

Students Consulting on Teaching

Faculty Handbook

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Students Consulting on Teaching

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Introduction to the Program

The Utah Valley University Faculty Center provides a program in which student consultants respond to professors' invitations to gather data on classroom activities and give them feedback.

Students Consulting on Teaching (SCOT) is dedicated to quality education at UVU and to providing faculty members with information that helps them have a better sense of what is happening in their classrooms. The program is offered to all instructors at the university; faculty members from every college have participated.

Student consultants are carefully selected UVU students who are interested in the teaching and learning process. They have been trained by the Center for Teaching and Learning to work in the program and can serve as excellent resources to faculty members, providing valuable data to supplement student evaluations and peer reviews.

Some of the advantages of this program are as follows:

- (1) Because the student consultants are not working for a grade, they provide an objective perspective.
- (2) Students offer a helpful perspective because they have experienced a wide range of college teaching.
- (3) The program can serve as a helpful introduction to those interested in majors similar to consulting, teaching, communications, Behavioral Science, or Public Relations.

If you have conceptual questions of a general nature or ideas you want to share, please call SCOT director Ursula Sorensen at 863 8372. For logistical details, questions, or information, please call the Students Consulting on Teaching student coordinator at 863-6020.

Please read on to learn more about the benefits of the Students Consulting on Teaching. We hope this program will provide you with a fresh way to research and enhance your students' learning. We look forward to working with you.

Ursula Sorensen
UVU Faculty Center

Faculty/Instructor Comments on Students Consulting on Teaching

“A good method for discovering what’s going on inside the students’ minds.”
–*Political Science*

“It was a positive experience for me and my students. These were powerful suggestions!”
–*Dance*

“It allows me to capture the students’ perspective on my courses in a non-threatening way.”
–*Linguistics*

“[I was] impressed with their frank and helpful evaluation of my lectures. Their perspective is valuable as they are students themselves.”
–*Chemistry*

“The student observer added a new dimension to the evaluation process.”
–*Institute of Public Management*

“It was helpful to have a student’s open perspective on the course.”
–*Microbiology*

“I was given ideas and suggestions in areas that I had never been aware of before. Your student observer was wonderful. Very cooperative and helpful!”
–*Recreation Management & Youth Leadership*

“[They are] fine observers who give great feedback so that I can make adjustments.”
–*Religious Education*

“It [has] constantly reminded me to improve! Also great feedback and encouragement! The student observers were genuine and sincerely interested in helping me improve the class.”
–*Elementary Education*

“I have had student observers video tape, observe and record, and interview students in two of my classes. I have found their assistance to be almost priceless in learning from my mistakes, and building on my strengths as a teacher. It is very conducive to improving the quality of one’s teaching abilities.”
–*Music*

How the Program Works

Requesting a Consultant

- Instructors who wish to participate in the SCOT Program select an option from *Requesting a Student Consultant* (in this handbook) and fill out the form returning it to scot@uvu.edu or room LI 415. The form is also available online at uvu.edu/facultycenter.
- The instructor receives a handbook via email that describes the program further and outlines the role of the student consultant. The instructor also receives an instructor evaluation form to be completed and returned upon discontinuation of SCOT services.
- The SCOT coordinator assigns a student consultant to the instructor according to the class time and the observer's availability.
- The SCOT coordinator gives the student consultant the name, office address, email address and campus telephone number of the instructor and the student consultant arranges for an initial visit with him/her. The coordinator also gives the student consultants name, telephone number, and email address to the instructor.

Consultation Process

- The instructor and student consultant meet together to get acquainted and clarify expectations, including setting up a time for a follow-up appointment.
- The student consultant visits the instructor's class, gathers the information appropriate to the option(s) that the instructor selected, and prepares feedback for the instructor. S/he provides the SCOT student coordinator with a copy of this feedback.
- The student consultant meets with the instructor to provide him/her with feedback.
- The instructor chooses to continue the consultation with the same options, select another option or discontinue participation. The instructor may also elect to work with a different student consultant to get another perspective.

Final Evaluation

- When the instructor has the information s/he needs and is ready to discontinue participation, s/he fills out the evaluation form sent via email (also in this handbook) and returns it to LI 415, or emails it to Kristie Binks scot@uvu.edu
- The instructor may also pre-arrange for a student consultant for the upcoming semester/term.

Steps for Participating in the SCOT Program

Step 1: Selecting an Option

There are several possibilities for you to consider as you envision ways to use your SCOT student consultant. These include:

1. *Recorder/Observer:* The Student Consultant records in writing what went on in the classroom (e.g., chronology of classroom activities; time spent in questioning, board work, small group discussion, etc.) and gives the record to the instructor. In this case, The SCOT describes rather than evaluates.
2. *Faux Student:* The SCOT takes notes as if s/he was a student in the class and returns them to the instructor.
3. *Filmmaker:* The SCOT films the class, creating a videotape for the instructor. The instructor may invite the SCOT to watch and discuss the tape.
4. *Focus Group:* The instructor leaves the classroom for the last fifteen minutes of class while the SCOT conducts interviews with students to assess how well they are learning and how well they perceive the class. The consultant asks the students to respond verbally and in writing to the following questions:
 1. What helps your learning in this class?
 2. What hinders your learning in this class?
 3. What suggestions do you have for this class?
5. *Primed Student:* The SCOT meets with the professor prior to class to receive pointers on what to watch for (e.g., How often do certain kinds of students respond? Why aren't the students getting involved in the discussion? Are the students asking questions among themselves? What hinders their learning? Is the instructor helping students make connections between the course materials and personal application?)
6. *Student consultant:* The instructor asks the SCOT for evaluative feedback on classroom activities or particular learning issues of concern.
7. *Other* (Classroom Research, Reflective Teaching, Action Research)

Step 2: Meeting Your Student Consultant

We recommend that you meet briefly with your student consultant prior to her/his first visit to your class. Your student consultant will contact you to arrange this meeting. In this meeting it would be helpful to:

- Get acquainted with each other and the Students Consulting on Teaching program
- Discuss course goals
- Clarify each others' expectations
- Verify details such as class time and place, etc.
- Plan a follow-up meeting

Remember that this program is “professor-driven.” Student consultants are involved in the program to serve you. They may have ideas and suggestions, but their role is to assist you in getting what you want out of the program. For them to be most helpful to you, you may want to share with them your course objectives, course syllabus, and any concerns or problem areas you have identified.

Student consultants are committed to keeping the entire consultation process confidential. They recognize that this service and the information gathered thereby are for *your* use only.

Step 3: Receiving Feedback

After the student consultant visits your class, meet with him/her for a feedback session. Your student consultant can provide several types of feedback, ranging from simply descriptive observations of the class to recommendations for improvement. For most options, they will provide you with a written report.

The nature of the feedback depends on the option you select. For example, if you select the interviewer option, you will receive a report of comments and suggestions from students in your class. If you select the filmmaker option, you will receive a videotape of your class session. You can either review the videotape by yourself or watch it with your student consultant and discuss it together. Clarifying your feedback preference in your initial meeting will ensure that you get the feedback you need.

Step 4: Continuing, Selecting Another Option, or Discontinuing the Program

Once again, this program is professor-driven. We suggest that you use your student consultant for more than one observation so they can collect more data. If you are interested in trying other options, you are welcome to continue with the program. Simply discuss the options you would like to try next with your student consultant and s/he will assist you. You may ask to work with a different student consultant to get a different perspective.

Step 5: Evaluating Students Consulting on Teaching

When you are ready to discontinue your participation, inform your student consultant, fill out the evaluation form sent via email and return it to the Student Coordinators office on LI 215 (or email it to scot@uvu.edu).

Form: Requesting a Student Consultant

Date:

Name _____ Phone: _____ Office _____

E-mail address _____ Office Hrs. _____

May the student call you at home if necessary? No _____ Yes, my Home Phone _____

Course Information

Course Title _____

Class Days and Times _____ Class Location _____

Semester/Term _____ Year _____ Approximate number of students in class _____

Evaluation Options

Please circle all that you are interested in:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Recorder/Observer | 5. Primed Student |
| 2. Faux Student | 6. Student Consultant |
| 3. Filmmaker | 7. Other: |
| 4. Interviewer | |

Email to scot@uvu.edu or LI 415

Helpful References

1. *7 Principles For Good Practice in Undergraduate Education* (available online at fc.byu.edu/tpages/tchlrn/7princip.htm and as a 10-page booklet available from the BYU Center for Teaching and Learning).
2. "Applying the Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education," *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, Number 47, Fall 1991, Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers.
3. Angelo, Thomas, *A "Teacher's Dozen,"* re-printed by permission from the *American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) Bulletin*, Volume 45, Number 8, April 1993, (Available from the Center for Teaching and Learning).
4. Light, J.Richard, *The Harvard Assessment Seminars*, Harvard University, Graduate School of Education and Kennedy School of Government, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138.
5. Fink, L. Dee, and Lynn Sorenson, *Planning Your Course: A Decision Guide* (Available from the BYU Center for Teaching and Learning).
6. Harb, J.N., Terry, R.E., Hurt, P.K., Williamson, K.J., *Teaching Through the Cycle*, Brigham Young University Press, Provo, Utah, 1991 (Available from the Dean's Office, College of Engineering).