

Teaching Academy Executive Council Minutes

October 31, 2025

Members Present:

Ameri Gurley, Jeffrey Harper, Shane Blum, Vijay Hegde, Chris Smith, Yuan Shu, Julie Chang, Lisa Low, Alan Barenberg, Feruzan Irani Williams, Suzanne Tapp

Members Not Present: Fanni Coward, Nancy Soonpaa, Cindy Akers, Charles Crews

Welcome and Group Activity:

Ameri welcomed the group and started with some facts on how different generations celebrate Halloween.

Approval of Minutes:

Jeffrey Harper moved to approve the minutes from September 19th; Yuan Shu seconded. The council approved the September minutes.

Piper Award Review Committee Report:

Dom Casadonte shared that this year's nominee selection process went smoothly and the committee was unanimous in their decision. There are a few changes they'd like to make to the review process and will work to update it before the next application cycle. The main updates are a closer alignment of the review process and narrowing the details required on the form, like a more curated CV and asking specific questions about undergrad courses.

Connecting With Today's Students:

Ameri updated the council on the two tabling sessions held to engage with students. Six Teaching Academy members volunteered for the first one and it seemed like a success. Students seemed interested in what the Teaching Academy was and conversations were fruitful. The LA program facilitated the second session and had a more formal survey.

Burns Conference Recap:

Suzanne Tapp shared that attendance for this year was a little lower than previous years, but Ann Austin was an amazing speaker. The sessions focused on how teaching evaluations can be a pathway to better teaching and Lindsay Slaughter in Plant and Soil Sciences presented on their departmental teaching plan. Dr. Austin also met with several Vice Provosts and discussed the future of departmental teaching plans. Several departments are currently developing their own plans to be implemented next year.

Bylaws Update:

With the support of the Council Chair, Chair Elect, and Past Chair, Suzanne Tapp proposed to update the bylaws to include a position on the Executive Council that would allow her to continue serving as a liaison to the Provost's Office and as an aid to the new TLPDC director during this transition period. The council was all in agreement and decided on the following language for a new item in the bylaws:

"The Office of the Provost shall appoint an ex officio liaison to the Executive Council."

Alan Barenberg moved to add this item to the bylaws as item 4.1.3; Chris Smith seconded. All members voted in favor and the motion passed.

Challenge Coins:

Ameri commissioned challenge coins as a gift for all Teaching Academy members serving on the Executive Council and award committees this year. They are branded with the statement “Discover Your Why” as a reminder for this year’s theme.

Adjourn:

Ameri adjourned the meeting.

Minutes submitted by Molly Jacobs.