

## Defining Faculty Excellence: The Talents of Teaching

The tenure process is organized around a clearly articulated vision of CCC faculty excellence, called the **Talents of Teaching**. Based on models of best practices and designed entirely by CCC faculty, the Talents of Teaching reflect CCC institutional mission and values and thus act as an anchor for the tenure process. Through the tenure process, tenure track faculty members will learn about the Talents of Teaching, engage in thoughtful discussions around the Talents, and use the Talents as touchstones for assessing individual strengths and areas for growth. Over the course of their time on the tenure track, faculty members work to create an evidence-based document called the *Argument for Tenure* which demonstrates competence in the Talents of Teaching.

## Talents of Teaching

### History and Purpose of the Talents

During the Spring 2010 semester, a team of CCC faculty met with representatives of Valencia College, a multi-campus college system in Florida similar to CCC. The CCC faculty team was impressed with the sophisticated level of professional development that Valencia offered to their faculty members, all of which was organized around the “Essential Competencies of a Valencia Educator.” Embracing the value of establishing a set of core competencies that reflect our institutional mission and values, faculty from around the district worked to define the Talents of Teaching. After several semesters of drafting and refinement, the Talents of Teaching represent both best practices in educational research, and the elements that we, as City College of Chicago teachers, find most fundamental to our practice.

The Talents of Teaching represent excellent practices from educational research and elements that City Colleges of Chicago educators find most fundamental to their practices. The Talents are not outcomes, but rather aspirational statements that articulate exemplary faculty practices. Their purpose is to guide faculty development activities and to provide a foundation for faculty peer evaluation. As a living document, these statements are always open to review and revision by faculty bodies such as the Faculty Council of the City Colleges of Chicago (FC4).

The Talents of Teaching are:

1. Teaching and Learning
2. Measuring Learning
3. Diversity, Inclusion, Respect, and Student Support
4. Academic Citizenship, Shared Governance, and Leadership
5. Content Expertise and Lifelong Learning

## Teaching and Learning

CCC faculty members develop and use highly effective teaching strategies that meet students' diverse needs and that promote the acquisition and application of knowledge and the development of critical and creative thinking and problem-solving skills. They carefully design courses to meet learning outcomes and promote students' active participation in their own learning. They create an effective learning environment that fosters students' intellectual curiosity, helps students to problem solve using discipline-specific thinking strategies, and encourages students to challenge sources and confront their own assumptions.

## Measuring Learning

CCC faculty members employ a variety of formative and summative assessments to ensure that classroom instruction leads to student learning and the attainment of the student learning outcomes for the course. They carefully select and use a variety of appropriate assessment instruments, communicate clear assignment expectations and evaluation criteria, provide students ample and timely feedback, and evaluate and improve assessment activities and grading practices.

## Diversity, Inclusion, Respect, and Student Support

CCC faculty members help students reach their academic, personal, and career goals and foster a safe environment that respects the diversity of people and ideas by modeling respect for all students and conveying confidence in every student's ability to learn. They employ approaches that consider how learning is affected by students' motivations, attitudes, perceptions, values, and behaviors; and help students overcome obstacles by connecting them to appropriate resources.

## Academic Citizenship, Shared Governance, and Leadership

CCC faculty members enrich the CCC community by participating actively in departmental, college, and/or district committees and activities; they contribute to and provide leadership in their academic and professional communities, and they promote collaboration and teamwork among members of these communities. CCC faculty members maintain leadership organizations that determine and maintain standards of academic integrity and excellence and that participate in policy and curriculum development.

## Content Expertise and Lifelong Learning

CCC faculty members demonstrate content-area expertise and continually grow intellectually by remaining current within their fields, expanding their content-area knowledge, studying teaching and learning, and engaging in self-evaluation and goal setting. They engage in and model intellectual curiosity and express passion for their disciplines and for learning in general.

## Summary

These five Talents of Teaching serve to increase student success and maintain institutional health. The first two Talents, *Teaching and Learning* and *Measuring Learning*, are meant to guide faculty towards improving instructional effectiveness. The third Talent, *Diversity, Inclusion, Respect and Student Support*, aims to meet the needs of all CCC students. The fourth Talent, *Academic Citizenship, Shared Governance, and Leadership*, meets the needs of both faculty and the institution as a whole by ensuring the faculty have a voice in all curricular matters and maintaining a process through which academic initiatives can move forward with integrity. The final Talent, *Content Expertise and Lifelong Learning*, seeks to maintain a strong, qualified, highly effective faculty body dedicated to continued improvement.

Although the Talents of Teaching were initially designed as aspirational statements for faculty, the institution as a whole must strive toward excellence in the Talents. It is only through faculty, administration, and staff collaboratively working towards this common goal that the CCC will become a world-class academic institution.