"The disquieting truth of academic life today is that teaching is widely undervalued. The unspoken gameplan seems to be to speak of the importance of teaching but to evaluate faculty primarily for scholarship and professional activity."

Seldin, 1991 (Pace University)*

Dear Colleague:

Teaching is a difficult and challenging part of your job. You put a lot of effort into making your classes exciting and effective. How can you make this effort visible to the peers and administrators who evaluate your performance?

Everyone in academia knows that teaching is hard for anyone outside the classroom to "see." Faculty are reluctant to take student evaluations alone as evidence of teaching skills, and there are few other ways to demonstrate your teaching excellence.

"The fruits of scholarship: books, scholarly articles, and paper presentations are fairly self-explanatory and standards exist to indicate their relative merit. Unfortunately, there is no comparable structure for faculty to establish and document the quality of their teaching."

Galagno, 1991 (James Madison University)*

The Association of Midwestern College Biology Teachers (AMCBT) is dedicated to providing opportunities for you to share your teaching ideas in a public forum. At AMCBT's annual conference you can meet other Biologists who take their teaching seriously, and share ideas in formal presentations or workshops covering everything from laboratory problems to the latest ideas in teaching scholarship. Papers from previous conferences include:

Honors Biology: Teaching Research Design
Writing your own Computer Tutorials
Use of the Winogradsky Column to Demonstrate Biodegradation
Writing in Biology: Increasing Critical Thinking and Research Skills
Using Cooperative Learning in Biology Teaching and Assessing
Immunocojugates for Selective Delivery of Drugs
Chronobiology: Teaching Endocrine Rhythms in the Lab
A Team-Taught Course in Bioethics
Your best teaching ideas could be among this year's presentations.

"A movement we might label 'Taking Teaching Seriously' is spreading across the country. There is hardly a campus that is not in some stage of reexamining its commitment to teaching and approaches to the improvement of teaching."

Edgerton, 1991 (AAHE)*

Your membership in AMCBT will not only help you meet new colleagues and share new ideas, but entitles you to receive and submit papers to Bioscience, a peer-reviewed Journal of College Biology Teaching. It also offers you the chance to participate in projects like the definition of standards for undergraduate Biology curricula and the Coalition for Education in the Life Sciences (CELS), of which AMCBT is a member.

The Association of Midwestern College Biology Teachers is a professional organization that takes teaching as seriously as you do. We hope you will join us in sharing teaching methods and working to make teaching a respected part of academic scholarship.

Yours Sincerely,

Sr. Marion Johnson, Past President
Association of Midwestern College Biology Teachers

"By its very nature, teaching is evanescent. What does a faculty member have to show for all that effort at the end of a semester? A syllabus, a stack of corrected bluebooks, and perhaps some student evaluations. His or her lectures or seminars are rarely attended by colleagues or videotaped for posterity. The teacher is thus a bit like an actor whose performances theater critics never get to see. The theater program shows that he played Hamlet all last fall; but how do the critics know whether he was any good?"

Wilkinson, 1991 (Harvard)*

* all quotes are from the OAH Council of Chairs Newsletter, June 1991.