Annual Report 2010-2011
The Committee on Excellence in Teaching

Committee Members: Kevin J. Wetmore, Jr. (Chair), Wendy Binder, Monica Cabrera, Teresa Heiland, Ralph Quinones, Ani Shabazian, Beth Serlin, and Daniel Smith-Christopher

The committee focused on activities that promote excellence in teaching, encourage professional development related to LMU’s teaching mission and support the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE). This academic year also featured important and unique events including the selection of a new CTE director and revision of the Committee’s bylaws. The committee met at least once a month both semesters, with several meetings in January and February related to the selection of the new CTE director. The following items highlight and summarize the important work done by the Committee during the 2010-2011 academic year:

1. The Committee worked with interim CTE Director Suzanne Larson in the Fall semester, overseeing her brief tenure as director and providing support and advice both to Professor Larson and to CTE Administrator Nick Mattos, who oversaw the CTE in Spring 2011 while a new director was selected.

2. In October 2010, Marta Baltodano, Chair of the Burns Distinguished Teaching Award Committee met with the Committee to update the CET about the selection process in order to aid the CET in serving as a resource for applicants.

3. In November 2010, Laura Massa, Director of Assessment at LMU, was invited to give a presentation to the Committee on “Closing the Loop: Assessing LMU’s Undergraduate Learning Outcomes.” The Committee responded with comments and questions regarding the data and planned to integrate the information into future Committee activities to promote excellent teaching.

4. Seven applications for the R. Patricia Walsh Grant in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning were reviewed, a larger amount than usual (for example, last year we had four) and three were funded. Recipients were Zaki Eusufzai (Economics), Francisco Ramos (Education) and Sijun Wang (Marketing).

5. The CTE Travel Grants were increased from $750 to $1000 by Committee vote because of conservative stewardship of the funds in years past. The grants were made available to the faculty in the fall this year. In December three travel grant applications were
reviewed and all three were funded. The recipients were: Mónica Cabrera (Modern Languages and Literatures), Jackie Dewar (Mathematics), and Elizabeth Reilly (Education Leadership).

6. The most important activity in which the CET engaged this year was the selection of a new Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching. Working with Vice President for Academic Planning and Effectiveness Margaret Kasimatis, in December 2010 the Committee prepared to undergo the selection process for the position. On 20 January 2011 a call for applications went out. In addition to our meetings, the committee circulated numerous emails and documents in preparation for interviewing the candidates. Two faculty members applied and the committee interviewed both on 11 February, deliberated on 18 February and recommended Dorothea Herreiner, Associate Professor of Economics be appointed director. With the approval of the President, the CAO and Dr. Kasimatis, Professor Herreiner will begin a three-year appointment in the fall of 2011.

7. As a result of concerns raised during the selection process of the CTE director, the Committee decided to revisit its bylaws and amend them in order to reflect current practice. Following the procedure outlined in Article VI, Section B, on 29 April 2011, six of the eight committee members were able to gather and pass two amendments to the by-laws as they stand:

Amendment 1:

Vote to change Article I, section D to read: “To make recommendations to the President or his or her designee for the appointment of the Director for the Center for Teaching Excellence.”

The amendment passes unanimously, 6-0-0.

Amendment 2:

Vote to change Article II, section F to read: “Any member of the Committee who wishes to submit an application or proposal for a grant to the Committee will not participate in any Committee activities which involve the consideration of grant proposals. Members of the Committee are ineligible for consideration for Patricia Walsh Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Research Grants during the term of service on the Committee.”

The amendment passed unanimously, 6-0-0.

These amendments will take effect with the approval of the University President, as provided in Article VI, Section B.
The Committee also decided to revisit the bylaws again in the Fall, as Article III, section E needs to be changed in order to reflect both actual practice and the university’s current administrative structure.

The Committee also made tentative plans next year to further amend the bylaws, as noted above, return to our Statement on Effective Teaching, and work especially closely with the new director of the CTE to aid her as much as possible in her first year in the position.

One final note: the Faculty Senate’s Committee Membership Directory is in severe error on the listing of Committee Members. Ralph Quinones (Marketing and Business Law), represents the College of Business Administration and his term expires in 2012. Thomas Klein (Animation) is not on the Committee but served as a one semester replacement for Beth Serlin (Screenwriting), who represents SFTV on the Committee and whose term expires in 2012. Likewise, Matthew Siniawski (Mechanical Engineering) has declined to serve on the Committee and never attended any meetings, although this situation is actually for the best, as the Committee’s bylaws limit CET to eight members and he would be the ninth. Ana Serrano (Elementary and Secondary Education) rotated off the Committee last year and her name should be removed as well.

The end of the academic year also marks the end of the service on the Committee by Teresa Heiland (Dance, CFA representative) and Daniel Smith-Christopher (Theological Studies, BCLA representative), both of whom have contributed tremendously to the Committee over the past three years and are thanked for their service. The CET Chair respectfully requests that the Committee on Committees appoints new representatives from BCLA and CFA for the CET in time for the Committee to reconvene in the Fall. The Chair’s only other concern is that five Committee members’ terms expire in 2012 (Binder, Cabrera, Quinones, Serlin, and Wetmore), which will result in a remarkable shift in representation and a very limited continuity. The Committee will discuss the possibility of one or more of these individuals renewing their position on the Committee in the Fall, but the powers that be should be aware of this situation.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Wetmore, Jr. Chair,
Committee on Excellence in Teaching
on behalf of CET members: Wendy Binder, Monica Cabrera, Teresa Heiland, Ralph Quinones, Ani Shabazian, Beth Serlin, Daniel Smith-Christopher, and Kevin Wetmore