

2018 – 2019 RTPC Teaching & Practice Faculty End of Year Report

Co-Chairs: Gioia Polidori, Jessica Parr

Members: Su Jin Lee, Brent Chappelow, Gayle Fiedler-Vierma, Cindy Blois, Christopher Magriney, Lorena Gallego, Jim Valentine, Alessio Filippi, Shirin Brijandi, Marianna Chodorowska-Pilch, Yuka Kumagai, Joseph Palacios, Andrea Parra

Goals for the Year: The goals of the RTPC Teaching and Practice Caucus for the 2018-2019 academic year included:

1. Continue the work on mentoring from the 2017-2018 Research, Policies and Documentation Caucus.
2. Explore opportunities for course development and pedagogical research for RTPC faculty.

Mentoring Efforts –

Building on the work from the Research, Policies, and Documentation Caucus from the 2017-2018 academic year, the co-chairs of this year's caucus, Gioia Polidori and Jessica Parr, have met periodically with John Holland to discuss mentoring for RTPC faculty. The recommendation from last year was the establishment of formal mentoring for all RTPC faculty at all levels, similar to the mentoring structure that had been very successful for the tenure-track faculty.

The work of the RPD caucus, Trisha Tucker, Dan Pecchenino and John Holland with the Dean of Undergraduate Education, Andrew Stott, led to the 2019 revision of the promotion guidelines for RTPC faculty, which among other changes, also includes language on the assignment of mentors to RTPC faculty:

“In order to encourage and facilitate the teaching and/or research excellence that is expected of all Dornsife RTPC-track faculty members and that forms the basis of all review and promotional processes, departments assign an appropriate mentor to each junior faculty member upon hiring. The mentor should be someone who has been through at least one promotional cycle (and is, at least, one rank higher than the person being mentored), and can come from either the tenure- or RTPC-track faculty.”

John Holland previously served as the director of the Writing Program where he was responsible for mentoring a large number of Teaching faculty, helping them grow professionally and leading them through the promotion process. For the 2018-2019 academic year, John transitioned to a role in the Deans office where he was instrumental in revising the promotion guidelines for RTPC faculty and preparing documents to aid in the preparation of dossiers and the formation of department level Faculty Evaluation Committees, as well as information for Chairs on assembling a successful promotion

package for RTPC faculty. Gioia and Jessica helped John with the preparation of the documents and will continue to work with him this summer to finalize what will be distributed to the faculty and departments.

Through these meetings, some of which Associate Dean for Curriculum and Assessment Jane Cody also attended, there were discussions of developing informal faculty communities to help facilitate networking to facilitate the development of mentoring relationships. Gioia and Jessica organized a panel for the RTPC faculty in the Natural Sciences and Mathematics, which was held on Friday, April 12th and was well attended. John Holland, Dan Pecchenino and Lorraine Turcotte served as panelists. Discussions included best practices for preparing for a dossier, developing mentoring relationships and what types of activities faculty should be seeking out to be successful candidates for promotion. On Thursday, April 25th, a workshop was held for all Dornsife faculty, where Dean Andrew Stott introduced the new promotion criteria and guidelines. John Holland, Dan Pecchenino, and Jessica Parr served as panelists to help answer questions. Caucus members Andrea Parra and Gayle Fiedler-Vierma organized a panel for RTPC faculty in the Humanities and Social Sciences divisions. John Holland, Dan Pecchenino, Emily Anderson, and Erin Moore served as panelists for this final meeting. All workshops were fairly well attended and there is interest to continue having these types of meetings.

The caucus recommends continuing to establish networking opportunities for RTPC faculty. Jessica Parr is willing to organize events to develop a learning community in the Natural Sciences and Mathematics division.

Opportunities for Course and Professional Development –

Below is a proposal that will be submitted to Dean Andrew Stott to support faculty wishing to pursue projects that bolster the academic program and pedagogy in the College.

Summer Support for Teaching Innovations

Rationale:

Excellence in teaching relies on the continuous advancement of curricular and co-curricular offerings. The design and implementation of innovative pedagogical practices, however, requires substantial resources. To this end, the establishment of a competitive summer support grant may not only encourage faculty to develop innovative pedagogical ideas, but also financially support those who wish to develop and implement such teaching practices. Indeed, continuous improvement may offer the path to systemic advancement and thus this strategy may ultimately leverage the knowledge and expertise of our faculty to promote progress and teaching excellence in a systematic way.

Recommendations:

The RTPC Teaching and Practice Caucus of the Dornsife Faculty Council would like to propose the establishment of a competitive fund for summer salary support for any faculty interested in the development of innovative pedagogical practices, analysis of teaching practices, training, or any other undergraduate or graduate curricular development. The caucus proposes the implementation of an application process that would entail a call for proposals and a streamlined submission process, which would facilitate the review and selection of deserving proposals. Since summer is an ideal moment in the academic year to work on curricular design due to decreased teaching responsibilities, we believe this would be an optimal time to support faculty as they work in a consistent and creative manner on pedagogical innovations, curricular design, and professional development.

Thus, we recommend the establishment of competitive awards of for summer salary support for faculty to pursue academic, research and pedagogical projects, which might include:

- Developing online textbooks or pedagogical resources
- Developing Maymester/Spring Break courses, or an overseas study program
- Writing a book, or book chapters
- Researching and preparing a white paper on pedagogy and assessment
- Developing new courses or laboratories
- Analyzing data collected following a curricular innovation
- Analyzing data on long-term student performance
- Attending professional development courses or training

- Developing online courses or activities to be offered if a natural disaster or other large emergency prevents in-person meetings on campus

Eligibility:

All RTPC faculty as well as Tenure-track and Tenured faculty involved in teaching would be eligible to apply for the grant provided that they commit to stay at USC for at least the following academic year.