

Teaching Excellence Proposal I

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A. To rename the "**GCSU Excellence in Teaching**" award to the "**Excellence in Teaching and Learning**" award and to designate one of the three annual recipients of the award as winner of the "**Distinguished Achievement in Teaching and Learning**," the latter being named as GCSU's nominee for the BOR Teaching Excellence award.

Rationale

There is a mismatch between the BOR criteria for teaching excellence awards and our institution's criteria for the Distinguished Professor award, which makes it difficult for us to send strong portfolios on to Atlanta. To date none of our faculty nominees have ever successfully won a BOR award in the teaching excellence category. Currently GCSU's Distinguished Professor is automatically the institution's nominee for the BOR awards. The chart below succinctly sums up the differences between various awards offered at the local and state-wide levels.

It will be evident that the GCSU Distinguished Professor award emphasizes **research** and **service** in addition to superlative teaching, while the BOR awards focus solely on **teaching excellence**. Consequently, the portfolios of GCSU nominees often reflect emphasis on areas that are not focal points for the BOR awards without adequately addressing BOR criteria. There is a place for an overall award at GCSU to recognize excellence in teaching, research, and service and, consequently, **no changes** are proposed to the criteria for the GCSU Distinguished Professor award. However, we do propose that the winner of this award should no longer automatically be the institution's nominee for the BOR teaching excellence awards. Instead, one of the winners of the **teaching excellence awards** should become the institution's nominee for the BOR award nomination.

Changing the name of the current teaching excellence awards aligns GCSU's awards to BOR and national trends, as outlined below under "criteria." In order to facilitate the nomination process for the BOR award, the selection committee should designate one portfolio among the three teaching awards winners that most closely meets the proposed criteria below or that meets them in the most exemplary way. This nominee should also receive recognition on campus as the winner of the "Distinguished Achievement in Teaching and Learning" award and should become the university's nominee for the BOR award. The title of the university-wide

award also reflects the BOR and national emphasis on learner-centered teaching, as outlined in the section on criteria below. The proposed criteria for the teaching and learning excellence awards are outlined in section B below.

Brief Comparison of GCSU Awards with BOR Awards Structure

Awards	GCSU	BOR
Faculty teaching excellence	3 university-wide awards	One faculty award for each sector (2-year, 4-year, etc.)
Program Excellence award	One annually	One program teaching excellence award for each sector
Distinguished Professor Award <i>(From the faculty handbook: The award committee will look for persuasive evidence that nominees have a record of superlative teaching, research, and service related to the profession while at GC&SU. To be eligible for nomination, a faculty member must be full time tenured faculty at GC&SU with a minimum rank of associate professor and must have completed five years of teaching at GC&SU.)</i>	One annually	None
Scholarship of teaching and learning Award for Faculty	None	One faculty award for each sector
Scholarship of teaching and learning for Programs	None	One program award for each sector
Research award	3 annually	None under faculty development
Service award	Irene Rose award	None under faculty development

B. To align the eligibility criteria, nomination process, and documentation standards with those of the BOR Teaching Excellence awards and standards for teaching excellence that are recognized and promoted by well-respected national organizations.

While nominating one winner of the university teaching excellence awards for the BOR awards successfully shifts the focus of the campus nomination process to teaching to fit the BOR awards structure, a quick comparison of criteria for the awards in the chart below reveals that GCSU's criteria for the current teaching excellence awards do not match those of the BOR. GCSU's criteria need to be revised to be more consistent with those of the BOR and to match state-wide expectations where possible.

Comparison of GCSU, BOR, and Proposed Criteria for the Teaching Excellence Awards

GCSU Teaching Excellence Awards	GCSU Distinguished Professor Award	BOR Criteria for Teaching Excellence Awards	Proposed New Criteria for GCSU Teaching Excellence Awards
The award committee will look for persuasive evidence that nominees have a record of classroom teaching excellence, continued professional development, and contributions to the overall institutional objectives. Nominees must be full time faculty members who have completed three years of full time teaching at GCSU.	The award committee will look for persuasive evidence that nominees have a record of superlative teaching, research, and service related to the profession while at GC&SU. To be eligible for nomination, a faculty member must be full time tenured faculty at GC&SU with a minimum rank of associate professor and must have completed five years of teaching at GC&SU.	The award committee will look for persuasive evidence that nominees have a record of superlative teaching at their campus, including a strong commitment to fostering the academic success of students through classroom instruction and through interaction with students outside of the classroom (e.g., advising, mentoring,	Candidates for this award should demonstrate through persuasive, directly documented evidence that they have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a record of superlative teaching that has enhanced student learning on campus; • a commitment to and record of achieving student success through activities that transcend the classroom, such as advising student organizations related to one's discipline, mentoring students as advisors, directing and/or facilitating service learning projects, facilitating living/learning communities, coordinating special programs, etc.; • developed and implemented on a sustained basis innovative pedagogy that exhibits

		recruiting, etc.).	<p>creative solutions to classroom teaching and learning issues reflected in the scholarly literature;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developed and implemented on a sustained basis teaching methods that reflect current literature, practice, trends, and issues in their discipline and in higher education and that have had a demonstrable impact on student learning; • developed, implemented, and changed classroom practices on the basis of strong and direct evidence that their practices enhance student learning; • engaged in creative and documented assessment practices appropriate to their discipline that go beyond required institutional student evaluations and that have been used to refine teaching methods; • been instrumental in developing special projects and innovative curricula on the school, college, university, state or national level that have had a demonstrable impact on student success; • shared and disseminated their teaching expertise, innovations, and methods for enhancing student learning with others through scholarly presentations and publications.
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Rationale

1. Current mismatch between BOR criteria and GCSU teaching excellence criteria

Note that GCSU's criteria call for evidence that "nominees have a record of classroom teaching excellence, continued professional development, and contributions to the overall institutional objectives." The BOR criteria transcend institutional objectives, make no reference to "professional development," and note that superlative teaching includes "a strong commitment to fostering the **academic success of students** through classroom instruction and through interaction with students outside of the classroom."

2. The need to align GCSU's teaching excellence criteria with current national trends

The BOR criteria for the teaching excellence awards have, for several years, moved away from a teacher-centered, content-driven model towards an emphasis on **outcomes and student learning**. Largely this is due to a national shift towards a more **learner-centered model**, reflected in various initiatives sponsored by The American Association for Higher Education (while it was in existence), The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, The American Association of Colleges and Universities, The Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education, and other influential national organizations. Many research I institutions, such as Georgetown University, Indiana University, and The University of Notre Dame, have transformed their standards for teaching excellence to incorporate an emphasis on student learning. Accreditation agencies are also placing more weight on documented student learning outcomes. An emphasis on the connection between innovative pedagogies and deep student learning is especially relevant to our mission as the public liberal arts university of Georgia, but our current criteria place little emphasis on either of these areas.

A revision of our institutional criteria for teaching excellence to better reflect current practices and issues of concern in the academy would be a positive expression of our commitment to quality teaching and to our mission. We propose some changes to the **criteria for the teaching excellence awards** on campus as outlined in the chart above. Differences between the proposed criteria and the BOR criteria arise from faculty members' experiences who have served on the BOR selection committee. The proposed criteria for the GCSU awards simply state more clearly what the BOR actually looks for in portfolios.

i. to increase the emphasis on documentation of student learning as a measure of teaching effectiveness so as to align required documentation for GCSU Teaching Awards to BOR requirements

The chart outlines differences between BOR required documentation for teaching excellence awards and GCSU documentation.

GCSU Required Documentation for Teaching Excellence Awards	BOR Required Documentation for Teaching Excellence Awards	Proposed Changes
Nomination portfolios for these awards are limited to 20 pages, including any appendices (no smaller than 12 point). Each portfolio must include the following information (electronic submission is encouraged):	Nomination portfolios for these awards are limited to 20 pages, including any appendices (no smaller than 12 point). Each portfolio must include the following information:	Nomination portfolios for this award are limited to 20 one-sided pages, including supporting appendices (no smaller than 12 point). Nominees are encouraged to review the portfolios of past recipients of the BOR teaching excellence awards or to consult with CETL for guidance on appropriate materials to include. Each portfolio must include the following information:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nomination letter. (1-2 pages) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nomination letter from the institution's chief academic officer, noting the highlights of the nomination portfolio. (1-2 pages) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nomination letter from a colleague highlighting noteworthy achievements and explaining how the candidate meets the criteria. (1-2 pages)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A condensed curriculum vitae covering the past 5 years. (2 pages) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A condensed curriculum vitae. (2-3 pages) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A curriculum vitae covering at least five years focusing on and highlighting achievements in teaching and learning, including relevant

		publications, presentations, and teaching awards. (2-3 pages)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A reflective statement about teaching and learning from the nominee. (2 pages) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reflective statement about teaching and learning from the nominee.(2-4 pages) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reflective statement by the candidate about their philosophy of teaching and learning that addresses the award criteria. Candidates should include a description of innovative techniques and ways that these address and solve specific teaching and learning issues. (2-4 pages). Candidates are encouraged to work with CETL volunteers to develop teaching philosophy statements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Two letters of support from colleagues who have observed the nominee teach and are qualified to comment on the nominee's teaching. A GIFT (Group Instructional Feedback Technique) evaluation may be substituted for one letter. Letters should describe how the nominee teaches and why he or she is especially effective in advancing student learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One or two letters of support from colleagues qualified to comment on the nominee's teaching. These letters should describe how the nominee teaches and why he or she is especially effective in advancing student learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One or two other letters from colleagues familiar with the candidate's teaching and how it addresses the above criteria. The letters should especially address the ways the candidate's teaching has contributed to deep student learning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Two letters of support from current and/or past students. At least one letter should be from one of the nominee's current students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One or two letters of support from current and/or past students. At least one letter should be from one of the nominee's current students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two letters of support from past students.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents that provide evidence of the nominee's teaching success in one course (e.g. data showing the success of the nominee's students, teaching techniques, course syllabi, handouts, descriptions of evaluation methods, examinations, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents that provide evidence of the nominee's teaching success (e. g. data showing the success of the nominee's students, course syllabi, handouts, descriptions of evaluation methods, examinations, summaries of recent student evaluations, etc.) Direct documentation of student learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persuasive, directly documented evidence of the impact of one's teaching on student learning. This documentation should represent a wide-array of materials, which might include examples of the following items: description of creative assessment methods and their results with regard to student learning, a list of achievements of past and present students, student performance on standardized national instruments, results of interviews and formative surveys, course materials where these demonstrate innovative approaches or help to elucidate the student learning outcomes achieved, any other relevant direct documentation of student learning that demonstrate the impact of the candidate's teaching on student learning, and a summary of student responses to the most relevant questions (i.e. responses to "This instructor is an effective teacher" or other especially pertinent questions) on the student opinion form over several terms. The candidate should also clarify how the data have informed his or her teaching practices.
<p>Grade distributions for all classes taught by nominee for the past 3 years (condense to 1 page).</p>	<p>No comparable requirement</p>	<p>No comparable requirement</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student opinion summaries for the 	<p>See above, but no requirement for 3 years of complete data (response to</p>	<p>See above, but no requirement for 3 years of complete data (response to the most relevant</p>

nominee for the past 3 years (condensed).	the most relevant questions on the opinion form should be submitted; candidates rarely submit complete data.)	questions on the opinion form should be submitted)
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Rationale

A comparison of items required to document the nomination also illustrates that the BOR requires letters and other evidence that demonstrates why candidates are especially effective at **advancing student learning**. GCSU's required documentation currently includes student opinion summaries and grade distributions. Candidates for BOR awards do not present grade distributions as part of the required documentation. Further, nominees often use student opinion information very selectively and do not present it in its entirety. It is used only as part of a much larger package more directly documenting academic achievements of the instructor's students. The BOR committee often does not place emphasis on syllabi as compelling indicators of student learning. The proposed changes are consistent with BOR required documentation and a greater emphasis on student learning.

Some students have reported feeling pressured to nominate candidates for teaching awards. Students who are in the position of having to earn a grade from a candidate should not be asked to participate in or initiate this process through nominations. Student input will still be sought through letters from previous students that form part of the required documentation, but candidates for awards should not directly contact current students and request letters. The BOR has also considered dropping the requirement that candidates submit a letter from a current student, but in the event they keep the requirement, the departmental chair or another colleague should request and obtain volunteers from the candidate's current classes to provide letters.

ii. to increase the number of years of service required for candidacy from three to five

Awards	Length of service requirement	Years between receipt and eligibility to reapply
GCSU	3	5
BOR	5	One-time only

Rationale

Nominees for the Distinguished Achievement in Teaching and Learning award should be full-time faculty who have completed at least **five** years of full time teaching at GCSU. Currently, the requirement is for **three** years of full-time teaching, but a quick look at BOR winners since 1997 illustrates that all but one had attained the rank of associate professor or above at the time of the award (see http://www.usg.edu/academics/fac_dev/recipients.phtml) . If we want our teaching award recipients to be more viable at the state level, we need to consider making this change. Increasing the requirement for years served would also elevate the status of the teaching awards by recognizing sustained contributions by seasoned faculty.

Once recognized as a recipient of an excellence in teaching and learning award or the proposed new Distinguished Achievement in Teaching and Learning award, candidates should not be eligible to reapply for the award. This is a more fair process to other faculty members and also matches the BOR trends.

iii. to change the GCSU nomination process to allow a faculty member to self-nominate and forbid nominations by students

Source of Nominations for GCSU Teaching Awards	Current System	Proposed System
Colleagues	yes	yes
Faculty members who wish to apply	no	yes
Students	yes	no

Rationale

Some students have reported feeling pressured to nominate candidates for teaching awards. Students who are in the position of having to earn a grade from a candidate should not be asked to participate in or initiate this process through nominations. Student input will still be sought through letters from previous students that form part of the required documentation, but candidates for awards should not directly contact current students and request letters. In the event a candidate's portfolio is sent on to Atlanta as a nomination for a BOR award, the departmental chair or another colleague should contact any current students whose letters are required. A faculty member should be allowed to self-nominate.