3.7.3 Faculty development

3.7.3 The institution provides ongoing professional development of faculty as teachers, scholars, and practitioners.

Judgment of Compliance

In Compliance

Narrative

The University of Alabama is compliant with Comprehensive Standard 3.7.3 because it (a) supports faculty professional development through diverse opportunities, activities, and financial commitments, and (b) informs and advises faculty of development opportunities.

The purpose of the University’s development activities, offered at the university, college and departmental levels, are to provide means to foster, enhance, as well as create new opportunities to further the faculty community’s research, teaching, and service productivity and excellence. Faculty professional development starts with the arrival on campus of new faculty members initially through faculty/new employee orientation programs as well as development opportunities offered annually/semi-annually during the course of faculty careers. Development activities are supported by the Provost’s Office, the Faculty Resource Center (a division of the Center for Instructional Technology), the University Research Committee, the Office for Sponsored Programs and, periodically, by the dean’s office of individual schools or colleges. Collectively, these diverse and multiple venues/sources of enrichment and development offer a variety of activities, opportunities and programs to support and enhance faculty performance as professionals, teachers, and scholars.

Career Development

Opportunities to have a long-term, positive impact on a faculty member’s career include new faculty orientations; faculty mentoring programs; flexible faculty workload assignments; faculty development leaves; endowed chairs and professorships, and leadership programs. Such programs create a supportive and encouraging environment in which faculty members grow professionally.

An example of a program available early in a faculty member’s career is the Office for Academic Affairs’ First Year Experiences [1] orientation program for new faculty. The program has over two dozen opportunities thought out the academic year and each opportunity is open to all new faculty regardless of status. The opportunities range from meeting university administrators to learning about programs and services available on campus.

Available further along in a faculty members career, and offered through the College of Continuing Studies, is a program called Leadership U. [2] Faculty in leadership positions on campus can apply to participate in Leadership U with the goal of enhance their leadership skills. The program began with the 2010–11 academic year and is open to all faculty and professional staff. Topics covered by Leadership U include:

- The Changing Learning Community
Teaching

All UA faculty have access to the Faculty Resource Center [3], a division within the Center for Instructional Technology. [4] The FRC offers regularly scheduled online tutorials [5] and workshops [6] to train and assist faculty with instructional technology methods and platforms used on campus in addition to supporting and promoting new teaching strategies. Tutorials available include:

- Preparing to use Blackboard
- Blackboard for Instructors
- Testing Tips
- Using Tegrity
- Using Clickers
- TurnItIn
- Lab Monitoring Software
- Blackboard Collaborate
- Respondus
- Classroom Interactive Monitors

Workshops are offered every fall and spring semester and tackle many of the same topics addressed by the tutorials yet these venues provide faculty with the opportunity to interact with subject matter experts and peers in each subject area.

Each year, the Center for Instructional Technology sponsors the Faculty Technology Showcase. [7] This event allows faculty to learn how their colleagues are using technology to enhance learning, conduct research and increase productivity.

Research

The Office for Sponsored Programs (OSP) [8] provides trained grant specialists [9] to each college/school on campus. These professionals are available to work with individual faculty or faculty teams in the identification of funding opportunities, preparation of proposals, budget preparation, etc., with a goal of providing a process that allows the investigator to focus on the technical portion of the proposal.

The OSP and the Office for Research [10] offer a number of programs designed to support, foster, and build the research community on campus. These activities include online or onsite training [11], the Research Administrators Support Group [12], numerous funding source search resources [13], Networking events for cross-disciplinary research [14] and internal funding opportunities. [15] [16] Of particular note are the resources [17] made available to new faculty just beginning their research careers and arrangement [18] made with the university’s Writing Center that allows investigators to send their proposals to a reviewer trained in technical writing.

OSP also offers a number of online resources designed to enhance the research capabilities of faculty. Some of these are:

- Research Development [19]
An internal funding opportunity on the UA campus is made available by the Research Grants Committee (RGC). The RGC accepts proposals for funding to support pilot projects that will lead to external funding or a scholar product. Full-time, tenured, tenure track, and clinical faculty are eligible for RGC funding with priority given to tenure track faculty. Applicants may request funding up to $6,000 each year. Proposal submissions are due January 31 of each year and awards are announced in early April.

Service

Sponsored by the university’s Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility, the Faculty Fellows in Service Learning program is a one year fellowship designed to accelerate the work of faculty members who are eager to develop exemplary curricular approaches to education promoting active and ethical citizenship, social responsibility and engagement by incorporating service learning in their courses. The program aims to intentionally and thoughtfully integrate the philosophy, pedagogy, and process of service learning in the campus academic environment. The Fellows program is structured around a year-long series of meetings (six total) designed to help faculty develop a strong background in service learning and illustrates how to integrate this methodology into courses across the disciplines. Some examples of courses are provided in the supporting documents.

The University’s Division of Community Affairs also engages in promoting and supporting development activities for faculty related to University service. For example the Division of Community Affairs sponsors participation in the annual Engagement Scholarship Consortium Conference and provides seed-funding to faculty for community-based research.

Other

Colleges on the UA campus also support and promote faculty development by supplementing the development opportunities offered by the University. For example, the College of Arts and Sciences offers several career development activities for faculty. For research, the College provides grant writing seminars with an external-funding expert who guides faculty in writing proposals, a publisher-in residence program to give guidance for successful publication, and a funding mechanism to provide support for faculty to achieve excellence in research, scholarship, and creativity activity.

Dissemination of Development Opportunities

Faculty receive information about development opportunities through the websites of the appropriate offices (many of which were mentioned above), through directed email messages and through the weekly campus newsletter called Dialog. Samples of the faculty development opportunities presented in Dialog are provided in the supporting documents.

Supporting Documents

1. First Year Experience (HTML)
2. Leadership U (HTML)
3. Faculty Resource Center (HTML)
4. Center for Instructional Technology (HTML)
5. FRC Online Tutorials (HTML)
6. FRC Workshops (HTML)
7. Faculty Technology Showcase (HTML)
8. Office for Sponsored Programs (HTML)
9. Office for Sponsored Programs Staff Listing (HTML)
10. Office for Research (HTML)
11. Office for Research Training (HTML)
12. Research Administrators Support Group (HTML)
13. Office for Research Funding (HTML)
14. Special Topic Workshops (HTML)
15. Research Grants Committee (HTML)
16. Research Stimulation Program (HTML)
17. New Faculty Resources (HTML)
18. Proposal Editing Services (HTML)
19. Research Development (HTML)
20. Proposal Prep (HTML)
21. Policy and Procedures (HTML)
22. Contract (HTML)
23. 2014 RGC Award Recipients (HTML)
24. Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility (HTML)
25. Faculty Fellows in Service Learning (HTML)
26. 2010–2011 Faculty Fellows in Service Learning (HTML)
27. Community Affairs (HTML)
28. Annual Conference (HTML)
29. Seed Fund Recipients (HTML)
30. Publisher-in-Residence Program (HTML)
31. Grant-Writing Seminars (HTML)
32. CARSCA (HTML)
33. Dialog Example 1 (HTML)
34. Dialog Example 2 (HTML)
35. Dialog Example 3 (HTML)
36. Dialog Example 4 (HTML)