Impediments to Teaching Task Force

At the request of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee a task force was convened to discuss the “impediments to teaching” at UNLV. A general email was delivered calling for all faculty and professional staff who wish to serve on said task force to sign up. Those listed are the first set of volunteers and the notes given here are a summary of their concerns, knowledge, questions, and needs concerning the issue of teaching at UNLV.

It is the hope of the Chair, Kathy Lauckner, that we continue this discussion and conclude this task in the Spring of 07 with the placement of the needs of the campus into three categories:

I. Needs that can be addressed through communication.
II. Needs that can be addressed with the help of the administration/ existing budgets.
III. Needs that can be addressed with additional funding.

Meeting One: 11/29/06
In attendance:
- Kathy Lauckner, Faculty Senate Rep
- John Farley, Physics
- Salley Sawyer, TLC
- Terry Meithe, Criminal Justice
- John Bare, Biology
- Alan Personius, Kendall Hartley, A.J. Robinson, Darrell Lutey - OIT
- Bob Aalberts, Business
- Carrol Steedman, Education Outreach
- Tessie Rose, Special Education
- Chris Stream, Psychology

Meeting Two: 12/1/06
A duplicate meeting was held to accommodate those who could not make the 11/29 session.
In Attendance:
- Margaret Louis, Nursing
- Helene Jackson, Social Work

Topics of Discussion:

I. MONEY:
   i. Amount of money given to departments for teaching materials is inadequate; the budget is exhausted after the first semester.
   
   ii. Why spend $ 40,000 per “smart room,” when in most cases a $ 3000 laptop and projector are all that is needed.
   
   iii. We need a regular funding stream for classroom upgrades; build outs, etc. We can not function properly with the “wait until the end of the year monies are allocated” routine.
II. CLASSROOMS:

i. Not having the proper classroom space.
   • need more “smart rooms”
   • need more computer laboratories

ii. Classroom preference survey seems to have been ignored.
   a) need classrooms that are appropriate for the subject
      • Chemistry in CBC is unsafe
      • Physics – assigned rooms are irrational for prep and materials needed to conduct the class
      • Lectures – need more large rooms
   b) There is no need for faculty to walk all the way across campus for their next class. It is OK to hold class within the building where you have an office or close to your department.

iii. Classrooms have structural obstruction such as
      • columns between student and teacher
      • screens in the way of writing space
      • chairs that do not move

iv. Classrooms in need of repairs
      • broken blinds
      • broken equipment; elmos; overheads
      • dangerous flooring
      • ac/heat not in the control of the instructor
      • some ADA access to classrooms is not OK…
      • Classroom Building Complex & Dining Commons air intakes are faulty; exhaust is sucked in to CBC - C Building - the grease fumes are overwhelming
      • Classroom walls are too thin, especially in the newer buildings, and the noise interferes with teaching.

v. Need “ownership” to classroom space. It is OK for departments to own a lecture hall; laboratories, etc.

vi. We need a Testing Center; the trend is to use classroom for teaching/ labs and students find additional time to take a computerized test.

III. TECHNOLOGY:

i. Some teachers use none; teaching issue; class culture; if appropriate fine.

ii. inadequate

iii. departments poorly funded

iv. $40,000 for a smart room vs. $3000 for a laptop and projector for each new faculty

v. WATCH OUT for the “clicker” technology. Presently there are 117 different clickers and students can actually buy a different clicker for each subject. That would be an undue burden.

vi. “tech carts” are inefficient; block the view of students and are too noisy. Delivery for evening classes is still an issue.
vii. WEB CAMPUS is a “beta” product at best and has many flaws.
   • emails to not forward or forward to every student revealing private information to the other students.
   • building mechanism within the program fails
   • chats can not be distributed to more than one person when the instructor wants to give the same response to all the students.
   • Web campus did not have enough of a pilot test – faculty was not consulted –
   • Faculty wish to test new open market products.

What is needed:
   a. Better communication is absolutely necessary when the transfer of information or innovations are being discussed. For example; web campus, clicker technology, new smart rooms, new tech in the smart rooms – what is it; how does it work?
   b. OIT service 7a.m. until 10p.m. whenever classes are in session.
   c. A reliable campus web system for online homework and testing.
   d. More staffing for OIT. Expertise and individual care provided to the departments.
   e. Do we need a “Turn it in. com system?” Plagiarism is rampant. Will this help?
   f. Each smart room needs a common platform.
   g. Finish the wireless accessibility for the whole campus.
   h. 1500 – 2000 computer are in a 4 year replacement cycle.

IV. TEACHING:

   i. Need more respect for the profession. Although faculty are evaluated on research, teaching, and service, those who teach are treated like second-hand citizens. There should be merit for innovation. Research is necessary but not at the expense of teaching. We need more teaching awards/ highlights/ recognition.
   ii. All, tenured as well as part time, must prove scholarly activity as part of their application.
   iii. TLC needs a “menu” of classes for new teachers. It must be mandatory for those who need help to go to class.
   iv. There seems to be interdepartmental barriers to co-teaching across departments. FTE’s / department listing.
   v. LINKS- the Links Program, which is a co- teaching program has issues with its all “hands-on” registration.
   vi. Teaching budgets are inadequate for copies; pens; hand-outs; books, etc.
   vii. 30% student base are millennium scholars yet 60% are remedial students. Writing skills have deteriorated considerably.
   ix. Some departments are “stuck” with a Chairs attitude or a Dean in transit.
   x. No support for research in new classes
   xi. Need better scheduling methods --- stop the “vendetta” attitudes.
   xii. Scheduling for part time instructors is placed before full time faculty.
   xiii. College advisors are not up to speed with department policy. Some students are getting the wrong information.
xiv. Student evaluations for new faculty reduce the rigor and increase grade inflation.

*What we need:*
- Need a task force with “teeth.”
- Organizational norms need to filter down.
- A program review is needed.
- Teaching with benefits.

V. SYSTEM

i. Registrar’s office is in a chronic panic mode.
   - Students are dropped with no reason
   - Students are charged money when not taking classes
   - Fraudulent registrations are made with student’s names and numbers but no
     there is no staff or time to follow up on the case.
   - need for cross-referenced classrooms
   - distance education standardization

ii. Need a new someone to champion the cause for funding.

iii. Need ownership of classroom space.

iv. or We have $7 million in the budget to build out new smart rooms and no staff to do
    it.

v. SIS – be careful not to buy a bad product!!!
   - HR; Student data; Financial – it is understood that each campus will have their
     own system that will in turn be connected to a central system.

*Overall* we need **COMMUNICATION; THEN MONEY!**