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Teaching Fellows Development Program (TFDP)

A faculty program for sustained teaching effectiveness and student learning improvement

Background and rationale: A pre-tenured faculty member with teaching appointment in addition to developing a successful research and/or extension program has to show evidence of impactful teaching. The new faculty member should continue to put time and effort for continuous improvement of classes and teaching effectiveness. However, the first few years is dedicated to improving the course material, revamping the existing syllabus of a class, or in some cases developing an entire new course. Attending professional development workshops related to teaching improvement, research, and extension are other important activities that have to be pursued. Given the multitude of activities performed in the first few years, for any additional teaching improvement efforts to become a top priority, the new faculty member might have to be provided some credit which can be counted towards their teaching FTE.

Program: TFDP allows new faculty members (mentee) to engage in classes taught by successful accomplished teaching faculty members (mentor) at various levels (e.g., observe, collaborate, help with SOTL activities, etc.) during the first few years of their tenure. The goal is to learn effective teaching practices from their experienced peers, and above all, understand the teaching culture in CASNR and other colleges at UNL. TFDP creates a framework where the mentee and mentor can count a certain number of hours spent in this program each semester towards their teaching FTE.

Outcomes and Impacts:

- The mentees will get oriented to teaching culture of the departments in CASNR and other colleges at UNL within the first year of joining. Further, TFDP will also help new faculty members who are not teaching right away in their first semester, to get involved with teaching efforts by observing and learning from a mentor.
- Mentees who do not have previous teaching experience will get exposed to effective teaching practices and student engagement strategies.
- TFDP will provide an opportunity for mentees to collaborate with mentors in executing Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) strategies that mentors intend to implement.
- TFDP framework will allow mentees to choose mentors from any department at UNL allowing exposure to inter-disciplinary teaching practices.

- TFDP through its activities will encourage a cohort of teaching faculty (including professors of practice) to attend and present at national and international to enhance UNL's scholarship of teaching and learning activities every year (E.g., ASEE conferences, NACTA, ASABE etc).

Implementation Strategy:

▪ TFDP will be implemented at the department level with guidelines from CASNR.

▪ As a first step, mentees will identify and approach potential mentors from any department unit at UNL and express their intent to participate in the TFDP program.

▪ Mentees will develop a clear plan describing the level of engagement and the time commitment (# of hours per week) during the semester. Mentee will take the lead on developing this plan with guidance from the Mentor.

▪ Few examples of levels of engagement in the plan include: Fall Teaching and Learning Symposium, ARISE program, and PRTP.

▪ Mentee will submit the TFDP (approved by the Mentor) to the unit department head before the beginning of the program.

▪ Number of hours spent by the mentor and the mentee each semester will be used as inputs to the Faculty Adjustment Sheet developed by the CASNR to generate the Credit Hours Equivalent (CHE). CHE will be converted in to teaching FTE values.

▪ As an example, if the mentor and the mentee spends 100 hrs per academic year (assumptions: 3 hrs per week, approx. 16 weeks per semester, 2 semesters) a CHE value of 2.00 is obtained for that academic year, based on the CASNR's Faculty Adjustment Sheet calculator.

▪ At the end of the TFDP, mentees will present reflections of their learning experiences at departmental meetings, and university teaching workshops.