March 22, 2016

TO: Texas Tech Instructional Faculty

FROM: Lawrence Schovanec, Provost
Genevieve Durham DeCesaro, Vice Provost
Melanie Hart, Vice Provost

RE: Forum on Teaching Excellence and Student Success

On March 23, 2016 from 3:30-5:00, a Forum on Teaching Excellence and Student Success will be held in the Matador Room. This the first in a series of campus conversations on how we as an institution can foster excellence in teaching and high impact educational experiences that promote student learning and success at Texas Tech. Moderators for the panel will be Vice Provosts Melanie Hart and Genevieve Durham DeCesaro. The faculty panelists are: Dr. Scott Burris, Dr. Idoia Elola, Dr. Tanja Karp, Dr. William Westney, and Dr. Aliza Wong

The recent attainment of the Carnegie Foundation’s ‘Highest Research Activity’ designation is evidence of Texas Tech’s achievement in areas of scholarship, research and graduate education. But Texas Tech’s Tier One aspirations can also be strengthened by a university wide focus on excellent teaching and its relationship to student success. Texas Tech has a number of institutional resources, such as the Texas Tech Teaching Academy, the TLPDC, and the Student Success Collaborative that promote teaching excellence and student success. However, an aim of the Forum is to bring greater attention to the concerns, questions and successes expressed by faculty members when considering how to promote and support efforts that create a signature experience for Texas Tech students.

As a means of introducing the conversation, each panelist will have the opportunity to respond to the general question: “Why is teaching important?” The panelists will then respond to a series of follow-up questions, including:

- What are your biggest challenges with promoting teaching excellence?
- How is TTU working to promote the relationship between teaching excellence and student success? How could we do more?
- How do you think the importance of excellent teaching is perceived across the university?
- How will our identity as a Tier 1 research university affect the way we understand teaching and student success?
- How is the perception that focusing on teaching will compromise our research aspirations reflected, if at all, in our institutional policies and/or procedures?
- How might a shift in our institutional culture (or lack thereof) of peer evaluation of teaching support teaching excellence?
- What effect will a growth in graduate students have on a sustained effort to improve teaching across campus?
What resources do you feel are currently available to you as a faculty member who is interested in promoting teaching excellence and its effect on student success?

The moderators will then facilitate questions and participation from the audience.

We hope you will be able to attend.