

Teaching + Learning Commons Reorganization

The Teaching + Learning Commons was established in 2015 to provide campuswide leadership and integrated support for the university's teaching and learning initiatives, and to demonstrate our commitment to the academic success of all students. Led by Dr. Gabriele Wienhausen as Faculty Director, the Commons supports educational excellence and advances faculty and student success by providing expertise and innovation in the key areas of faculty development, graduate student and postdoctoral development, undergraduate academic support and enrichment; and assessment, evaluation, and education research.

Since its inception, the Commons has created a wide range of outstanding programs, services and research to assist all members of the UC San Diego community in developing highly effective learning environments. The Commons has established a strong infrastructure that develops teaching skills and enhances learning: new faculty workshops, course and curriculum redesign studios, teaching with technology, teaching online, individual teaching consultations, classroom visits, assessing learning outcomes, seminars and short, dynamic discussions and workshops addressing critical classroom issues.

As the full scope and breadth of the Commons' mission has been unfolding, we have come to realize that its original organizational structure was limiting our ability to achieve the synergistic environment envisioned for the Commons and the "vertical" integration of its work with students, teaching assistants, and faculty. Accordingly, we will be dissolving the distinct centers, and create integrated "hubs" within the Commons, in order to remove the perceived boundaries associated with them. Commons' staff will, instead, be encouraged and empowered to contribute their expertise broadly across the service areas of faculty support, student success and digital learning.

The central mission of the Commons is clear - to provide campus-wide leadership in instructional matters as well as student learning and academic success. To fulfill its mission, the Commons is adjusting its organizational base, with hub leaders and staff who will routinely work together. There will be four hubs – the Academic Achievement Hub and the Writing Hub, already in place, and the newly created Engaged Teaching Hub and Digital Learning Hub. Underlying this structure is the recognition that questions and projects that faculty members bring to the Commons typically span multiple areas (e.g., refining teaching methods in light of how students learn math, or approaching writing instruction in a digital context). This new organizational model allows for continuation of all current programs and services offered by the Commons while promoting further expansion and enrichment of those programs.

Concurrent with the reorganization, the Commons is establishing a Senior Council (made up of faculty staff representing the academic divisions and departments, undergraduate colleges, and other units that support the instructional mission of UC San Diego), which will guide development and growth of the Commons with the ongoing goal of integrating teaching and learning across campus. In addition, each hub will have an advisory committee, with two members of the committee for each hub serving on the Senior Council. By promoting Commons' activities, the Senior Council will help establish and support campus-wide networks of faculty, staff, and students involved in teaching and learning.