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SoTL Chronicles

Volume 3, Number 1 November 2011
Newsletter of the SoTL at Georgia Southern Initiative

Website for SoTL at Georgia Southern Initiative

A website for the initiative is at <http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/sotl>. It will serve as the portal for the activities and resources of the initiative.

Faculty Awards for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning

The Faculty Awards for SoTL have the purpose to encourage and recognize faculty members engaging in scholarship that focuses upon teaching and learning and then applying the results of that scholarship to courses for the improvement of student learning. The awards emphasize the integration of research about teaching and learning and the practical application of that research to the teaching and learning process. There are two annual awards of \$2,000 each provided by the Center for Teaching, Learning & Scholarship (CTLS). The application process will take place in February 2012.

5th Annual SoTL Commons Conference

The CTLS will host its 5th **annual SoTL Commons**: A Conference for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning on March 7-9, 2012. Keynote speakers will be Pat Hutchings (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching), Mick Healey (University of Gloucestershire), and Craig Nelson (Indiana University). The submission of proposals took place in September-October. Proposals are from faculty at such schools as San Francisco State University, U.S. Air Force Academy, Loyola Marymount University, South Dakota State University, Columbus State University, Purdue University, Georgia State University, University of Georgia, Western Oregon University, University of South Carolina, Miami University, University of York (UK), York University (CA), Missouri State University, College of Charleston, Kennesaw State University, University of Central Florida, University of North Texas, University of New Orleans, Mercer University, University of Regina (CA), Georgia Southern University.



The conference website is at <http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/ijsotl/conference/2012/index.htm>.

Faculty Learning Community for SoTL

The FLC for SoTL began in 2006 and has been meeting (with different membership) for six years. The members this year are Trent Maurer (HTFCS), Diana Sturges (Health & Kinesiology), Deborah Allen (Nursing), Padmini Shankar (Health & Kinesiology) and Delena Bell Gatch (Physics). For the first time in the history of the FLC, we have 100% of the members from last year returning this year. We have such a good working group going now that we have closed the group to new members so that we can focus more on the disciplinary interests that all the current members share. (A second FLC on SoTL started this year and it is open to new members.) Last year, we examined how students' academic motivations influenced their academic behaviors and perceptions of the course in Anatomy and Physiology courses. This year, our first project is extending this project to examine the influence of students' academic



motivations on their final grades in the course and including two other disciplines: Nutrition and Physics. We plan to present this work at the 2012 SoTL Commons Conference and ultimately submit it for publication.

We also have three other projects in the works to launch in the spring semester. The first one will track undergraduate pre-Nursing students longitudinally through the Nursing program to examine the impact of academic motivations on student grades, student retention/progression/graduation from the program, and ultimately students' scores on the Nursing Boards examinations. The second project is a multi-site investigation of undergraduate students' academic motivations in Physics courses that will examine changes in motivation over the semester, learning gains on established content measures, performance on course assignments and time on task, and final grades. The third project is a multi-site longitudinal investigation of graduate students' academic motivations in Allied Health programs that will examine changes in motivation through the programs and the impact of motivations on student grades and student retention/progression/graduation from the program. We have set a very ambitious agenda for the year and are looking forward to our best year yet!



SoTL Fellows Program

In the spring, 2012, there will be a call for applications to become SoTL Fellows for 2012-2013. The purpose of the program is to encourage and assist faculty members engaging in scholarship that focuses upon teaching and learning (SoTL) and then applying the results of that scholarship to courses for the improvement of student learning. The new SoTL Fellows program emphasizes individual and collaborative SoTL research, and disseminating the fruits of that research to others and to the campus. There will be up to 4 SoTL Fellows selected for an academic year, depending upon the quality of the applications received. Faculty will be invited to apply to be SoTL Fellows by describing a significant SoTL project that is either underway, or will be begun and completed during the Fellowship period. In addition to working on and completing the SoTL projects that were the foundation for their fellowship applications, the SoTL Fellows would be responsible for one or more open forums / presentations on SoTL to the campus. Also, the Fellows are to be available to serve as SoTL mentors to colleagues, while joining with the other Fellows in fostering SoTL at Georgia Southern.

Each SoTL Fellowship will be an award of \$3,000 that may be taken either as salary, or as release time for a three-credit course (at the discretion of the recipient and with approval of department chair). The funds for the award are provided by the Center for Teaching, Learning & Scholarship.

SoTL on Wikipedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scholarship_of_teaching_and_learning



International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning

<http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/ijsotl/v5n2.html>

The 10th issue of *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning* was published in July 2011 by the Center for Teaching, Learning & Scholarship. The journal is an open access, double-blind peer-reviewed, academic electronic journal and is international in its Review Board, authors, and readership. The issue included Invited Essays, Research Articles, Essays About SoTL, and a reflection. A continuing feature is the SoTL Mentors to the World consisting of SoTL scholars available to mentor colleagues anywhere in the world about their SoTL ideas, projects, and applications. The SoTL Mentors are from Canada, Denmark, Ireland, Israel, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, UK and US (including one from Georgia Southern). Authors in the issue came from Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, China, Russia, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom and the U.S. The submission deadline for the January 2010 issue of IJ-SoTL is November 15, 2011.



SoTL Symposium of the South

<http://ceps.georgiasouthern.edu/conted/sotlsymposium.html>

The 2nd annual SoTL Symposium of the South was held on Friday, October 14, 2011 at Georgia Southern University for faculty and administrators at private and public colleges and universities in the southeastern region of the United States. The main focus of the Symposium is on ways to develop, design and complete SoTL projects (including dissemination via publication, presentation, etc., as well as practical applications to one's teaching and students), and practical ways for working to foster, support, and recognize SoTL. Attendees came from four states and many schools, including the University of South Carolina, Jacksonville University, Mercer University, Augusta State University, Georgia Tech, Armstrong Atlantic State University, Georgia Southern, and many more.



SoTL Mentors

A new aspect of "SoTL at Georgia Southern" is to have a group of faculty experienced in doing SoTL research available to serve as SoTL Mentors to Georgia Southern colleagues (in person, or via email/phone, or both ways). The CTLS will maintain a list of SoTL mentors on the SoTL at Georgia Southern website who may be contacted for SoTL consultation or mentoring. SoTL Mentors (on the website) can indicate if they are currently open to be contacted, or are currently mentoring to capacity. *SoTL scholars are invited to volunteer to be SoTL Mentors* by contacting Alan Altany at aaltany@georgiasouthern.edu. #

Voices About SoTL

A consensus has formed within growing circles in academia that there is scholarly research to be done on teaching and learning, that the systematic creation of rigorous knowledge about teaching and learning is a crucial prerequisite to responding to major challenges facing academia, that this knowledge must be shared publicly and should build cumulatively over time, and that the explorations of this area should be conducted by academics from all disciplines, not just those with appointments in schools of education. _ David Pace

One telling measure of how differently teaching is regarded from traditional scholarship or research within the academy is what a difference it makes to have a "problem" in one versus the other. In scholarship and research, having a "problem" is at the heart of the investigative process; it is the compound of the generative questions around which all creative and productive activity revolves. But in one's teaching, a "problem" is something you don't want to have, and if you have one, you probably want to fix it. Asking a colleague about a *problem* in his or her research is an invitation; asking about a problem in one's teaching would probably seem like an accusation. Changing the status of the *problem* in teaching from terminal remediation to ongoing investigation is precisely what the

movement for a scholarship of teaching is all about. How might we make the problematization of teaching a matter of regular communal discourse? How might we think of teaching practice, and the evidence of student learning, as problems to be investigated, analyzed, represented, and debated? _
Randy Bass

"I was familiar with teaching portfolios ... but thinking about teaching as scholarly inquiry began to lead me in the direction of something I had not seen anyone else doing: a portfolio that focused on the course rather than on all of one's teaching. Being a social scientist, I began to think of each course ... as a kind of laboratory - not a truly controlled experiment of course but as a setting in which you start out with goals for student learning, then you adopt teaching practices that you think will accomplish these and along the way you can watch and see if your practices are helping to accomplish your goals, collecting evidence about effects and impact." _ *Bill Cerbin*

SOTL is an area of scholarship that does not solve problems once and for all. The challenges of teaching and learning are persistent. They mutate and grow as new disciplines are invented, new challenges of practice emerge and new generations of both students and faculty come to inhabit and define our classrooms and institutions. These are problems that are not cured, but managed. SOTL is like the teaching practices that it investigates; they are renewed and reiterated year after year and generation after generation because they support the work of a higher calling. Since the world is forever changing, understanding of that world is a quest without end. Education and scholarship are the ways our species copes with the challenge of learning to live in, with and on behalf of that world.

_ *Lee Shulman*

I believe that college teaching is a scholarly profession that will come into its own in the 21st century. The members of a profession are bound together through sharing a base of knowledge and experience that makes them qualified to exercise judgment and skill in the practice of their profession. Strangely missing from the profession of Teaching..., is the ability to advance the profession through a shared base of knowledge about human learning. Classroom research (SoTL) has the potential for creating teaching/learning communities with the shared goal of understanding learning well enough to improve it — individually and collectively. _
Pat Cross

SoTL Resources

Tutorial on the What/Why/How of SoTL: <http://www.issotl.org/tutorial/sotltutorial/home.html>

Peer Review of Teaching Project: <http://www.courseportfolio.org/peer/pages/index.jsp>

SoTL Publication Outlets: <http://ilstu.libguides.com/sotl>

"Getting There: An Integrative Vision of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning":

http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/ijsotl/v5n1/featured_essay/HutchingsHuberCiccione/index.html

The *SoTL Chronicles* is edited by Alan Altany of the CTLS. If you have any information, comments, ideas, or projects connected with the SoTL for possible inclusion in a future issue, please send them to aaltany@georgiasouthern.edu.