

**MEMORANDUM**

Date: February 22, 2012

To: Scott Ishman, Chair  
Graduate Council

From: Susan Logue, Chair   
Center for Graduate Teaching Excellence Transition Task Force

Re: Transition Report

Attached, please find the Transition of Center for Graduate Teaching Excellence at SIUC Report from the CGTE Transition Task Force. This report represents the work of task force members Ryan Netzley, Chair, Education Policy Committee of Graduate Council, Holly Hurlburt, Chair, Programs Committee of Graduate Council, Laurie Achenbach, Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Affairs, College of Science, and me.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you.

SL:emw

Enclosure: Transition of Center for Graduate Teaching Excellence at SIUC Report

cc: John W. Nicklow, Provost and Vice Chancellor  
John Koropchak, Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Dean  
David Wilson, Associate Dean and Director of the Graduate School  
Transition Task Force Members

# CGTE Transition Task Force

February 2012

Report on:

Transition of Center for Graduate Teaching Excellence at SIUC

This report is the result of meetings of the CGTE Transition Task Force, under the direction of the Associate Provost for Academic Administration. The Task Force has reviewed the current obligations and directives of the Center for Graduate Teaching Excellence (CGTE) and provides the following report in regard to transitioning the program from its current oversight within the Graduate School to the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE).

### **Program for Excellence in Teaching (PET)**

Under the auspices of the CGTE, PET has conducted three workshops this term (Spring 2012): 1) sexual harassment; 2) academic honesty; 3) research responsibility. CTE staff can readily and ably assume responsibility for these recurring aspects of PET. The other chief aims of PET can only be augmented and improved by consolidation with the CTE. For example, PET orientation sessions and roundtables for interested teaching assistants, individualized mentoring of TAs, and even the coordination of teaching observations, recording, and feedback are best handled by a single clearinghouse for pedagogical improvement and support. In fact, the CTE staff has been assisting in and supporting the technical aspects of these activities for some time. Although the CTE staff has not been involved in the mentoring of TAs and teaching observations, it is in a position to do so. The committee recognizes concerns that faculty pedagogical issues could drown out graduate student issues. However, we also note that a center that services both faculty and graduate students promises not only to promote efficiencies in the delivery of professional teaching development, but also potentially overcomes the stigma of asking for help about such matters: i.e., “interested students” who see faculty availing themselves of the same resources are less likely to avoid the center as a result of shame or imposter syndrome. If anything, the consolidation risks not so much shunting graduate pedagogical development to the side, as it does decreasing faculty participation in CTE programs. The committee then urges the CTE leadership and staff

to develop a plan for reaching out to faculty about pedagogical development, one that is particularly mindful of the potential awkwardness of seek help from a center that also serves novice instructors.

### **Departmental Support**

As is the case with the Program for Excellence in Teaching, the committee maintains that departmental support and outreach efforts can only be strengthened and improved by a central clearinghouse for pedagogical issues and professional development. The stated concerns about the negative impact of the CGTE transition are actually an argument for consolidation: currently, multiple offices claim to administer instructional support services, resulting in sometimes confusing referrals, which can only serve to frustrate already busy faculty, chairs in particular, and discourage them from utilizing the university's pedagogical development resources. The committee acknowledges the importance of providing an overview of the services available through the CTE to its own staff and further, we feel that such information could have prevented this particular concern. However, we again assert that the consolidation of programs solves this problem. The committee also maintains that the chief obstacle to success of the CTE and its mission to support departments and faculty is the potential stigma of seeking help for pedagogical concerns. We again urge the CTE to develop a strategy for contacting faculty about pedagogical development that is mindful of this problem.

### **International Teaching Assistant Training**

In the past, much of the testing, placing, and training of International TAs (ITAs) has occurred under the aegis of the Center for English as a Second Language (CESL), with CGTE acting in a mostly intermediary role (e.g., communicating between departments with ITAs and CESL). Planning and execution of testing and training will continue to be a mandate of CESL – the scheduling and results of which will now be facilitated in

cooperation with the CTE, which as elsewhere noted, has a well-established record in scheduling.

### **Graduate Assistant Training Workshops and Make-Up Workshops**

The original intent of the CGTE (as per the SIUC Graduate Council minutes of April 5, 2001) was to enhance, not supplant, existing training programs (e.g., those offered through individual departments/colleges) and the committee is committed to ensuring that this graduate training focus remains intact upon transition to the CTE. The committee recognizes concerns that scheduling and implementation of the three-day Graduate Training Workshop mandated by the Graduate Council will be compromised by the transition. However, the CTE staff currently provides significant support for these activities including assisting presenters with their presentation materials, providing equipment support, generating the customized evaluation forms, providing student worker support of 5-6 students for four days, and collecting/maintaining attendance and evaluation results. Finally, the CTE staff is poised and able to assume responsibility for scheduling the presentations, contacting presenters and ancillary services, and distributing campus announcements.

Because the CTE currently provides the attendance reports for the CGTE, the CTE is currently in a position to notify units of makeup requirements for those TAs/RAs/GAs that missed one or more of the mandated workshops. In addition, as with the regularly scheduled workshops discussed above, the CTE staff is able to assume responsibility for the scheduling and implementation of these makeup workshops.

### **Chemistry/Math Undergraduate Retention Efforts**

The CGTE currently (FY12) provides support for two (2) chemistry TAs and the Vice Chancellor for Research provides support for four (4) chemistry TAs, and no (0) math

TAs. The bulk of the TA support for the math efforts has been through the central administration. It is our understanding that these lines will continue to be funded through the entities mentioned above. The committee therefore concludes that the CGTE-CTE transition will in no way negatively impact our ongoing undergraduate retention efforts in chemistry and mathematics, assuming the funding from the Vice Chancellor for Research continues to provide the funding for the four Chemistry TAs.

### **TA Mentoring**

As noted in the above Departmental Support section, mentoring of TAs (including but not limited to workshops, technological assistance (such as videotaping), and pedagogical advising) will be a part of the general mission of the CTE, and TAs will benefit from the integration of their work into a larger drive for teaching excellence campus-wide.

### **Conclusion**

The committee concludes that the integration of the above programs into the mandate of the CTE ought to be monitored beyond the immediate transition (Spring 2012), and encourages the Educational Policies Committee of the Graduate Council to conduct follow-up assessment of the elements of the CTE pertinent to graduate education and teaching one year hence (Spring, 2013).