

Executive Summary

At the Center for Teaching Excellence, the 2010-2011 academic year was one shaped by community building, faculty outreach, new program development and service to the University. With a guiding commitment to enhance teaching and learning at VCU, the CTE was able to meet – and in some cases exceed – its goals. This executive summary section provides a brief description the CTE’s programs and services, an overview of how key goals were achieved, and a listing of important highlights that defined the collective work of the CTE. More detailed information about these efforts can be found in subsequent sections of this annual report.

Core to the CTE’s mission is belief in the value of community building to support faculty engagement in the programs and services we provide. This focus finds us continually exploring ways to establish relationships with individual and small cohorts of faculty, as well as entire schools or departments. This process often takes years of sustained engagement that is defined by constancy, innovation, adaptability and problem solving. In an ongoing effort to support this notion of sustained engagement, the CTE offered a wide range of opportunities for faculty members to enhance their practice and participate in the continued creation of a culture of teaching and learning at VCU. During the past year, the CTE supported the development of new and junior faculty members at VCU through its *Junior Faculty Mentorship Program* (19 participants), as well as teaching a course in the Graduate School’s *Preparing Future Faculty* program (GRAD 602). The Center also provided opportunities for faculty members to engage in meaningful inquiry about teaching and learning through our *Faculty Learning Communities Program* (9 FLCs with 55 faculty participants), and in the Small Grant Program (Six grant awards totaling \$24,800). The CTE also continued to provide innovative programs and services in the area of instructional technology through the *Digital Storytelling Program* and launch of its multi-year *i³ Project* that will focus on enhancing student engagement and learning through the use of digital technologies. In addition, the CTE supported the University’s strategic move into online education by continuing to engage last year’s twenty (20) faculty members in the *Online Course Development Initiative*, while starting the second year of the initiative with nineteen (19) additional faculty members. For this second cohort, the CTE designed and offered an online learning experience for faculty in a course called *Designing Quality Online Courses*, and continued development of web-based resources (e.g., *eLearning Tools Landscape*). Faculty members also had multiple opportunities to engage in conversations about teaching and learning through summer institutes, workshops, brown bag lunch events and consultations. The CTE conducted three (3) week-long summer institutes attended by 54 faculty members, over 120 workshops attended by 670 faculty members, 25 brown bag lunch sessions attended by 228 faculty members, and completed over 270 individual consultations with faculty. Taken collectively, these programs and services represent a very significant effort on the part of the CTE staff – and faculty participants - to enhance teaching and learning at VCU.

In addition to the preceding general overview of the CTE's work during the past academic year, there are several key highlights worth noting in greater details that illustrate the energy and commitment of the CTE to enhance teaching and learning at VCU, and these are briefly outlined below:

Support for Online Teaching and Course Development

The past academic year witnessed VCU make strides in generating a campus-wide conversation about online teaching and learning. The CTE played an important role in this process by providing consultation to schools and departments, as well as designing programs and services to support faculty members in developing new teaching practices and online courses. In the two years, nearly 40 new online courses have been developed with support from the CTE.

Promoted Faculty Inquiry about Teaching and Learning

The CTE sustains its commitment to supporting faculty inquiry and innovation in teaching and learning at VCU through a variety of services and programs. Two key programs - *CTE Small Grants* and the *Faculty Learning Communities* - are specifically designed to promote faculty inquiry, reflection, and innovation in teaching practice as well as course design. These programs are highlighted here because of the diversity, creativity and learning represented through faculty participation.

Innovative Programs and Resources to Support use of Educational Technology

The meaningful use of digital technology to support teaching and learning remains an important area of focus for the CTE. As one of the primary units with a university-wide focus in this area, it is important that the CTE provides hands-on guidance and training as well as opportunities for faculty to experiment and innovate. In addition to scores of workshops and consultations in the area of educational technology, the development of new programs (*i³ Project & EdTech Collective*) and resources in this area is a noteworthy highlight.

Engaged Schools and Departments in Opportunities to Enhance Teaching and Learning

A key aspect of the CTE's work involves a focus on individual faculty members; employing a "grass-roots" approach to building relationships that leads to broader faculty involvement over time. During the 2010 – 2011 academic year, the CTE experienced growth in working with larger groups of faculty representing entire departments and schools. This highlight is significant because it marks the result of years of successful relationship building, and an acknowledgement of the value of CTE involvement in school-based teaching enhancement projects.

Hiring of New CTE Staff Members

The CTE was fortunate to have the opportunity to conduct two searches new staff members over the past year. These searches resulted in the hiring of two (2) new CTE staff members - Phillip Edwards, Instructional Consultant and Joyce Kincannon, Online

Instructional Designer. Their addition to the CTE represents growth and new opportunities for enhancing services provided to the VCU community.

As evidenced by these highlights, the CTE had a year marked by learning, productivity and innovation in support of the teaching and learning mission of the University. The Center looks forward to the 2010 – 2011 academic year with a sense of opportunity and a fresh focus on key goals to guide our work.

Outcomes / Objectives

For the 2010-2011 academic year the CTE focused on achieving three (3) core outcomes. These goals and related objectives, along with the extent to which they were achieved, are outlined below.

Outcome 1: Engage faculty members in the development of a culture of teaching and learning at VCU.

- *The CTE will facilitate the professional and intellectual development of faculty members as educators.*
- *The CTE will provide resources and support for faculty inquiry about teaching and learning.*
- *The CTE will seek to broaden the conversation about teaching and learning at VCU.*
- *The CTE will offer programs and services to support faculty exploration of innovative teaching practices and the assessment of their effectiveness.*
- *The CTE staff will explore how to effectively integrate innovative teaching and assessment practices into their own courses and faculty development activities.*
- *The CTE will help faculty explore ways to best showcase and disseminate innovative teaching at VCU.*

Developing creative and meaningful opportunities for faculty members to participate in a culture of teaching and learning at VCU is an essential focus of the work of the CTE. During the 2010-2011 academic year the CTE was able to successfully address this goal in the following ways:

- Workshops addressing teaching and learning topics continue to be an entry point for supporting faculty development. The CTE conducted over 120 workshops for 672 faculty members.
- The CTE Brown Bag Lunch Series continued for its 4th year offering members of the VCU community a unique opportunity to engage in conversations about a range of teaching and learning issues. During the 2010 – 2011 academic year, a total of twenty-five (25) sessions were offered, and attended by 228 people. All

brown bag sessions were recorded, and a complete archive can be accessed here:

- <http://www.vcu.edu/cte/workshops/BrownBags/archives2010Fall.html>
- <http://www.vcu.edu/cte/workshops/BrownBags/archives2011Spring.html>
- Consultation has become a core service of the CTE and allows for confidential and intensive support of individual teaching needs. The CTE staff conducted over 270 consultations with 206 individual faculty members. These one-on-one consultations provided direct support for faculty members on a wide range of teaching and learning topics.
- The Faculty Learning Communities (FLC) Program served an important role in fostering a culture of teaching and learning. In total, seven FLCs were supported – two were offered out of the CTE (*Promoting Critical Thinking in the Classroom, and Using Technology to Enhance Teaching and Learning: Networked Learning*) and five came directly from faculty through our annual call for proposals in the spring of 2010 (*Teaching Creativity, Faculty Development in Teaching, Teaching Strategies for Reducing Disaster Risk with International Disasters Cases Studies: Beyond Haiti, Genetics, Health and Policy: Thinking Critically Across the Disciplines, and Black Education Association (BEA) – A Conversation on Learning*). A total of fifty-five (55) faculty members participated in the FLC program during the 2010 – 2011 academic year.
- Members of the CTE engaged several schools and departments during the 2010 – 2011 academic year in order to begin or sustain a conversation about excellence in teaching at VCU. These conversations took place during faculty retreats, convocations, faculty meetings, or during scheduled times throughout the academic year. These are briefly outlined below:
 - School of Nursing Retreat
 - *In Pursuit of Excellence in Teaching and What Constitutes Excellence in Teaching at VCU's School of Nursing?*
 - Throughout the academic year, a member of the CTE staff served as a facilitator for a SoN task force charged with overhauling the end of course evaluation. In addition, the task force developed documentation for best practices associated with getting high response rates, quality feedback from students, and next steps for faculty upon receiving end of course feedback. A new Instrument was created and deployed in the spring of 2011, with an 87% response rate.
 - Workshops were developed and offered on *Creating and Using Teaching Portfolios*, and *How to Interpret and Respond to End of Course Evaluations*.
 - School of Dentistry Retreat
 - Workshops were developed and offered on *In Pursuit of Excellence in Teaching* and *Creating and Using Teaching Portfolios*

- Department of Dental Hygiene
 - Scholarly Teaching / Teaching Effectiveness workshop series
- Department of Pediatrics
 - Scholarly Teaching / Teaching Effectiveness workshop series
- The CTE offered four different Summer Institutes during the 2010-2011 academic year:
 - Health Sciences Institute on Teaching and Learning (7 faculty members)
 - Summer Institute on Teaching and Learning (16 faculty members)
 - Teaching and Learning Online (19 faculty members)
 - EdTech Collaborative (6 faculty members)
- Supported faculty inquiry and research about teaching and learning through engagement in the CTE Small Grant program (http://www.vcu.edu/cte/programs/small_grants.htm)
- The 2010 CTE newsletter, *VCU Teaching*, was published in Fall 2010 to feature faculty reports on teaching projects supported by the CTE Small Grant Program.
- The “Article of the Month” provided an opportunity to focus monthly conversations as well as generate discussion on teaching and learning topics on the CTE blog site. Links to the Article of the Month series can be found here: http://blog.vcu.edu/cte/monthly_article_series/
- The CTE continues to provide support for the University College’s Summer Reading Program. Each Summer we co-conduct a series of Discussion Leader Training sessions to help new and returning discussion leaders prepare to lead discussions about the book selected for the Summer Reading Program.
- Members of the CTE also explored how to effectively integrate innovative teaching and assessment practices into their own courses:
 - ADMS 647 – Educational Technology for School Leaders
 - ADLT 641 – Exploration of Digital Media for Adult Learning
 - GRAD 602 – Teaching, Learning and Technology in Higher Education
 - SOCS 340 – Self and Society

Outcome 2: Enhance faculty development efforts by focusing on the unique needs of early career faculty.

- *The CTE will explore ways to improve existing programs to better meet the developmental needs of early career faculty.*
- *The CTE will develop new programs / initiatives that are directed at preparing early career faculty.*

Providing support for early career faculty members is an important way of establishing and growing a commitment to the teaching and learning mission of the university. The CTE was able to achieve this goal in the following ways:

- Nineteen (19) new or junior faculty members participated in our year-long Junior Faculty Mentorship Program. The program consists of one-on-one mentoring, a book club, as well as workshops and events that are designed to help early career faculty be as successful as possible
 - New workshops offered in *Diversity and Oppression in the Classroom & Service Learning*.
- Two CTE Staff members continue to design and teach a course in the Preparing Future Faculty Program (GRAD 602 – Teaching, Learning and Technology in Higher Education).
- In the fall of 2010, a member of the CTE staff designed and conducted a special seminar series for School of Engineering GAANNS fellows (7 students) which included the following sessions:
 - Developing a Teaching Philosophy
 - Engaging Students in their Learning
 - Assessing Student Learning
 - Developing a Lesson Plan
- During the 2010 – 2011 academic year, a member of the CTE staff developed and facilitated a three part series of workshops and seminars around the topic of *Preparing a Teaching Portfolio* for UNIV 200 graduate students.
- The CTE offered a general orientation to teaching for the entire group of incoming graduate students during the GTA orientation in August sponsored by the PFF program
- The CTE provided workshops on Teaching with Blackboard and using Social Media in Education for graduate assistants in Biology and in the School of Business. We provided mentorship and support for the CTE Graduate Fellow position. This position will continue to be supported for the 2011 – 12 academic year.
- We continued to maintain and update the “New Faculty Resource Guide” available on the CTE website (<http://www.vcu.edu/cte/resources/nfrg/index.htm>).
- A member of the CTE staff presented at the annual School of Medicine’s Basic Teaching Skills Workshop—part of their New Faculty Orientation. New faculty members were introduced to the idea of scholarly teaching and CTE services related to scholarly teaching.
- Members of the CTE staff developed and conducted a series of *Preparing to Teach at VCU* workshops associated with the New Faculty Orientation. This workshop series was offered prior to the fall and spring semesters. A total of fifty-one (51) faculty attended in the Fall, and forty-six(46) faculty in the spring.

Outcome 3: Promote the meaningful and effective use of instructional technology to support teaching and enhance student learning experiences.

- *The CTE will engage faculty in programs, workshops and consultations that focus on the use of technology in education.*
- *The CTE will examine emerging technologies for potential use in teaching and learning.*

- *The CTE will offer programs and services to support the development of faculty members teaching online, hybrid and distance education courses.*
- *The CTE will disseminate research and best practices that address the intersection of teaching, learning and technology.*
- *The CTE will leverage the unique affordances of digital technology to deliver flexible and alternative faculty development opportunities.*

Engaging VCU faculty members in the meaningful use of educational technology to support teaching and learning is a key aspect of the CTE's mission. During the 2010-2011 academic year the CTE was able to successfully address this goal in the following ways:

- The CTE staff collectively offered seventy-five (75) workshops focused on the use of technology in education, and these were attended by a total of 546 faculty members.
- The CTE staff routinely engaged in one-on-one and small group consultation with faculty members to support the effective use of educational technology, and we conducted over 135 individual faculty consultations in this area.
- Six (6) faculty members participated in a year long Faculty Learning Community on *Networked Learning*, which examined the use of web-based technologies to support distributed learning environments and practices.
- Eight (8) faculty members participated in the CTE's *Digital Storytelling Program*, which focuses on the use of digital media to create compelling instructional content.
- The CTE supported faculty participation *Learning Technology Research Group* (LTRG), a team of faculty members who design and conduct research studies on the how the use of digital technology influences learning.
(http://www.vcu.edu/cte/programs/instructional_technology/LTRG/index.htm)
- During the past academic year *mobile computing* was identified as a key emerging technology to explore. The CTE engaged in initial exploration of iPads and participated in the EDUCAUSE online conference, "Mobile Learning 2.0: The Next Phase of Innovation in Mobility." Educational use of iPads will continue to be explored through a CTE program for the 2011-2012 academic year.
- In support of the growing effort to enhance online teaching, learning and course development the CTE supported the initial cohort of twenty (20) faculty members as they completed their design and teaching of their online courses for the first time. Based on an evaluation of the first cohort's program, the CTE redesigned and offered the *Online Course Development Initiative (OCDI)* to a new cohort of nineteen (19) VCU faculty members. The OCDI program remains a year long program that prepares faculty to be effective online instructors and provides ongoing support for the development of an online course. More information about the program can be found here:
(<http://www.vcu.edu/cte/programs/ocdi/index.html>)
- A web-based resource, the "eLearning Tools Landscape," was developed to assist faculty members with the identification and selection of technologies to support learning (<http://www.vcu.edu/cte/resources/OnlineTools/index.html>).

- The “CTE Article of the Month” provided regular opportunities to disseminate research and best practices at the intersection of teaching, learning and technology. In addition, the CTE used several social media tools (delicious, twitter, wikis) to disseminate resources to the VCU community.
- Throughout the year the CTE provided multiple opportunities for VCU faculty to engage in both synchronous and asynchronous online professional development opportunities including the following:
 - Jossey-Bass Online Teaching and Learning Conference (<http://2010.onlineteachingandlearning.com/>)
 - EDUCAUSE Online Focus Session, "Mobile Learning 2.0: The Next Phase of Innovation in Mobility " (http://net.educause.edu/content.asp?SECTION_ID=484)
 - Recorded archives of all CTE Brown Bag Lunch sessions (Fall 2010 - <http://www.vcu.edu/cte/workshops/BrownBags/archives2010Fall.html>) and (Spring 2011 - <http://www.vcu.edu/cte/workshops/BrownBags/archives2011Spring.html>)

Highlights

The CTE engaged in a range of activities supporting its core mission of faculty development during the 2010 – 2011 academic year. In addition to the activities described in preceding parts of this report, the CTE engaged in focused efforts that represent key achievements and highlights. These are outlined in greater detail below:

1) Support for Online Teaching and Course Development

The past academic year witnessed VCU make strides in generating a campus-wide conversation about online teaching and learning. The CTE played an important role in this process by providing consultation to schools and departments, as well as designing programs and services to support faculty members in developing new teaching practices and online courses.

- *Online Course Development Initiative (OCDI)* – Comprehensive year-long faculty development program aimed at enhancing teaching practice and online course development. Twenty (20) new online courses were designed and taught during the 2010-2011 academic year by the first cohort of faculty members. A new cohort of nineteen (19) faculty members attended the summer institute and online course mentioned below.
- *Teaching and Learning Online Summer Institute* – An intensive 5-day program designed to assist faculty members with becoming effective online instructors.
- *Designing Quality Online Courses* – An online course designed as a companion to the Summer Institute (offered July-August 2011), supporting the development of online courses.
- *Faculty Mentors* – Engaged two (2) VCU faculty members to serve as mentors during the Summer Institute and the online course. Mentors play vital role as consultants and advocates for effective online teaching and course design.

- *Consultants for Life* – This service pairs an individual faculty with a consultant at the CTE who knows the faculty member and the unique needs / features of the course. This service is designed to provide dedicated and consistent one-on-one support for faculty members who participate in the OCDI.
- *Department / School Consultation* – CTE staff worked with several schools (School of Social Work, School of Engineering and School of Business) to support planning and development of online programs.
- *Online Advisory Committee* – Members of the CTE served on the Online Advisory Committee, chaired by the Vice Provost for Instruction, Dr. Joseph Marolla.

2) Promoted Faculty Inquiry about Teaching and Learning

The CTE sustains its commitment to supporting faculty inquiry and innovation in teaching and learning at VCU through a variety of services and programs. Two key programs - *CTE Small Grants* and the *Faculty Learning Communities* - are specifically designed to promote faculty inquiry, reflection, and innovation in teaching practice as well as course design. These programs are highlighted here because of the diversity, creativity and learning represented through faculty participation.

- Small Grants Program – The CTE was able to fund six (6) proposals for the 2011 grant cycle, awarding a total of \$24,800. Each of the funded grants supports the implementation of a project focused on enhancing teaching and learning at VCU. The funded projects and faculty members are listed below.
 - “Examining the Effect of Service-Learning on Students’ Understanding of the Need for Special Education Services” - Dr. Beth Bader, School of Education
 - “Beyond the Text: Richmond Cultural Institutions and VCU Core Curriculum” - Dr. Catherine Ingrassia, College of Humanities and Sciences
 - “Establishing a Student-Staffed Service-Learning Based PR Agency: Bring the Public Relations Capstone” - Dr. Yan Jin, School of Mass Communications
 - “Teaching Applied Demography for Social Science Majors” - Dr. Li Zhang, Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs
 - “Implementation of an On-line Alternative to Introductory Chemistry Using ALEKS” - Deborah Polo, College of Humanities and Sciences
 - “Development of an Assistive Technology Course: A Hands-On Approach” - Dr. Diane Pawluck, Biomedical Engineering
- Faculty Learning Communities – A total of fifty-five (55) faculty participated in the seven (7) learning communities listed below
 - *Promoting Critical Thinking in the Classroom*
 - *Using Technology to Enhance Teaching and Learning: Networked Learning*
 - *Teaching Creativity*
 - *Faculty Development in Teaching*
 - *Teaching Strategies for Reducing Disaster Risk with International Disasters Cases Studies: Beyond Haiti*

- *Genetics, Health and Policy: Thinking Critically Across the Disciplines*
- *Black Education Association (BEA) – A Conversation on Learning*

3) *Innovative Programs and Resources to Support use of Educational Technology*

The meaningful use of digital technology to support teaching and learning remains an important area of focus for the CTE. As one of the primary units with a university-wide focus in this area, it is important that the CTE provides hands-on guidance and training as well as opportunities for faculty to experiment and innovate. In addition to scores of workshops and consultations in the area of educational technology, the development of new programs and resources in this area is a noteworthy highlight.

- *i³ Project – imagination, innovation, inspiration* – This new multi-year project represents an effort on the part of the CTE to support faculty members in the use of technology to enhance student learning and engagement. *i³* related programs are slated to be developed for VCU faculty through 2015.
- *EdTech Collective* – This program was launched in June 2011, and engaged an interdisciplinary cohort of faculty members in an effort to design, implement and assess a technology related teaching project. The *Collective* has planned a multi-author blog to share the ongoing progress with their work (<http://edtechcollective.wp.vcu.edu/>).
- *eLearning Tools Landscape* – This resource was developed by the CTE to facilitate the process of identifying and selecting technology tools to support learning. This “one stop” location provides an integrated visual of technologies to support learning in four key areas, and then links to the resource for self-directed exploration.
- *Networked Learning FLC* – This faculty learning community (FLC) provided faculty members with a unique opportunity to explore questions and share ideas about ways in which a social, resource-rich and networked web are having an impact on how and where learning are taking place. This FLC experience fostered inquiry about changes in teaching and learning, and opportunities to learn to use digital technologies in innovative ways.

4) *Engaged Schools and Departments in Opportunities to Enhance Teaching and Learning*

A key aspect of the CTE’s work involves a focus on individual faculty members; employing a “grass-roots” approach to building relationships that leads to broader faculty involvement over time. During the 2010 – 2011 academic year, the CTE experienced growth in working with larger groups of faculty representing entire departments and schools. This highlight is significant because it marks the result of years of successful relationship building, and an acknowledgement of the value of CTE involvement in school-based teaching enhancement projects.

- *School of Nursing* – Beginning with the School of Nursing faculty retreat in August of 2010, the CTE engaged the nursing faculty in a year-long conversation and exploration of what constitutes excellence in teaching in their field. One of the key outcomes of this engagement was a complete overhaul of their end of

course evaluation. In addition to the instrument being completely overhauled, it was moved online, and a process was developed for maximizing response rates (87%).

- *School of Dentistry* – The CTE was also invited to present at the School of Dentistry retreat in December of 2010. The theme of the retreat was very similar to the school of Nursing retreat—to explore what constitutes excellence in teaching in the field of Dentistry. A key outcome from this event was a number of individual faculty seeking consultations on how to enhance their teaching and student learning
- *Department of Dental Hygiene* – The CTE was invited to the department of Dental Hygiene in the summer of 2010 for an opportunity to discuss what constitute scholarly teaching.

Teaching Activities

While the CTE is not considered a traditional academic school or department, the professional faculty members at the Center do regularly teach courses as a part of their professional responsibilities. During the 2010 – 2011 academic year three members of the CTE taught courses in the Department of Sociology, School of Education, and the Graduate School. The courses are listed below:

- ADLT 641 – Exploration of Digital Media for Adult Learning
- ADMS 647 – Educational Technology for School Leaders
- SOCY 340 - Self and Society
- GRAD 602 - Teaching Learning and Technology in Higher Education

Scholarly Activities

The CTE staff is also actively involved in scholarship and service. Listed below are publications and presentations completed during the past academic year. Also included is a list of service activities engaged in by CTE staff at the local, state and national levels. (CTE staff include: Bud Deihl, Zachary Goodell, Jeff Nugent & Britt Watwood).

Submitted for Publication

Ellington, A.J., Hardin, J.R., & Nugent, J.S. (2011, in press). Use of tablet PCs to enhance instruction and promote group collaboration in a course to prepare future mathematics specialists. *Mathematics and Computer Education*.

Presentations / Poster Sessions

Deihl, W. & Carter, T. (2011). Engaging Faculty and Students in the Power of Digital Storytelling for Reflective Learning. Presentation at the Conference on Higher Education Pedagogy, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

Goodell, Zachary G. (2011). A Comprehensive Approach to Promoting Critical Thinking in the Classroom. Presentation at the Lilly South Conference on College and University Teaching, Greensboro, NC.

Nugent, J.S. & Southall, S. (2011). Learning in the Open: Faculty and Student Perspectives of Blogging to Support Reflective Practice. Presentation at the Lilly Conference on College and University Teaching, Washington, D.C.

Robnolt, V.; Mazzeo, S.; Watwood, B.; Lawal, I.; Hassel, A.; and Lincoln, J. (2011) Assessing Faculty and Student Perceptions and Attitudes Regarding 21st Century Literacies. Poster presentation at Educause Learning Initiative 2011 Conference, Washington DC.

Carter, T.J. & Nugent, J.S. (2010). Self-directed Learning through a Personal Learning Network. Presentation at the annual meeting of the American Association of Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE), Clearwater, FL.

Nugent, J. & Watwood, B. (2010). [Re]connecting: Exploring New Opportunities for Teaching and Learning in a Networked World. Presentation at the 7th Annual Conference on Teaching and Learning, Elon University, Elon, NC.

Watwood, B. & Deihl, W. (2010). Open, Connected and Social: Personal Learning Networks for Faculty Development. Presentation at the 7th Annual Conference on Teaching and Learning, Elon University, Elon, NC.

Service

The CTE is, at its core, a service organization. By our very nature and through our daily actions, we serve faculty as they work to improve the experience of our students. Our commitment to serve VCU's many communities and our strength in building bridges through interdisciplinary activities has provided the CTE staff the opportunity to serve both internal and external organizations. During the 2010-2011 academic year CTE staff engaged in the following:

VCU Committees

- Member, Living Learning Program Advisory Committee
- Member, Electronic Communications Modernization Project
- Member, Lecture Capture Review Committee
- Member, Technology Advisory Committee
- Member, Online Advisory Committee
- Chair, Instructional Technology Advisory Group
- Members (2), Preparing Future Faculty Program Advisory Group
- Chair, CTE Instructional Designer Search Committee
- Chair, CTE Instructional Consultant Search Committee

External Organizations

- Journal and Conference Session Review Panel member:
 - Professional conference: EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative
 - Professional conference: National Association of Research in Science Teaching (Strand 7 - Special Interest Group in Educational Technology)
 - Professional conference: Professional and Organizational Development in Higher Education Network
- Program Committee Member, EDUCAUSE 2012 Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference
- Member, New Media Consortium K-12 Horizon Project Advisory Board
- Vice-Chair, Learning Technology Advisory Committee, an advisory committee to the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV)
- VCU representative, Electronic Campus of Virginia
- VCU primary representative, EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative
- VCU representative, Southern Regional Educational Board

Challenges

The start of each new academic year brings with it a new set of challenges, and these often present opportunities for growth. As we look ahead, the CTE sees many opportunities for contributing to the teaching and learning mission of the University. A central area of opportunity is represented by the recalibration of VCU's strategic plan: *Quest for Distinction*. Theme I of the strategic plan calls for the university to embrace teaching excellence across the entire academic enterprise. Within this view, teaching excellence is defined as a more "active, learning-centered, collaborative and interdisciplinary approach to the process of teaching and learning." The CTE is a strong advocate and supporter of the instructional values represented by this expectation, and our many programs and services described in the preceding pages of this report reflect our commitment to these values. What remains a potentially significant challenge is the creation of systemic processes that – in addition to the grass-roots efforts of the CTE – can drive institutional changes that support an equitable balance between teaching and research. If research continues to be elevated above teaching, and scholarship and grant writing are deemed to be more important than student learning outcomes, then the CTE will face significant challenges with building and sustaining a culture of excellence in teaching at VCU. However, if we are able to work collectively at making changes in the organizational culture and structure within the university that truly position and reward excellence in teaching on much the same scale as is done with scholarly research, then the challenge quickly becomes transformed into an opportunity. Clearly the CTE can make a contribution in this area, but it must be a concerted effort across the institution. As decades of educational research have shown, even in the best of conditions and with optimal support, changes in institutional culture and organizational structure occur slowly over time. Thus, a central challenge faced by both the CTE and the University is how to provide balanced expectations, support, resources and rewards for those schools, departments and faculty who engage in meaningful pursuit and demonstration of teaching excellence. In order to be successful in encouraging this kind of growth, some long-standing and traditional practices within the academy (teaching / course evaluations, tenure & promotion requirements, etc.) may well need careful

review and revision. Within this context of challenge and opportunity, the CTE remains committed to supporting change through community building and the development of a culture of teaching and learning excellence at VCU.

2011 – 2012 Goals

In reflecting on strategic university initiatives and considering the unique mission of the CTE, the following goals have been identified for the 2011 – 2012 academic year:

1) Provide programs and services to support the development of faculty members teaching online, hybrid and distance education courses.

- The CTE will design and develop programs and services to promote teaching effectiveness in a range of distributed learning environments.
- The CTE will provide services and resources to support the design and development of high quality online courses.
- The CTE will provide opportunities to showcase best practices of online teaching and learning at VCU.

2) Engage faculty members in the development of a culture of teaching and learning at VCU.

- The CTE will facilitate the professional and intellectual development of faculty members as educators.
- The CTE will provide resources and support for faculty inquiry about teaching and learning.
- The CTE will seek to broaden the conversation about teaching and learning at VCU.
- The CTE will offer programs and services to support faculty exploration of innovative teaching practices and the assessment of their effectiveness.
- The CTE staff will explore how to effectively integrate innovative teaching and assessment practices into their own courses and faculty development activities.
- The CTE will help faculty explore ways to best showcase and disseminate innovative teaching at VCU.

3) Promote the meaningful and effective use of instructional technology to support teaching and enhance the learning experiences of students.

- The CTE will engage faculty in programs, workshops and consultations that focus on the use of technology in education.
- The CTE will examine emerging technologies for potential use in teaching and learning.
- The CTE will disseminate research and best practices that address the intersection of teaching, learning and technology.
- The CTE will leverage the unique affordances of digital technology to deliver flexible and alternative faculty development opportunities.

4) Enhance faculty development efforts by focusing on the unique needs of early career faculty.

- The CTE will explore ways to improve existing programs to better meet the developmental needs of early career faculty.
- The CTE will develop new programs / initiatives that are directed at preparing early career faculty.