Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Swanlund Administration Building
601 East John Street
Champaign, IL 61820

September 8, 2015

2015-2016 Teaching Advancement Board

Dale Bauer, English, LAS, Co-Chair
Eric Snodgrass, Atmospheric Sciences, LAS, Co-Chair
Gretchen Adams, Chemistry, LAS
Dawn Bohn, Food Science and Human Nutrition, ACES
Jennifer Follis, Journalism, Media
Cinda Heeren, Computer Science, ENGR
Jorge Lucero, Art & Design, FAA
Shelly Schmidt, Food Science and Human Nutrition, ACES
Tracy Sulkin, Political Science, LAS
Brad Sutton, Bioengineering, ENGR
Madhubalan Viswanathan, Business Administration, BUS
Amelia Woods, Kinesiology and Community Health, AHS
Michel Bellini, Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning, ex officio
Kristi Kuntz, Office of the Provost, ex officio
Deanna Raineri, Office of the Provost, ex officio

Dear Colleagues:

Thank you for your willingness to serve on the Teaching Advancement Board during the 2015-2016 academic year. The Board plays an important role in enhancing instructional excellence on the Urbana campus of the University of Illinois, and in ensuring that achievements in teaching are visible and supported. Your work helps shape the culture of our campus and highlights the central place of instructional excellence in that culture. The efforts of the Teaching Advancement Board have positively influenced the ways that faculty, academic staff, and students engage in our core mission of teaching and learning.

During the 2015-2016 academic year, I ask that you undertake the following activities and initiatives:

• Campus Teaching Awards Program. The teaching awards program administered by the Board demonstrates the campus’ commitment to teaching excellence by recognizing individuals’ exemplary commitments to student learning. The Board is charged with publicizing the program, evaluating submissions, and recommending award recipients. The Board should continue its efforts to assist nominating units in developing strong cases for their nominees. It should also provide assistance to the Provost’s Office in planning and conducting the annual Celebration of Teaching Excellence event.

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• Provost’s Initiative for Teaching Advancement (PITA) Grant Program. This grant program enables recipients to design, implement, and assess instructional innovations that have a high probability of enhancing education. The Board should give weight to funding projects that align with campus priorities, and that have the prospect of leveraging PITA award resources to obtain external support. The Board is charged with a) promoting the grant program, b) seeking the submission of high quality project proposals, and c) evaluating and recommending proposals for funding. The Board should also assist the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning in finding ways to showcase the achievements of previous years’ PITA grant recipients.

• Distinguished Teacher-Scholars Program. This program honors and supports outstanding instructors who take an active role in promoting effective teaching on campus. The Board is charged with a) promoting the Distinguished Teacher-Scholars Program, b) seeking high quality applications, c) evaluating and recommending successful applications, and d) supporting the current Distinguished Teacher-Scholar, Jennifer Amos, should she seek the Board’s assistance.

• Teaching Advancement Travel Grants Program. Travel grants assist individuals who wish to participate in conferences or workshops that aim primarily to improve teaching and learning outcomes. The Board is charged with a) promoting the travel grants program and evaluating and recommending proposals for funding b) updating the program’s call for proposals such that it is clearer what sort of conferences and conference participation qualify for funding. I ask the Board to conduct a review of the grant program that focuses on the selection criteria and the expectations for awarding the individual grants.

• Faculty Retreat and Grant Program. The Board will be available for consultation with the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning regarding the focus of the annual faculty retreat. In 2014-2015 the Board affirmed the Faculty Retreat Grant Program by designating a portion of the budget to fund the grants. I ask the Board to continue to monitor the success of the program and develop a process for selecting award winners that balances the program’s goals and available resources.

Through these programs and activities the Teaching Advancement Board serves as an advocate and resource to our faculty and staff who are committed to teaching and learning. Careful stewardship of the monies allocated for the Board’s use is critical in this challenging fiscal climate. As the Board prioritizes funding decisions, I ask for careful consideration of efficient and prudent use of these funds. Thank you for your willingness to serve on the Teaching Advancement Board and for your assistance on teaching-related matters throughout the academic year.

Sincerely,

Charles L. Tucker III
Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Innovation