

## **Teaching Philosophy and Agenda**

### *School of Business Promotion and Tenure Criteria*

The School of Business at Indiana University Kokomo is a small AACSB accredited department consisting of eight full time faculty and two part time faculty/administrators (the Dean and I). In order to gain tenure in the School of Business, the Promotion and Tenure criteria sets forth three areas of concern; teaching, research and service. The faculty member must show excellence in one of the areas and satisfactory in the other two areas. I plan to claim excellence in teaching and satisfactory in research and service. You can find my justification for satisfactory research in the Research Philosophy and Agenda document. In terms of the criteria for “excellence” in teaching adopted by the IU Kokomo School of Business, the criteria states:

“If teaching is the primary criterion, it should be, according to the IU Handbook, distinctly superior to that of effective teachers at this and other major institutions. Distinctly superior/excellent means that the faculty member has received consistent acclaim and public recognition for achievements in teaching. A wide range of evidence typically accompanies distinctly superior performance. (See IC, Evidence of Teaching Performance)”

I.C. Evidence of Teaching Performance lists the following examples of acceptable evidence of teaching (I have listed only the examples that apply to my case):

1. Course and curricular development
2. Innovation in teaching and learning concepts and applications
3. Controlled evaluations by students via formal instruments and including accompanying comments
5. Recognition by peers for teaching achievements
7. Local, regional or national teaching awards
8. Participation in projects and activities related to teaching improvement and/or currency in one’s teaching field
10. Advising students
12. Presentations and papers related to teaching in one’s field
15. Maintaining high ethical/professional standards and an appropriate level of rigor in one’s classes and with students outside the class
16. Consistent discharge of faculty responsibility, as in meeting classes, being prepared for class, handling exams and assignments in a timely manner, appropriately assessing student performances, meeting university and School requirements for reporting and recording, having a course syllabus and following it to the extent possible, and having and observing office hours.

### *Teaching Philosophy*

I see my teaching as a work in progress. Every semester I make changes to my courses based on things I learned the previous semester. I have spent a great deal of time working on L201, Legal Environment of Business and L303, Commercial Law. In my mind, L201 is an important course for me to focus on since it is the only course required of all business students. Whereas, L303 is only required for accounting students and the other courses I teach, Employment Law and Cyber Law are electives. I use L201 to teach a critical thinking skill I developed called “Team Based Critical Analysis”. This teaching methodology is a combination of the IRAC teaching method taught in law school and the Team Based Learning method commonly used in the sciences. I worked with the Center of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (CTLA) my first year at IU Kokomo to develop this new teaching methodology. Recently, Dr. Cox and I wrote a research paper that summarizes the teaching process and assessment of learning. This paper will be under review by the end of summer.

Essentially, I focus on the student’s ability to critically think and reason. To me, their conclusion is not as important as the process they used to obtain that answer. I spend a significant amount of time in my classes focusing on “analysis” and “application”. One of the critical skills the students learn is how to use evidence based argument. I explain to them that in order to be persuasive they must be able to support their position with evidence. I teach them how to support their arguments by linking their position to facts and law (or rules). It is my goal, that by the end of the semester, the students will be thinking in a new way, a way in which they naturally make supported arguments rather than conclusory statements. The class is very challenging and most students enjoy the experience although they tend to complain about the rigor and amount of work that is involved.

I am pleased with my teaching evaluations and my comparison to the excellent faculty we have in the School of Business. Although teaching evaluations are important to me, I am more struck by the peer evaluations I have received from my colleagues and personal emails I have received from my students. In terms of my peer evaluations, my colleagues have noted my passion for learning and my commitment to student assessment and retention of learning. I have consistently been praised for my teaching by my colleagues and appreciate their willingness to sit in my classes and evaluate my performance.

In terms of the personal emails I receive from my students, I am most excited about the level of engagement my students have with the law. I firmly believe that the level of engagement my students demonstrate is significantly increased because of my use of Team Based Critical Analysis. I have received numerous emails from students, both current and former, telling me about an article they read or heard about in the media that had to do with material they learned in class. I do not recall having this level of engagement prior to changing my teaching method. Moreover, prior to the change of my teaching method, the student comments often stated that they enjoyed my class, they enjoyed my enthusiasm for the law and they found the class interesting. Since the launch of my new teaching method I still get those comments but now I am also receiving comments from students that say how much they learned in class and many students are actually citing the IRAC method and saying how much evidence based argument has improved their ability to communicate in their personal and professional lives. (All teaching evaluation comments are attached). This change is precisely what I was hoping for when I developed Team Based Critical Analysis. It is my goal to create a dynamic, engaged and active

learning environment for my students because I believe this type of environment improves learning and retention of knowledge. In addition, as my pedagogical paper states, assessment of the teaching method supports the contention that these goals are being reached in my law classes.

In summation, I enjoy teaching and have a sincere concern for my students. I take my responsibilities seriously and strive to ensure my students are learning the basics about the law, are able to retain this information for future use, and have developed the ability to reason and apply significant facts to the relevant law or rules. I do not wish to simply teach my students, rather I desire to open their minds and cause them to see the world around them differently than they did before my class.

### *Evidence of Meeting Teaching Criteria*

#### #1. Course and curricular development

##### **Legal Environment of Business Development – L201**

I use L201 to teach a critical thinking skill I have developed called Team Based Critical Analysis. This teaching methodology is a combination of the IRAC teaching method taught in law school and Team Based Learning method commonly used in the sciences. I worked with the Center for Teaching, Learning and Assessment (CTLA) my first year at IU Kokomo to develop this new teaching methodology. The teaching evaluations for L201 have consistently been excellent semester after semester.

After I developed the method I studied the learning outcomes using assessment tools, qualitative feedback and student evaluations. Every year, the method was tweaked to provide a better outcome in the next year. I have completed the study and have co-authored a pedagogical paper that provides evidence for the hypothesis that Team Based Critical Analysis improves learning, retention of learning and student engagement. This paper is expected to be under review by the end of summer 2011.

##### **Employment Law Development – L406**

I have also developed a new course for M.B.A. and undergraduate students in Employment Law. This course will give the students an in depth look at cases and problems dealing with employment law in the workplace. This class launched for the first time in spring 2010 for undergraduate students. I taught it again in spring 2011 for undergraduate students. The teaching evaluations for both years were excellent. I am scheduled to teach Employment Law for the M.B.A. students in the summer of 2012. I assisted the publisher in reviewing part of the course textbook for completeness, relevancy and errors. I am using a management textbook that is well written in the law to further benefit the students in that the law is being taught from a management perspective rather than merely a legal perspective. It is important to me that my students learn the law from a uniquely business perspective since they are not going to be future lawyers, rather future business managers. In addition, I added a service learning component to the course by having the students conduct workplace violence research and present their findings at the annual Take Back the Night/Angel Walk event which benefits Family Service Association of Howard County. The event raised over \$28,000 and had over 600 people in attendance. See letter from Kat Stremiecki attached.

### **M.B.A. Study Abroad Trip Development**

I have developed a study abroad trip to Istanbul Turkey for M.B.A. students enrolled in five regional Indiana University campuses. This is the first time regional business schools have come together to offset the costs of traveling abroad which better serves our students by reducing the costs of the study abroad program therefore allowing more students to participate. I have developed the entire program from which course should be offered to what the experience in Istanbul will be like. I have spent over a year communicating with various business leaders and university faculty in Turkey to assist me in designing the trip, which will take place in May 2012. In April, 2011, I was awarded a \$3,000 program development grant through Indiana University Office of International Study to travel to Istanbul Turkey in August 2011 to set up and finalize the plans for the May 2012 trip.

### **Commercial Law – L303**

I have agreed to teach Commercial Law online in odd numbered years beginning fall 2011. In order to teach online effectively I completed a four week online course through our Center for Teaching, Learning and Assessment called “Online Course Strategies Workshop”. See workshop certificate attached.

### **Student Motivation**

In order to give students added incentive to do well in my classes, I award the top student in each law class, as determined by the final grade (not including extra credit), a certificate called the Blue Book Award Winner. I find that students appreciate being commended for the hard work they do in my classes. Although this is something I do and is not officially recognized by the university, I have found students use these awards by listing them on their resume and by asking me to be a reference for them for scholarships, other awards and in job interviews.

#2 Innovation in teaching and learning concepts and applications

### **Team Based Critical Analysis**

I created a specific method for teaching the legal environment of business course at Indiana University Kokomo. As described previously, this teaching methodology is a combination of the IRAC teaching method taught in law school and Team Based Learning method commonly used in the sciences. I worked with the Center for Teaching, Learning and Assessment my first year at IU Kokomo to develop this new teaching method. I have presented my research relative to my teaching method at the annual ALSB conference, at a faculty conference for excellence in teaching at Indiana University Kokomo and then again at the Edward C. Moore Symposium on Excellence in Teaching at IUPUI. During the faculty conference at IU Kokomo, I had twenty-two students come to campus on a Friday morning at 9am to perform Team Based Critical Analysis for the conference participants. The presentation was excellent as it gave participants an opportunity to actually see what I do in the classroom in terms of the group learning component. After the presentation the Executive Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Sue Sciame-Giesecke, commended my ability to get twenty-two undergraduate students to come to campus early on a Friday morning (the IU Kokomo campus did not have classes scheduled on Fridays at that time). Dr. Sciame-Giesecke stated that it was a testament to my teaching ability that such a large number of students participated in the faculty presentation.

In regards to the Edward C. Moore Symposium, I brought two student presenters with me. This time, instead of showing what the group work component looked like, the student presenters explained how Team Based Critical Analysis works and why they liked the method. This presentation was also well received by the conference participants. In fact, one of the conference participants, a dental school faculty member, went back to her Department Chair and convinced him to invite me to the Dental School to present my teaching method to the dental school faculty. I was told that the Dental School is considering adopting my teaching method as a way to teach their dental students. See Pratibha Varma-Nelson letter and Moore Symposium conference evaluations attached. See Jeffry Bennett letter attached.

#3 Controlled evaluations by students via formal instruments and including accompanying comments.

See attached 2006-present data for the following: grid of all teaching evaluations, class enrollment numbers, normative data for the department and teaching comments.

#5 Recognition by peers for teaching achievements

See peer evaluations attached.

#7 Local, regional or national teaching awards

The Trustees Teaching Award was established by the Board of Trustees of Indiana University to be awarded to no more than 6% of tenured and tenure-track faculty members and 6% of full-time lecturers and clinical faculty members who have demonstrated that they were the campus' best teachers during the previous calendar year.

In 2011, I was a recipient of the Trustees Teaching Award for excellence in teaching during 2010. See award letter attached.

#8 Participation in projects and activities related to teaching improvement and/or currency in one's teaching field

### **2011 Activities**

March 28, 2011 CTLA Brown Bag on the Role of Debate Participation in Student Learning and Attitudes by Kathy Holcomb, Psychology

April 13, 2011 IU Kokomo FACET luncheon and information session for prospective members

### **2010 Activities**

February 20, 2010 3 hours of General CLE credit by Peoria County Bar Association

April 12, 2010 IU Kokomo FACET luncheon and information session for prospective members

June 11, 2010 CTLA workshop by Angela McGlynn on Motivating and Preparing Today's Students for College Success

October 4, 2010 CTLA Brown Bag on Using Mid-semester Feedback to Inform Your Teaching

October 22, 2010 attended TriState ALSB conference

November 3, 2010 CTLA Brown Bag on Multicultural Teaching by Kathy Parkison and Dianne Roden

November 10, 2010 Diversity Workshop hosted by Student Activities

December 2, 2010 Team Based Learning special interest group meeting hosted by CTLA

### **2009 Activities**

August 4-8, 2009 7 hours of General CLE credit at ALSB International Conference Denver, CO.

October 12, 2009 2 hours of Ethics CLE credit Peoria County Bar Association

October 22, 2009 4.5 hours of General CLE credit at Southern Illinois University

### **2008 Activities**

April 14, 2008 leadership lecture through the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching by Bill Plater

August 13-17, 2008 6 hours of General CLE credit at ALSB International Conference Long Beach, CA

### **2007 Activities**

June, 2007 attended First Annual IU Kokomo Faculty Conference

August 2007 attended ALSB International Conference, Indianapolis, IN

September 2007 attended AACSB Continuous Improvement Conference St. Louis, MO

November 2007 attended Team Based Learning workshop hosted by CTLA

### **2006 Activities**

September, 2006 attended a two day technology workshop hosted by CTLA

September 2006 attended AACSB Continuous Improvement Conference Milwaukee, WI

### **#10 Advising Students**

As the only law professor on campus, I regularly meet with students to discuss their interest in attending law school. In addition, I regularly meet with students to discuss career options, review their resume, and write letters of recommendation.

### **#12 Presentations and papers related to teaching in one's field**

Ficht, Linda S., Zell, Craig, McClurg, Sarah, (February, 2011). Team Based Critical Analysis: A New Look at Evidence Based Argument. Presented at the *Edward C. Moore Symposium on Excellence in Teaching*, IUPUI, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Ficht, Linda S, Fall 2010 section of Legal Environment of Business Class. (November, 2010). Team Based Critical Analysis: A New Look at Evidence Based Argument. Presented at the *3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Kokomo Faculty Conference*, Kokomo, Indiana.

Ficht, Linda S., Cox, Steve R. (August, 2009). Team Based Critical Analysis: A New Look at Evidence Based Argument. Presented at the *Academy of Legal Studies in Business Conference*, Denver, Colorado.

In addition, I have been invited on September 23, 2011 to give a presentation to the Indiana University School of Dentistry enrichment program on “Team Based Critical Analysis”, the teaching method I created for business law. I was told that the Dental School is considering adopting my teaching method in its instruction of dental students. This invitation came as a result of meeting one of the dental school faculty who attended my teaching presentation at the Edward C. Moore Symposium on Excellence in Teaching.

#15 Maintaining high ethical/professional standards and appropriate level of rigor in one’s classes and with students outside the class.

I refer you to the written comments of my teaching evaluations. I am known in the School of Business as being a tough but fair professor. Students know when they come to class on the first day that my class is not going to be easy and they must be prepared to work hard. I pride myself on having a reputation of being an excellent teacher who provides a worthwhile and enriched educational experience.

#16 Consistent discharge of faculty responsibility, as in meeting classes, being prepared for class, handling exams and assignments in a timely manner, appropriately assessing student performances, meeting university and School requirements for reporting and recording, having a course syllabus and following it to the extent possible, and having and observing office hours.

I refer you to the written comments of my teaching evaluations. I do not cancel class unless I have to be out of town for a conference. I keep my students the entire class period rarely letting them leave early. I write my own exams and the exams are different each semester. I use a lot of essay and short answer questions on my exams and do not rely heavily on multiple choice exams. I also have extensive group work assignments. Thus I have a great deal of grading to do in each of my classes. One of the consistent complaints I have received, that I am still trying to address, is that it takes me too long to grade assignments. I modify my syllabus every year to take into account what I have learned about teaching the class the year before. Since I am an administrator I have an open door policy. If I am in my office students may come and speak to me about class. I believe students feel comfortable coming to me for help because they know I sincerely care about their academic and personal development.