

April 5, 2013

Jere Morehead
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
203 Administration Building
CAMPUS

Dear Provost Morehead:

In order to transform our current teaching spaces, especially for the **large enrollment lecture** courses, we need to address the functionality and adaptations of existing learning spaces and design of future facilities. We also need to provide incentives which encourage faculty to adopt and implement practices which engage students in meaningful learning situations. The group offers the following suggestions:

I. Facilities:

Problem: Education research studies have established that existing classroom structure and layout provide major barriers to the implementation of active learning practices.

Recommendation: Establish a task force (representing faculty across campus charged with instruction of large enrollment courses, along with CTL, EITS and Facilities representatives) to develop a master plan to facilitate change in our current facilities policy and to allow input into new classroom planning. We identified several Issues that need to be discussed: 1) issues with how classrooms are currently scheduled and how faculty have access to that schedule; 2) layout and design of current classrooms for modification to create more flexible learning spaces; 3) mechanisms for funding classrooms; 4) current infrastructure issues that include having to deal with Facilities staff that prevent classroom redesign (for example, they are charged with purchasing furniture which **MUST** be bolted down); 5) access to facilities that enhance experiential learning such as computer labs.

Implementation Steps:

1. CTL creates a task force charged with evaluating undergraduate teaching space. They are currently collecting data that includes comprising an inventory of all classrooms with photos of classrooms and schedules that faculty can access when planning their classes for the following semester. We propose that they also construct a list of undesirable classrooms that can be used to connect to capital development plans for creating 3 model classroom spaces on North, Central, and South campus. This list can serve as possible

funding opportunities for UGA's ongoing Capital Campaign. For example, these could be available as opportunities for named classrooms. In Terry College, Coca Cola lounge could serve as model.

2. After this evaluation is complete, the task force will adapt into an ongoing Classroom Committee that is changed with communications between the five major entities that are responsible for our current classroom needs: EITS (computers and WiFi accessibility); CTL (audio/visual and faculty development); Architects (building design); Facilities (furniture); Instructional Faculty (facility users).

Estimated Cost: modest for planning; \$3-4 M for construction and instructional equipment (items for Capital Campaign)

II. Faculty Support Initiative

Problem: CTL has just hired a new staff member charged with coordinating faculty development. UGA faculty teaching large lecture classes are willing, even desperate, for help revising their courses. They need the time, knowledge, and support to enact these changes. Currently, UGA provides little in the way of incentives to encourage these faculty to participate in curricular redesign. Dr. Watson has approached Deans from each of the various colleges and schools, and of the 14 which he has already engaged in conversation, most expressed interest in allocating resources and support behind this type of initiative.

Recommendations:

1. Smaller workshops and peer coaching model could be easily implemented, but to see sustained change we propose a larger model that recruits and funds 12 large-lecture course fellows to participate in a 2-year residency program workshop. "Student Success Partnership" Programs could be initiated and coordinated by a newly established group known as the "Large Class Learning Fellows" or the "Creative Teaching Learning Fellows."
2. Benefits
 - a. Would help develop greater teaching competencies in our faculty; those who complete the residency would serve as mentors for future program participants.
 - b. There are impressive centers for expertise in US college teaching for curricular ideas like Problem-Based Learning at the University of Delaware. But, despite the obvious need, there is no US center for ideas in tackling large class instruction. We could become that resource.
 - c. There is currently no systematic program for instructional development in this area. Faculty Learning Communities are excellent for sharing ideas, but are not able to provide the systematic training and support under their current guise.

- d. Large enrollment courses provide the greatest impact both in credit hours (Introductory Chemistry is taught to over 4000 students each semester; Intro History to 3000) as well as impact on student completion rates at the University (Introductory Chemistry has a 15-20% withdrawal rate).
 - e. Student success is critically impacted during these first years on campus. The Complete College GA Plan put forward by the Governor proposes to increase the total number of graduates and retention of students. UGA currently has the highest completion rate, so most initiatives that focused on retention would have little effect at UGA. However, if we identify the classes that have the biggest impact on our students' time completion rate and satisfaction, we could address the Governor's plan.
3. Model: One semester buy-out for a single course. 12 faculty engage in learning fellows program in curricular design and classroom implementation during that semester (Spring suggested). During Summer, faculty would continue to work and refine design plans with feedback of the fellows cohort. In the following semester (Fall), the faculty would be expected to implement their new model and assess the impacts of implementation in conjunction with support staff at CTL.
 4. Implementation Steps:
 - a. Use qualtrics surveys to Identify faculty with these critical classes that impact student learning and represent high student populations (Core Classes, large enrollment, key courses for entering majors)
 - b. Create a pilot program with 12 faculty fellows
 - c. Collect systematic data on student learning analytics and evaluate faculty practice. (CTL can commit a graduate student to evaluate data for learning improvement in specific student demographic groups that would help inform our program evaluation and accreditation.)
 - d. Hire at CTL graduate student expert in use of technology in the classroom (e.g. clickers, scanning short answer questions into a program like the one developed in Chemistry) who could help coordinate technology in large classes and help train graduate TAs in those classes.
 - e. Develop a community of practice with faculty fellows continuing in subsequent years to mentor and collaborate with peers across the UGA and USG system.
 - f. Develop a peer coaching model to disseminate the best practices to new faculty and graduate students.
 5. Outcomes:

- a. Provide a model for curricular leadership for the entire University System. Currently, many USG schools battle with the same problems with large class instruction that we do at UGA. The methods that our fellows develop could serve as a model to improve instruction across the state.
- b. Publication in Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: Starting with the composition of a white paper diagraming the best practices that we develop, we could also pursue publishing a textbook on Best Practices. One outcome could be the creation of a new SOTL publication; “Journal of Large Classes” which would enable the reading and evaluating of these teaching strategies internationally.
- c. A campus-wide FAQ-like website would be developed to aggregate faculty development opportunities across campus into one concise micro-website.

Estimated cost: \$120 K per year for course buyouts, instructional materials, and graduate student support.

Sincerely,

Marguerite Brickman, Chair
Break-out Group on Large Residential Classes