent teaching, and it is seen as the thing that takes us away other things we want to do, or, we resent engagement, and service because it detracts from the teaching we are obligated to do, and the thing that gets squeezed out usually is research. And that of course makes us better teachers. And we want our students to work hand in hand with us in research.   So we are actually working against our own goals if we don't make some room. So I think it's an academic structure issue and then I think it's also an issue of trust between faculty, and department chairs and deans, that equity can exist within a differential workload system.

You talked about having that differentiation on an annual basis, would something like that also apply for promotion because I think sometimes we have the same issue with the promotion that we fall into that you have to be good at this and you have to be good at this, you have to be good at everything and one of my chairs when I first started told me that it is actually more difficult to be promoted here at NKU because you have to be good at everything whereas at some other schools you can just be good at one thing.

I think that at my previous institution got it right it one sense. The way we would articulate it there is that we need to see strength in all three areas and excellence in at least one. And, I would say that I would, NKU could benefit from that mindset. You know somebody might be an extraordinary faculty member with unlimited research agenda and a modest amount of service or maybe even a fantastic amount of service and there are reasons we would want to tenure that person. I don't think that if we want to be a comprehensive, respected university we can ever say that you don't have to do research to get there or you don't have to teach. Right, but a strong competence in all three areas with excellence in at least one would make for me a good tenure case. When we get from promotion to full, I think we have to decide what we expect there as well. In a research 1 you cannot get promoted to full unless it's based on excellence in research. I don't think that is applicable for NKU. I think you know probably the same criteria for tenure and promotion to associate would make sense for promotion to full. The other thing I've observed here is that it is a little bit ridged in terms of 6 years to mandatory 10 years. That's typical. But then 6 years to promotion full, well that's not typical, I mean people get to full at different rates and for doing different things, so I'd like to see that expectation almost, I had someone come to me recently, a faculty member, who said, I love what I'm doing, its very service oriented but I don't think I can continue to do it if your expectation is that I go up for full in my 6th year after being tenured. And I was so surprised I said, why would I expect that you do that, and this person said, well at NKU it's kind of the tradition, and I said, well, no, I actually think you go up for full when you are ready. You know when you have reached that point in your career and your accomplishments attest to that accomplishment and if we make it more of a ridged thing then we undermine ourselves compared to benchmark institutions, because that wouldn't be the way it would be at other places.

I have a scenario where I have heard people say, how come you aren't full yet? like there must be something wrong with you.

So, I'll give you and example, at my previous institution we had to make a big push to reengage associate professors who might have been in rank for 15 – 20 years so as an associate, maybe they were department chair for awhile, associate department chair, and they begin to feel that, what is the point of restarting my research because nobody is going to respect me having been in rank for so long. And so this individual, who actually produced a 550 page brilliant scholarly work in the area of literature, the pivotal work on, on I believe it was Byron, was actually reluctant after 20 years and the book coming out, at that point to go up for full. And we had to actually launch kind of a campaign that said, if you re-engage, and you know we will support you, you should not feel disadvantaged because the fear was, well they are going to see 1 book in 20 years, and that of course is not okay, and we had to say, no, no, no, no, we are not going to look at it that way. We are going to look at what you've done.

A full spectrum of your accomplishments.

We aren't going to average it out of the years you've been in rank. So, I think we want to be careful about rushing to full but also inlay fears about being in rank longer than 6 years or whatever.

and we have to find ways to educate and develop people. So the next question, good segway, you have been helping me as an interviewer. How can you help faculty develop?

I think some of the things that I've been talking about really, if I can help us through these what we call barriers to academic innovation as part of the strategic planning process, that's our number 1 role this year, is to address some of these barriers, so what do we need to do in terms of simplifying processes, making sure that best practices around teaching are available, that our mentoring doesn't just stop once you get tenure, but extends through associate professors into full. Anything that I can do to support deans, who are supporting their department chairs, who are supporting their faculty that is what we will be focused on. If there are things that make faculty members lives more difficult and we can fix them then it behooves us to do so. And a lot of times its just, things have been done a certain way for so long that people assume they have to be done that way...

So, what are your expectations when it comes to faculty when it comes to their own professional development?

I think faculty should be taking advantage of any and all opportunities offered to them. I think that our fields are rapidly changing, I can't think of one that isn't changing, but maybe history, and I'm actually teasing because history...

Well, there is a revisionist history...

Well history doesn't change it's the same stuff, but history is one of the most changing fields with public history, and digital history, and all of that, so actually, I'm being ironic, I think we have, faculty are responsible for staying current, I think they are responsible for staying open to trying new pedagogical ideas like the flip the classroom or any number of things, I think the faculty are responsible for challenging themselves, I think they are responsible for knowing that they come into an environment that does ask the impossible in many ways. We want faculty to be everything to everybody. It's hard, but it's no less than I expect of myself, and I know you know, no less than we all, why do we come into higher education? We choose an environment where we are underfunded and the expectations probably exceed our capacity to fulfill them, and we, yet we do it because we love seeing the transformation happen in our students, and so, faculty have to be self motivated in terms of development and staying current. Now, on the other hand, we have to provide those opportunities. I don't have my arms around it all yet, but I will be revealing how much funding we are putting forward to faculty development, toward supporting sabbaticals, research leaves and summer research and awards, all of those sorts of things. I don't know if we are putting the appropriate amount or if we need to get more, everybody says we need more, but I don't know, maybe we do, um, so I think my office can do is look at the structures we have in place and make sure that they are the ones we need to support faculty in their development. We cant say stay current with your profession if we don't provide funding for conferences, and we can't say gain an international reputation if we don't provide travel money to go to international conferences. We can't do it,

I think this is the last question. What can we do to continue or encourage, sustain the culture of student success?

Well, I think this coming year; the theme is going to be student success and retention. The president has been very clear that that is my number one priority and I in turn am being very clear with dean's and chairs, who will be very clear with faculty that that as a group has to be our number one priority. I think we are doing a lot of the right things; one of our goals is to roll out MapQuest down into the faculty level, so it's not just advisors, who are utilizing MapQuest. It's a very good tool – you can look at MapQuest, are you familiar with that?

No, I'm not familiar with that.

So, it's, what a minute, not MapQuest, Mapworks. Sandi corrects me every time. So you can look at one of your students on Mapworks and you can see the results of surveys they have taken, how they are feeling about themselves, what they are thinking about their work, if they think they are studying enough or not, whether they are worried about money, how much they are working outside of school, whether they have roommate issues they are concerned about, whether they think they will be back next term, you see so much information and you can communicate with students and you can see like advisor communications, there are levels to what different people can see. But you can see how they are doing in other classes, it's a really neat program and the advisors have been using it for a while and students are getting familiar with it, what we want to do know is get it down into the hands of faculty, because I believe that the most important factor in student success is faculty student relationships. And so, if we can encourage faculty to use this tool to help them understand students who may be at risk, who they may not even know are struggling, the ability to reach out and make that necessary connection might be the difference between a student persisting or not. And that faculty touch is the most important thing in student success, so that's our goal.

My next question is, what area do you think we need to change in order to enhance teaching or what areas would you like to keep and continue to develop because we are doing a great job.

I think we are doing a great job in mentoring our students on a one-to-one basis. So when I look at what we are able to do here with undergraduate research, for example, it far surpasses anywhere else I've ever been. And, um, what was the question...

Well I think you start to answer some of the responses for my second question, but given that you are new and we always love to have fresh perspective, as somebody coming from outside, what are your thoughts as a newcomer when you look at NKU?

In general, teaching in specific…Well, I think it's an extraordinary institutions or I wouldn't have come here. I think the youth of the place provides tremendous opportunities along with significant challenges and that we are positioned to move into what I would call academic maturity or institutional maturity. To me NKU just graduated from college and now its time now to be a grown up. So, the first 50 years, somebody likened it in a conversation I had yesterday to a start up company you know in the entrepreneurial spirit we start up, and rely on practice and you just kind of make it up as you go, and it works but you reach a point where you have to really set policy, establish governance, create HR, you know, and that's kind of where we are, we have relied heavily on practice, past practice to guide us and now we are to a point where we need to really focus more on policy to guide us, institutionalize some of these things. I think we benefit from fresh perspectives, from people coming from the outside, wedded with the long traditions of people who have been here for a long time, and those perspectives. So, I think you know, we have a right to call ourselves innovative, we have a right to call ourselves nimble, and I think, I have rarely seen and institution where the faculty are so dedicated to both the university and to the students. I think that that is palpable, the great love for this institution. I think we have some trust building to do and I think we have just a tremendous amount of work to sort of some of our practices and get it simplified, clarified, and then move on. Some of our handbook policies are contradictory, one thing that I think that we cant' be afraid of when it comes to teaching is the power of peer reviews, peer feedback, so some departments that is part of the cultural while other departments want nothing to do with it, and I really think that faculty miss out, especially young faculty when they don't have feedback from their peers and that we should find ways to institutionalize that to a greater extent than we do, as formative.

It's based upon practice, I can tell you from my experience.

So I also, one of our goals this year is to really look at what we have in place of work life policies we have for faculty. So things like, we did manage to approve the "stop the clock" tenure policy, that's an important one, modify duties is another important one, so there is all sorts of, there's a radical notion that's really kind of cool of a part time tenure tract appointment as a possibility. When you think about it, why should I lose an incredible faculty member who should be on the tenure track just because he or she has other obligations that only makes it possible for them to be half time? Why not? Then the tenure time frame doubles, so what? We get full advantage of their work, the institute benefits from their achievements, the students benefit, so I think that is something we want to explore. So there is a range of work life policies that I would like to look at, dual career accommodations, its true we're in a metropolitan area, we are not isolated so there are other options for dual career families, but I don't want to lose a top candidate because we can't easily provide appointments, even if it's visiting appointments, for a time being, assuming they are qualified by the department, we should be able to do that. A pipeline for increasing diversity among our faculty, a future professoriate pipeline, how can we make connections to HBCU's that might give us pipelines for diversity and then build relationships with those individuals coming out of graduate programs across the country so that when we are doing a search we can invite people to apply and increase the diversity of our pools. It's increasing, the diversity of pools in a search that ultimately may increase the diversity of our faculty and that's what we need to work on. I could go on but…

SCHOOL OF LEARNING

Creating a Motivational Learning Environment

Many of us often ask ourselves the question "Why do our students not want to learn"? It seems as if our students often come to class only to sit passively in the hopes of simply absorbing information, or worse yet, they don't come to class at all. Furthermore, professors often get the impression that the high performing students are consistently self-motivated to perform at an even higher level whereas the lower performing students are unmotivated to improve at all. This impression leaves us wondering how we can motivate our students to become engaged in their education.

One of the first steps to motivating students is to understand the students themselves, their needs, and their priorities. For example, does a student expect to be provided with direction in all learning activity because that is their worldview? Are students so overwhelmed that they do not know where to begin? If so, then perhaps asking questions of students that will help them formulate their own ideas and direction will help to motivate them and take responsibility for their learning (Crone & MacKay, 2007).

Perhaps a student is unmotivated because he or she is a first-generation college student and has no reference as to what is needed to be successful in higher education. These students often have many barriers to success such as age, family, and employment. Furthermore, these students tend to be less involved in campus activities which can also impede motivation (Petty, 2014).

Understanding the students in the classroom is a first step toward creating a motivating learning environment. While it is impossible for every professor to know every student, it is possible to get an overview of the background and general needs of the students. Additionally, when a few students present themselves as unmotivated it could be beneficial to involve the students in a conversation as a way to determine the reason they are having difficulty with motivation to learn. In doing so, everyone involved may benefit.

References

Crone, A. & MacKay, K. (2007). Motivating today's college students. *American Association of Colleges and Universities, Winter,* 18-21.

Petty, T. (2014). Motivating first-generation students to academic success and college completion.
    College Student Journal, 48(2), 257-264.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Computer Science Major, Ryan Toler Reflects on His NKU Experience

Hello, my name is Ryan Toler, and I am a junior Computer Science major with minors in Computer Forensics, Computer Information Technology, Criminalistics, and Mathematics. Yes, I know what you're thinking; I'm crazy for having four minors. Well, college has turned me into quite the over achiever. I currently work at the Center for Applied Informatics as a Software Engineering Specialist. I am also heavily involved on campus. I am a member of the Alpha Tau Omega leadership fraternity, the Golden Key International Honor Society, and I am a College of Informatics Ambassador.

My decision on where to go to college was a difficult one. I grew up in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky, graduating from Covington Catholic High School. Right after graduation, my family moved to Charlotte, North Carolina because my parents' jobs at Duke Energy were relocated. To make it an even more difficult decision, most of my friends were going to other colleges. I struggled immensely on whether I wanted to follow my family, follow my friends, or stay in a place that has always been home. I ended up receiving a full tuition academic scholarship to NKU, so ultimately that was the deciding factor on where my decision was to attend college.

Looking back on my college experience so far, I am so happy that I decided to attend NKU. NKU has provided many opportunities for me to succeed. Joining ATO was one of the pivotal moments of my college experience because it allowed me to build a network of people, gain valuable leadership experience, and it gave me the confidence to want to get involved in other areas on campus. Working at the CAI has given me valuable work experience in my field of study. I joined the College of Informatics Ambassadors where I have given tours of Griffin Hall and have been the face of the college. I was selected to do research this past summer in the UR-STEM program with professors Maureen Doyle and James Walden researching security vulnerabilities in devices that have web servers. I was also just recently offered an internship at GE Healthcare in their very prestigious ITLP program in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. All of these opportunities would not have been possible if NKU had not given me the tools to succeed.

With the small class sizes, rigorous curriculum, and very approachable and empathetic professors, NKU has pushed me to be the best I can be. Even with a large workload, I have managed to make the dean's list and achieve a 3.75 cumulative GPA. With one year left, I plan on finishing strong and going out with a bang. My experience at NKU has been nothing but the best, and I have truly fallen in love with NKU. I know my future is bright and I can't wait to see what's in store. GO NORSE!!!

Jonathan T. Reynolds

Department Of History and Geography

In 2014, Dr. Reynolds was named the Frank Sinton Milburn Outstanding Professor. At NKU, Dr. Reynolds teaches courses in African and World History, as well Historical Methods and various courses in the Honors program. He has the honor of advising the History Department's award-winning Phi Alpha Theta chapter, and in the past has advised both the NKU International Student Union, the campus Amnesty International chapter, and the African Students Association. Reynolds also served on the Editorial Boards of H-Hausa, H-Africa, and the ABC-Clio Encyclopedia of World History. In 2005 he was elected to the Executive Board of the World History Association. He currently serves as an Associate Editor for *World History Connected*.

A funny thing happened on my way to my receiving the Milburn Outstanding Professor Award.

People told me I was teaching wrong.

Mind you, this was a couple of decades ago. I was just starting out teaching my own classes at UT Knoxville, and was on the job market. A number of established faculty, many of whom had been my professors when I was an undergraduate, had me come guest lecture in their classes and offered me advice after observing me in the classroom.

There were some reoccurring themes in their commentary, including 'don't move around so much,' 'don't try to be funny,' 'don't get off the subject – stick to your notes,' 'don't tell students that they are wrong,' and 'don't dance.' There were a lot of don'ts. And I tried to follow their advice. They were, after all, usually faculty I knew and admired. And, they had real jobs with tenure and everything, while I was a lowly part-time-term-hire adjunct who played guitar on the side to make enough money to pass as an adult. So I tried to stay still and stick to my notes.

I hated it.

Eventually I got really lucky and I got a tenure-track job at Livingstone College. Liberated from trying to play a certain role to get a job, I started teaching in a way that came naturally to me. I started moving around, I let the discussion deviate from my notes. And I wasn't afraid to dance in the middle of class. None of this, mind you, is to suggest that people who stay put and stick to their notes are teaching wrong. It may well be the best possible way for them to teach. But it wasn't going to work for me.

And there is, I think, a broader lesson in this. There is no single way to teach. What works for one field, or one class, or one teacher, may not work for others. While there might be a "safe" way to teach that minimizes risk and hits certain learner outcome benchmarks more often than others, such an approach pretty much guarantees a classroom experience that is similarly vanilla, middle-of-the-road, and white-cotton-undergarment-esq. What I found was a way to teach that built upon my strengths and flowed naturally from how I think about my field.

And how do I think about my field? I think History is flat out fun. It's an intellectual playground that encompasses what is for all practical purposes the infinite scope of human experience and knowledge. Further, there is no single message or meaning from any moment, event, theme, or issue in history – it can, and should, mean something different to every one of us. As a result, I believe that every discussion needs to be free-flowing and open-ended, so that the students have the opportunity to ask the sort of questions or raise the sort of issues that guide the exchange in ways that are as unexpected for me as they are for them. Every day has a topic, of course, and I have a few key points that I'm angling to get across, but how it is going to work out and exactly what we are going to talk about is anybody's guess. But it is going to be chock full of delicious meaningful historical goodness. Whodathunk that the secret to good teaching, for me, would involve not being sure exactly what I was going to talk about during class each day?

TECHNOLOGY TIPS

From a health perspective, the onset of winter can hit faculty members with a proverbial 1-2 punch. The end of semester brings about its own particular stresses (e.g., grading, exam prep, etc.) and the combination of colder weather and holiday eating…well, let's just say it can impact one's waistline *and* sap one's energy. Given that physical health/fitness serves as a protective factor against burnout, it may be worth looking into a fitness-related app to help stave off the end-of-year "ugh."

Jefit is a free fitness tracker (available on Android, iOS, and Amazon Fire OS) that offers a number of bodybuilding workouts (including a "no equipment at home workout"), as well as more general cardiovascular and yoga routines. The **Nike Training Club** (free on both iOS and Android devices) is a women's fitness community app that will enable users to create a four-week training program, focusing on categories including increasing muscle tone, weight loss, and strength building. Both apps may be downloaded on the Apple App Store or on Google Play.

TEACHING TIPS

Have you ever had students evaluate one another's work? As it turns out, peer-evaluation is a valuable teaching tool. Whether students are asked to evaluate someone else's paper or presentation, it's a win-win situation.

The first win is for student who hones critical thinking skills and tact. Reviewing a peer's work provides an opportunity to consider paper organization, how well the content is explained and supported, and editing suggestions. This exercise also develops written and oral communication skills when students write comments and explain these to their peer in a thoughtful way. In reviewing presentations, students are more likely to pay closer attention to the presenter's information and delivery. Students, moreover, also learn more about their own work in the process when reflecting on the comments they've made about others' work.

The second win is for the instructor. Peer-evaluation gives the instructor a way to engage students with other students' written work. When peer-reviewing paper drafts, for example, revisions suggested by the instructor may be reinforced if students write similar critiques. Peer-evaluation proves especially useful in classes where instructors want to implement class presentations, but are concerned about students paying attention rather than zoning out. Providing an evaluation sheet for both written and oral work will guide the students in what to look for and consider in their responses.

TEEC Brown Bag Session

Just a reminder that the final brown bag session will take place on January 29th, 2015 in Steely Library, room 221. The topic of this session will be on Assessing Teaching Effectiveness.

2015 Spring Faculty Development Workshops

Watch for more information to come on these faculty development workshops – Spring 2015

- Get a Little Help from Your Colleagues - Improving your teaching through peer feedback or coaching.
- Mindfulness and Renewal - Incorporating and Practicing in Your Teaching