

Committee for Faculty Excellence Annual Report 2015-2016

Committee for Faculty Excellence activities in FY 2015-2016 had four foci. First, we reviewed 115 Teaching and Productive Scholarships (TAPS) grant requests from over 90 different faculty members. Second, the committee reviewed and ranked three sabbatical proposals in fall 2015. Third, we reviewed 11 portfolios from candidates for the first Annual Award for Excellence in Service. Finally, we also reviewed four portfolios for the Annual Award for Faculty Excellence Scholarly and/or Creative Pursuits.

1. **TAPS AWARDS.** Our original TAPS budget was \$125,000 but in the face of rising demand in early spring we requested and received a one-time budget increase of \$25,000 from the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Working with this increased budget, the committee was able to make a total of 112 TAPS grant awards in FY 2015-2016, totalling \$144,328.22. This is an average award of \$1,289, with approximately \$114,000 awarded to support domestic travel (including Canada), \$28,000 to support international travel, and approximately \$1,600 awarded for equipment and other research support. The vast majority of the awards were to support conference paper presentations and/or combined research and service/teaching activities). 14 supported significant service activities and four funded teaching-development activities.

The SharePoint-based electronic application process that the committee adopted in 2014-2015 has continued to evolve and develop into an efficient process that networks administrative assistants, administrators, and committee members. TAPS applications are accepted with rolling deadlines and on average are processed within 7-10 days during the regular semester and within two weeks over breaks.

The rising demand for TAPS awards – reflecting a trend that has developed over the last several years – demonstrates the critical importance of TAPS support for faculty, especially as departmental travel funds continue to decline. TAPS has emerged as the single most important source of faculty development funding on campus. Given this importance, we are very pleased to note the SVCAA's highly proactive role in supporting the committee and the recent allocation of \$157,000 (a record sum) to support TAPS awards for FY 2016-2107.

For FY 2016-2017, the eligible amount for domestic grants will remain \$1750. Faculty who are travelling internationally are eligible to apply for a total of \$2000 to support their work.

2. **SABBATICAL PROPOSALS.** We reviewed received, reviewed and ranked three sabbatical proposals for FY 2015-2016. All of these were approved and funded by the office of the SVCAA.

3. SERVICE AWARD. In fall 2015 the committee also reviewed eleven portfolios from candidates for the first Annual Award for Excellence in Service and selected Dr. Tina Herzberg for the honor and the \$1000 award.
4. SCHOLARSHIP/CREATIVE ACTIVITIES AWARD. In spring 2016 we reviewed four portfolios for the Annual Award for Faculty Excellence Scholarly and/or Creative Pursuits. The committee selected Dr. Vince Connors as the award winner and he received a \$1000 prize.

Committee members in 2015-2016 included Stephen Bismarck, Jack Cheng, David Damrel (chair), Tammy Gilliam, Celena Kusch, Camille McCutcheon, Lynn McMillan, Calvin Odhiambo, Anselm Omoike, Susan Richardson, Amanda Schwartz and Rachel Snow. Due to the difficulties of convening a 12-member group, the committee has developed a practice that combines face-to-face meetings with electronic participation and consultation through SharePoint and BlackBoard.

Service on this committee ensures that significant faculty development activities and faculty accomplishments are rewarded and supported. The twelve-month work of this year's unit representatives demonstrates commendable service to supporting faculty development and faculty excellence in teaching, research, and service at USC Upstate. It should also be noted that the work of this committee has depended heavily on the professionalism and efficiency of the SVCAA's office and administrative assistants across the university.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. David Damrel
Chair, Committee for Faculty Excellence