

Center for Scholarship of Teaching & Learning at Juniata College.

Mission Statement

The Juniata College Center for Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (CSoTL) promotes professional development related to evidence-based practice in higher education. The goals of the center are to increase:

- open and honest discussion of issues related to teaching effectiveness at Juniata
- awareness of the literature on evidence-based practices in education at Juniata
- scholarly teaching at Juniata
- the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) at Juniata

The center adopts McKinney's (2007) definitions of scholarly teaching:

“Scholarly teaching involves taking a scholarly approach to teaching just as we would take a scholarly approach to other areas of knowledge and practice. Scholarly teachers view teaching as a profession and the knowledge base on teaching and learning as a second discipline in which to develop expertise. Thus, scholarly teachers do things such as reflect on their teaching, use classroom assessment techniques, discuss teaching issues with colleagues, try new things, and read and apply the literature on teaching and learning in their discipline and, perhaps, more generally.” (p. 9-10)

The center adopts McKinney's (2007) definitions of SoTL:

“The scholarship of teaching and learning goes beyond scholarly teaching and involves systematic study of teaching and/or learning and the public sharing and review of such work through presentations, publications or performances. “Study” is broadly defined given disciplinary differences in epistemology and the need for interdisciplinary SoTL. SoTL, then, shares established criteria of scholarship in general, such as that it is made public, can be reviewed critically by members of the appropriate community, and can be built upon by others to advance the field (Shulman, 2001). SoTL focuses on teaching and learning at the college level, and is primarily classroom and disciplinary based.” (p. 10)

To achieve these goals, the CSoTL will be directed by a faculty advisory board that will be responsible for:

- organizing programs to facilitate the exchange of ideas about teaching and learning on campus.
- offering resources and support for those interested in learning about evidence-based pedagogy that improves student learning outcomes.
- creating informal and formal mechanisms to support those who wish to pursue research in the area of SoTL.

- collaborating with administration, technology interests and other groups to promote effective student learning at Juniata.

Advisory Board.

The Juniata CSoTL will be guided by a rotating board of three Juniata faculty. Members will be selected on the basis of their scholarly teaching, SoTL credentials, and on-going SoTL efforts, in order to carry out the goals and responsibilities outlined above. The critical leadership role of a CSoTL advisory board member will occur during the second year of his/her term on the advisory board when he/she serves as director of the CSoTL.

Role of Board members.

The Commitment to the advisory board will be for three academic years. The first year, board members will serve as the director-designate; the second year as director, and the third year as past-director. The duties for each board member are summarized below.

Director.

The director's main responsibility will be to promote the culture of SoTL on campus. This will be achieved through a combination of formal SoTL brown bag lunches, development of learning communities as well as working with individual scholarly teachers to develop and implement their own SoTL projects. This might involve identifying research questions, designing and implementing appropriate assessment measures, assisting with data collection and analysis, and reporting results. The director will also serve as a professional model for carrying out SoTL research by developing a SoTL project of his/her own. During the year that the faculty member serves as director he/she will be provided 50% teaching release time.

Director-designate.

The director-designate's main responsibility will be to familiarize themselves with the duties of the director and plan the SoTL activities he/she will carry out during his/her time as director. To facilitate the transition from the director-designate to the director's position, the faculty member will be provided with a one course release for the semester preceding the academic year in which he/she becomes director.

Past-director.

The role of the past director is to support the center's transition to a new director and to continue to model the appropriate activities of a SoTL investigator by moving to disseminate information generated from research and other activities conducted as director. This would most likely take the form of peer-reviewed publication or presentation at a national or international SoTL conference. The past-director also will provide a public lecture to the Juniata community describing the State of SoTL at Juniata and directions and challenges for the broader SoTL field in higher education.

Initial advisory board members.

The initial advisory board has been selected.

2008-2009. Dave Drews & Mike Boyle (co-interim directors), Kathy Westcott (director-designate), and Phil Dunwoody (director designate 2009-2010).

2009-2010. Kathy Westcott (director), Phil Dunwoody (director-designate), Dave Drews (past director).

2010-2011. Phil Dunwoody (director), Kathy Westcott (past director), and director-designate (this will be the first selected director designate for the SoTL center).

Selection of advisory board members.

The three year commitment made by each member of the advisory board is intended to promote stability for the center while rotating membership encourages evolution in focus and expertise while spreading a culture of systematic assessment across campus.

To apply for the SoTL advisory board, an application for a three year term will be due to the Provost by January 31 of the year prior to joining the board. The first position to be filled will be the director-designate for the academic year 2010-2011. Applications for this position will be due by January 31, 2010 and then annually thereafter on the same date.

The application package should contain the following:

1. Description (limited to two pages) of your personal and/or professional goals for applying to join the advisory board, including any special circumstances (e.g. applying for a sabbatical to leverage additional release time during the year in which you are director) and a statement of commitment to the full 3 year term of an advisory board member.
2. A current curriculum vitae highlighting information relevant to your SoTL qualifications.
3. An abstract (limited to one page) of your proposed SoTL project to be conducted while director. Your project may change during your year as director-designate. Providing an initial abstract demonstrates that you are already thinking about potential SoTL projects.
4. Samples of SoTL work that you have completed (if available).

All applications will be reviewed by the advisory board and the Provost and the applicant will be informed of the status of their application by February 15th. Any faculty member can apply for the SoTL board including individuals who have already completed a 3 year term.

References

McKinney, K. (2007). Enhancing learning through the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: The challenges and joys of juggling. San Francisco, CA: Anchor Publishing.