CASTL at Illinois State University: SoTL on Civic Engagement Experiences (CASTL Final Phase - "Continued Use of the Carnegie Name") Final Report, Spring 2012

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Illinois State University (ISU) has been involved with the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) and earlier AAHE-Carnegie SoTL efforts over the last 13 years.[i] CASTL has now ended the final, institutional phase titled "the Continued Use of the Carnegie Name" (a two-year phase from January 2010-December 2011). In this phase, institutions were encouraged to engage in SoTL and provide support for SoTL that promoted key institutional initiatives. At ISU, we have been involved in a number of 'high-leverage institutional agendas' that are directly part of or related to our strategic plan, *Educating Illinois*. Two of these are the American Democracy Project --and civic engagement more generally-- and promoting learner autonomy. The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning is helping us with these initiatives. **Our goals for this final phase of CASTL were that, through engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning, we would do the following:**

- Better understand and document the developmental and learning processes and outcomes for students of involvement in civic engagement experiences in and out of the classroom including service learning opportunities.
- Better understand and document the extent to which, and how, enhanced learner autonomy is related to civic engagement and service learning experiences.
- Share what we learn via the web site, presentations, and publications.
- Encourage 'student voices in SoTL'.

Our CASTL Team members for this final phase (Steve Hunt, Tom Gerschick, Phyllis McCluskey-Titus, Jennifer McDade, Kathleen McKinney, Chair, and Erin Thomas) **completed several actions to meet these goals.**

- We conducted, for internal use, an on line survey of all ISU faculty about whether they do civic engagement and/or service learning assignments in class or related to student organizations/other out-of-class opportunities, the nature of these projects, whether they have reflected on or studied learning outcomes, whether/how/where reflections/studies have been made public, and the type of support they would like to see for doing and making public such reflections/studies.
- We also provided internal funding to ISU teams for SoTL projects on civic engagement. The grants were to study the developmental and learning outcomes of ISU students involved in civic engagement and/or service learning in classes or in co/extra-curricular experiences. Grants ranged from $1,200 to $5,000 and were funded by the Office of the Cross Chair in SoTL. All funded teams were required to present at the ISU annual Teaching-Learning Symposium and to submit a newsletter or journal article based on the research. In addition, we have offered incentives for these recipients (and

others doing SoTL) to create and submit web representations of their project this spring for the ISU SoTL web page.

<u>2010-2011 Grant Recipients</u>

- *Community Arts and Pre-Service Educators: A Study of Civic Engagement;* Judith Briggs, Art Ed; Kim McHenry, Art Ed; Michael Vetere, Theater Ed
- *Community Organization Research Project (CORP): Learning Decision-Making through Civic Engagement;* Laura Erskine, MQM
- *Six Years of Collaborative Service: EAF 463 and LinC;* Phyllis McCluskey-Titus, EAF; Jodi Hallsten, COM; Wendy Troxel, EAF; Erin Pearce, Office of the Dean of Students
- *Creating Family Assessment Portfolios (FAPs) in SED 10;* James Thompson, SED
- *Taking Stock of Student Outcomes: Examining Participation and Perception of Civic Engagement at a Large Midwestern University;* Jeffrey Walsh, CJS; Jessie Krienert, CJS; David Marquis, Student Body President

<u>2011-2012 Grant Recipients</u>

- *The ISU CONNECT Program: Identifying Developmental, Motivational, and Civic Outcomes;* Gary Creasey, PSY, Verenice D'Santiago, PSY, Kaitlin Jones, COM, and Robert Lee, COE
- *Assessing a Situated Learning Approach in the Civically Engaged Classroom: Fostering Anti-Oppressive Community Practice;* Cynthia Edmunds-Cady and Ashley Boyer, SSW
- *A Mutually Beneficial Example of Service Learning: Collaboration between Preservice Language Teachers and a Local Community Center;* Susan Hildebrandt, LLC, and Iryna Brown, C & I
- *Preparing for a Career in String Teaching: Advocacy and Service Learning;* Adriana Ransom, MUS

- In July of 2010, we held a workshop, co-sponsored with our Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology, on 'Doing SoTL on Civic Engagement.' We offered another workshop in April 2011 on writing an internal grant for a SoTL on Civic Engagement project. About 20 faculty members attended these workshops.
- We organized and held a "Student-Faculty Conversation on Learning: Learning Outcomes from Involvement in Registered Student Organizations." About 25 faculty, staff, and students attended this event. We posted the notes from the small groups at this event online at
http://sotl.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/pdf/StudFacConversationSpg11Notes.pdf
- This past fall, a video production team documented five ISU CE project sites and in the spring conducted focus groups with a sample of participating students to discuss and describe the nature of their experience.[ii] The video product is an integrated documentary exploring these cases of CE with a reflective discussion from among student participants. This SoTL project's goal was to investigate the student CE experience and learning outcomes. Led by School of Communication Assistant Professor and Emmy-award winning producer, Maria A. Moore, the production team included graduate and undergraduate students from the School of Communication and was overseen by the Cross Chair in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and Professor of Sociology, Kathleen McKinney. The video project was supported by the ISU Office of the Provost, American Democracy Project (ADP), and Office of the

Cross Chair in SoTL. The video will be presented at ISSOTL 2012, at the 2013 ISU Teaching Symposium and will be posted on the ISU website (once completed in May 2012).

- In the spring of 2012 (planned in fall 2011) we brought in an outside speaker, Dr. Jennifer Robinson of Indiana University to meet with faculty and give an open presentation to a topic related to some civic engagement and service learning: Environmental Literacy.
- We involved students in our work in several ways including having student collaborators in the funded SoTL research projects on civic engagement, connecting with student organizations, holding the student-faculty conversation on learning, having students help with the initial on-line survey, and conducting a SoTL project consisting of a video of student reflections on their civic engagement experiences for which several undergraduate and graduate students are on the production team.
- We wrote and had published reports and articles about our work in our SoTL at ISU newsletter, on our ISU SoTL website, and in the *International Commons* (newsletter for the International Society of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning). Projects from two earlier, related grants to the School of Communication and to faculty in Education and Administration Foundations were presented at the 2011 meetings of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

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[i] A list with links of much of our AAHE and CASTL work from 1998 to 2012 can be found at http://sotl.illinoisstate.edu/castlAahe/. Briefly, our early work included the AAHE-Carnegie Campus Self Study and Mapping work. Next, in the first three-year "Cluster" phase of the CASTL Campus Program, Illinois State University was the lead institution for one of about ten clusters of campuses from around the United States and Canada. Our cluster focused on "Organizing to Foster the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning" at the campus level. We attended meetings and worked with members of the other campuses, created resources, and reported on our work. During the second, three year phase, Illinois State University was part of the 'student voices' theme group with a special institutional emphasis on the reciprocal relationship between supporting student voices in SoTL and promoting learner autonomy. We sponsored three campus student-faculty conversations on learner autonomy, created a learner autonomy web page on our SoTL page, and gave out small SoTL grants related to promoting learner autonomy while involving students. In addition, two ISU teams (including students) wrote two chapters for the edited volume from our themed group on this topic (*Engaging Student Voices in the Study of Teaching and Learning*. Carmen Werder and Megan Otis, eds. 2010, Sterling, VA: Stylus).

[ii] IRB approval was obtained for this project.