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Brief Comments Regarding the Center for Teaching Effectiveness

Good Morning! I am very very happy to be a part of this program. If for no other reason, this is perhaps the only time that I get a chance to wear my two hats at once: that as an Administrator and the more important one, that as a faculty member.

I came to UT in 1980. I was attracted to this institution because the History Department convinced me that UT would support my scholarship in ways that few other schools would: the possibility of research assistants,, summer research grants, and funds to travel to conferences and to archives. Without question, over the years, URI has greatly assisted my work as a scholar.

Very early on, also, I was told that the History Department, the College of Liberal Arts, and indeed the entire University was committed to Undergraduate Teaching. I had been around the block a little bit, so I was somewhat skeptical about this "commitment." Yet, my colleagues took very seriously how I performed in my classes.

At some point I heard about the Center for Teaching Effectiveness. If nothing else, I decided, the presence of this Center made a nice statement. But, I quickly discovered that this was an invaluable resource. I am not sure how my first contact with the Center was made, but at some point I agreed to have Dr. Karron Lewis attend my class and do an evaluation of me. I must admit that this made me rather nervous, but it most surely helped me eliminate some of my shortcomings.



Since assuming the post of Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education, I have had far more contact with the Center. We have an outstanding, experienced--though they are individually all very young people-- team. In fact, Marilla is often called upon by other institutions to help them create or improve their Centers. I represent UT in the Alliance for Undergraduate Education, and people at these schools most surely know about our Center.

The Deans and Chairs of your Colleges and Schools are very familiar with the Center. Over and over again, I have heard the President say that before a certain candidate can be promoted he/she needs to go and receive assistance from the Center.

The mission statement of the Center says: "The primary purpose of the Center for Teaching Effectiveness is to assist the teaching staff of the University in providing instruction which is consistent with the best information on quality teaching and learning at the post-secondary level. To accomplish this mission, the Center provides both basic and advanced information about the teaching/learning process through an array of formats, including group seminars, classes, self-study materials and individual consultation on specific questions." As you will discover, starting this morning, the Center for Teaching Effectiveness most surely is meeting its mandate.