

# SOTL AT ISU

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at Illinois State University  
“systematic reflection/study on teaching and learning made public”

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## First University-Wide SoTL Award Conferred

This year (2013-2014) is the first year of the Illinois State University “Dr. John Chizmar & Dr. Anthony Ostromsky Scholarship of Teaching and Learning University Award.” A review committee considered the portfolios of multiple candidates for the award. We are pleased and honored to announce that the recipient of this award is Dr.

Cheri J. Simonds of the School of Communication. Dr. Simonds has been involved in SoTL work for over a dozen years. She was recognized for this award at the annual ISU Teaching-Learning Symposium earlier this month. She will be honored during Founder’s Day, as well as at a SoTL event in late spring. Congratulations, Cheri!

## SoTL Scholar-Mentors: Fall 2013 Reflections

**Jennifer Friberg, Communication Sciences & Disorders and Anu Gokhale, Technology**

Anu Gokhale (TEC) and Jen Friberg (CSD) were selected to work with the Cross Chair in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning as SoTL Scholar-Mentors for the fall semester of 2013. In this capacity, they were able to pursue their own SoTL related studies, while working directly on projects impacting the study of teaching and learning across ISU’s campus. Each Scholar-Mentor took the lead in the development of some, while providing support for one another’s, projects along the way.

Over the course of the semester, Anu took the lead in designing a new website for SoTL and developing a grant pre-proposal for external funding of SoTL work by ISU students and faculty. She describes her experiences as follows:

“I have enjoyed the privilege of designing a new website for SoTL, or rather the privilege of creative expression. I first asked myself: what is unique about ISU SoTL? The rich scholarship of ISU faculty members who gladly dedi-

cate their intellectual pursuits to continuously chisel their teaching skills in the interest of student learning ought to be celebrated. I embarked on a search of websites with a similar mission, and identified features that I liked the most. I then set about incorporating those at different points along the ISU SoTL website; the can-do attitude of the ISU IWSS team made it a pleasurable endeavor. The Cross Endowed Chair, Kathleen McKinney, was the anchor; she brought a lot of background and insightful perspectives that guided the website overhaul. Tom Silvia assumes the charge of maintaining the website.

Another project that I have undertaken is to write a grant pre-proposal for a university-wide SoTL initiative. The project that I envision would fund multiple SoTL team research studies on teaching civic engagement and involvement in community engagement experiences across disciplines to gain a systemic understanding of learning as a result of such teaching and experiences. The studies would

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## SoTL Travel Award/Funding Recipients for FY14

The Office of the Cross Chair in SoTL awarded travel grants to aid in presenting scholarly teaching or SoTL work to:

Judith Briggs, Art

Peter Bushell, Art

Jennifer Friberg, Communication Sciences and Disorders

Anu Gokhale, Technology

Susan Hildebrandt, Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

Phyllis McCluskey-Titus, Educational Administration and Foundations

Maria Moore, Communication

# Selected SoTL Travel Grant Report

*As space permits we publish travel grant reports in SoTL at ISU, which may be edited due to space limitations.*

## Tami Dean, Teaching and Learning

This past December I attended the American Reading Forum conference in Sanibel Island, Florida. This was my first time attending the conference. I am looking forward to attending and presenting at this conference again. The best part about the conference was the ability to reach out and network with other professionals in the area of literacy.

This conference maintains a smaller, national program and multiple opportunities for interaction among conference attendees. While there, I had the opportunity to attend sessions that were thoughtful and engaging. The presentation formats allowed for conversation around issues and practices both in higher education and the K-12 environments.

One of the sessions I attended discussed the use of e-readers and e-books in K-12 schools and in higher ed. It was a great opportunity to get a variety of perspectives and experiences at once. There were concerns mentioned that I had not perceived. For example, many e-readers like the original Kindle don't provide pictures to accompany the text. This can be problematic for younger readers or with texts where the illustrations contribute to the construction of meaning. I had not considered this before and will add this as a consideration for my teacher candidates when they think about the types of technology they might want to integrate into their future classrooms.

During the lunch presentation, Susan Florio-Ruane talked extensively about students and the need for their life experiences to be allowed into the classroom and literacy practices in both teacher education and in K-12 schools. Her research and work solidified my notions that schools are currently ignoring the everyday literacy practices of students in favor of school-based literacy practices. The needs of these students are being overshadowed by the standardized testing era and leave many urban and traditionally marginalized students on the outskirts and in danger of losing their community schools and being with teachers and fellow students with whom they can foster deep connections. This talk inspired me to continue bringing up the difficult topics of race and social class and how they affect the educational community and our work as educators.

I believe that conferences are opportunities to not only disseminate my work, but also a time/place to listen to feedback from others and gain new ideas. I appreciated the interactions from fellow conference attendees about my research on back channeling and will apply some of those thoughts and ideas as I continue to work on the analysis and dissemination of the research. I left this conference with new ideas and confirmations of how to continue being a teacher educator.

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involve ISU students as subjects and, importantly, as co-researchers. The grant would provide stipends for selected ISU faculty and students, and fund travel to conferences and research related expenses. I'm excited about this project because, when funded, it would provide opportunities in SoTL research for faculty and students across ISU. This proposal is due in early spring 2014; it is taking shape with valuable feedback from Kathleen and some additional colleagues. My work as a SoTL Scholar-Mentor has been very fulfilling."

Jen's work in SoTL was focused on developing a framework for a multi-media publication as a campus-wide outlet for SoTL work, delivering a multi-hour workshop to introduce new faculty to SoTL, and developing opportunities to promote SoTL to students, faculty and administrators across campus. She reflects on these experiences as follows:

"I have enjoyed tremendously my work as a SoTL Scholar-Mentor this semester. I have appreciated the opportunity to meet new faculty through the design and facilitation of my 'SoTL as a Method to Improve Teaching and Scholarship' workshop in November. I have already

forged relationships with several attendees which have led to interesting discussions and possible partnerships. Similarly, my work in promoting SoTL with students and faculty across campus has challenged me to consider SoTL as being more dynamic and rife with possibilities than I had previously imagined.

My work with *Gausius*, ISU's planned multi-media SoTL publication, has been a tremendous opportunity. I've had a role in the conception and development of this project in a collaborative and supportive environment with fellow SoTL enthusiasts. Talking to prospective authors and reviewers and planning with technology specialists across campus to visualize our end result has been a great learning experience for me. I feel as though more people than ever are excited about SoTL at ISU, which can only benefit teachers and (current and future) students on campus."

Both Anu and Jen extend gratitude to the Provost's Office and to Kathleen McKinney for their support in appointing SoTL Scholar-Mentors and providing resources to participate in and launch initiatives geared to grow the ISU SoTL community.

# Sampling of Upcoming 2014 SoTL-Related Conferences

February 5–7, The 6th Annual Conference on Higher Education Pedagogy  
Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia  
[www.cider.vt.edu/conference](http://www.cider.vt.edu/conference)

February 7-8, Research on Teaching and Learning Summit  
Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, GA  
[cetl.kennesaw.edu/summit/](http://cetl.kennesaw.edu/summit/)

February 20–22, Lilly National Conference, Evidence-Based Teaching and Learning  
Newport Beach, California  
[lillyconferences.com/ca](http://lillyconferences.com/ca)

March 26–28, The SoTL Commons Conference  
Savannah, Georgia  
[academics.georgiasouthern.edu/ce/conferences/sotlcommons](http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/ce/conferences/sotlcommons)

April 11, The 15th Annual Midwest Conference on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning  
South Bend, Indiana  
[www.iusb.edu/ucet/events/sotl2014.php](http://www.iusb.edu/ucet/events/sotl2014.php)

May 14–16, The 7th Annual Great Lakes Conference on Teaching & Learning  
Mount Pleasant, Michigan  
[teachingconference.cmich.edu](http://teachingconference.cmich.edu)

May 29–June 1, Lilly National Conference, Evidence-Based Teaching and Learning  
Bethesda, Maryland  
[lillyconferences.com/bethesda](http://lillyconferences.com/bethesda)

May 30–June 1, The Teaching Professor Conference  
Boston, Massachusetts  
[www.teachingprofessor.com/conferences/conference](http://www.teachingprofessor.com/conferences/conference)

June 17–20, Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, Transforming our Learning Experiences  
Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada  
[www.queensu.ca/stlhe2014](http://www.queensu.ca/stlhe2014)

October 21-25, International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, Nurturing Passion and Creativity in Teaching and Learning  
University of Laval, Quebec City, Ontario, Canada  
[www.issotl14.ulaval.ca](http://www.issotl14.ulaval.ca)

## Panel for Deans, Directors, and Chairs

Illinois State University Deans, Directors, and Chairs received a special invitation from the Cross Chair in SoTL to attend a panel at the 2014 University-Wide Teaching & Learning Symposium on January 8 at the Marriott. The panel was sponsored by the Office of the Cross Endowed Chair in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and titled “SoTL as a Vehicle for Faculty and Departmental Advancement.” The session was designed to engage campus administrators in an interactive discussion about the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) at Illinois State. The panel (and question-answer) session addressed the following topics:

- The definition of SoTL at ISU and SoTL as scholarly research
- SoTL and Educating Illinois
- Campus resources and initiatives supporting SoTL
- Value/uses of SoTL for Faculty and Administration (e.g., tenure/promotion, program review)

Panelists included three SoTL scholar-mentors from ISU: Jennifer Friberg (CSD), Anu Gokhale (TEC), and Maria Moore (COM) as well as Interim Cross Chair in SoTL, Kathleen McKinney (Emeritus).

## Second Edition of *Gausius* Coming in Spring

First published in print in 2009, *Gausius* highlighted work in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) by faculty and students at Illinois State University. A second volume of *Gausius* is planned for publication in spring 2014 and has been reconceived as a multimedia publication to include all types of SoTL work taking place at ISU.

Consistent with ISU's definition of SoTL and *Educating Illinois'* mission to enhance SoTL across campus, *Gausius* will promote the work of ISU personnel seeking to make public their systematic study/reflections of the teaching and learning of ISU students. This publication will be co-spon-

sored by the Cross Chair in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology. Several peer reviewed articles, posters, videos or other SoTL products will be included in the spring issue.

Why *Gausius*? “Gausius” is the Latin word for gladly or joyfully. Prior to the publication of its first volume, the name *Gausius* was selected for this publication to match the motto of Illinois State University: gladly we learn and teach. *Gausius* is the celebration of scholarly teaching and learning at ISU.

# Some Thoughts on the Application of SoTL Results

Kathleen McKinney, Office of the Cross Chair in SoTL

The scholarship of teaching and learning serves many functions in higher education and on each campus. The most important functions, however, are to positively impact our teaching and student learning and development. Thus, a critical question is how can we impact learning with SoTL work? Are you using the following strategies with your or others' SoTL projects, results, or products?

- Gathering data in our SoTL work on intervening processes—the how and why.
- Specifying context variables to help with interpretation and generalizability.
- Making applications of own or others' SoTL work in our classes or out-of-class learning situations.
- Making applications of own or others' SoTL work at levels beyond the classroom.
- Making our SoTL work public to others for their use and adaptation.

• Engaging in a SoTL research agenda and connecting with others doing similar work to grow the SoTL knowledge base.

- Sharing our SoTL results with our students.
- Being a social change agent for the SoTL movement, locally and beyond.

Thus, there are several levels of application for SoTL results from one study, sets of studies, or interdisciplinary studies including the classroom, program, department, curriculum, co-curriculum, college, institution, and discipline levels. Finally, there are many existing processes on campus that could be vehicles for the application of SoTL results including assignment/pedagogy design, course design, curriculum reform, assessment, program review, accreditation, budget requests, and strategic planning. Are you and your colleagues doing all you can do to apply and use SoTL work to enhance our students' learning and development?

## Future Events and Opportunities to Support SoTL

### Submit your SoTL Publication Citation

Published a note, article, video or other SoTL product looking at the teaching and learning of ISU students? If it is not already in the SoTL Publications list at [http://sotl.illinoisstate.edu/scholarship/faculty-staff\\_pubs.shtml](http://sotl.illinoisstate.edu/scholarship/faculty-staff_pubs.shtml), please send the full citation to [kmckinne@ilstu.edu](mailto:kmckinne@ilstu.edu) to be added.

### SoTL Small Research Grants for FY15

Guidelines for these annual grants should be out in February with grant applications due in early May. These guidelines will be posted on the SoTL web page and ISU-Teach listserv, and sent to faculty campus mail boxes.

### Web Page Redesign and Updates

The ISU SoTL web page has been redesigned, existing content has been updated and moved to the new site, and we are looking for new content. Check out the site at <http://sotl.illinoisstate.edu/>. Thanks to Anu Gokhale, Tom Silvia and the ISU IWSS team for their efforts on this project.

### Internal Multi-Media SoTL Publication

Reviews of submissions to *Gausius*, our on-line, internal, multimedia SoTL publication have begun. Later this spring, the first few accepted items will appear. Thanks to Jen Friberg for her work on this project.

### Consulting

Are you considering or working on a SoTL project or product? If you would like advice or assistance, individual or team consulting is always available. Contact Kathleen McKinney at [kmckinne@ilstu.edu](mailto:kmckinne@ilstu.edu).

### FY15 SoTL Scholar-Mentors Call for Applications

The call for applications for Scholar-Mentors will go out by mail, ISU Teach and [sotl@ilstu.edu](mailto:sotl@ilstu.edu) later this spring.

### Student SoTL Event

We are planning an event to share SoTL results and SoTL as a field with ISU graduate students.

### SoTL Celebration Event

In late spring we will hold an event to recognize Dr. Cheri Simonds, the first recipient of the Chizmar and Ostrosky University SoTL Award, and the first issue of *Gausius*. Dr. Simonds will give a presentation based on her SoTL work.

### SoTL Spring Workshop and Writing Circle

Be on the lookout for information about a SoTL workshop during the semester. If there is sufficient interest, we also plan to offer a spring SoTL writing circle.

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