

The University Council on Teaching views peer mentoring and peer evaluation of teaching as important elements in promoting the best teaching possible at Boston College among all ranks of our faculty. Junior faculty members should have their teaching formally evaluated by faculty peers on a regular basis, not just at the time of promotion proceedings, and should be routinely mentored by more experienced teachers. The UCT also feels that mentoring and peer evaluation of teaching should be expanded to non-tenure track faculty. Tenured faculty also need to be encouraged to apply innovative methods to enhance their teaching and to utilize student-learning outcomes for assessment of their courses. Across the campus, more needs to be done to promote good teaching and to recognize and celebra(r)41voss the campus

To have faculty realize that becoming a better teacher is a process that continues throughout a career.

Review of all aspects of a course, including the objectives, the syllabus and organization, homework, exams, papers, grading practices, etc., in order to fully understand the nature and goals of the course and the student-learning outcomes.

Classroom visits or joint viewing of videotapes of the class, but on more than one occasion.

Discussion of all aspects of the course.

Mentoring and evaluation of teaching needs to be done on a regular and continuing basis in the pre-tenure years.

Minimally, helpful mentoring needs start upon the arrival of a new faculty member. One way to do this might be for a department to establish a small committee (2-3) of willing faculty members to help and support the new faculty member. Mentoring needs to be a continuing and informal process whereby a non-tenured faculty member does not feel threatened to ask questions of and have an open dialogue with senior faculty members or review with them all aspects of the course including the student evaluations. Mentoring committees might also include other non-tenured faculty members as well as senior faculty and faculty from outside the department. A lot can be learned from the mutual exchange of ideas at all levels. Some departments essentially establish a "buddy" system that seems to work quite well.

Minimally, formal review and evaluation of teaching for pre-tenured faculty members needs to be done on a regular basis, at least every two years. This should also be done by a small committee of faculty with written feedback to the Chair (and Dean) and the faculty member. The evaluation committee needs to review all aspects of teaching by the pre-tenure faculty member, not just do a one-time "pop-in" visit in each of the classes. Reviewed faculty members should be given the opportunity to respond to the written feedback before the report is submitted to the Dean. The written reviews should become part of the materials submitted by a department at the time of promotion proceedings, along with a thorough review and summary statement on the candidate's teaching at the time the applicant is put forward for tenure. Student input should be sought, at the very least, during this last pre-tenure review.

Junior faculty members need to be made more aware of the teaching resource help and support available at BC outside of their own department. (Currently aside from technology, this support is often not well advertised to faculty and Chairs.)

Ideally, junior faculty members should be encouraged to attend classes by senior peers in their own department. Chairs might also arrange for them to teach a joint course with senior faculty, if possible. They should also be encouraged to attend classes of some of BC's acknowledged best teachers (see below), even outside their own department.

The UCT recognizes that formal post-tenure review and evaluation of teaching is likely a sensitive issue in many, if not most, departments except at the time of promotion to full professor. However, tenured faculty need to be continually encouraged to think about ways to improve their teaching and to recognize that becoming a better teacher is a life-long learning experience.

There are many models for post-tenure teaching enhancement, but at a minimum senior faculty need to be given incentives to improve their teaching and positive feedback when they take steps to do this.

At a minimum it needs to be made clear to senior faculty that excellence in teaching is important, is a criterion for promotion to full professor and is considered in yearly increment decisions. As an important corollary, Deans and Chairs need to actually make teaching a significant consideration in promotion and increment evaluations and make this known to faculty. Too many faculty feel, many perhaps correctly, that they are evaluated only on their research as long as their teaching is "acceptable."

Promotion documents for full professorship need to include a formal written peer review of a candidate's teaching as part of the departmental submission. Ideally, all tenured faculty should have their teaching formally reviewed and evaluated by their peers in a fashion similar to that of the non-tenured faculty (as above) on a regular 3 or 4-year basis. The UCT realizes that this may be challenging to carry out in some smaller departments, but believes that it can be instituted if proper guidelines are developed and implemented in the University.

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Establish a "Master Teachers" at BC program whereby some of our noted teachers, perhaps nominated by their Deans or students, would be willing to have other faculty visit their classes and discuss aspects of teaching with them.

Support a lecture series/discussion by some of our "Master Teachers" and/or outside experts on teaching in various disciplines or in different course styles. Perhaps these could be followed by informal panel discussions and question and answer sessions. More discussion of teaching should be promoted at BC.

Have Deans mandate that all departments hold one-day sessions at the end of each academic year to discuss teaching in the department and reevaluate academic programs in light of an assessment of student-learning outcomes. Reinvigorate the Dover conferences on teaching. Perhaps use this facility to focus on departments rather than trying to hold sessions with faculty from across the University. For instance, host one-day departmental teaching "retreats" supported by the Administration.

Have distinguished awards for teaching within the University.

Use the faculty annual review forms to promote thinking about teaching. Add questions that will make each faculty member reflect on what they do in the classroom, how their teaching might be improved and the importance of good teaching. Such questions on the annual review form would help to promote the idea that good teaching is also important in increment and promotion decisions.