School-Based Plan for Excellence in Teaching

Schools should convene a joint faculty/administrator committee to create a 5-page plan, with appendices, that includes foundational documents, tools and resources, and processes to advance excellence in teaching. Plans should be vetted and agreed to by the appropriate faculty governance bodies.

Schools may use this template for outlining their plan, replacing items in red with school-specific information. The first draft of plans should be submitted to the Provost by the end of Spring 2019, with the Process, Definition, and Evaluation portions completed. The final completed version should be submitted by the end of Spring 2020.

The University commissioned a faculty group to develop a university-wide definition of excellence in teaching on which schools may build, and has invested in evidence-based resources developed by CET for development, peer evaluation, and reward of teaching. Schools may adopt these resources as their own, edit them, or adopt or create their own discipline-endorsed resources. Schools should create a plan, tailored to their discipline’s evidence-based pedagogical best-practices, that is aligned with the university’s initiative for the development, peer evaluation, and reward of excellence in teaching, resources for which can be found on CET’s website.

**Process** *(Who are the faculty and administrators that developed the plan? What was the faculty vetting process?)*

**Plan Development Process:** Process narrative should include:
- Who were the faculty and administrators who led plan development (most commonly a task-force or faculty council)?
- What was the process for shared governance; opportunities for all faculty to provide feedback and agree upon adoption?

**Definition of Excellence in Teaching** *(What does excellence in teaching look like in our school?)*

**Definition:** Schools may:
- Adopt the USC definition as written
- Customize the USC definition by adapting/adding criteria aligned with discipline’s language and/or best practices
- Create a new definition, based in discipline’s best practices, but clearly aligned with USC’s definition

**Definition development should include:**
- Faculty-led review or creation of definition
- Review of discipline-based pedagogical best practices
- Opportunities for all faculty or representatives to provide feedback and agree upon adoption of school’s definition
- For new definitions, demonstration of alignment with USC’s definition and of discipline best practices
- Method for all stakeholders to access definition information (e.g., website, online portal, file share, etc.)

**Development** *(What kinds of training opportunities will we provide our faculty to help them meet the criteria laid out in our school’s definition of excellence in teaching?)*

**Development Opportunities:** Schools may, among other options, choose to:
- Promote CET’s faculty institutes for new faculty and Faculty Fellows
- Host School-Based Institutes for Advancing Teaching run by CET Faculty Fellows
- Promote opportunities for individual, group, or program consultations with CET instructional designers
- Provide formative evaluation opportunities
- Support attendance at teaching conferences
- Provide teaching workshops that promote evidence-based best practices
- Support competitive teaching grants and sabbaticals

**Process needed for teaching development opportunities:** Process should include:
- Statements embedded in school policies about how teaching development is tied to the values of the school, its evaluation processes, and its incentive structures
- Regular and clear communication, including method for all stakeholders to access information (e.g., website, online portal, file share), about teaching development opportunities—including how and when they can participate
Development opportunities should:

- Align with school’s definition and merit, promotion, tenure, and continuing appointment criteria
- Provide training that helps faculty reach criteria for merit, promotion, tenure, and continuing appointment
- Be responsive to faculty feedback about teaching needs
- Be available to all faculty (on a competitive basis for more costly options), including part-time, online, and remote faculty, when appropriate

Evaluation (How will we use peer review [and other evidence-based methods if appropriate] to evaluate teaching?)

Tools: Schools may, in addition to other options, choose among, or some combination of, the following:

- Use CET peer review evaluation tools (classroom observation, syllabus review, assessment review, and teaching reflection statements)
- Edit CET peer-review evaluation tools
- Draft new peer-review evaluation tools using discipline-endorsed peer-review tools
- Use evidence-based best practices in the discipline

Process: Evaluation process should include:

- Process for peer review for merit, promotion, tenure, and continuing appointment
  - Evaluation tools to be used
  - Rating system determined for each tool (i.e., what constitutes excellence for merit, for promotion from assistant to associate, from associate to full, from full to continuing appointment, for tenure?)
  - Evaluation committee composition, training (on bias and tools), workload assignment/release time
  - Protocols for reviews and reporting results, including timelines and scheduling
  - Process for feedback to faculty
- Regular and clear communication, including method for all stakeholders to access information (e.g., website, online portal, file share), about teaching evaluation processes, tools, and schedules

**Evaluation should:

- Be based on peer review and, if appropriate, other evidence-based, discipline-endorsed evaluation methods
- Align with school’s definition and merit, promotion, tenure, and continuing appointment criteria
- Assess and improve performance on teaching elements faculty have identified as critical to the discipline
- Be reviewed and agreed upon by faculty (both process and tools)

Reward (How will investment in teaching development, peer review evaluation, and performance be rewarded?)

Incentive Structure: Schools may, among other options, choose to:

- Make participation in teaching development part of the criteria for merit, promotion, tenure, and continuing appointment (e.g., In order to be promoted from assistant to associate professor, faculty must participate in the CET New Faculty Institute or a discipline-endorsed teaching development program for new faculty)
- Make participation in peer-review evaluation service part of the criteria for merit, promotion, tenure, and continuing appointment (e.g., Faculty who wish to be promoted to full professor must have contributed to their peers’ teaching development, either through peer review or teaching mentorship)
- Make reaching a predetermined level of performance in teaching a part of merit, promotion, tenure, and continuing appointment criteria (e.g., To be considered for continuing appointment, full teaching-track professors must meet X% of criteria listed in Tier 3 of the CET classroom observation checklist)
- Create teaching awards
- Provide teaching grants and sabbaticals based on merit of proposals

Process: Incentive structure and process should include:

- Clear guidelines for teaching criteria that must be met for faculty to reach various levels in incentive structure
- Regular and clear communication, including method for all stakeholders to access information (e.g., website, online portal, file share), about incentive structure for teaching

**Rewards should:

- Clearly align with school’s definition of excellence in teaching criteria
- Serve to elevate the stature of teaching such that its value to the school is clearly demonstrated
- Be sufficiently rewarding to motivate faculty to invest in development, evaluation, and performance in teaching excellence
- Be accessible to all faculty, including online, remote, and part-time faculty
- Align with university criteria for excellence in teaching such that top rewards in the schools might reasonably lead to meeting criteria for top university-level teaching rewards