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2012

Annual Report of the Wally Cordes Teaching and Faculty Support Center for the year ended..., 2012

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2011 – 2012 Annual Report

of the

Wally Cordes

Teaching and Faculty Support Center

University of Arkansas

Fayetteville, Arkansas

For the year ended June 30, 2012

Submitted to the Provost and Vice Provost

by Co-Directors

Marianne Neighbors, Norm Dennis, and Paul Cronan

July 1, 2012

2011-2012 Annual Report
Wally Cordes Teaching and Faculty Support Center (TFSC)
submitted to the Office of the Provost

Programs and Activities

- **Annual Teaching Retreat (July 30-August 2, 2011).** The annual teaching retreat, organized and sponsored by the TFSC, took place at the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute at Petit Jean Mountain. “Teaching Camp” remains a popular and intensive professional development program. Despite significant increases in the cost of food, transportation, and lodging for this event (the largest center programming event in terms of budget costs), we were able to stay within the trimmed budget for the academic year 2011-2012. Again this year, we received a record number of applications. The application number seems to rise each year, but the numbers of accepted campers has stayed at 60 due to budgetary constraints. This number includes the Teaching Center's staff as well as the university administrators who join us.

Teaching camp 2011 included faculty representation from every college. In addition, the number of years of teaching experience of those in attendance ranged widely. About half the campers were “new to campus,” “new to camp” or both. The remainder had two or more years of experience, including several of the most senior UA faculty members.

Camp content was divided into two parts: the opening evening and first full day were led by Dr. Don McCabe, professor of Management from Rutgers and a nationally-recognized specialist in academic integrity. The remaining sessions were delivered by 28 UA faculty members on camper-proposed topics including: Plagiarism, Technology and Academic Integrity, Proactive Teaching, De-Gradation, Confronting Academic Dishonesty, Enhancing Learning with Technology, On-Line Assessment, The Law, What Needs to be in Your Syllabus, Peer Evaluation, Large Classes, and Managing Student Expectations (schedule attached). Faculty response to the retreat was quite positive. Comments included:

- o Thoroughly enjoyed my first teaching camp!
 - o Excellent results by the TFSC team. A great job putting together a very relevant meeting.
 - o A huge coordination and fantastic effort.
 - o Wonderful opportunity to meet faculty from across the campus.
 - o The theme was very interesting and vital.
- **New Faculty Orientation (August 16, 2011).** The TFSC assists new faculty through a variety of activities. The first support activity (New Faculty Orientation) occurs during the first official week of the University’s fall academic calendar. This past year, 95 new faculty were sent invitations, and 70 new faculty attended the orientation session held at the Reynolds Center, a large and energetic group.

Orientation consisted of welcoming remarks from the Co-Directors and Provost Gaber. Professor Curt Rom followed with “Tips for Teaching Success” and Professor Norm

Dennis with “Strategies for Conducting Successful Research.” We closed the morning program with a Q&A session with two second-year professors entitled “Less New than You.” This session was followed by lunch and the information fair featuring representatives from various service and benefits offices on campus. A University Relations photographer made official photographs throughout the morning. The afternoon session was hosted by Human Resources and focused on benefits; an evening reception was hosted by the Chancellor and Provost (attached).

The qualitative evaluation instrument revealed a deep appreciation for the UA’s care in welcoming new faculty to campus. Some of the comments from attendees included:

- Great, practical information. Very helpful.
 - Good reminders and tips. I appreciated the open, realistic responses.
 - Useful specific advice about dealing with cell phones and laptops in class and what to expect from students and balancing the workload.
 - Great off the cuff practical information.
 - The information packets will be good to peruse later. It was kind of overwhelming but I appreciated having all the resources in one place.
- **Faculty Awards Reception, September 10, 2011.** The TFSC continues to co-host (with the Teaching Academy) an annual reception recognizing the winners of major campus teaching awards. This year, approximately 75 people attended and 26 faculty were honored. In addition, this was the sixth year we presented the “Certificate of Teaching Commendation,” a form of recognition designed to encourage our newest peers to participate in faculty development events. Seventeen (17) faculty members earned the award this year (program attached).
- **New Faculty Luncheons (NFL, first Thursday and Friday of each month).** The TFSC continues to host a monthly luncheon series for new faculty, those in their first or second year. The luncheons feature a short program and much discussion about teaching strategies, student support, and faculty development broadly. To acquaint new faculty with the campus, luncheons occur at varying locations, including the Teaching Center, Old Main, the Arkansas Union, and the Multicultural Center. Despite their busy schedules, the new faculty seemed to relish the "teaching tips" luncheons so attendance was at an all-time high. Topics presented this year included *No Slipping Clutches Here: Engaging Students in the Classroom*, *How the Library Can Help You Retain Students*, *2011 UA Students – Who Are We?*, *Resources on Campus*, *The Scholarship of Assessment and Report of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Research*.

In recent years, TFSC Co-Directors have expanded our program assessment efforts. All luncheons were assessed with an instrument that asked participants about the quality of the presentation, the quality of the food, how likely they were to attend future programs, whether they read *Relative to Teaching*, and whether they have visited our Web site; we also ask respondents for suggestions for future programming. The results show strong support for the NFL program and gave good suggestions for future programs.

- **Not-So-New Faculty Luncheons (NSN, third Thursday and Friday of two months each semester).** In addition to the NFL series, we continue to host additional luncheons for veteran faculty. We hosted four programs (eight luncheons) in 2011-2012. Attendance at all programs was up from the previous year, and participating faculty always provided lively discussions. Assessment again proved the luncheons were successful and important to the faculty. Suggestions given for future programming helped the Co-Directors plan the next lunch sessions and also gave suggestions for the Winter Symposium and camp topics. Presentation topics included *Civility in the Classroom*, *10 Technology Tips that will make your life easier!*, *Resources on Campus*, and *Report of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Research*.
- **All Faculty “Dead Day” Luncheon Series.** It was decided to open the traditional “Dead Day” luncheon to all faculty. The response to combining faculty of all experience levels to talk about teaching has been overwhelmingly positive. Unfortunately, it was necessary to cap attendance at 100 due to space and budget considerations. More than 100 faculty responded to the email, so the attendees were chosen on a first-respond basis. Clearly, this program is a success based on attendance alone. The evaluations again demonstrated overwhelming enthusiasm for the two programs (fall and spring). The speakers included Dr. Dan Ferritor talking about the privilege of teaching and Dr. Charles Robinson along with some of his staff presenting information on diversity at the University of Arkansas.
- **Relative to Teaching Newsletter (three issues per semester).** The TFSC publishes and distributes *Relative to Teaching* six times each year. A typical issue features a main article written by a nationally-recognized expert, details about upcoming teaching-related programs, and an interview with one of the university’s award-winning teachers. Other important announcements are also included. The newsletter is delivered on-line to every member of the UA faculty, serving the double function of “greening” our operation and drawing more instructors to our Web site. The back issues can be accessed on-line at the TFSC Web site. Lori Libbert maintains the operations related to the on-line newsletter. We receive monthly analytics about which pages are accessed most frequently. We plan to continue to redesign the site based on that analysis, and to keep it updated with important information for faculty. The TFSC Graduate Assistant has also helped both the Co-Directors and Lori to review and update the TFSC Web site.
- **Teaching Assistant Luncheons.** The TFSC continues to work with the Graduate School’s Teaching Assistant Effectiveness Advisory Committee to provide TA support. Chiefly, we again hosted four TA luncheons (two in the fall and two in the spring). Topics included test construction and questioning in the classroom. In addition to the formal program, we continue to observe that luncheons afford attendees the opportunity to discuss with their peers (as well as non-supervising faculty) the challenges they face in the classroom. The participants indicated a strong interest in more such events, but the attendance was not as good as expected. The Co-Directors plan to network more closely with the Graduate School on this to increase participation in the luncheons. One important message the participants passed on through their evaluations was that these luncheons/topics need to be presented earlier in their “teaching life” on campus. The Co-

Directors decided the luncheons for the next academic year should be earlier in the fall and spring or, that both should be presented in the fall.

- **Winter Teaching Symposium, 2012.** The Third Annual Winter Symposium was held January 12, 2012 in the union. The Chancellor welcomed the participants and introduced the keynote speaker, Dr. Don Bobbitt, President of the University of Arkansas System. After the keynote, 7 break-out sessions were offered focusing on the following topics: *Press One for More Options (Clickers in the Classroom)*, *Large Classes*, *Study Abroad*, *Signaling and Starting Well*, *Reciprocal Learning*, *Mentoring TAs*, *One Book-One Community* (program attached).

Each topic was repeated in a second hour of break-out sessions so the participants could choose two to attend for the morning. Over lunch, the Provost presented encouraging words to the faculty about the on-going construction and the university's plans as a whole. Evaluations of the symposium were outstanding and included such remarks as:

- o Loved hearing from the president and appreciated that he took the time to provide his perspective.
 - o Great tech and great to see a presenter who is engaged and looking ahead
 - o Was inspiring to hear a president encouraging innovation in course delivery and his comments on online/hybrid courses were helpful.
 - o Interesting, thoughtful and important.
 - o Greatly informative. Great sharing of ideas
- **Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.** In 2011, continued with a faculty program started in 2010 to promote the scholarship of teaching and learning. The intent was to establish a faculty learning community focused on the principles of SoTL; that is, to identify research questions related to teaching and/or student learning, draw upon a small TFSC grant to pursue the study, and share findings. Ten faculty participated in this grant project and presented results at luncheons this spring. This program has demonstrated great success based on the luncheon evaluations and the fact that 20 faculty submitted for a grant for the 2012-2013 academic year. The submissions were reviewed by the Co-Directors and 10 were chosen to receive a grant. The faculty who received a grant will present their findings during the spring 2013.
 - **Book Club.** Because of time constraints and budgetary issues this academic year, the book club was not active. However, the Co-Directors recommend that it be revitalized for fall 2012.

Additional Activities

In addition to regular programming, TFSC personnel are active in a number of other activities, including one-to-one teaching consultations and classroom observation, representation on campus committees, one-time faculty development programs, and more.

- **Personal Consultations.** Co-directors are called upon to provide one-to-one support and assistance to faculty and teaching assistants from across the university. Nine

consultations were done this year which included visiting classes taught by the faculty, writing an evaluation and then meeting with the faculty to discuss issues and offer suggestions; meeting and the center with faculty by request to talk about their teaching problems and offering suggestions for improvement; reviewing taped teaching sessions for a faculty and offering both words of encouragement and suggestions for improvement; providing tips for handling a large lecture class; offering tips for dealing with troubled students; suggesting methods for more consistent grading; and helping Ph.D. students improve their teaching methods; and spending time in classroom observation including review of teaching materials and provision of feedback. One faculty whom we had worked with emailed the following comment to us:

"I wanted to share with you that I had a very good teaching semester. My evaluations were up significantly. Several student responses were rated 4 and above. Below are two comments from students that were so heartfelt and encouraging to me. Thank you for your guidance and support."

- **Representation on University Committees and Campus Activities.** It is a pleasure to work in an environment in which respect for the needs of students and teachers is so much in evidence. Although the Center has been asked to represent these interests in the past, the current effort to rejuvenate the campus's physical teaching spaces and tools has expanded this commitment exponentially. To this end, TFSC Co-Directors this year actively participated on the following committees which include: Health Center Advisory Board, Women's Commission, Faculty Senate, Academic Integrity Committee, Teaching Assistant Effectiveness Advisory Committee, Disability Services Committee, Graduate Council, Teaching Council, Teaching Assistant Development, Academic Integrity Board, and UA Copyright Committee.

In addition, the Co-Directors kept in close touch with the Provost's office meeting frequently to discuss the Center's activities and budget, and to discuss teaching enhancement and faculty support on campus.

- **One-time Faculty Development programs.** In addition to the 30-40 regular programs hosted by the Center each year, we have been asked to present faculty development sessions for departments or groups with special needs. This year, a workshop on teaching was presented to 7 Law Librarians in an afternoon at the Law School (per request). The Law Librarians will be teaching classes in fall 2012 and some of them have never taught or have not taught in several years. They requested the workshop to better prepare them for this new assignment. Topics covered included writing objectives, developing a syllabus, testing and classroom activities. Participants were active learners and the workshop was deemed a great success.
- **'Road shows' to Academic Departments.** We would like to think all faculty and administrators know about the TFSC and its services, but many do not or may not understand all the resources we have to support, enhance, and celebrate teaching on campus. Thus, the Co-Directors began a "road show" program this spring to inform departments about the center and the activities and assistance that we offer faculty. All departments were contacted, requesting a time that we could visit and present ours

"show" to the faculty. We were able to schedule four this spring and hope to continue and expand this in the 2012-2013 academic year.

Personnel

Janine Parry (Political Science) completed her term as Co-Director of TFSC in August 2011, at which time **Paul Cronan** (Information Systems) joined us as the newest Co-Director. **Marianne Neighbors** (Nursing) and **Norm Dennis** (Civil Engineering) continued as third year and second year Co-Directors. Neighbors will complete her three-year term in August 2012 and will be succeeded by **Jeannie Whyne** (History), who was appointed by the Provost following a campus-wide call for nominations. Because Norm Dennis was named Interim Associate Dean of Engineering, Norm Dennis will continue with the Teaching Center only until August 15, 2012 when **Inza Fort** will complete his third and final year with the center. She was named by the Provost to fill-in for the one-year period of time. **Lori Libbert** continues to serve as the TFSC's Special Events Manager (previously Administrative Assistant). She was promoted to this position November, 2011. She organizes all the activities for the center under the direction of the Co-Directors and also supervises a work study student for 12-14 hours a week. The Center was also able to utilize the expertise of a Graduate Assistant from the Information Systems Department, Sam M. Walton College of Business. We had an assistant each semester and this summer to help with the Web site. This student worked closely with Lori, teaching her how to add information to and maintain the Web site.

Facilities and Resources/Budget

The TFSC is located on the seventh floor of the Harmon Parking Facility. The office serves as a resource for individual faculty, where they obtain instructional resources, meet with co-directors, and participate in book clubs. Groups including the Teaching Academy and Teaching Council, and at times, subcommittees of Faculty Senate utilize this space as well. The Center also maintains an e-presence via our reorganized Web site. We continue to add and reorganize the site's content, and have incorporated regular link-checks and updates into the Web site material with the direction of the Co-Directors. The Web site will be checked weekly for necessary updates. The Center's newsletter was sent out on-line this year, a process started in the 2010-2011 academic year. Lori Libbert has continued to maintain the Web site and send out the newsletter on-line. The newsletters have been housed on the Web site for continued reference for users. There are still some challenges in maintaining the Center's Web site, but we will continue to try to improve and update the materials on the site.

With the help of the Provost's Office, we developed a detailed operating budget for the year. Co-directors, together with the office administrator, monitor spending closely as well as engage in long-term planning. In the process of developing the budget, we discovered that, although the center is serving more faculty than ever before the total amount designated for programmatic expenses has not been increased in at least ten years. However, as technology needs increase, the center's equipment also needs to be updated and enhanced. We were able to upgrade Lori's computer and purchase a new laptop for the center, but this issue needs to be revisited in terms of budgeting. Still, by good management (trimming both luncheon fare, costs for facility use, and travel expenses), we managed to finish the year within the allotted budget for

operations. As demands for assistance from the Teaching Center increase, and as the Co-Directors develop new programs to enhance teaching on campus, budget limitations will continue to be a challenging issue. We realize budgets are strained across campus, but believe a graduated annual increase to the center's budget would help relieve this strain.

Future Programming

New ideas for programming come from both the Co-Directors and from faculty suggestions. Some plans for the future include:

- Expand Teaching Camp attendance to 70
- Allow an unlimited number to attend luncheons teaching sessions
- Present the "road show" to many more departments on campus
- Expand our focus on academic integrity for both faculty and TAs
- Extend faculty development programming to TAs
- Take a leadership role in faculty development for universities and colleges in Arkansas (State Conference on Teaching Excellence)

Concluding Remarks

In sum, the Wally Cordes Teaching and Faculty Support Center continues to expand programming, offering more services to greater numbers of teaching faculty each semester. With the help of the Office of the Provost, we developed a detailed operating budget. We also updated the working calendar and institutionalized a system by which the center's Web site can remain vibrant, including keeping the newsletter entirely on-line. In addition, we have expanded the quantity and quality of our programs, continue consultations and evaluate all programs and use these as the basis for future programming. We are grateful for the continuing support and encouragement of the Office of the Provost in all of these endeavors.