ITL 2021 Panel:
Documenting your Teaching for Promotion and Tenure

Panelists:

- Abena Aidoo, faculty member in Tourism, Events, and Hospitality Management in CEHD.

- Tehayma Lopez Bunyasi, faculty member in the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution.

- Arie Croitoru, faculty member in Computational and Data Sciences in COS.

- Beverly Middle, faculty member in the School of Nursing in CHHS.

- Kim Eby, moderator, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Development.

Mason Context for Session

- Term Faculty Task Force and Committee work to provide pathways for promotion.
- Our COACHE Faculty Satisfaction Data from the spring of 2019 indicate clarity and transparency of RPT processes are an Area of Growth.
- COVID-19 pandemic and reckonings with structural and institutionalized racism have created significant disruptions in and creative adaptations to teaching, learning, and mentoring. While the past decade plus of research has shown us the problems inherent in over-reliance on student course evaluations, including biases of race, ethnicity, gender, age, and accents – to name a few – the pandemic has amplified our need to think beyond student evaluations of teaching.
- Please note that each School/College, and even departments, does have slightly different expectations, so it's critical to be aware of your School/College, and local, criteria.

Overarching Questions

- How should faculty be thinking about sharing their teaching philosophies and approaches?
- How might we think about documenting and providing evidence of the effectiveness of those approaches?

Brief Panel Discussion Notes

- Setting up your documentation for teaching and learning

  o Start collecting documentation early, keep an "I love me file" where compliments, notes, unsolicited emails from students and faculty are stored.

  o Annotate your syllabi with lessons learned, what you want to do differently next time, to show evidence of responsiveness to student feedback and your observations of what's working/not working in your course.

  o Track your writing prompts, grading criteria, and assignment design and what has changed from semester to semester. How does this reflect your thinking (e.g., your evolving philosophy) about how best to teach a specific course?

  o Solicit mid-semester feedback from your students and show how you use this feedback to make adaptations.

- - Get comfortable with the notion of the course-correction and readjusting to meet your goals.
  - Keep files that showcase student work (e.g., great moments in student writing).
  - Take screenshots from online courses that evidence student engagement and learning (be sure to remove names).
  - Open-ended questions from student course evaluations are a good source of evidence (e.g., students who articulated how different parts of the course were helpful to them).
- Getting a handle on expectations for promotion
  - Make use of your resources and be sure to talk with your peers, colleagues, and mentors. Do not be afraid to reach out to understand the expectations for the process and/or to get feedback on your statement. They will sometimes point out insights on your strengths that you might overlook.
  - Reach out to your supervisor (e.g., department chair) for clarity around local expectations.
- Remember that there are multiple layers to the teaching and learning for documentation
  - There's what happens in the "classroom," regardless of modality.
  - And there is what you do with students to support them in their careers.
- Learning goes beyond content, we want students to be successful moving forward, so how do we help them acquire the skills to be able to learn, re-learn, and adapt to an ever-changing world?
  - How do you help your students develop the skills to adapt to change?
  - Given your field of study and the course requirements, consider what skills, competencies, and abilities you need to help your students develop, whether graduate or undergraduate → goal is success in both their professional and personal lives.
- Questions that might inform your thinking
  - How do I teach courses differently from my colleagues, considering both style and emphasis?
  - What changes have I made to courses I have inherited, and why did I make those choices?
- About the Professional Statement
  - Think about your readers. Make it easy to read and be sure that it's well-organized.
    - Remember that there are multiple audiences within Mason, those who know your field and those who don't

- If your statement is going to external reviewers (outside of Mason), be sure that there's enough context to make sense of what you are writing (e.g., the types of classes, Mason's student body)

    o Talk with chair of the local promotion and tenure committee to better understand where different contributions ought to be located in your statement.

    o Some colleagues are willing to share examples of statements with others.

    o Highlight successes and what you have learned from things that did not go as planned/expected. How did you make sense of the latter and turn it into your growth and learning about teaching and mentoring?

    o Provide a framework and context for your service contributions.

    o Remember that there will be overlap across the different sections of your professional statement, which is to be expected. Try to show the intersections and integration across your work wherever possible.

    o Embed evidence in the statement itself.

    o If there's labor that tends to be invisible (e.g., mentoring historically underrepresented students), then name that activity in your teaching and highlight it to make it visible.

- About student course evaluations

    o Provide a set time/opportunity for students to complete the student course evaluations to ensure a better response rate. Even in online courses, setting this expectation can help.

    o Explain to students how you use their feedback to make changes to and improve the course.

    o Faculty Senate Teaching Effectiveness Committee has introduced new course evaluation, eliminating the two global questions, and was recently voted into place by the full Faculty Senate.

    o Some faculty supplement the standard evaluation with their own forms, see: [Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) - Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning (gmu.edu)](#)

    o Important to explain and provide context for your evaluations. If you tried something new, moved online, or simply had a bad semester – it happens – then explain what happened and how you have addressed any concerns.

- Give yourself adequate time to prepare your statement. Remember that our [Faculty Writing Support](#) is a great way to take advantage of finding a community of writers, co-sponsored by our Writing Across the Curriculum colleagues, the Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning, and Faculty Affairs and Development.

Office of the Provost and Stearns Center web-based resources
- [Supporting Efforts to Document and Assess Teaching and Learning | Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President (gmu.edu)](#)

- [Documenting Your Teaching | Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning (gmu.edu)](#)

- See [Term Faculty Information](#) and [Tenure-line Faculty Information](#), pay special attention to Genuine Excellence and High Competence in Teaching documents linked to those sites

- [Considerations for Faculty Evaluation and COVID-19 | Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President (gmu.edu)](#)

- [Faculty Writing Support | Faculty Resources (gmu.edu)](#)