

Promoting Faculty Teaching Excellence and Supporting Student Learning in Colleges of Agriculture

Clemson University
College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Life Sciences

Catherine A. DiBenedetto, Ph.D. Assistant Professor
Ted Whitwell, Ph.D. Professor and Associate Dean



Introduction

Most important responsibility of post-secondary institutions:

- To meet the educational needs of a diverse student population.
- Be concerned with increasing academic rigor to stimulate student learning and engagement to continually meet the current industry need.



Specific responsibility of Colleges of Agriculture:

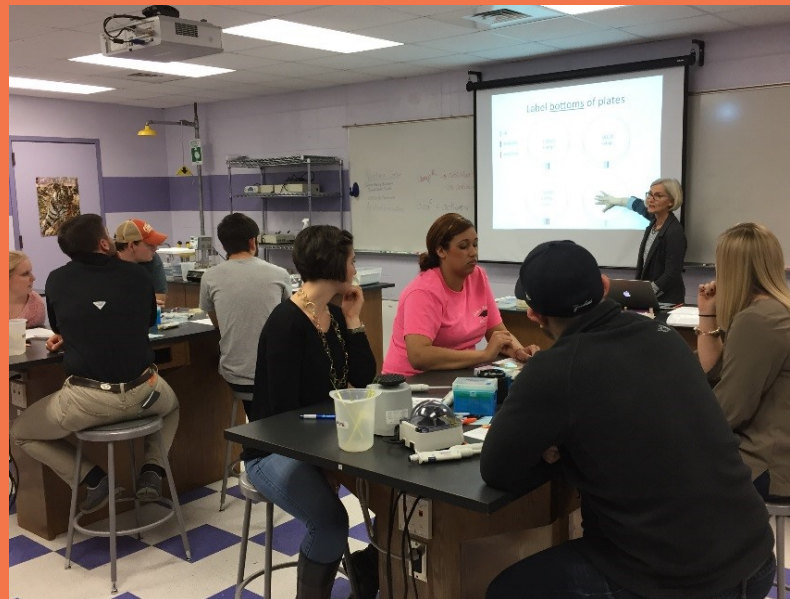
- Escalate teaching within colleges of agriculture to meet the demands of the 21st century workforce.
- Prepare students for a variety of careers in Agriculture and Life Sciences.



Purpose of the Study

To provide resources for professional development, survey post-secondary education associate deans of colleges of agriculture to:

- Explore how teaching excellence has been promoted.
- Determine how student learning has been supported.



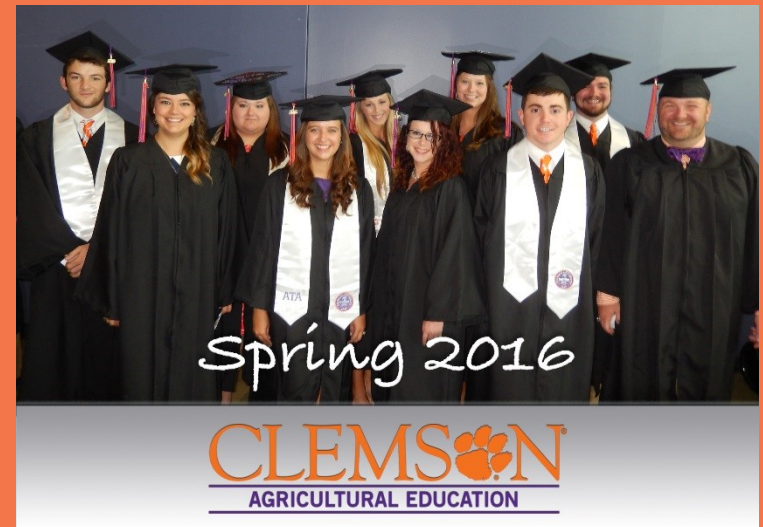


Research Question and Objectives of the Study

How do Colleges of Agriculture promote excellence for teaching faculty and support student learning?

This study sought to:

- Determine the structure and effectiveness of professional development programs used in Colleges of Agriculture throughout the nation to promote teaching excellence.
- Determine how student learning has been supported by professional development programs.





Methodology

Survey Design:

- Instrument developed and reviewed by a panel of experts at the Association of Public Land-grant Universities (APLU).
- Pilot tested instrument with associate deans at Clemson University.

Population of Interest:

- Colleges of Agriculture in the United States
 - Land-grant Universities
 - Non-land-grant Agriculture and Renewable Resources Universities (NARRU)
- Associate Deans contacted to respond to survey
- Population frame contacted and provided by APLU





Demographics:

Associate Deans of Colleges of Agriculture with 18 Average Years of Experience (n = 45)		
	Percentage	Frequency
Male	73%	33
Female	27%	12
Non-Hispanic White	91%	39
Asian or Asian American	5%	2
Black or African American	2%	1
Hispanic or Latino	2%	1

Average # of Faculty in College = 177, Average # of Students in College = 2,335



Essential Question:

Do you believe it is important to promote and provide opportunities for faculty of your college to enhance their teaching and improve student learning?

- Enhancing Teaching Effectiveness
 - 98% responded: Definitely Yes
- Improve Student Learning
 - 100% responded: Definitely Yes



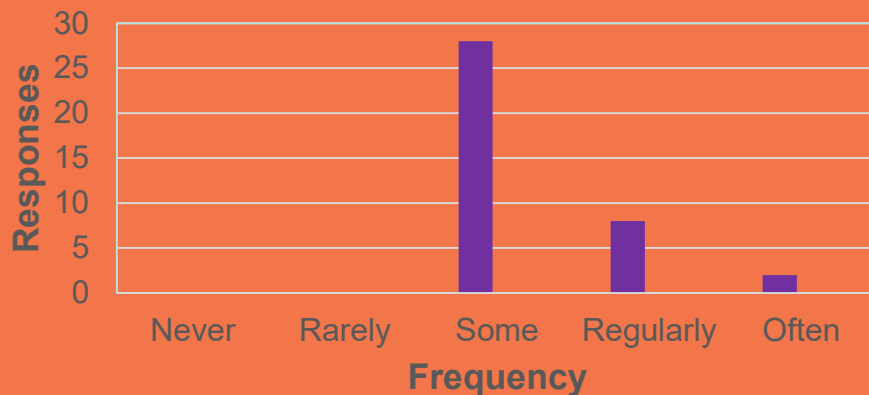


Findings: What are you doing to enhance teaching and learning in your college?

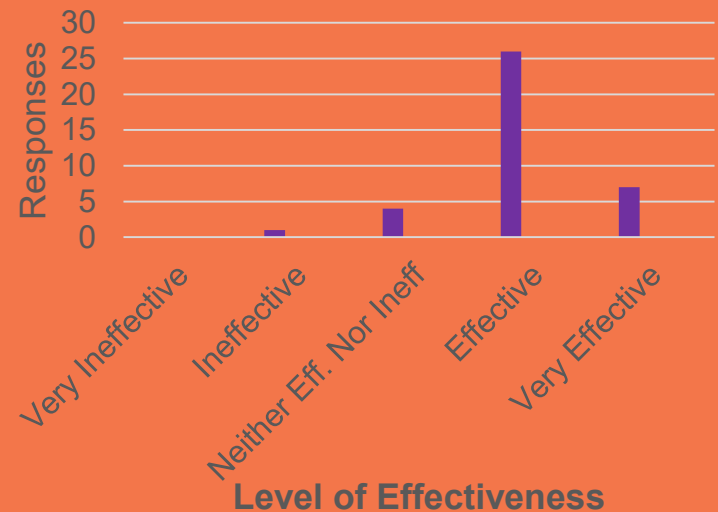
1. Utilizing University Centers for Teaching and Learning/Teaching Academies

- Of the 45 respondents, 84% indicated their University has a Teaching and Learning Center

Do your faculty take advantage of the University T & L Center ?



Effectiveness of University T & L Center





Findings: What are you doing to enhance teaching and learning in your college?

2. Developing College-wide professional development seminars, workshops, teaching enhancement symposiums, teacher's college, brown bag lunch discussions, online training
3. Provide Funding/Support for Conference Attendance to support teaching and learning (especially NACTA)- pay membership dues
4. Grants/Mini-Grants- improvement, innovative projects
5. Peer Teaching/Mentoring and Establishment of a Culture for teaching excellence
6. Curriculum Review



Findings: Teaching Awards or Incentives Provided by your College to Encourage or Reward Teaching Excellence

7. Awards and Recognition which consist of:

- a. Participation at NACTA and USDA award programs
- b. Annual College Teaching Awards with cash stipend*
- c. Certificates for Teaching Excellence
- d. College Outstanding Teacher
- e. College Undergraduate, Graduate Teaching and Advising Awards
- f. Dean's Award on Teaching, Teacher/Advisor of the Year
- g. Distinguished Teaching Award
- h. Innovative Teaching Award
- i. Life Time, Senior, and Early Career Teaching Awards
- j. Golden Apple, RM Wade Teaching Excellence, Shepardson, William-Livdal Teaching, W. S. Overton, Golda Moss Awards

*Stipends ranged from \$0 - \$1,500 one time - \$5,000 added to base salary



Findings: Do Teaching Awards Matter when Making Decisions for Promotion and Tenure?

Question	Not at all important	Very Unimportant	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Very Important	Extremely Important	Total Responses
Importance of Teaching Awards	0	2	15	27	1	45

- 60% of respondents indicated teaching awards are very important for Promotion and Tenure
- 33% of respondents indicated teaching awards are neither important nor unimportant for Promotion and Tenure



Findings: Effectiveness of Teaching Awards and Incentives

Question	Very Ineffective	Ineffective	Neither Effective nor Ineffective	Effective	Very Effective	Total Responses	Mean
Increased Motivation to Teach	0	4	15	24	1	44	3.50
Improved Instructional Effectiveness	0	1	10	28	4	43	3.81
Improved Student Learning	0	1	11	28	4	44	3.80
Success towards Promotion and Tenure	0	3	8	26	7	44	3.84
Success after Promotion and Tenure	0	2	14	23	5	44	3.70
Improved Course Evaluations	0	2	14	24	4	44	3.68

Overall, Associate Deans believe teaching awards are effective in many ways.



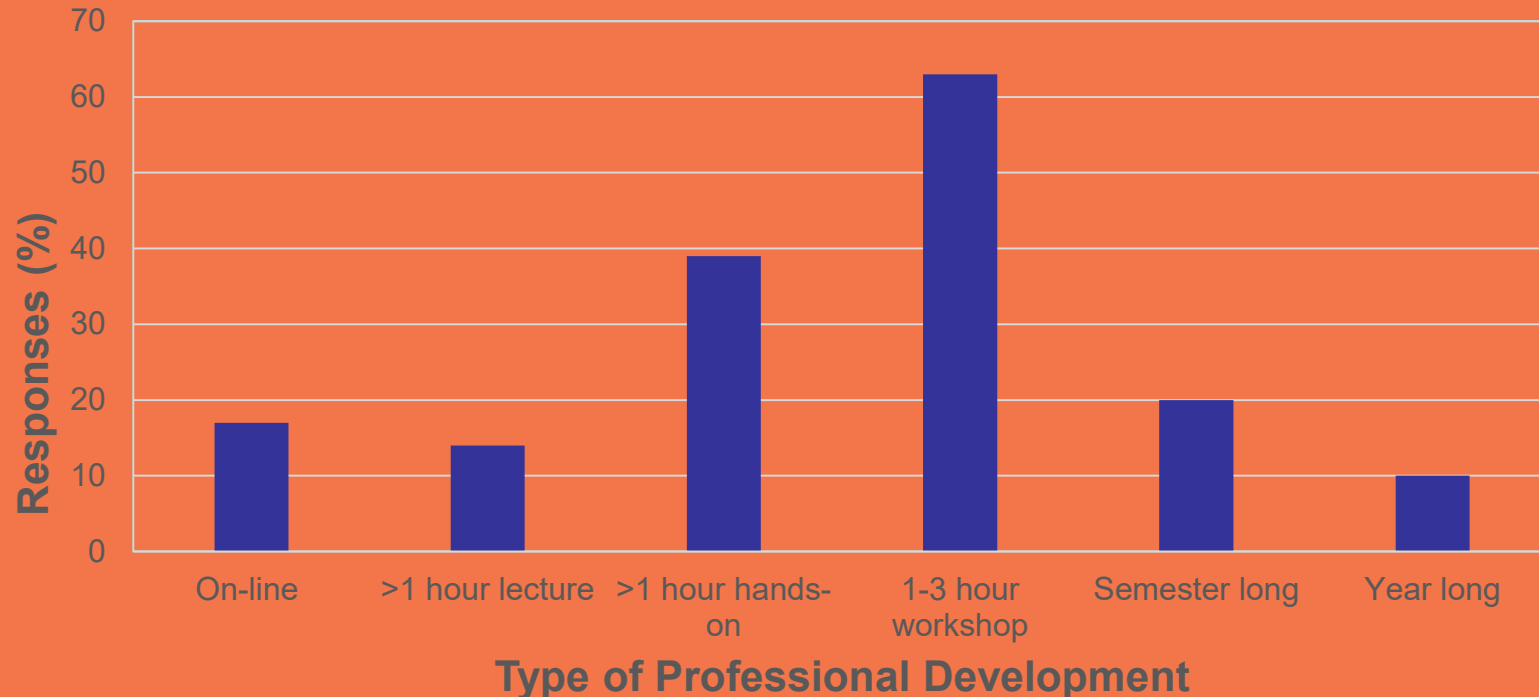
Types of professional development programs offered at the college level to enhance effective teaching and promote student learning.



- **Professional development is done at the University level.**
- **Teaching seminars, workshops, day long retreat, teaching book discussion groups**
- **Helping faculty with day to day teaching issues e.g. syllabi, grade disputes**
- **TA training workshops and preparing future faculty programs**
- **New faculty development and mentoring programs**
- **Faculty learning communities and teaching fellows program for early, mid and senior faculty**
- **Support NACTA membership, conferences and travel to other teaching conferences**
- **87% of the respondents indicated they perceived these programs to be either effective or very effective in promoting teaching excellence and 91% effective or very effective in promoting student learning.**

Professional Development Programs within the College

Presentation Format/Structure



➤ Other types of PD offered:

Teaching Enhancement Symposium (4-5, 75 minute workshops in 3 concurrent sessions), Summer Workshops (3 weeks, 8 hour days, results in development of on-line course), 2-day workshop with ½ day sessions on specific topics), Off campus PD opportunities supported by mini-grants.



How do you encourage faculty participation in the teaching and learning professional development programs your college designs?

Theme 1

Build a culture of expectation for teaching excellence:

- Good reputation and strong faculty leaders help encourage faculty attendance.
- Make teaching excellence a part of the culture and set PD attendance as an expectation for new faculty.
- Encourage Department Chairs to be involved and let Chairs know the faculty from their unit that are participating. (Celebrate Excellence)
- Faculty committee on Teaching plan programs and encourage colleagues to attend.
- Important for annual evaluations and promotion/tenure considerations.

Respondents (59%) indicated moderate participation by faculty in their teaching and learning professional development programs.



How do you encourage faculty participation in the teaching and learning professional development programs your college designs?

Theme 2

Convenience, Flexibility, and Incentives:

- Have annual programs so faculty will plan and anticipate.
- Hold events on multiple days to allow all teaching faculty to attend regardless of teaching schedule.
- Send out many reminders and make them enjoyable, advertise.
- Interactive programs, certificates, free materials, free lunch/food, and door prizes.
- Provide funding: travel and registration funds, financial incentives with stipends, mini-grants, participation at NACTA encouraged.

Potential Barrier:

- Incentives difficult with lack of finances for raises and other support.

Respondents (74%) indicated NO financial rewards are associated with participation in the teaching and learning PD programs in their colleges.



Recommendations:

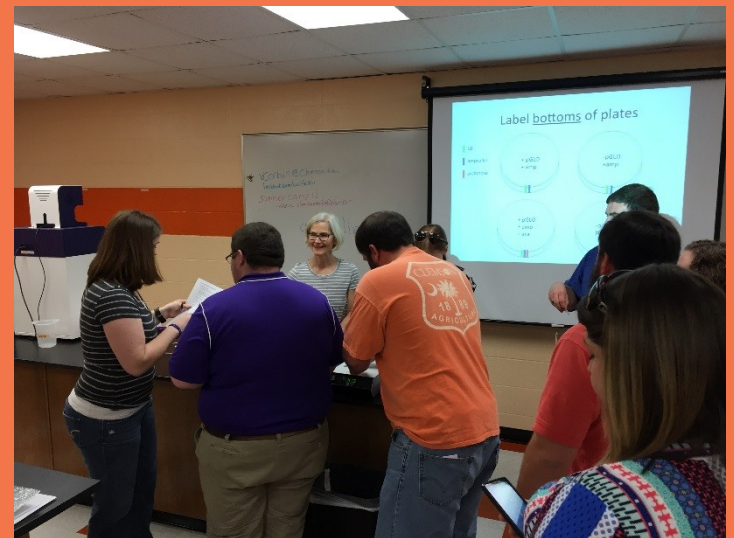
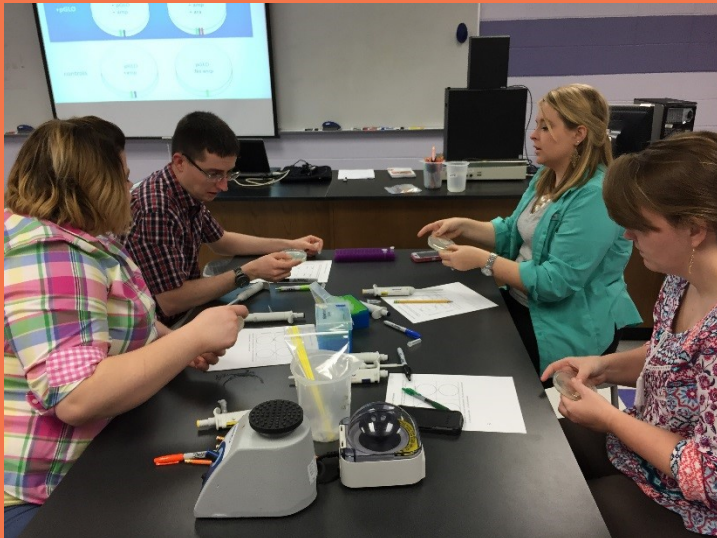
- Excellence in Teaching and Support for Student Learning should be a priority of upper administration.
- Utilize the resources available in your University Teaching and Learning Center and encourage your faculty to attend events.
- Develop an effective teaching and learning program that can promote faculty teaching excellence and support student learning to meet the needs of the faculty in your college.
- Consider resources for providing funding, financial rewards to faculty who participate in PD programs- include support for travel and membership dues to teaching and learning conferences – especially NACTA.





Recommendations:

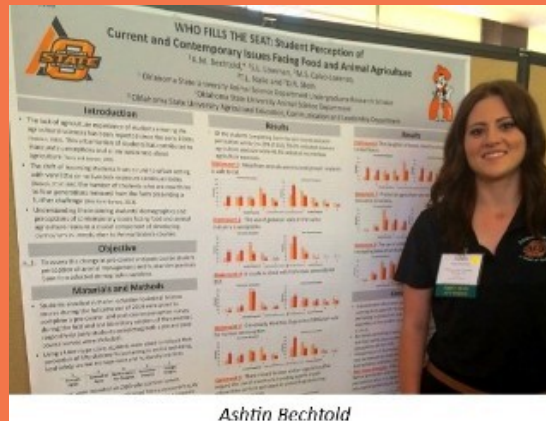
- Create College-wide Grants and Mini-grants that support improvement, innovation, and undergraduate research in teaching and learning.
- Establish a culture within your college that focuses on teaching excellence through mentoring, peer review/evaluations, and emphasize the importance of scholarship towards reaching promotion and tenure.





Recommendations:

Design a system for regularly rewarding and recognizing faculty for their outstanding accomplishments in teaching and learning.



Ashtin Bechtold



Samantha Lowman



Questions?

Thank you!

