

Chapter 6: Staff

Understanding the staffing at UCAT, especially with regard to retention and turnover, requires a longer horizon than the five-year period upon which most of this study is focused.

Staff Retention and Turnover

Throughout the 1990s, the leadership of the unit, then known as Faculty and TA Development, was stable with Nancy Chism and Christine Stanley serving as director and associate director, respectively. By the end of that decade, the unit included two other instructional consultants, a program assistant/coordinator, an office associate, and one graduate associate. In 1998-1999, both Chism and Stanley left Ohio State for other opportunities, and Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies Martha Garland undertook a review of the unit's needs and launched a national search for a new director.

In July 2000, Alan Kalish joined the unit as director. In 2001, Kathryn M. Plank was hired as associate director. While there was significant turnover among the UCAT staff in the first half of the last decade, most of the changes since 2008 have been due to growth. Kathryn Plank left in 2012 after eleven years as associate director, and our visiting instructional consultant, Jerry Nelms, left at the end of his three-year contract. However, we have been able to replace both of these FTE. Stephanie Rohdieck was promoted to associate director, Phil Edwards joined our unit as assistant director, and Lindsay Bernhagen filled the line for the third consultant, which was converted from temporary to ongoing. We were also able to convert student assistant positions into a full-time office assistant line, with Audree Riddle as the first incumbent (see Appendix O for all staffing changes during 1999-2014).

Change to Staffing

In 2010, the UCAT leadership, in consultation with Ohio State's Office of Human Resources, developed a plan to reorganize our management structure (see Chapter 7 for discussion) and reclassified and retitled several positions to enhance the professionalization of the unit (see Table 6.1 for more details). These changes were accompanied by appropriate raises based on comparable market equity (see Chapter 8 for further discussion of professional and administrative staff compensation).

Trends in Appointments

UCAT consulting professionals come from a broad range of academic backgrounds: three hold doctoral degrees (English, Microbiology, Comparative Studies), two hold terminal

Table 6.1

UCAT Position Reclassifications 2010

Prior Title/Rank	Prior Working Title	Current Title/Rank	Current Working Title
Program Director (A4)	Director	Director (00)	Director
Instructional Development Specialist (A&P 65)	Associate Director	Associate Director (A&P 67)	Associate Director
Instructional Development Specialist (A&P 65)	Instructional Consultant for GTA Programming	Instructional Development Specialist (A&P 65)	Assistant Director
Instructional Development Specialist (A&P 65)	Instructional Consultant for Assessment and Curriculum	Instructional Development Specialist (A&P 65)	Instructional Consultant--Coordinator for Assessment and Curriculum
Instructional Development Specialist (A&P 65)	Instructional Consultant for International Faculty and TAs	Instructional Development Specialist (A&P 65)	Instructional Consultant--Coordinator for International Programming
Post-doctoral researcher (temp)	Visiting Instructional Consultant	Instructional Development Specialist (A&P 65)	Instructional Consultant
Office Associate (A2)	Office Associate	Office Administrative Associate (A2)	Office Manager

professional degrees (Social Work, Library Science), and one is a doctoral candidate (Linguistics). We also bring a range of experience in university teaching and teaching support both locally and from other institutions.

In the current 5-year period of review, all of our new full-time staff have had at least some experience working in teaching advancement and/or academic support units. Jennie Williams, Program Coordinator, had two years as a graduate program assistant at the University Honors Program at Bowling Green State University and two years as a campus missionary (programming, event planning, and student support) at St. Thomas More University Parish in Bowling Green, OH. Jerry Nelms, as visiting consultant had 20+ years as a faculty member, with several years' experience supporting writing and speaking across the curriculum at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville. Lindsay Bernhagen was hired as an entry-level consultant after extensive experience at Ohio State. She had served as a Graduate Teaching Fellow, had worked as a Graduate Consultant for three years at the

Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing/ Writing Across the Curriculum (CSTW/WAC) and for two years at UCAT, and had served as UCAT's Doctoral Intern for 18 months. In terms of time, Bernhagen's experience matched the most experience of any other applicant in that search, and as a "home-grown" candidate, we were very confident in her abilities.

Phil Edwards joined the team as Assistant Director with four years experience in the field, both as a graduate student at the University of Washington and as a full-time consultant at Virginia Commonwealth University. He brings not only time in the field but also training and experience with two other teaching centers to broaden our repertoire. Stephanie Rohdieck was promoted to Associate Director after fourteen years of steadily growing responsibilities at UCAT. Beginning as a part-time program assistant, she has served as Program Coordinator, Instructional Consultant, and Assistant Director before moving to her current role.

UCAT has had a generous policy on short-term flex-time and flex-place for many years, and several staff members have taken advantage of Family Medical Leave as needed to support work-life balance. In addition, two members of our staff have negotiated temporary reduced FTE in the last few years, in order to better balance their commitments. In the near future, these temporary adjustments will expire and each individual will need to decide whether to request making their reduced-FTE appointment permanent. Going forward, this may become an important consideration in meeting demand for services and in requests for additional resources.

Recruitment Practices

UCAT has used both internal and University Office of Human Resources (OHR) expertise to generate the largest and most diverse pool of qualified candidates for our positions. In addition to always seeking to identify a demographically diverse pool of applicants, we have worked to maintain a broad range of disciplinary backgrounds among our professional consulting staff.

When recruiting for our recent opening at the Assistant/Associate Director level, our HR consultant was especially helpful. She aided in the creation of an enhanced position profile, including a detailed overview of the work and the expectations of the role, to attract a higher caliber of talent. She built a strategic recruiting plan focused on key areas where talent would be identified – such as listservs, associations, other teaching centers and appropriate social media – and provided candidates with information regarding the process and timeline to ensure engagement, to offer the highest level of candidate care to engage, and to retain key talent in the process.

Once prospective applicants were identified, OHR helped to coordinate on-campus interviews, providing candidates with logistics, agendas, information about the center and an overview to set expectations and allow appropriate preparation.

Graduate Students

UCAT is dedicated to supporting the development of future generations of teacher-scholars, both broadly across the disciplines and specifically within our own field of educational development. We provide opportunities for graduate and professional students to engage in professional development and teaching support activities.

Graduate Consultants

UCAT employs several graduate students each year (most at .5 FTE), training them as teaching consultants for other graduate teaching associates (GTAs). They also coordinate and write for our social media and blog, assist the professional consulting staff with research, facilitate the Starting TA Resource Group (STAR), and provide general assistance with the orientation, teaching events, and in-house publications. Working as a graduate consultant exposes graduate students to educational development while also increasing our capacity and reach in providing support for graduate students as they learn to be university teachers.

Doctoral Internship

Beginning in 2006, UCAT has dedicated at least one of our graduate associate positions to a Doctoral Internship in Educational Development. The intern learns to consult with other graduate students, like all of our graduate consultants. She also engages in an independent study composed of reading the core literature in the field, shadowing each of our senior consulting staff members, reflecting on the scope of our work, and eventually generating a significant scholarly project on a topic in educational development. The internship is intended as a two-year program, leading to possible employment as an educational developer. Of the five interns who have graduated, three are currently employed in teaching centers in higher education, one manages a GTA program for a department in his discipline, and one works in professional development for K-12 teachers.

Comparison with Peer Centers

UCAT is a full-service teaching center. We engage in a very broad scope of work, supporting instructors across the span of their careers, working with individuals and with academic units, sponsoring teaching communities and groups, and supporting multi-unit projects and institutional initiatives of all sizes.

We work across this very large and decentralized institution, serving constituencies in all 14 colleges and on all five campuses, and we collaborate with many central support units as well. In providing a single, centralized teaching center, we differ from several of our counterparts in the CIC (the Committee on Institutional Cooperation is an academic consortium of the Big Ten conference). Some schools have separated parts of the mission into various units; for example, Michigan State splits GTA services from faculty support.. And other schools, like Wisconsin, whose Delta Center supports only STEM instructors as part of an NSF funded project, have no centralized teaching center.

We also serve a very large pool of instructors — approximately 8800 faculty members, lecturers, and GTAs — with a rather small staff of six professional consultants, four graduate consultants, and a doctoral intern. While comparable numbers are hard to collect, as position titles and range of duties vary widely from institution to institution, full service teaching centers in the CIC have between six and 16 consultants, and the instructional staff at Ohio State has at least 300 more members than the next largest in the group. The University of Michigan, with approximately 8500 instructors, has 13 professional staff consultants, plus 30 graduate consultants at around .1 FTE each. At the 2014 Professional and Organizational Development Network (POD) Conference, Herman⁶ facilitated a session on staffing and based on the data presented, the average ratio of teaching center staff to undergraduate enrollment is 1:2839. UCAT's ratio is 1:4212. Based on the same data source, the average ratio of teaching center staff to FTE faculty (TAs are not included) is 1:175. UCAT's ratio is 1:500.

Intellectual Life of the Unit

UCAT staff members have a long tradition of a shared intellectual life. We regularly engage in co-development activities as a team in order to hone our skills and knowledge as educational developers. We have developed a structured process for bringing new consultants onto the team and into the working culture of the office. We collaborate often and intentionally, both on our core services of consulting and programming and also on our scholarly projects.

Training and mentoring

Given our changing professional consulting staff and the frequent addition of new graduate consultants, we have developed a formal, structured process to bring new members onboard and to mentor and train them as they develop as instructional consultants. This includes readings in the core literature on educational

⁶ Herman, J. (2014, November). Staffing of teaching and learning centers: Indicators of institutional support for faculty development. Session presented at the 39th Annual POD Conference, Dallas, TX.

development, shadowing and co-consulting with more experienced colleagues, and regular debriefing of interactions with clients.

Co-development activities

At bi-weekly Consulting Team meetings, UCAT professional consulting staff and interns discuss ongoing work, read and analyze literature, and share ideas and activities as they relate to the field and consultations specifically. Topics have included listening skills, facilitating difficult discussions, our shared philosophy of practice, and recently, assessing our own work.

Collaborative practice

In addition to the co-consulting mentioned above, UCAT staff members often call upon each other to assist in consultations based on our respective areas of focus and expertise. Some of these areas are formalized in the assignment of a coordinator role (GTA Programming, International issues, Assessment), and others emerge organically from prior experience or scholarly interest. We also collaborate to develop almost all of our new programming.

Collaborative scholarship

Even the briefest glances at our list of publications and presentations will show how frequently we collaborate on our scholarly projects both with our local colleagues and with partners from many other teaching centers. We work together to establish a shared research agenda while also allowing professional consulting staff members the freedom to focus on areas of special interest. Chapter 4 of this report goes into much more detail on our research interests.

Teaching

All full-time UCAT consulting staff members hold teaching appointments in the department of Educational Studies, either as adjunct faculty or lecturers. We teach most sections of the generic (non-discipline specific) College Teaching class, as well as a graduate class on course design in higher education and a seminar for Graduate Teaching Fellows (see Chapter 2). We have established a rotation, so that each professional consultant gets to teach at least once every two years.

The College Teaching class is the core course of a Graduate Interdisciplinary Specialization/Minor in University Teaching. This program was designed and proposed by UCAT staff and is managed by the director in collaboration with the department of Educational Studies.