

EFFECTIVE WAYS TO SUPPORT THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING AT THE CAMPUS LEVEL

**2003 Campus Colloquium on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning:
Collaborating for Change**

Washington DC, March, 2003

Kathleen McKinney
Illinois State University,
kmckinne@ilstu.edu

Below a number of strategies used to support SoTL at the campus level at Illinois State University are described.

Involvement in the CASTL Program

Since early 1998, several Illinois State University (ISU) faculty members and a larger group of faculty and staff members have participated in the CASTL program and our ongoing campus discussions of SoTL and interdisciplinary research on student engagement. Our campus definition of the scholarship of teaching is “systematic reflection on teaching and learning made public.” Three faculty members from different departments applied for and obtained an AAHE “Going Public Grant” for our CASTL work, one person attended last year’s Colloquium, we sent a team (administrator, faculty members, staff, and student) focusing on SoTL to the 2002 AAHE Summer Academy, and we have posted reports to the CASTL Web Center. At least two faculty members have applied to be Carnegie Scholars. Most recently, we submitted an application as a Cluster Leader in the next phase of CASTL.

Teaching and Learning Symposium

This day-long event at ISU provides an opportunity for faculty, graduate assistants, and staff to share teaching resources, teaching strategies, and pedagogical research on college teaching and student learning/development, including SoTL. Though all relevant topics are appropriate, each year’s symposium has encouraged presentations on select topics. For example, the call for the 2002 symposium emphasized active learning; assessment; collaboration between academic and student affairs; interdisciplinary efforts; and out-of-class learning experiences. Paper, poster, and panel sessions are included. A notable speaker external to campus is invited to give a keynote presentation. The symposium is held in a centrally located and highly visible venue. Information about this event can be found at this website: <http://www.cat.ilstu.edu/events/tls.shtml>.

Campus Sessions on SoTL

Upon recent investigation, there appears to be seven ISU faculty members who have recently served or are currently serving as editors of teaching/learning related journals. Two of those SoTL editors joined with two other SoTL editors from other universities to provide a panel discussion. Panel participants included Helen Moore of the University of Nebraska who is editor of the *Teaching Sociology*; William Becker of Indiana University who is editor of the *Journal of Economics Education*; Dale Fitzgibbons of Illinois State University who is editor of the *Journal of Management Education*; and Deborah Gentry of Illinois State University who is editor of the *Journal of Teaching in Marriage and Family*. The panelists spoke of the

mission and expectations of their respective journals, definitions of SoTL from the perspective of their respective disciplines, and strategies and tips for undertaking high quality SoTL and then seeking to get the outcomes of such work published. This spring we are holding two open campus discussions on SoTL: the first on definitions and reward, the second on research questions and methods.

SoTL Teaching-Learning Communities (TLC)

A TLC is a campus-wide opportunity for ISU faculty members of varying ranks and teaching assistants from differing disciplines to meet informally on a regular basis in small groups to reflect upon and discuss issues related to teaching and learning. Interest forms are distributed at the start of each semester. Considerable sharing and mentoring occurs during these gatherings. Most small groups meet for 1-1.5 hours every other week during an academic term. About 3 TLCs per semester focus on SoTL in varying ways. The Cross Chair in SoTL or a Center for the Advancement of Teaching (CAT) staff member attends TLC sessions in an effort to facilitate discussion and resources. Each SoTL TLCs have read and discussed SoTL books, co-authored internal grants, attended conferences together, learned about conducting SoTL, and functioned as research and writing circles.

Support at the Department Level

As Cross Chair at ISU, I work with Deans, Chairpersons, and faculty members on issues related to SoTL. I have given a “workshop” on defining, measuring, and evaluating (formative and summative) teaching, scholarly teaching, and the scholarship of teaching and learning. We discuss the differences between these concepts, how faculty might document their work in these areas, criteria, evidence for success, which work “counts” as teaching or service or scholarship, how/where SoTL fits within current policy, etc. I have created relevant handouts to share with various groups. I also, by invitation, attend a department faculty meeting to discuss SoTL. In addition, SoTL small grants often involve department/disciplinary team grants.

SoTL Small Grant Program

We have used several small grant programs to support SoTL work at Illinois State University. You can see guidelines for past grant programs at the URLs listed below. Most programs are open to regular faculty, non-tenure track faculty, staff members, and students. This year, we began a new program supporting six teams with grants up to \$4,500 per team. Each team was required to consist, at a minimum, of two faculty members and one student. In addition, faculty are encouraged to submit SoTL projects to our University Research Grant program (an internal small grant program administered by each College), though most funds in this program go to “traditional disciplinary research.” We work with faculty to write high quality SoTL proposals in an effort to increase their competitive edge in this program.

<http://www.cat.ilstu.edu/awards/sotlgrant.shtml>

<http://www.cat.ilstu.edu/awards/tllevel.shtml>

First Year Faculty Institute on Classroom Assessment and Classroom Research

Each year the Center for the Advancement of Teaching (CAT) and the University Assessment Office (UAO) at ISU offer a summer teaching institute titled “Classroom Assessment and Classroom Research” for tenure-track faculty members who have just completed their first year of teaching at Illinois State University. Faculty members are paid a small stipend. The emphasis of the institute is on measuring and understanding student learning using strategies for getting formative feedback from and about students. We

examine what faculty members can do to better assess and research student learning outcomes at the classroom, program, and/or department levels. We also discuss how such work can become a form of the scholarship of teaching and learning, and can be shared through local and national publications and presentations. The institute features presentations by on-campus experts, as well as round table discussions with the participants. This unique interaction with colleagues from across disciplines is designed to assist new faculty members in their planning and improvement of courses for the upcoming academic year and beyond. Contact Wendy Troxel at UAO (wgtrox@ilstu.edu) for more information.

Summer Institute on SoTL

Beginning in summer 2003, at ISU, we will offer a three-half day institute for up to 15 faculty members, staff members or graduate assistants. Potential participants must submit a 1-2 page letter of application. Each will receive a small (\$300) stipend and books and handouts. The goals of this institute include providing an opportunity for participants to do the following: 1. learn more about the Scholarship of Teaching, including what it is, how to conduct it, how to make it public, how to document it for evaluation, and how to use it to enhance teaching and learning; 2. begin working on ideas for doing and/or making public an SoTL project; and 3. share ideas and information about SoTL with their colleagues. The application guidelines for the institute can be viewed at <http://www.cat.ilstu.edu/sotl/invite.shtml>.

SoTL Community of Scholars and SoTL Resources Group

We have recently created a virtual community of people interested in SoTL at Illinois State University. Thus far just over 100 individuals are in an email nickname group. SoTL resources and opportunities are shared with this group. We are considering a brownbag series. We are just setting up the SoTL Resources Group, "a 'bank' of faculty who have expertise in specific areas related to SoTL. These individuals, their contact information, and their areas of SoTL expertise will be listed as resources/possible mentors in a data base distributed on campus and posted on the SoTL web site.

SoTL as a Criteria in University Level Awards

In the award guidelines for all university-level teaching awards (there are four categories), scholarly teaching and SoTL are explicitly listed as criteria. In addition, as we develop a Department Teaching-Learning Award, SoTL work will be in the criteria. SoTL may be considered but is not explicitly noted in the guidelines for university-level research awards or Distinguished Professor. This latter group, however, is selected based on excellence in teaching, research, and service. Some past recipients have been involved in SoTL in addition to their traditional disciplinary research.

SoTL Book Give-aways

The Cross Chair in SoTL and the teaching center purchase multiple copies of SoTL books. These are offered to faculty and staff, free, when they receive a SoTL grant, participate in an SoTL TLC, come to the teaching center as a new faculty member, help with CASTL or Summer Academy work, and so on. These are also used as door prizes at certain events.

Campus Study of the Status of SoTL

As part of the project of the ISU 2002 Summer Academy Team and the Cross Chair, we are gathering data (and will gather again in about 5 years) on the status of SoTL on our campus. With the assistance of many campus units, team members, and other volunteers, we are doing

secondary analysis of existing data (e.g., faculty productivity reports, grant annual reports, etc.) and an on-line self-administered questionnaire to faculty and staff. The results of this study and any implications will be shared with the campus community.

Endowed Chair in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Dr. K. Patricia Cross, as most of you know, is a well-know scholar in the field of higher education. She has generously endowed the Cross Chair in the SoTL at Illinois State University. Dr. Cross and her sister are Illinois State alums, and their father is a former Illinois State University professor. The Chair serves a five-year term, can come from any discipline housed at ISU, reports to the Office of the Provost, and is chosen via a national search. The Cross Chair engages in his/her own SoTL scholarship in Sociology and in higher education more generally. Second, he/she facilitates the SoTL work of other faculty, graduate students, and staff. The third role is that of a social change agent, working to promote, share, reward, and use SoTL work on campus. Finally, the Chair serves as a representative on the SoTL from Illinois State University to the higher education national scene working with his/her own disciplinary society and with organizations such as the American Association of Higher Education (AAHE) and the Carnegie Foundation. <http://www.cat.ilstu.edu/sotl/cross.shtml>

SoTL Web Sites

At ISU, we have put together (continue to work on and welcome suggestions, links, etc.) a web site of information and resources for the SoTL. The site's main headings include the following:

- Cross Chair in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
- Internal Grants Used to Support SoTL
- Internal Outlets for Presenting and Publishing SoTL Work (i.e., Teaching-Learning Symposium, Teaching with Technology Conference, *In Teaching...*, *the CATalyst*)
- Other Publication Outlets
- Issues Related to Human Subjects
- Illinois State University's Involvement in the CASTL Campus Program
- Other SoTL sites and Resources
- Examples of SoTL work
- Funding Opportunities
- SoTL Conferences and Institutes
- AAHE Summer Academy Project 2002 on SoTL

<http://www.cat.ilstu.edu/sotl/index.shtml>