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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Department Teaching Excellence Award Committee  
FROM: Jeffrey Smitten, Head  
DATE: February 11, 2003  
RE: Department Teaching Award Pre-Proposal

The purpose of this memo is briefly to summarize the activities the Department of English has undertaken during 2001-2002 that demonstrate commitment to teaching excellence. The summary is organized around the rubrics involving teaching excellence identified in the award announcement. The summary is illustrative of the activities the department has undertaken in this one year and is not an exhaustive list.

### 1. Commitment to sustained excellence in teaching and learning

- Received the first departmental "Golden Mouse" Award in 2001 for innovations in teaching, learning, and technology
- Received eight faculty grants totaling more than \$150,000 specifically earmarked for improving teaching and learning
- Required demonstrated teaching excellence by all faculty candidates in the hiring process
- Formulated a new mission statement, defining its commitment to teaching
- Continued to receive strong student evaluations

### 2. Ongoing assessment and improvement of teaching and learning quality

- Instituted an alumni database that tracks the career and achievements of hundreds of the department's graduates
- Maintained an ongoing program in which alumni are invited to return to campus to talk with undergraduate and graduate students
- Conducted annual assessment reviews for all programs in the department, including all general education courses, with results posted on the department web site
- Maintained a university-wide Writing Center to support student writing and learning activities, including the creation of The Online Tutor, a unique management system that allows students to make appointments, confer with tutors, and collaboratively revise papers online

### 3. Faculty development for teaching

- Provided a week-long orientation course for new graduate instructors, lecturers, and professorial faculty
- Hosted the Bennion Workshop for area high school teachers to heighten their awareness of diversity in the classroom and published the proceedings in a special issue of the *Utah English Journal*
- Hosted the Tanner Symposium on the topic of "The Search for a Common Language: Environmental Writing and Education"
- Sponsored a day-long retreat for all Concurrent Enrollment high school teachers to support the visits of the department's Concurrent Enrollment Coordinator
- Presented 40 papers at professional meetings on the topic of teaching and learning
- Published 3 books and 21 articles and chapters on the topic of teaching and learning

#### 4. Provision of resources for students

- Maintained a comprehensive internship program staffed by a 25% time adviser, which awarded 35 internships
- Awarded over \$64,000 in undergraduate and graduate scholarship support to more than 40 students
- Created an innovative arrangement with IBM allowing students to complete their education while working off campus on internships
- Received a Pacesetter Award from the national Society for Technical Communication for our student chapter's development of a newsletter
- Together with ASUSU, sponsored at university-wide Creative Writing Contest, awarding scholarships and cash prizes for outstanding writing
- In conjunction with the Jenny and Thad Box Creative Writing Scholarship, sponsored a competition for the best work of creative nonfiction
- Sponsored fellowships and internships for students to work on the professional journals supported by the department, including *Western American Literature*, *Petroglyph: A Journal of Creative Nature and Scientific Writing*, and *Western Folklore*
- Created a Speakers Series, providing students an opportunity to engage with visiting and resident faculty
- Together with the Department of Theatre Arts, hosted the Actors from the London Stage for one week, including stage performances and classroom visits
- Created an expanded study/meeting area for students in Ray B. West
- Supported a Writing Center, a drop-in computer lab, and a networked classroom for student use
- Provided an online classroom environment and technical support for every teacher and student in the department plus full department information available through a large interactive web site
- Developed and staffed a usability research laboratory to support students in the Professional and Technical Communication Program

#### 5. Linking discovery, creative activity, and engagement with teaching and learning for the benefit of students

- Supported the writing, revision, and presentation of 13 graduate student papers and 4 undergraduate papers at professional meetings
- Supported a panel of student presentations at the Student Academic Showcase sponsored by the Honors Program
- Published and distributed the winning entries in the Creative Writing Contest in a collection titled *Windows on the Mind*
- Engaged folklore students in a national program to collect responses to the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and to present them to the Library of Congress
- Supported current and former graduate students in presenting "Students Mentoring Students: A Generational Perspective of Writing Program Administration," a panel at the national meeting of the Council of Writing Program Administrators based on their experience at USU
- Formed an ongoing partnership with Cache Valley Learning Center to develop a nature-writing curriculum
- Involved four folklore graduate students in the award-winning Bear River Heritage Area fieldwork project
- Engaged students in the teacher supervision program as online mentors in an innovative project with minority students and second-language acquisition
- Engaged Hubbard Scholarship winners in an active role in the Tanner Symposium on environmental writing and education
- Sponsored a Multimedia Projects Fair for students in Professional and Technical Writing, featuring products with commercial potential