

A Statement of CIT Principles and Procedures

PREAMBLE: MISSION AND MEMBERSHIP

Mission and purpose of CIT. The Center for the Improvement of Teaching (CIT) is a grassroots faculty-led organization committed to collaborative work on pedagogy across all disciplines and colleges. CIT's mission since its 1983 founding has been to help faculty foster the learning of diverse students within a dynamic urban university environment like ours, with complex institutional expectations, changing communication technologies, and evolving concepts of academic knowledge and training. We have used sustained reflection and scholarship to promote more effective pedagogical practice, a high standard of excellence in teaching, and an inclusive education that engages all students and promotes their academic success. CIT offers a strong faculty voice in wider university discussions of educational policy, especially regarding pedagogy and the promotion of student learning.

Diversity and Inclusion as Guiding Principles. CIT's definition of inclusion is broad and highlights race, social class, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, and culture (which includes ethnicity, nationality, and religion), as well as differences in levels of skill, academic preparation, and language background. We take seriously the multiple ways that these factors intersect with each other and serve as assets for learning and teaching.

Programs that Support Critical Reflection on Teaching and Learning. The hallmark and strength of CIT is an active network of faculty, staff, and students who regularly engage in critical reflection and dialogue that deepen and extend a culture of engaged learning, academic excellence, and curricular and pedagogical transformation at UMB. Our regular programs include semester-long faculty seminars, public forums, student/faculty dialogues, annual conferences, faculty peer mentoring, and the encouragement of scholarship on diversity, learning and teaching.

Membership. CIT programs serve the entire UMB community. Participation is open to all, and takes place through active engagement with the Center's programs on campus. All university faculty and staff who are involved in providing student services, and students are potential participants in CIT programs. Forums and the January annual conference are open to participation from faculty, staff, and students, and faculty teaching seminars are open to participation by faculty of all ranks and statuses.

ADVISORY BOARD

Principles of composition. In recruiting faculty members, generally board members are veterans of at least one CIT seminar. Further, they are recruited in a manner that preserves maximum diversity in the group, in terms of college affiliation, department, academic rank (including full-time and part-time, tenure stream and non-track), and socio-cultural diversity. The board also tries to include student and staff representatives, preferably at least two or more of each. The size of the board is flexible, but past practice has shown that ten to fifteen members are a workable number.

Selection. The Director or any member of the board may propose new board members. Individuals may also volunteer to serve on the board. The selection of members is determined by the existing board.

Term of office. Each faculty and staff board member serves a term of three years, renewable. Student members have a term of one year. Board members who wish to continue service when their term expires should request a renewal of membership, and the Director will ask the board to extend their

service for another term. For all those cycling off the board, there should be an appropriate recognition of their service.

Responsibilities of board members. The board sets policy and engages in strategic planning for CIT, including negotiations with the administration for appropriate staffing, space, and budget, with the active collaboration of the Director. The board assists the Director in decisions about setting the themes and the composition of CIT faculty seminars, including selection of faculty participants; defining semesterly plans for CIT forums, and organizing such forums if possible; and making program decisions about the yearly January conference. Board members are expected to attend board meetings regularly, and attend, organize, or speak at forums at least twice each year. The board should appoint a member to take official minutes of each of its meetings. This responsibility can rotate among board members. Board members should also rotate the responsibility of writing short synopses, for wider dissemination, of CIT forums that they attend. Finally, as a way of supporting the CIT seminar program, board members normally are willing to open up their classes to visiting by seminar participants.

DIRECTOR

Appointment. The Director should be a tenured, senior faculty member with a record of commitment to peer leadership, mentoring of colleagues, and scholarship in teaching, and a history of service to CIT programs. Appointment is made by vote of the board, and through recommendation to the Provost.

Term of office. The Director's term of office is three years, renewable by vote of the board.

Duties. The Director represents CIT and its programs to the administration, works closely with the board to develop strategic plans for the Center, and lobbies and advocates for resources that permit these strategic objectives to be pursued. The Director supervises support staff and any space assigned to the Center. The Director calls board meetings, and assembles and distributes an agenda to members a week in advance of each board meeting. The Director serves as the official source of information about the Center, and oversees all CIT programs, from faculty seminars, to forums, to the January annual conference.

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

A faculty Associate Director shall be appointed by vote of the board, either from among its members, or from among other faculty who have been involved in CIT programs, to assist the Director in administering the affairs of CIT, and to administer or represent the Center in the temporary absence of the Director. When possible it is advisable for the Associate Director to represent a different college than the Director. The term of office for the Associate Director is two years, and is renewable upon the approval of the board. The Director normally delegates the planning of forums to the Associate Director. Whenever possible, the board should assure that the Associate Director's term is staggered with that of the Director, so as to help provide administrative continuity during transitional periods.

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Faculty Seminars. In principle, a faculty seminar should be offered each semester on average, though sometimes multiple seminars may cluster in the same semester. Seminars can vary in composition and in thematic concentration. Normally one of CIT seminars each year is for pre-tenured or recently tenured faculty, and concentrates on mentoring newer faculty on issues that promote their

success as teacher-scholars at the university. Under normal circumstances, faculty applicants should have already completed one year of service as UMB faculty before joining a seminar. Other seminars may have a thematic focus, such as academic standards and grading, teaching about diversity, or preserving instructional quality in a time of administrative change.

Participants in seminars are normally limited to faculty only. Faculty members who want to participate in a seminar, for which they usually receive a CLR, must submit an application and must receive permission from their chairs and deans in order to participate. Faculty are selected for seminars by the board and the Director in a manner that provides for maximum diversity among participants, with regard to socio-cultural identities, and disciplinary, departmental, and college affiliations, and where appropriate, by academic rank. Where possible, the Center should avoid having more than one person from the same department in the same seminar. Additionally, the benefits of participation in a faculty seminar should be distributed as widely as possible, and priority given in selection to those who have not yet participated in a seminar.

Forums and Dialogues. Forums are one-time panel sessions on issues of teaching and learning, with an audience in attendance, that address themes of interest to faculty, staff, and students at the university. Holding such events under its auspices is an important way that the Center sponsors wide public dialogue on campus over teaching and learning. Forums offer members of the community an open venue to gather and dialogue over important teaching issues that are of concern at the moment. Forum panels and speakers can include faculty, staff, and students. Board members share among themselves the responsibility of posting summaries of forums on CIT's wiki for the information of the broader campus community.

Dialogues involve a series of meetings, normally two to four, often taking place over lunch, where students and faculty engage in dialogue with one another over issues of teaching and learning. Participation is through subscription to an entire series, which allows continuity in the group's deliberations.

January Conference. The Center shall hold a Teaching for Transformation conference the Friday before the opening of classes for the Spring semester, open to regional participation from all colleges and universities in New England. Definition of the program, and of presenters, shall be made by the board in consultation with the director.