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Final Report on Winter 2014 Teaching Skills Study Award

Renwu Zhang (Ph.D.)

Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

Name of Conference Attended:

Lilly Conference on College and University Teaching and Learning

Date: February 20 – 23, 2014

Location: Newport Beach, CA 92660

Program: <http://lillyconferences.com/ca/>

Teaching Strategy Studied:

The theme of the coming Lilly West Conference was the “Evidence-Based Teaching and Learning”, which is very consistent with our university’s strategic plan in higher education: focusing on Students’ Learning Outcomes. This conference discussed how to implement this teaching strategy on different subjects from different aspects, including Academic Success, Student Learning, Creating Communities of Learners, Course/Curriculum Design/Redesign, Engaging and Motivating Students and Innovative Pedagogical Approaches, etc. From attending the conference, I learned: (a) systematic background knowledge of Evidence-Based Teaching and Learning; (b) effective ways to assess students’ learning outcomes; (c) methods to collect, analyze and interpret the evidence from students’ learning outcomes; and (d) the best strategies to develop and modify my courses according the evidence.

Impact on/How Applied to Current Teaching:

The impact of Evidence-Based Teaching method on my chemistry class is primitive while promising. In the past years, I have been adopting Process Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning (POGIL) in the classroom and combining the POGIL method with the traditional Lecturing-Based method. The effectiveness of the above method was solely accessed from students’ evaluation, that is, SOTE results. After attending the 2014 Lilly West Conference and learning this new teaching method, I implanted more objective assessments on Students’ Learning Outcomes (SLOs). I input new in-class quizzes, more online homework and constant communications with students to modify the content of materials to cover and the depth of knowledge to reach as well to adjust course pace basing on students’ understanding and mastering the content. The Evidence-Based Teaching method discussed from this conference improved and will further improve the POGIL method in my teaching. It will be further refined in my Physical Chemistry class continuously enhance my teaching effectiveness and students’ learning outcomes in Physical Chemistry, which is the most difficult subject in chemistry field at the undergraduate level.