Summary of the Faculty Discussion of *Statement on Effective Teaching at LMU*, drafted by Committee on Excellence in Teaching Spring 2009, held January 26, 2010 at Center for Teaching Excellence

Attendance: 32

Summary by Jackie Dewar, CTE Director, synthesized from notes taken by Nick Mattos, CTE Administrative Assistant and Jackie Dewar

Kevin Wetmore, Chair of Committee on Excellence in Teaching opened the meeting with introductions. He then asked Jackie Dewar, Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence, to describe the complexities of teaching in 21st century[1] and to clarify the distinctions between Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, scholarly teaching, and effective teaching[2]. He then opened the conversation with these points:

- The Committee will not be revising this document
- The purpose is to start a conversation on the value of teaching
- The hope is to produce action items & good ideas to promote excellent teaching

Major themes and comments by those in attendance:

1. General agreement that the CET statement provides a good list of effective strategies to document effective teaching beyond evaluations.

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[1] Trends facing faculty members in higher education include:
- an increasingly diverse student body (Kewal, Ramani, Gilbertson, Fox, & Provasnik, 2007) in part because now 60% of high school graduates go directly to 4-year schools vs 40 % in the 1960's
- a student population that is far more diverse in terms of the need for accommodations for physical, perceptual, learning, ADHD and/or psychological disabilities
- the availability of new technologies for teaching and learning and expectations to use it by administration and students
- greater emphasis on assessment & accountability
- a movement toward connecting theory and practice in undergraduate education through experiential learning (Freeland, 2009).
- competing demands for better retention while increasing academic rigor

In addition, views of teaching as the private domain of individual faculty members are shifting. For instance, Lee Shulman, one of the most influential voices in educational psychology, called for teaching on college campuses to become "community property," to be valued, documented, and evaluated in the same way as scholarly research (Shulman, 2004).

[2] Ronald Smith (2001) writes that good (or effective) teaching is defined and measured by the quality of student learning, while scholarly teaching requires something more. Scholarly teachers and their teaching must be informed not only by the latest developments in their field but also by research about instructional design and methods of assessing student learning and teaching in their field. Based on this research, scholarly teachers make choices about instruction and assessment for their classes and their students. Practitioners of the scholarship of teaching and learning contribute to this knowledge base by carrying out research on teaching and learning. This SoTL research involves aspects of discovery, application and integration and is intended to improve practice within and beyond the investigators' own classrooms.

2. Currently too much emphasis is placed on the course evaluation and we need periodic reminders of the guidelines for interpreting the data.

3. Few present were satisfied with current peer evaluation in terms of frequency and the process of how it is handled.

4. In response to the question, what do students consider to be great teaching, CTE agreed to post notes from a Spring 2009 student panel on teaching effectively and from a Fall 2009 panel on Community based learning.

5. Additional suggestions offered for assessing or improving teaching
   - Midpoint evaluations ongoing formal/informal
   - Tie research to the classroom as much as possible (Former LMU President Father Loughran used to say one measure of the value of research at LMU is how well it "blends with and enhances the classroom experience.")
   - Would be helpful to view teaching and research more synergistically
   - Can we ease up on formal documentation to give faculty more leeway
   - Having best practices for peer evaluation known and in place across all schools & colleges would help
   - The current system of evaluation puts too much emphasis on summative, not enough on formative evaluation of teaching
   - An advising center for curriculum details would help, and would free faculty to have more in depth conversations with students about their goals and concerns

6. Need to change the culture on campus to value teaching more.
   - We made the shift to valuing research without giving up commitment to teaching.
   - How can we make a shift to valuing teaching without giving up a commitment to research?
   - Will new emphasis on assessment of student learning outcomes provide impetus to make this shift, since we have to graduate students who can write, who can be life-long learners, etc.?
   - Current teaching evaluation system looks for problems with teaching, how can we better recognize good teaching.
   - Hold conversations about teaching in departments/disciplines and when hiring.
   - Is there appropriate mentoring for teaching at the department level?
   - A tenured faculty member should be held to higher standards for teaching.

7. Challenges for teachers:
   - Increasing rate of expansion of information challenges teachers to include more in courses both in terms of content and learning skills.
   - Easy to think about what we can do more of, but it would be better to figure out how to do "in place of." Are there better evaluation methods that are manageable and sustainable?
   - Good teaching takes time; it is not easy.
   - Where research and teaching meet doesn't always lead to research being published.

- Service demands take away from both teaching and research.

8. Problems with the reward system
   - The recommended balance for teaching/research/service is 40/40/20 (Killoran document), but it seems like 50/50/0.
   - It would help if we could view teaching and research more synergistically.
   - Can we bridge the gap between teaching and learning? What if an external review were required of student work?
   - Who or what does the current system serve?
   - What would faculty work and the reward system look like if LMU were living its mission?