Establishing a Teaching Academy: Cultivation of Teaching at a Research University Campus

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The University of Georgia (UGA) has worked hard over the last 22 years to increase the respect and reward for teaching through the faculty development programs of the office of instructional support and development and through the establishment of two campus-wide teaching awards. Looking for a means to extend a celebration of teaching beyond one-time recognition or one-time participation, the university established a campus-wide teaching academy. The purpose of this chapter is to chronicle the evolution of the teaching academy that was founded at the University of Georgia in 1999. The mission, goals, membership, funding, and programs and activities of the teaching academy will be described, as well as the faculty development programs and teaching awards that laid the foundation for the teaching academy.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last 40 years, faculty development programs and teaching awards have been key components in recognizing and rewarding individuals for teaching excellence on research university campuses. In the last ten to 15 years, campuses have looked for a structural model that can marshal the collective

energy of individuals who have participated in faculty development programs or who have received teaching awards. For a growing number of campuses the model has been found in the form of a teaching academy. Chism, Fraser, and Arnold (1996) define a teaching academy as

a group of faculty who are considered excellent or highly interested in teaching and who have been tapped by their institutions to engage in advocacy, service, or advising on teaching matters. The central idea of the academy is that effective teachers, working through an honorary and service-oriented collective, can have a significant impact on an institution's pursuit of teaching excellence. (p. 25)

Chism, Fraser, and Arnold (1996) go on to say that "the notion of an academy transforms the concept of singling out individuals into the concept of a community of expertise, changing one-time recognition into an opportunity for continued celebration of excellence" (p. 25). Teaching academies vary in their evolution, mission, structure, membership, goals, and activities. The purpose of this chapter is to chronicle the formation of a teaching academy at the University of Georgia

EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH A CULTURE THAT RESPECTS TEACHING

The Early Days at the University of Georgia

Prior to the mid-1960s, professors at the University of Georgia (UGA) were by and large a "traditional group of teaching faculty" (Dyer, 1985, p. 340). A shift occurred in the late-1960s and 1970s as the university struggled to become a modern university. Within this 20-year period, observers noted "enormous growth in the institution's research activities" (Dyer, 1985, p. 341). Concomitant with an increase in research activities, the institution's reward system underwent a transformation that resulted in a focus on research publications. Dyer (1985) notes that "new guidelines made promotion more difficult and gave a much heavier emphasis to assessment of quality, and some would have said quantity, of scholarly publications" (p. 353). The pendulum swung so far in the research direction that teaching was devalued.

During the late 1970s, three separate faculty committees recommended that an office dedicated to the improvement of teaching be established at the University of Georgia. In fall 1979, with final approval from the vice president for academic affairs, the office of instructional development (OID) was created. The central mission of OID was to provide campus-wide leadership on matters relating to instruction. Over its nearly 25-year history, OID (now

called the Office of Instructional Support and Development [OISD]) has coordinated a wide variety of programs and activities. OISD serves faculty, administrators, and graduate teaching assistants (TAs) in each of the university's 14 schools and colleges.

The programs and activities of OISD include faculty and TA development programs, instructional grants, consultation services, publications, and instructional resources and media services. In addition, seminars, workshops, and conferences that address a wide range of topics are offered throughout the year. Since its inception, OISD has sought to promote vitality among faculty and administration and to foster an institutional climate that reinforces excellence in teaching and learning. Information about OISD may be found at <http://www.isd.uga.edu/>.

Faculty Development Programs

Two of the central programs of OISD that celebrate faculty passion for and commitment to excellence in teaching are the Lilly Teaching Fellows Program and the Senior Teaching Fellows Program.

The Lilly Teaching Fellows Program. The Lilly Teaching Fellows Program was originally established at the University of Georgia in 1984 as a result of a grant from the Lilly Endowment. In 1987, the program was continued with full support from the university. Each year, up to ten faculty members are selected to participate in this two-year program. Participants must be tenure-track faculty members in their second, third, or fourth year at UGA. The goals of the program are to:

- Provide new faculty with an opportunity to further develop basic skills associated with effective teaching and other roles required by a research university
- Provide new faculty with information concerning instructional policies, resources, and services that exist at the university
- Offer a support system for sharing of ideas with colleagues from other disciplines who may have similar interests and who face similar challenges
- Develop instructional skills through exposure to and interaction with senior faculty who are master teachers
- Provide funding for an instructional project designed to strengthen courses and teaching methods in each participant's academic department

- Help reinforce an instructional environment that honors and recognizes dedicated teaching scholars; that values a synergistic relationship between teaching, research, and service; and that promotes a learning-community spirit on a large campus

To date, over 160 faculty members have participated in the Lilly Fellows Program. Over 100 of these faculty members are still at UGA and are active in promoting excellence in teaching and learning on the campus.

The Senior Teaching Fellows Program. The Senior Teaching Fellows Program was originally established at the University of Georgia in 1987 through a three-year grant from the United States Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE). In 1990, the program was continued with full support from the university. Each year, eight faculty members are selected to participate in this one-year program. Any faculty member with the rank of associate or full professor who has been at the University of Georgia for at least five years is eligible for nomination to the program. Candidates may be self-nominated or nominated by their colleagues, department head, or dean. The goals of the program are to:

- Provide senior faculty with an opportunity to focus on undergraduate instruction
- Provide senior faculty with opportunities for the sharing of ideas with other dedicated, highly motivated, and innovative teachers from other disciplines who may have similar interests and who face similar teaching challenges
- Provide senior faculty with opportunities for professional and personal renewal
- Provide funding for an instructional project designed to strengthen courses and teaching methods in each participant's academic department
- Help reinforce an instructional environment that honors and recognizes dedicated teaching scholars; that values a synergistic relationship between teaching, research, and service; and that promotes a learning community spirit on a large campus

To date, 111 faculty members have participated in the Senior Fellows Program. Only two participants are now at other institutions (one is now dean of a law school, the other is a vice provost). Twenty-nine participants are retired. Many of these retired faculty members are actively engaged in the life of the university (13 are now members of the UGA teaching academy).

Teaching Awards

Two campus-wide teaching awards were established in the late 1980s and early 1990s that have significantly enhanced the visibility and respect for teaching at the university.

Meigs Award for Excellence in Teaching. As part of the perceived need to promote and recognize teaching excellence, the university established a campus-wide teaching award in 1982, in honor of the university's second president, Josiah Meigs. Award winners were recognized at a campus-wide award ceremony and received discretionary funds to support their teaching programs. In 1988, the vice president for academic affairs elevated the status of the awards by including a permanent salary increase of \$5,000, in addition to the one time \$1,000 discretionary allowance. The salary increment has since been raised to \$6,000.

Today, up to five Josiah Meigs Teaching Awards are given each year to faculty members across all disciplines. Meigs Award recipients are recognized at a campus-wide teaching award banquet. Video teaching biographies of each winner are produced. The videos are premiered at the award banquet, used for public relations purposes, and are run periodically on the university's cable channel. Biographical pieces are also run in the campus newspaper. (In some past years, the awardees rode in the homecoming parade.) As of this publication, 65 faculty members have been recipients of the Meigs Award.

The Meigs Award is significant because it both recognizes and rewards teaching, while conveying to young faculty members and graduate students that the university is serious about teaching. The award is also a means for addressing salary differences between outstanding teachers and outstanding researchers. For the most part, however, award winners receive their awards and return to their private lives as teachers. Until 1999, the Meigs Award lacked a mechanism for award winners to share their teaching expertise with one another or with the larger university community.

Richard B. Russell Undergraduate Teaching Award. The Richard B. Russell Undergraduate Teaching Award at the University of Georgia is named to honor university alumnus Richard B. Russell, a United States Senator of the state of Georgia from 1932 to 1970, who had a love for new knowledge and an appreciation of our nation's youth. The award was established in 1992, and its purpose is to recognize excellence in undergraduate instruction at UGA by faculty members in their early academic careers. Three awards are made each year. Awardees receive a \$5,000 cash award from the Richard B. Russell Foundation.

Eligibility for the Russell Award is limited to tenure-track faculty members engaged in undergraduate instruction, who have been at the university a minimum of three years at the time of the actual award, and who have been in a tenure-track position for a total of no more than ten years. To date, 30 faculty members have received the award.

Formation of the UGA Teaching Academy

With the hard work of many administrators and faculty members throughout the 1980s and 1990s the research-teaching pendulum has swung back toward the middle where teaching is valued—perhaps not equally to research, but much closer than it was in the 1960s and 1970s. The establishment of an office of instructional support and development with its suite of faculty development programs, and the establishment of two significant teaching awards are tangible evidence of this shift in the campus culture. By the end of the 1990s, the conditions and climate for establishing a teaching academy at UGA were ideal. A survey was administered in spring 1998, asking faculty for their thoughts on forming a teaching academy at UGA. The responses were overwhelmingly positive. An ad hoc committee was formed to suggest a framework for an academy. In October 1999, after deliberating and planning for some 15 months, the committee (later to be called the executive committee) established the University of Georgia Teaching Academy.

Mission, goals, and values. The first and most critical issue addressed by the executive committee was to establish the Academy's mission, goals, and core values. After much debate, the following was adopted:

- **Mission:** The mission of the academy is to promote and celebrate excellence in teaching and to foster learning through inquiry
- **Goals:** The Academy will promote faculty leadership to enhance teaching and learning, to advocate for effective educational environments, and to foster a community of scholars
- **Core values:** We believe that educating students is a fundamental responsibility of every faculty member of the University of Georgia and that teachers are catalysts for effective learning

A preamble was drafted to integrate the teaching academy's mission statement into the larger context of the university's mission (Table 5.1).

TABLE 5.1
The University of Georgia Teaching Academy Preamble

Whereas the great purpose of higher education is the strongest obligation to form the youth, the rising hope of our land, to render the like capable and dedicated to glorious and essential service.

Whereas the faculty of the University of Georgia share a special commitment to the value and practicality of higher education and an obligation to promote a culture of inquiry, a passion for learning, a community of scholars and a contempt for ignorance, apathy and indifference.

Whereas the University was founded on the vision of a land-grant institution with its roots in and commitment to serving all people of the state with the knowledge and skills that uplift the economic, cultural and spiritual well-being of the common citizen.

Whereas the public's expectations and sensibilities of the University's commitment to teaching and learning are great and prudent.

Whereas the teaching and learning mission of the University is the strength and only non-proprietary enterprise of the University.

Whereas the University's tripartite mission in teaching, research and service enhances and enriches the learning environment and whereas faculty engaged in such activities have the fortune and obligation to share the fruits of their knowledge and activities in the glorious enterprise of teaching.

Therefore we solemnly commit ourselves to establishing a University of Georgia Teaching Academy to celebrate and engage the larger University community to embrace the joy, passions and rewards of teaching and learning. The charter members of the University Teaching Academy duly enact and embrace this assembly of scholars and promote its just and necessary causes and ambitions on this twenty-seventh day of October in the year nineteen hundred ninety-nine. We declare by these signatures that this body be hereby created.

Membership. The second and equally critical issue was membership. That is, what criteria should be established for membership? In developing membership guidelines, members of the executive committee were concerned that the teaching academy play a significant service and advocacy role for teaching and learning at the university. They wanted the academy to be more than

merely honorific. They recognized that there are many excellent and committed faculty members on campus, but felt it important for would-be members to express a commitment to the academy and its goals and activities.

In 2000, Meigs Teaching Award recipients and faculty members who had participated in the Senior Teaching Fellows Program were invited to join the teaching academy. Meigs recipients had been recognized for their teaching excellence and would bring a rich set of expertise and experience to the academy. Senior Teaching Fellows work together as a group for one year, have experience in developing collaborative teaching projects, and were expected to bring that collaborative spirit to the academy. As a prerequisite for membership, nominees were asked to submit reflective essays on their teaching philosophy and their personal vision for the academy. Fifty-two nominees accepted the invitation and comprised the academy's inaugural class of 2000.

In 2001, 126 faculty members were invited to join the academy. Those invited included the four 2001 Meigs Award recipients, the eight 2001–2002 Senior Teaching Fellows, all Richard B. Russell Award recipients up to 1995, and all Lilly Teaching Fellows still at UGA from the years 1984 through 1994. The purpose of expanding to the Russell Award recipients and Lilly Teaching Fellows was to ensure that views of less senior members of the faculty were included in the work of the academy. In the spirit of inclusiveness, the teaching academy now consists of 130 members who represent the university's most outstanding and dedicated teachers.

Funding. The third issue faced by the academy was one of support and funding. In its formative years, the academy partnered with the office of instructional support and development (OISD), the institute of higher education (IHE), and the office of the senior vice president for academic affairs and provost. OISD and the provost's office serve as the support units for the academy and the IHE serves as the academy's academic partner. The academy represents the faculty-initiated and faculty-driven component of this triad. To date, the academy's support needs have been shared among these units and the offices of the executive committee. As the academy grows, a more permanent support structure will be established. With respect to funding, the academy requested and received a \$6,000 grant from the university president's venture fund. These funds are available for start-up projects and organizations with the potential to benefit the university community. These venture funds have served as seed monies in the academy's efforts to identify donors.

Programs and activities. The fourth issue faced by the academy was to define programs and activities. That is, what roles were these outstanding and dedicated faculty members expected to play as members of the teaching acad-

emy? The academy's programs are expected to complement and build upon faculty teaching roles. The executive committee wanted to create a forum for members to share their teaching expertise and to learn from each other.

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA TEACHING ACADEMY

In its first years of operation (2000–2002), the teaching academy sponsored a number of projects and activities to promote interaction among teachers across disciplines. The working philosophy of the academy has been to encourage opportunities for participation and engagement at all sponsored events. This section describes some of the major programs and activities sponsored by the academy.

Member Workshops

Inaugural workshop: Fall 2000. At the outset, the academy wanted to convey that membership was not merely honorific but that its members were expected to contribute to and participate in the academy's activities. Hence, a workshop was held as part of the induction ceremony for the inaugural class of teaching academy members. The workshop, "Taking Teaching Seriously: An Agenda for the Georgia Teaching Academy," asked members to discuss the proper role of the academy and to develop goals and action plans to promote teaching and learning on campus. It was suggested that the teaching academy work toward:

- Making teaching "community property"
- Creating a center for undergraduate teaching opportunities
- Encouraging the establishment of chaired teaching professorships
- Engaging the teaching talents and experience of retiring faculty
- Establishing interdisciplinary teaching circles
- Establishing teacher mentoring programs
- Sponsoring workshops and seminars to promote excellence in teaching and learning

Workshop recommendations were used by the executive committee to develop an agenda of activities for the teaching academy. Clearly, some recommendations are long term in nature and require considerable funding. It is hoped that others can be implemented rather quickly and with minimal resources.

Fall 2001 workshop. The teaching academy's fall 2001 workshop, "Roles and Rewards of Teaching Faculty at Georgia: Teaching Academy Recommendations," discussed possible changes in the reward system for the role of teaching. Over 80 faculty members attended, and the workshop results have been presented to the provost.

Teaching Academy Forums

For faculty engagement to be effective and sustaining, opportunities for frequent interaction must be created. To promote interaction among its members, the academy sponsors or co-sponsors a major teaching forum each semester. These forums feature prominent speakers and include meal functions, small group sessions, a major lecture, panel discussions, and a reception. In these early years, the forums have focused on prominent speakers from outside the university who are renowned from their contributions to teaching and learning. A summary of teaching academy speakers to date is shown in Table 5.2.

TABLE 5.2
University of Georgia Teaching Academy Lectures

Semester	Speaker	Biographical Information	Lecture Title
Fall 2000	John Gardner	Senior Fellow of the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition	<i>The Undergraduate Bookends: The First-Year Experience and the Senior-Year Experience</i>
Spring 2001	James Muyskens	Chief Executive Officer and Dean of Faculty, Gwinnett University Center	<i>Education By All Means</i>
Fall 2001	Richard J. Light	Professor of Education, Kennedy School of Government and Graduate School of Education, Harvard University	<i>What Students, Faculty, and Administrators Can Do to Enrich the College Experience</i>

Attendance at teaching academy forums has exceeded expectations and the quality of interaction at the presentations has been excellent. Still, not all

academy members fully participate in these forums because of scheduling problems. Hence, other opportunities for interaction were explored.

Other Activities and Special Projects

The teaching academy consists of the university's most outstanding and recognized teachers. Many of its members are involved in faculty governance at the department, college, and university levels. The expertise and citizenship of academy members are in high demand. Recognizing the demands on the members' time, the executive committee has been guarded in requests made of its members. Thus far, the academy has been reluctant to assume complete responsibility for ongoing campus teaching activities. Instead, efforts have been made to tap the expertise of the academy without asking them to commit large amounts of time. Three such requests were made of the academy this past year. First, the academy was asked to recommend books that would be assigned reading for entering freshmen. *A Civil Action* by Jonathan Harr (1995) emerged from the academy's recommendation and was assigned to students entering the university's freshmen college, summer 2001.

Second, the university recently created what we hope will be a new tradition for the institution: an opening convocation to welcome all new students and faculty members to the campus. The first two years, an alumnus delivered the main speech. In 2001, the teaching academy was asked to nominate members from its ranks to deliver a message from the faculty.

Third, the academy was asked to recommend topics and issues for the university's annual academic affairs faculty symposium. For the past ten years, the provost has sponsored a two-day symposium at an off-campus location to discuss critical issues in academic affairs. Each year, some 60 to 80 faculty members from across the university are invited to participate in these symposia. The recommendations of the teaching academy will be used to plan future symposia. Six teaching academy members will serve on the planning committee for the 2002 academic affairs symposium titled "The Challenge of Becoming Extraordinary Teachers at a Public Research University: How Do We Get There?"

Future Projects

Recognizing that faculty members are busy people, the executive committee has explored ways for teaching academy members to interact on their own schedules. After all, the academy's goals are to promote interaction among members and between members and nonmembers. That is, the energy and expertise in teaching and learning lies with the academy's members, and interaction at the member level is thought to be the most productive. With this in

mind, the executive committee surveyed the membership to explore their interest in various mentoring arrangements. It is hoped that these various mentoring projects can be implemented in the coming years. A critical resource for the mentoring project is the new book, *Extraordinary Teachers*, edited by Teaching Academy member Fred Stephenson (2001). The book is a collection of 36 inspiring and thought-provoking essays by the university's outstanding teachers and Meigs Award recipients, many of which are members of the teaching academy, and represents more than 1,000 years of teaching experience.

The teaching academy now has a web site (<http://teachingacademy.uga.edu>), and the reader can see how the teaching academy continues to evolve over the coming years.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

The formation of the University of Georgia Teaching Academy represents a culmination of efforts to change the culture of this research university. The academy is an affirmation by a major research university that teaching and learning are central to the mission of the institution. Moreover, it represents a major step to extend the recognition of teaching by outstanding faculty members beyond one-time recognition.

The academy is another means by which teaching and learning can be celebrated and promoted. The academy creates a community of scholars who value and promote teaching and learning, a community that can energize and celebrate teaching and learning on a larger scale than has been possible on this campus. The academy is a logical and opportune outgrowth of the faculty development initiatives in the office of instructional support and development and the university's highest teaching awards. The academy will build upon and enhance the impact of these initiatives. One way the academy can extend faculty development efforts is by providing an ongoing forum for campus conversations on teaching and learning. That is, the academy represents an institutionalized forum for peer collaboration of teaching and learning. The academy, as a faculty organized and directed organization, democratizes the vision for teaching and learning on campus and gives faculty ownership to setting the teaching and learning agendas on campus.

CONCLUSION

The University of Georgia Teaching Academy is in its formative years. Assessing the academy's impact on the university community is premature at this point. Until an assessment is made, what outcomes would the teaching acad-

emy like to accomplish? An overriding goal has been to create a forum for interaction among teachers across disciplines. As an inclusive organization, the academy seeks to blur the distinction between teaching and research and to create a more collaborative model for teaching and learning. The academy would like to cultivate a campus climate where teaching and learning are shared responsibilities of all faculty. Finally, it is hoped that the academy can have a significant impact on the teaching and learning process at the University of Georgia.

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