

**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT**

*Center for Teaching and Learning*

**Activities Annual Report**

**2004/2005**

During the academic year 2004/2005, ten activities were implemented. These included updating the Academic Advising Guide, participating in the New Faculty Seminar, and organizing six seminars, one forum and a 2-year plan on developing program and course learning outcomes. Table 1 presents the activities conducted during the academic year 2004/2005, along with the dates of each activity; where applicable, Table 2 presents the number of participants in the seminars by faculty as well as the total number of participants in all the seminars. For more details on each activity and the participants' evaluation of the activity, kindly refer to the CTL website at <http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webteach/>

**Table 1: Activities conducted during the academic year 2004/2005**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Date</b>
1. Academic Advising Guide *	September 2005
2. New faculty Seminar	Sept. 21, 2005 and Sept 24, 2004
3. Seminar on Developing Course Learning Outcomes	December 3, 2004
4. Seminar on Assessment at Course and Program Levels	December 17, 2004
5. Seminar on Academic Advising	Friday, January 14, 2005
6. Seminar on Developing a Teaching Portfolio	February 25, 2005
7. Faculty Seminar on Learning and Teaching Excellence	March 10 through April 19, 2005 ( <i>Thursdays for 2 hours except last session on Tuesday</i> )
8. Forum on Faculty Mentoring	Friday, March 18, 2005
9. Summer Seminar on Creative Use of Resources in Course Design**	June 20 '05 through July 28, '05
10. Program and Course Learning Outcomes: 2- year Plan***	August and September 2005

\* **Academic Advising.** The Academic Advising Guide is being currently updated and will be posted on the CTL Website in due time. In addition, Dr. Theodore Christidis with support from the Office of the Provost attended a seminar on academic advising at NACADA Summer Institute in St. Paul, USA. Dr. Christidis will be invited to share his experience with AUB academic advisors at a later time. The Center was also consulted on, and contributed experience to, an academic advising task which has recently been formed. Dr. Christidis' report can be viewed at the following address

[http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webteach/nacada\\_summer\\_institute\\_trip.htm](http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webteach/nacada_summer_institute_trip.htm)

\*\***Summer Seminar on Creative Use of Resources in Course Design.** June 22<sup>nd</sup>, of summer 2004 marks the launching of a 6-week seminar designed for AUB faculty and funded by the Mellon Foundation. The Seminar, titled *Summer Seminar on Creative Use of Resources in Course Design*, incorporated three components: Course Syllabus Design, Information Literacy, and the use of Web CT in course design. The goal of the Seminar was to assist, support and encourage participants to resourcefully use methods of instruction as means for enhancing teaching and learning practices. The Seminar advocated integration of the three components in the design and implementation of the participants' courses and demonstrated how the integration can be manifested using WebCT. Group sessions and individual consultations were an integral part of the design to ensure proper application of Seminar content. There were 10 participants from the various Faculties at AUB, **3** from FAS; **2** from FEA; **2** from FAFS; **2** from FHS; and **1** from FM. A follow up meeting was held with the ten participants on January 5, 2005 to discuss and share experiences on how they implemented the Seminar components in their courses. For more details, please refer to the following website <http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webteach/act-mellon-evaluation-2004.htm>

Based on oral and written evaluations at the closure of the Seminar on July 29, '04, and the follow up session, the second Seminar was redesigned then **offered in the summer of 2005**, also funded by the Mellon Foundation, under the same title, with delineated learning outcomes for each component, and accommodating 14 participants this time, **6** from FAS; **6** FAFS; **1** FHS; and **1** from School of Nursing. The Seminar extended from June 20<sup>th</sup>, '05 to July 28<sup>th</sup>, '05. For more details on seminar content, learning outcomes and evaluation, kindly refer to [http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webteach/mellon\\_summer\\_seminar\\_learning\\_outcome.htm](http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webteach/mellon_summer_seminar_learning_outcome.htm)

### \*\*\***Program and Course Learning Outcomes: 2- year Plan**

Knowing the importance of developing and assessing learning outcomes at the program and course levels, CTL is in the process of preparing a 2-year plan for developing and assessing learning outcomes at the program and course levels.

The purpose of this plan is to provide AUB community at large with resources, seminars, individual consultations on how to develop and assess program and course learning outcomes. The plan takes into consideration where Faculties and Schools are in their process of developing program and course learning outcomes and thus caters to their needs rather than just offer seminars that may fit all but not necessarily the specific program needs. In order to achieve this objective, a committee of eight members has been formed; the members are: Thuraya Arayssi, FM; Saouma BouJaoudeh, FAS; Amal BouZeineddine, FAS + CTL; Nisreen Ghaddar, FEA; Marjorie Henningsen, FAS; Murad Jurdak, FAS; Fadl Moukalled, FEA; Waddah Nasr ( as an observer and in his capacity of Interim Director of the CTL). The Committee is charged with

- writing a concept paper which argues for developing and assessing program and course learning outcomes;
- preparing a 2-year plan for developing and assessing program and course learning outcomes;
- producing two resource handbooks: one on developing program learning outcomes, the other, on developing course learning outcomes.

In order to meet the tasks efficiently and within the set deadline (end of October, 2005), the Committee is divided into two sub-committees who are expected to coordinate and share their work on regular basis. The first subcommittee is charged with writing the concept paper and preparing the two – year plan; this subcommittee is composed of Dr. BouJaoude, Dr. Ghaddar, Dr. Jurdak, and Dr. Henningsen. The second sub-committee is charged with developing the two handbooks; this subcommittee is composed of Dr. Arayssi, Dr. BouZeineddine; Dr. Henningsen and Dr. Mukallid.

Faculty deans, program directors, department chairs and faculty members will be involved in this plan as the decision makers and primary beneficiaries of promoting learning excellence at AUB. It is hoped that this venue will reflect favorably on the performance of students at AUB. Tasks assigned for both sub-committees are research-based as well as AUB context specific.

**Table 2: Number of participants in activities by faculty for the academic year 2004/2005**

Title of activity	Faculty							Total
	FAFS	FAS	FEA	FHS	FM	OSB	SN	
All activities were seminars except #6								
1. Academic Advising	2	5	3	8	0	6	0	24
2. Developing a Teaching Portfolio	4	6	3	1	5	4	3	26
3. Seminar on Developing Course Learning Outcomes	1	8	1	2	2	1	1	16

4. Seminar on Assessment at Course and Program Levels	1	9	2	4	2	2	1	<b>21</b>
5. Faculty Seminar on Learning and Teaching Excellence	1	10	2	0	0	0	2	<b>15</b>
6. Forum on Faculty Mentoring	<b>Estimated 20 faculty members attended</b>							
7. Summer Seminar on Creative Use of Resources in Course Design	6	7	0	1	0	0	1	<b>15</b>
<b>Overall totals*</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>117</b>

\*Some participants took part in more than one activity

### **Recommendations**

Based on the CTL activities for the academic year 2004/2005, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Physical Location.** There is a serious need to assign a physical location for the *Center for Teaching and Learning*. This recommendation comes from the belief that the role of the Center should not be limited to offering seminars but should also include private consultation sessions for faculty members as the need arises; hosting follow up sessions, holding CTL meetings, offering seminars and forums and providing a place for publications, references, videos, CD's etc. designed to promote scholarship in teaching and learning excellence.
2. **Forum/Seminar Recommendations.** CTL should review and assess recommendations that ensue from seminars and forums especially if they affect the University at large and refer these recommendations to the appropriate academic or administrative units. This is pertinent particularly to the recommendations that came out of the *Seminar on Academic Advising* and the *Forum on Faculty Mentoring*. Kindly check the website (<http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webteach/>) for these two activities.
3. **Follow up Sessions.** Teaching excellence activities become more relevant and meaningful if follow up sessions are offered as part of the seminar design. Meeting with faculty members after implementation of teaching and learning techniques, methods, and approaches and should be useful to all concerned whether participants or facilitators assess the effectiveness of implementing activities suggested in the seminars and forums. These follow up sessions can be designed in the form of focus groups, questionnaires, interviews etc.
4. **Faculty Seminar on Teaching and Learning Excellence.** 2004/2005 marks the 5<sup>th</sup> year this Seminar has been offered. Based on past experience, it is recommended that more focus be placed on methodology of teaching and assessment/grading students' performance. As such, it is recommended that

the plan for implementing the Seminar for the coming academic year be modified to incorporate 4-hour seminars focusing strictly on methods of teaching such as: handling large classes, interactive lecturing, discussions / cooperative learning, and problem based learning; in addition, a seminar on assessment of learning outcomes/grading should be offered as well. The 20 participants who sign up for the seminar will be expected to commit to the 4-hour seminars during the spring semester.

5. **Proposed Seminars.** In addition to already offered seminars which have met the needs of the faculty (such as developing a teaching Portfolio, Academic Advising, Developing and Assessing Learning Outcomes, Faculty Seminar on Teaching and Learning Excellence (*see item 4 above*)) new seminars should be offered such as: Forum on Instructor Course Evaluation (ICE), a Seminar on Faculty Mentoring, Forum on Promotion Criteria and Teaching Excellence, Scholarship in Teaching and Learning Excellence, Academic Integrity etc.
6. **Attendance Policy.** CTL should develop a policy about seminar attendance. Some faculty members sign up for seminars, reserve their place in the seminars and on due date fail to show up. This disrupts the facilitator's design of the seminar content and activities, using up slots that may have been filled up by other faculty members and sometimes costs the Center undue expenses.
7. **Student Involvement.** It is important to invite AUB students (*USFC / SRC /students recommended by faculty*) to seminars which may have direct bearing upon their experience at AUB such as Academic Advising, ICE, Grading/Assessment / Academic Integrity etc.
8. **Seminar/Forum Facilitators.** The past five years have shown that inviting AUB faculty to facilitate the seminars has been quite effective. The recommendation here is to continue to seek AUB faculty to facilitate the seminars. *However*, The availability of high quality AUB resource persons should not lead to a policy of excluding the use of external experts and consultants whenever the need arises.
9. **Needs Assessment.** When properly staffed, CTL should develop a needs assessment plan which explores the needs of AUB faculty with respect to their professional development. Based on this kind of assessment, CTL would offer either consultation sessions, seminars or recommend seminars abroad to interested faculty.
10. **Centers Abroad.** CTL activities would be greatly enriched if the Center communicates with teaching excellence centers abroad by actually visiting such centers and/or inviting center directors from abroad to share their experiences with CTL staff and interested faculty. This would enhance and refine the Center's vision and activities.
11. **Scholarship Subscriptions.** CTL should subscribe to teaching excellence journals and purchase publications, videos and CD's in the area of teaching and learning. Having a rich library, the Center will become a reference point to scholarship in teaching and learning excellence.

### **Evaluation of Seminars and Forum**

The full evaluation and /or notes for each Seminar and Forum are available on the Teaching Excellence Website which is available online (<http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webteach/>). The Seminars and Forum were favorably received by participants. There is a need for repeating the seminars on developing a

teaching portfolio, developing learning outcomes, assessment at the program and course levels, and the Faculty Seminar on Teaching and Learning Excellence.