Campus-Wide Assessment of SoTL: Analysis of Perceptions, Engagement and Obstacles

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Campus-wide Assessment of SoTL: Analysis of Perceptions, Engagement and Obstacles

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Overview of Presentation

• Study evolution
• Instrument development
• Survey design and administration
• Armstrong background
• Data & observations
• Trial questions and discussion
• Next steps
Evolution of the Study

- SoTL Faculty Learning Community
- One of the goals – raising the profile of SoTL at Armstrong
  - What is the current profile?
  - Is there already a good published tool?
Published Survey Tools

- Kreber dissertation, 2003
- CASTL Survey, 2004
- NETI Survey, 2005-2006
- ASHA, 2009
- JU Fellows Pre-survey, no date
- UF College of Agriculture, 2009
- JU Faculty Perceptions of SoTL Survey, Fall 2011
Development of a Unique Survey Instrument

• Synthesis of existing instruments into broad categories
  1. Demographics
  2. General SoTL knowledge & perceptions; overall level of SoTL participation
  3. Specific aspects of SoTL participation
  4. Departmental context
  5. Campus context
  6. Constraints

• Limitations of instrument
  • Testing through collection of baseline data

ARMSTRONG ATLANTIC STATE UNIVERSITY
Sample Questions

Category: **General SoTL knowledge & perceptions; overall SoTL participation**

“I am comfortable defining the term ‘Scholarship of Teaching and Learning’”

SA   A   N   D   SD
Sample Questions

Category: **Specific Participation in SoTL**

“Have you engaged in the following activities (check those that apply)?

- Framed and investigated questions about T & L within my own classroom
- Attended a session devoted to SoTL at a discipline-based conference
- Received campus funding for a project on SoTL”
Sample Questions

Category: Deptartmental context

“My department’s policies encourage faculty to reflect upon their teaching performance”

SA  A  N  D  SD  DK/NA
Sample Questions

Category: Campus context

“Over the past five years Armstrong has established formal structures to support SoTL”

SA A N D SD DK/NA
Sample Questions

Category: **Constraints**

“The tension between demands for research productivity and SoTL is an obstacle to greater faculty involvement in SoTL at Armstrong”

SA   A   N   D   SD   DK/NA
Armstrong Background

- Colleges
- Scholarly Culture
- Background in SoTL
  - History of FD
  - PRISM
  - USG STEM Initiative
Respondents were mostly:

- Less than 5 years at Armstrong (38.3%)
- More than 20 years in Higher Ed (24.5%)
  - Assistant Professors (41.3%)
  - Tenured (43.0%)

Representation from all departments but one
Analysis by Groups

Disaggregation by:

- College
- Rank
- Years at Armstrong
- Involvement in K-12
Survey data: **General Knowledge & Perceptions**

A or SA

- I understand how research can improve educational opportunities: 89.6%
- SoTL is a viable research method in my discipline: 77.0%
- SoTL literature is important to my students’ success: 69.8%
- I am comfortable defining SoTL: 63.6%
- T & L literature is important to my success as a teacher: 62.3%
- I am comfortable designing T & L research: 60.4%
Overall level of research contributions in the area of T & L

- Minimal: 38%
- Average: 30%
- Significant: 8%
- Prolific: 1%
- None: 23%
Survey data: Engagement in SoTL

Most said they had done the following:

• Attended session at a SoTL conference: 64.6%

• Presented my T & L scholarship at a disciplinary conference: 57.3%

• Framed & investigated T & L question in my own classroom: 56.1%

• Worked with Armstrong colleagues investigating T & L questions: 54.9%
Observations

• *Self reported* knowledge and perceptions are high
• Participation (in ST) is generally high
• Contributions in SoTL are low

• **Question:** SoTL contributions or scholarly contributions in general?
• **Question:** What is holding faculty back from taking ST to SoTL?
Survey Data - Obstacles

A or SA

- Tension between teaching load and SoTL 78.1%
- Tension between disciplinary research and SoTL 69.6%
- Confusion about what constitutes SoTL 64.8%
- Perception that SoTL adds to workload 59.1%
Survey Data – Departmental Context

A or SA

• Policies encourage reflection on teaching performance 71.2%
• Other faculty members actively involved in SoTL 54.2%
• Faculty in other departments actively involved in SoTL 44.2%
Survey Data – Departmental Context

D or SD

• Adequate release time offered for SoTL 56.7%
• Adequate financial support for SoTL 46.7%
• Some of my departmental colleagues find my SoTL work problematic 40.8%
Survey Data – Institutional Context

D or SD

- SoTL support is widespread 33.7%
- Criteria for promotion reflects SoTL principles 31.8%
- Over past 5 years, Armstrong has re-examined its approach to rewarding teaching 29.8%
Survey Data – Institutional Context

Nearly evenly split between A/SA, N, D/SD, DK/NA

• Over past 5 years, Armstrong has broadened criteria for assessing teaching to incorporate SoTL
• Over past 5 years, Armstrong has established formal structures to support SoTL
• Tenure criteria reflect SoTL principles
Observations

• Perceived support for ST is high
• Departmental contexts generally positive
• Perception is that existing resources (time/money/reward) are insufficient

• **Fact:** There is a BOR advocacy policy (8.3.15) 
  http://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section8/C245

• **Fact:** SoTL appears in T&P policies for multiple departments and colleges at Armstrong

• **Question:** Is there a breakdown in communication?
Trial Questions & Discussion

Is there a general false confidence among faculty?
Trial Questions & Discussion

What supports or hinders faculty taking ST to SoTL?
Trial Questions & Discussion

Which perceived obstacles can be reduced for greater faculty involvement? How?
Next Steps

• Share results with Director of FD
  – Address communication gaps
  – Facilitate pathway from ST to SoTL
• Explore explanations behind results
  – Qualitative methods (focus groups)
• Other thoughts/recommendations?
Thank you!

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