

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

To: Dr. Peter Heath, Provost

From: Saouma BouJaoude and Amal BouZeineddine, Coordinators

Teaching Excellence Activities

Subject: Activity report for the academic year 2002/2003

Date: Monday, June 2, 2003

Dear Provost Heath,

We conducted seven major activities during the academic year 2002/2003. These included developing two manuals and organizing five seminars. In addition, we gave a presentation to the Board of Deans on advising; developed, with Dr. Murad Jurdak, Chair of the Department of Education, a special resource for designing syllabi to be used by faculty members in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences; and developed a proposal for a teaching excellence center at AUB (Appendix I). Table 1 presents the activities conducted during the academic year 2002/2003, along with the dates of each activity and the number of sessions for multi-session seminars. Table 2 presents the number of participants in the seminars by faculty as well as the total number of participants in all the seminars.

Table 1. Activities conducted during the academic year 2002/2003

| Activity | Date | # of Sessions |
|---|--|----------------------|
| 1. Advising guide | August 2003 | Not applicable |
| 2. Syllabus guide | October 2003 | Not applicable |
| 3. New faculty seminar | October 2003 | 1 |
| 4. Advising seminar | October 18, 2003 | 1 |
| | October 19, 2003 | 2 |
| 5. Seminar on developing a teaching portfolio | November 30, 2002, December 13, 2002, January 10, 2003 | 3 |
| 6. Seminar on developing | April 12, 2003, May 9, 2003 | 2 |

| | | |
|--|-------------------------|---|
| program and course learning outcomes | | |
| 7. Faculty seminar on learning and teaching excellence | March 12 – May 14, 2003 | 8 |

Table 2. Number of participants in the seminars by faculty^[1]

| Seminar title | Faculty | | | | | | Total # | |
|---|---------|-----|------|-----|----|----|---------|--|
| | FAS | FHS | FAFS | FEA | FM | BS | | |
| 1. Faculty seminar on learning and teaching excellence | 6 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | - | 20 | |
| 2. Advising seminar | 28 | 9 | 12 | 11 | 12 | 4 | 76 | |
| 3. Seminar on developing a teaching portfolio | 33 | 14 | 6 | 14 | 11 | 4 | 82 | |
| 4. Seminar on developing program and course learning outcomes | 30 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 14 | 3 | 59 | |
| Overall totals | 97 | 30 | 25 | 33 | 41 | 11 | 237 | |

Evaluation Summary

Participants were asked to evaluate each of the seminars. Below is a summary of these evaluations. Detailed evaluation reports are available on file.

| Seminar Title | Participants' Summary Evaluation |
|---|---|
| Academic Advising | Although such seminar is highly needed, content and issues should have related more closely to AUB needs |
| Seminar on Developing a Teaching Portfolio | There is wealth of helpful material; seminar caters to Faculty needs especially in terms of promotion files. Presenters did an outstanding job. |
| Developing Program and Course Learning Outcomes | Based on first Seminar feedback, the second had more application and better balance of discussion time. Content and application helped in seeing the relevance of General Instructional Goals (GIS) and Specific Learning Outcomes (SLO) especially in teaching and syllabus development. A seminar on assessment of GIS and SLO is needed. |
| Faculty Seminar on Teaching and Learning Excellence | There was clear collegial interaction among participants. The Seminar was an eye opener and of importance to upgrade teaching/learning practices. Adding an optional session for in-depth/follow up on teaching methods is needed. Web-CT and/or technology in teaching methods could be employed. |

There was no formal evaluation of the academic advising guide, the syllabus guide, and the resource for designing syllabi. Below is a summary evaluation of these three activities:

1. **Academic Advising Guide:** New components were added to last year's Academic Advising Guide: Recommended Statement of Values, Advisor's Role, Student's Role, academic advising websites, interest inventories, petition forms, other forms and index. **Summary Evaluation:** Feedback has been positive on the Guide's comprehensiveness ease of use.
2. **Syllabus Guide:** The purpose for the Guide was to help colleagues develop syllabi in a consistent manner. The guide comprised the following components: course syllabus, preparing a course syllabus, designing a course and samples of syllabi from AUB and universities in the States. The guide was posted on AUB website for all to use.
3. **Resource for Designing Syllabi:** On volunteer basis, we designed guidelines, chart and form for developing a course syllabus that was used as a resource for all faculty members in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

Recommendations

1. Based on organizing, implementing and participating in the teaching excellence activities for the past two academic years, it has become evident for us that there is a need among faculty for the Seminars offered. Evaluation and enrollment in these seminars have shown that these activities are relevant to faculty needs. As such, a structured entity to host these activities has become more of a necessity than a wish. Consequently, we recommend establishing a teaching / learning excellence center to provide a structured context for planned activities. Should such a teaching/learning center be established, the range of activities can include conducting faculty development needs assessments, encouraging scholarship on teaching and learning, reaching out to similar centers abroad, in addition to already offered activities (See Appendix I for a proposal to establish a teaching learning center at AUB).
2. The Faculty Seminar on Learning and Teaching Excellence should have follow up sessions that would give participants a forum for discussing issues related to their implementation of topics presented in the Seminar. From our experience in the past two years, this has been a much-needed, yet lacking, component of the Seminar.

We further recommend the following:

3. Repeat the seminars given during the academic year 2002/2003 and conduct seminars on other topics such as: Problem based learning, assessment of student learning, mentoring, among others.
4. Continue seeking AUB faculty to facilitate the seminars.
5. Inform students about seminars that deal with issues related to them (e.g. Academic Advising seminar).
6. Provide administrative support for the coordinators to complete an AUB website on teaching/ learning excellence.
7. Provide access to equipment needed for the seminars (such as a computer and an LCD projector)

Appendix I

Proposal for Establishing a Center for Teaching and Learning at AUB

Prepared by

Dr. Saouma BouJaoude and Dr. Amal BouZeineddine

Purpose, Mission, Goals, Policies, and Structure

Purpose

The purpose of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at the American University of Beirut is to provide faculty members with a setting in which they have the opportunity to exchange expertise in an atmosphere of collegiality.

Mission

CTL is a multipurpose interdisciplinary unit committed to the enhancement of student learning and teaching excellence. CTL's mission is to:

1. Serve the entire academic University community;
2. Facilitate the advancement of teaching by focusing on general and specific; pedagogical approaches;
3. Promote reflective practice;
4. Provide support for individual faculty members;
5. Advance sharing views, experiences, research and practice of pedagogy;
6. Promote scholarship on teaching and learning at the college level.

Goals

Goal 1: Provide opportunities for faculty members to share teaching experiences, develop insights about teaching excellence, and conduct research on teaching and learning at the college level.

Goal 2: Provide resources to help enhance the teaching quality of all faculty members.

Goal 3: Cultivate and support a teaching community in which teaching excellence is acknowledged and valued as creative intellectual work.

Goal 4: Coordinate teaching resources that exist in various academic units at the University.

Policies

CTL policies are first and foremost consistent with the Mission of AUB. Participation in CTL programs and initiatives is voluntary. CTL activities are based on collaboration, shared responsibility, and responsiveness to the needs of faculty member.

Structure

1. An independent unit under the Office of the Provost
2. Overseen by its own advisory board from the various University faculties and schools
3. Directed and coordinated by AUB Faculty members
4. Has its own budget and support staff (secretary, graduate assistant, IT specialist, ...)
5. Housed in an independent office with appropriate equipment

^[1] Facilitators were selected from all Faculties and Schools

^[2] In addition to faculty members, the associate Provost, the registrar, a representative of student affairs, and 2 students attended at least one of the advising seminars.