Course Stewards
Approved December 12, 2008

Course Stewards are faculty in the Institute of Technology associated with every Core course in each of the major and minor degree programs offered. There are three key objectives associated with a course stewardship program.

1. To employ the practice of peer review to the Core courses so as to improve their quality over time, the consistency with which they are offered by different instructors, and their continuing fit within an evolving degree program.

2. To ensure that there is more than one instructor ready to teach any Core course, and there is always someone who can step in to do so under very short notice if the need arises.

3. To document faculty and administrative agreement that faculty assigned as course stewards will teach the stewarded course on a regular basis and over a length of time sufficient to justify their investment in ongoing course development and review.

Each Core course in each degree program will have a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 4 course stewards at any time. Each full-time faculty member will serve as a steward on a minimum of 2 core courses (barring exceptional circumstances). Part-time faculty and faculty outside of the Institute who regularly teach an Institute course can be assigned as course stewards. The Director is responsible for assigning faculty stewards. The expectation is that the steward will teach the course multiple times but not indefinitely. The course scheduler will make every effort to schedule each course steward to teach the course at least once every other year, more frequently if possible. Related courses will be grouped into clusters for coordination and linkage as discussed below. The Director is responsible for assigning courses to clusters. The Director will designate one person from each cluster to serve as the cluster coordinator.

The Director will attempt to assign stewards based on each faculty member’s interests, expertise, and anticipated professional trajectory, balancing these faculty preferences with the needs of the academic unit and the long-term health of the Institute. Because of changes in personnel, sabbaticals, and individual faculty interests, there might be occasions when the Director assigns a faculty member as steward to a course that is not one of their preferred courses. Changes to stewardship can occur at any time during the calendar year.

Being a course steward means: 1) being willing and able to teach the course at the last minute (though every effort will be made to avoid this); 2) sharing course materials with other stewards on request; 3) meeting at least once each year with the other stewards for this course; 4) meeting at least once each year with the stewards of the courses in the same cluster, and 5) discussing the results of the yearly review meetings during a full faculty meeting arranged for this purpose. By default, this full faculty meeting will be the last meeting of the winter quarter, and of a duration sufficient to discuss the full curriculum.

The person designated as the cluster coordinator is responsible for coordinating the cluster meeting, and, at their discretion, making a report to the full faculty from the cluster.

During the yearly meeting among stewards of the same course (item 3 above), stewards will 1) review the course objectives (do they still make sense? are they complete? are they too ambitious?), 2) evaluate the extent to which students are meeting these (primarily through examining and reflecting on student performance on assignments, labs, and exams), and 3) determine if any changes to the course should be proposed to the full faculty. During the yearly meeting among stewards of courses in the same cluster (item 4 above), stewards will define and integrate the content across courses within the cluster.