

FATE Instructional Models Report Summary 2023

Abundant research demonstrates that students learn more when they are actively involved in the learning process, whether through group discussions, problem-solving, or project-based learning. However, active learning tasks typically require greater instructional support than more traditional pedagogical methods, creating a demand for more instructional personnel at a moment when budgets are constrained and a new UC-wide labor TA/GSR contract has led to a dramatic reduction in the number of TAs available to faculty. In this context, maintaining and continuing to improve the quality of undergraduate education at UC Irvine requires us to 1) identify new means of providing faculty with adequate instructional support while also 2) incentivizing faculty to invest the time and effort required to incorporate active learning in their classes.

Challenge 1: Providing Adequate Instructional Support

For certain classes, graduate instructors remain necessary for discussions, labs, and specialized courses, including upper division and writing-intensive courses, requiring additional resources. However, for lower-level and non-writing intensive courses, units can consider employing 1) undergraduate Learning Assistants (for credit) or Tutors (for pay) for in-class support, or 2) Readers for grading assignments (for pay) to optimize resources. In order to facilitate access to Learning Assistants, Tutors, and Readers, and to expand the kinds of instructional support available to faculty, UCI could take the following actions:

- **Allocate additional resources to the Certified Learning Assistant Program (CLAP)** for recruiting and training more students. Currently, ~400 students per quarter earn credit as LAs (50% in the School of Physical Sciences, 20% BioSci, and 15% ICS). They support about 65 courses per quarter. Of the 22 departments/units surveyed, 10 (most with large undergraduate programs) anticipate the need for more LAs in the future, potentially posing challenges in recruiting enough students.
- **Streamline the process to onboard undergraduate or masters students into UC Path**, or offering alternative options to ensure that students can be hired on much shorter timelines.
- **Provide sufficient administrative support** for units to hire students, process timesheets and pay, and manage other responsibilities such as scheduling.
- **Move the student enrollment window for spring classes earlier**, to make it easier to assess instructional support needs and complete the hiring process in a more timely manner.
- **Establish a centralized system for matching qualified graduate students with available instructional support positions.** Units vary in their TA availability, with some having excess TAships and others lacking sufficient graduate students. Units without their own graduate programs are concerned about sourcing qualified TAs from other departments/schools.
- **Suggest best practices and/or provide support to department chairs/committees** to establish guidelines for allocating instructional budgets and determining the most effective combination of graduate and undergraduates instructional support personnel to meet faculty needs.
- **Provide more data and planning guidance to units regarding projected future demand for large classes** and their associated instructional needs – especially GE and “service” classes (such as calculus) that are required for multiple majors.
- **Standardize the terminology used for different instructional support roles/positions** across campus. This will clear up existing confusion and facilitate clear communication so units/faculty can make informed decisions about what kinds of instructional support to request.

Challenge 2: Incentivizing Faculty to Incorporate Active Learning

Teaching active learning classes and utilizing instructional roles demand substantial faculty time and effort. Currently, there are limited incentives for faculty to make such investments, especially considering the impact on research time. Additionally, faculty may lack training in active learning, which poses a challenge requiring ongoing efforts to address. The FATE group has recommendations in this regard:

- **Provide new faculty the opportunity to co-instruct (i.e. “shadow”) experienced instructors** using active learning methods for their first class. This benefits new faculty by offering expert guidance in practical and pedagogical aspects, while enhancing teaching quality and teaching and student success.
- **Explore alternative faculty training methods** for active learning and the use of LAs, Tutors, Graders, etc. Options include video case studies, class visits, brief in-meeting sessions, or asynchronous training. Consider periodic training for promotion and tenure requirements (see additional details below). Create resources on best practices for recruitment and training for these roles.
- **Provide priority access to active learning classrooms** for faculty who are supporting the education of Learning Assistants to improve instructional staff:student ratios in their classes.
- **Making changes to promotion and tenure guidelines** that would reward faculty for using both active learning and incorporate Learning Assistants/Tutors into their classroom, or at least avoid penalizing faculty who take the time to do this. Possible ideas include:
 - o Modify the APM to require that, in order to receive a positive appraisal of their teaching, all faculty members will be expected to participate in DTEI or other Chair-approved training on active learning and/or other evidence-based highly effective pedagogies at least once per academic review period.
 - o Support faculty to more effectively balance time spent on research v. teaching. Explicitly reduce publication ‘quantity’ expectations to emphasize quality/impact (and develop new and more equitable metrics for assessing the balance of research and teaching).
 - o Offer faculty flexibility to structure their workload for optimal research productivity and pedagogical excellence. Implement a post-tenure option for Associate and Full professors to choose either a ‘Teaching Intensive’ or ‘Research Intensive’ review cycle. Those opting for ‘Teaching Intensive’ will collaborate with their department chair or an approved coach to create a plan focusing on pedagogical development AND departmental instructional goals, including course redesign, mentorship, and pedagogical training.
 - o Convene a group of leaders and colleagues from other flagship public R1s (Universities of Texas and Michigan, etc) to form a coalition to create new metrics for measuring and balancing excellence in research, teaching and service—in terms that reflect the unique identities, goals and commitments of research intensive public/land grant universities.
 - o Revise the AP review criteria to better incorporate pedagogical excellence and mentoring, making them integral to faculty performance evaluations.
 - o Develop better metrics for evaluating teaching excellence and recognizing faculty members' contributions to pedagogical development and mentoring. This could involve inviting student feedback on faculty members' teaching and mentoring performance.

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