

Chapter 3: Outreach and Engagement

UCAT staff members participate in many collaborative efforts to reach out to both the Ohio State University community and to the broader field of higher education. Ohio State is an extremely large, decentralized institution and houses many units that offer services to our teaching staff, such as Learning Technologies and Writing Across the Curriculum. While most of these units have a focused, niche area of university teaching that they specialize in promoting and supporting, UCAT maintains a broad and deep expertise across the entire field of post-secondary pedagogy. UCAT seeks to assist instructors to select and use the appropriate evidence-based teaching tools for their situation, their style, and their students.

UCAT has sought to partner and collaborate with as many of these units as possible. These partnerships are a crucial part of our efforts to advocate for effective, evidence-based pedagogies and to expand our capacity to best serve the Ohio State community. Descriptions of our primary partnerships are included below (see Appendix E for a table differentiating the services and missions of some of these units from ours).

In parallel with our partnerships with other academic support units, we also engage in a wide range of service activities. These activities are of crucial importance in allowing UCAT staff members to understand critical university initiatives and in enabling UCAT to offer our assistance and expertise at the appropriate time in the decision process. We have been invited into many, but not all of the venues that would enable us to act effectively as change agents for institutional development and advocates for teaching and learning. UCAT staff members take on a variety of roles in these efforts ranging from observer to primary leader.

University Partnerships

Office for Distance Education and eLearning

UCAT has sought to partner with the Office for Distance Education and eLearning (ODEE) and its predecessors for many years. We have had reasonable success in these collaborations with intermittent gaps usually due to reorganization or personnel changes. In its current incarnation, ODEE and UCAT professional consulting staff members have begun to hold regular shared meetings to learn about each other's services and build relationships that can lead to collaborations. We have just agreed to create a joint, hybrid CDI to support instructors designing distance classes, with a planned first institute to occur in June 2015.

ODEE focuses solely on teaching with technology, especially in promoting distance delivery and other electronic technologies. They offer "how to" assistance to individual instructors through the Digital Unions; however, they are mostly engaged in a limited number of large-scale, program level efforts. In our collaborative projects, UCAT contributes a broad knowledge of pedagogy and learning independent of delivery method. We also bring a much broader base of contacts with faculty members, departmental leaders, and graduate teaching associates, who may benefit from these efforts.

Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing

The Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing (CSTW), and especially its Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program, has been a long-term and close partner with UCAT in supporting effective use of writing pedagogies. The two units co-sponsor several open workshop sessions every term, and WAC coordinator Chris Manion is a regular presenter at UCAT CDIs. In the past, UCAT professional consulting staff members have served on the CSTW advisory board.

WAC focuses solely on the teaching of writing; they offer narrow, but deep support for individual instructors, course managers, and academic units in that area. In our collaborations, we benefit from their specialized expertise, and we offer them ways to generalize to other modalities of teaching and learning.

University Libraries

Beginning in 2011, UCAT and the University Libraries have expanded our efforts to collaborate and develop mutual support through both recurring and as-needed events. A representative from the Libraries visits each UCAT Course Design Institute to discuss how teachers and librarians might partner during course and assignment design processes. In 2012, UCAT offered a session on "Semester conversion: Implications for the Libraries" for Libraries' staff. Since 2013, UCAT representatives have facilitated one-day course design sessions for recipients of the Libraries' Course Enhancement Grants, and, in 2014, the Libraries and UCAT facilitated two co-sponsored workshops for the campus: "Threshold concepts for information literacy: New ways to talk with your students about research in your discipline" and "Facilitating learning through the research process" (also co-sponsored by Writing Across the Curriculum). In addition to the above efforts, during 2009-2014, 35 unique members of the University Libraries staff have voluntarily participated in UCAT-sponsored workshops, mini-conferences, Course Design Institutes, reading groups, or learning communities.

Committee on Academic Misconduct

UCAT has worked with the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) for many

years. COAM has been a mainstay of our “Policies Every Instructor Should Know” panel during the annual teaching orientation. We have regularly co-presented on issues of plagiarism and methods to both minimize misconduct and to use such situations as teachable moments. Most recently, UCAT, COAM, and CSTW have collaborated to assist ODEE in rolling out an enterprise-level contract with Turnitin in order to assist Ohio State instructors and students in making the best pedagogical uses of that tool.

Younkin Success Center

The Younkin opened in March 2000 and has been since its inception a collaboratively managed facility. The UCAT director and Office Assistant are members of the governing Younkin Council, meeting monthly with representatives of the other units located in the building. This relationship has led to several long-term shared programs, including the participation of learning specialists from the Dennis Learning Center in UCAT’s annual teaching orientation and a very highly attended annual series on the academic job search, co-facilitated by UCAT and Career Counseling and Support Services.

University Service

UCAT professional consulting staff members engage in a wide variety of university service projects at several levels of depth and involvement (see Appendix F for a table outlining most of our major projects). Responsibilities fall into the following categories:

1. primary leadership of project, significant development effort, and/or responsibility for implementation
2. ongoing advising, consultation, and or support
3. regular attendance, ongoing presence to stay informed
4. one-time consultation/conversation

Below we review a selection of the most significant projects.

Semesters and General Education Revision

In June 2009, the University Senate approved the semester calendar, thus beginning the process of Ohio State’s conversion from quarters to semesters, including the conversion of nearly 700 academic programs and 12,000 courses. UCAT professional consulting staff provided significant leadership and development on the many interconnected efforts required for calendar conversion.

UCAT actually began its work to support the conversion prior to June 2009. At the April 24, 2009 Academy of Teaching Mini-Conference, we offered our first workshop dedicated to Ohio State’s semester conversion: "Calendar conversion: What it means for teaching and learning at Ohio State." This workshop was the first of a number of such workshops that we held all over the Ohio State campus.

UCAT professional consulting staff members were deeply involved in many aspects of the University's massive initiative to convert from quarters to semesters, providing information, consultation, and programming to assist the university community through this transition. During the period of semester conversion, UCAT provided services beyond our regular support of teaching and learning. Specifically, we assisted faculty, teaching associates, staff, and administrators in bringing about an effective and responsible move from quarters to semesters by:

- Performing numerous consultations with both individuals and academic units;
- Developing and providing informational resources on teaching and learning in semesters through our newsletter, website, blog, and twitter feed;
- Developing and offering assistance in curriculum and course design for semesters through our Curriculum Design Institutes and Course Design Institutes;
- Offering various single workshops, other less-structured venues for discussion of teaching and learning, and events aimed at assisting with teaching in semesters;
- Serving as members on many committees, councils, and teams assisting in the development of policies and procedures relating to semester conversion and teaching and learning in semesters; and
- Helping plan and participating in state-wide semester summits.

Assessment Efforts

UCAT professional consulting staff members have served in both advisory and leadership roles related to assessment of academic programs and student learning outcomes. We have partnered with campus and college assessment leaders for many years, assisting with outreach to teachers on the importance of assessing student learning outcomes and aiding them in developing systems to collect and use data that can advance the quality of academic programs. Moreover, we have been key organizers and facilitators of annual campus-wide assessment events for the last two years. In 2013, Tomas A. Angelo was the keynote speaker; in 2014, we hosted Linda Suskie. In addition to the guests' presentations, UCAT staff organized working sessions for Ohio State faculty and staff to advance their programs' assessment plans. We have also supported the College of Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee in the assessment of Ohio State's General Education program.

Institutional Accreditation

UCAT provided data for the 2007 reaffirmation of institutional accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Since then, our efforts in support of program assessment and curricular revision have consistently been informed by this process. UCAT staff have been invited to participate on the OAA accreditation team and will play a more central supporting and advisory role in the 2017 reaffirmation.

University Senate Committees

UCAT professional consultants attend many university committee meetings, most regularly and importantly, the Council on Academic Affairs. This standing committee of the University Senate is charged with oversight of educational and academic policies, including the establishment, alteration, and abolition of all curricula and courses offered by the university, all degrees and certificates conferred by the university, and of all colleges, departments, and schools. Our ongoing presence at these committee meetings keeps us informed of crucial institutional issues and allows us to advocate for teaching advancement whenever appropriate.

External Service and Consulting

The Professional and Organizational Development Network (POD) is the premier North American professional association in our field. UCAT professional consulting staff members have been deeply engaged in the leadership of this organization, chairing several committees and subcommittees and serving on the Core Committee (Board of Directors). Kathryn Plank still worked at UCAT when she was elected President of POD in 2011.

UCAT professional consulting staff members have been leaders in the Ohio Teaching Enhancement Programs consortium, a coalition of teaching support professionals across Ohio since 2001.

UCAT professional consulting staff members also serve as editorial board members and reviewers on many journals in the fields of higher education pedagogy and educational development. We are often invited to consult and present at other institutions, and at national and international events. Since 2009, we have given 19 invited talks at five major events and seven other universities. These presentations are often based on our scholarly work, as described in Chapter 4. We have also served as external reviewers for five other teaching centers (see Appendix D for details of our external service and Appendix G for details on our scholarship).