

The Banyan Tree

Newsletter of the Center for Excellence in Teaching (CET)
Georgia Southern University

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Growth is the only evidence of life. _ John Henry Newman

Director's Message from the Canopy.

I started college teaching without really knowing how people learn or how to teach so that my students would learn in effective, enduring ways. I simply started talking about my discipline, with some class discussions thrown in. I had no apprenticeship, no internship or mentoring to help me learn to teach. It was individual trial and error. I now know it doesn't have to be that way. What if there were ways to glean from among the hundreds of faculty at Georgia Southern and their thousands of years of teaching experience some of their knowledge, understanding, even wisdom, about teaching and students' learning? That question is the impetus for much of the CET's program for creating ways for faculty to work together to benefit each other and their students, and, importantly, to enjoy doing so. Teaching can bring faculty together.

The CET's a new **Faculty Fellow** for 2007-2008, is **Dr. Michelle Zjhra**, associate professor in the Department of Biology. Dr. Zjhra received a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin, Madison and has done field work in Madagascar, Costa Rica, Panama, Borneo, Sulawesi, Rwanda, Vietnam, and the U.S. Coastal Plain. She is available to work with faculty and whole departments (in any discipline) to integrate problem-based learning (PBL), case studies, and other forms of active learning in courses, and to develop ways to assess learning.

The **Faculty Learning Communities** program is beginning its 2nd year, as is the **Reading Roundtable** (faculty book discussion group). To support faculty creativity and scholarship, the CET sponsors the **Creative Writing Circle** and the **Academic Writing Circle**. For new faculty there was the **New Faculty Forum** in August and the **New Faculty Seminar Series** this fall, along with the **University Mentor Program**. You can attend presentations by the recipients of the **Focus on Excellence Awards** in instruction, research, and service. A new group, the **MERLOT Colloquium**, is underway for faculty interested in using or creating multimedia learning objects in classes. There is a fall schedule of **CET seminars** on such topics as planning and developing online courses, gaming in SMART classrooms, digital video, creating interactive courseware and illustrations with PowerPoint, and a peer-reviewed repository of multimedia sites for use in courses in many disciplines.

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CET Fall Seminars

I invite and encourage faculty to propose seminars, workshops, panels, demonstrations that they will lead on topics connected with teaching, student learning, scholarship, service, and the academic life, sessions that would be open to any faculty to attend. This would be called the **Faculty Series** and facilitated by the CET.

The 2nd issue of the CET's peer-reviewed, open access, academic journal, *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning* was published online in July with the next issue published in January 2008. The CET is hosting the inaugural "**The SoTL Commons: An International Conference for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning**" on November 1-2, 2007 in the Nessmith-Lane Continuing Education Building. Any faculty who would like to co-chair a concurrent session (along with a student co-chair, please contact Raleigh Way at the CET.

"There is no difference between living and learning..." _John Holt

CET Web Site & CD

Visit the CET web site regularly at <http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/cet/> for updated resources, calendars, events, announcement for faculty, etc. The CET has created a **multimedia CD** full of teaching & learning resources, and featuring people, traditions, places, things of Georgia Southern University. For a downloadable version of the CD, go to <http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/cet/SB/NFO/tour.html>.



International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

[<http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/ijsotl/current.htm>]

The 2nd issue of the CET's peer-reviewed, open access eJournal, *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning* (IJ-SoTL) is online. The goal for the journal is to become the premier journal in the world for the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) and SoTL's application to improved student learning. IJ-SoTL is very international in its readership, authors, and Review Board. Reviewers are from 30 countries and people from nearly 50 countries have registered to receive notification when new issues are published. *This issue contains a research article by a Georgia Southern faculty member, Dr. Lorraine Gilpin.*

Reading Roundtable

Each semester the CET sponsors a faculty book discussion group called Reading Roundtable (RR). The RR meets several times during the semester, according to the schedules of its members. This fall there are 27 people in three separate RRs reading *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life* (Parker Palmer), *Thinking About Teaching & Learning: Developing Habits of Learning with First Year College & University Students* (Robert Leamnsen), and *The Missing Professor: An Academic Mystery* (Thomas Jones). Plan on joining a spring Reading Roundtable to read a different book. For info, contact Steve Bonham at the CET.

NEW!



The SoTL Commons

A Conference for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning

November 1 - 2, 2007

Georgia Southern University

Statesboro, Georgia, USA

(<http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/ijsotl/conference/>)

The CET will host an annual, international conference for SoTL. The inaugural conference will be held on November 1 - 2, 2007 in the Nessmith-Lane Continuing Education building. Presenters are from 12 countries (Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, England, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden, Swaziland, Switzerland, United States). The keynote speaker is **Dr. Mary Taylor Huber**, an internationally known writer and scholar in SoTL at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Featured Speaker is **Dr. Bob Beichner**, Department of Physics at North Carolina State University, who has focused upon teaching large classes effectively. *Many Georgia Southern faculty and staff will be presenting, and many other Georgia Southern faculty and students will serve as co-chairs for the concurrent sessions.* For info, contact the conference coordinator, Raleigh Way, at the CET.

Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs)

Many faculty will be working together in FLCs this year on selected topics, applying what they learn to their courses or work, and disseminating the fruit of their work to the campus in various ways (<http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/cet/programs/flc.htm>).



Grants, Awards & Educational Leave

For guidelines and deadlines, go to <http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/cet/grants.htm>.

Grants for the Development of Instruction: applications due 9/7/07

Grants for Professional Travel: applications due 9/14/07; 1/11/08; 3/21/08

Award for Excellence—Contributions to Instruction: Nominations due 9/14/07

"Teaching is the greatest act of optimism." _Colleen Wilcox

Featured Books from the CET Library

Faculty are invited to check out books from the CET's lending-library. Any of the books may be borrowed, including the following:

Advice for New Faculty Members

Engaging the Online Learner: Activities & Resources for Creative Instruction

Balancing Acts: The Scholarship of Teaching & Learning in Academic Careers

Blueprint for Learning: Constructing College Courses to Facilitate & Assess Learning

The Department Chair Primer: Leading and Managing Academic Departments

The Teaching Portfolio: A Practical Guide to Improved Performance

Disciplinary Styles in the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning: Exploring Common Ground

Dr. Michelle Zjhra (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison)

Associate Professor of Biology

CET Faculty Fellow, 2007-2008



"As the CET Faculty Fellow my goal is to disseminate active teaching tools that result in increased student learning. These include Active Lecture, PBL (Problem-based Learning), Case Studies, Place-based Learning, and Service-Learning. Skills that I can bring to this position include experience leading pedagogy workshops and teaching experience in Georgia Southern University's Department of Biology with a variety of active teaching tools, and assessment tools for active approaches. I have led pedagogy training sessions internationally, including a short course for the Society for Conservation Biology conference in South Africa, a week-long workshop for biology teachers at the National University of Rwanda, and at the Vietnam National University both a short course and a week-long workshop for educators.

"I have received training from experts in the field of Case Studies, Classroom Management, and PBL. Additionally, I am an active participant and contributor to NCEP (Network of Conservation Educators & Practitioners) creating, piloting, and assessing active teaching modules. I continuously experiment with these and other approaches

in my teaching. The result is that I am very comfortable in the role of facilitating student learning, critical thinking, and ownership of students' learning experience. I am available to consult with individuals, groups of faculty, or whole departments about active learning and its assessment, Problem-based Learning, and case studies."

Focus on Excellence Lecture Series for 2007 - 2008

This annual series of 6 lectures is facilitated by the CET and the campus is invited to attend presentations by the previous year's recipients of the Awards for Excellence in Contribution to Instruction, Research/Creative Scholarly Activities, and Service. All lectures begin at 4 pm in Room 3301 (Professional Development Center), College of Information Technology and are followed by a reception. Fall Lectures:



September 4, 2007 | Instruction

"Letting the Molecules Do the Talking," Dr. Jeffery Orvis

October 9, 2007 | Service

"Academic Service and the Elephant Metaphor of Reality," Dr. Bruce Schulte

October 30, 2007 | Research

"Does Diet Matter?: Ingestion Rates, Growth and Development of Echinoderm Larvae," Dr. Sophie George

Innovative Teaching Strategies Retreat

The CET sponsors a faculty retreat to enhance innovative teaching strategies. The retreat is held twice a year, early May and December and provides dedicated time with CET staff and colleagues for course development and work on a variety of pedagogical and technological issues in a friendly, resource-rich environment. The fall retreat will be held December 11-14, 2007 in the CET. The **deadline for proposals is October 26, 2007**. If you'd like to learn more, contact Raleigh Way at the CET.

Faculty Retreat Showcase

On Monday, **December 10, 2007, from 3:30 - 5 pm** in the Professional Development Center on the 3rd floor of the CIT building, there will be a **Retreat Showcase** of the work of the faculty who participated in the May 2007 retreat (Rose Mary Gee, Nancy Malcom, Camille Rogers, Alison Rushing, Laura Valeri, Dan Czech). If you have not attended a Showcase in the past, please plan on this one and see how colleagues are improving their courses.

"One's mind, once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original dimension." _Oliver Wendell Holmes

Academic Writing Circle

The goal of the interdisciplinary AWC is to support the writing of professional academic manuscripts (articles, conference papers, book chapters, etc.). The group will decide its schedule and activities. All projects and reviews are treated with confidentiality. *For more information about the Academic Writing Circle, contact Danny Dixon, Department of Sociology & Anthropology.*



Creative Writing Circle

Would you like to become involved in a small, informal, creative writing group sponsored by the CET? Members will meet once a month to give and receive critical feedback on various writing projects: short stories, essays, poems, memoirs, novels, screenplays, etc. *For more information about the Creative Writing Circle, contact Theresa Welford, Department of Writing & Linguistics.*

Featured Faculty

On a regular basis the CET features a variety of faculty members through web pages developed by those faculty in collaboration with the CET. The pages contain the faculty's backgrounds, their ideas about teaching and learning, and illustrations of those ideas put into practice with students. Visit the "Featured Faculty" page regularly at http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/cet/featured_fac/index.htm.

CET SEMINARS FOR FALL SEMESTER.: To register for a seminar go to:

<http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/cet/calendar.htm> and click on "Event Registration," or call the CET at 681-0049.

* CIT = College of Information Technology Building

September 5	Planning and Developing Online Courses [CIT 1205] 9-10:30 am (Raleigh Way)
September 6	Planning and Developing Online Courses [CIT 1205] 9-10:30 am (Raleigh Way)
September 10	New Faculty Seminar: Information Literacy (FLC for Info Lit) [CIT 3301]: 3:30- 5 pm
September 13	Planning and Developing Online Courses [CIT 1205] 3-4:30 pm (Raleigh Way)
September 14	Planning and Developing Online Courses [CIT 1205] 3-4:30 pm (Raleigh Way)
September 18	Creating Interactive Courseware with PowerPoint [CIT 1205]: 12-1:30 pm (Steve Bonham)
September 19	MERLOT Colloquium [CIT 1305]: 4-5 pm
September 24	New Faculty Seminar: Designing Courses (classroom/hybrid/online) [CIT 3301]: 3:30-5 pm (Raleigh Way)
October 2	Gaming in the SMART Classroom [CIT 1205]: 3:30-5 pm (Steve Bonham)
October 4	Hands-on Simple Digital Video [CIT 1327]: 2-3:30 pm (Steve Bonham)
October 10	Planning and Developing Online Courses [CIT 1205] 3-4:30 pm (Raleigh Way)
October 11	Planning and Developing Online Courses [CIT 1205] 3-4:30 pm (Raleigh Way)
October 15	New Faculty Seminar: Active Learning (Todd Deal & Steve Bonham): [CIT 3301]: 3:30-5 pm
October 17	Planning and Developing Online Courses [CIT 1205] 9-10:30 am (Raleigh Way)
October 18	Planning and Developing Online Courses [CIT 1205] 9-10:30 am (Raleigh Way)
October 24	A Taste of MERLOT [CIT 1205]: 2:30-3:30 pm (Steve Bonham) MERLOT Colloquium [CIT 1305]: 4-5 pm
November 7	Planning and Developing Online Courses [CIT 1205] 3-4:30 pm (Raleigh Way)
November 8	Planning and Developing Online Courses [CIT 1205] 3-4:30 pm (Raleigh Way)
November 9	Creating Interactive Courseware with PowerPoint [CIT 1205]: 9-10:30 am (Steve Bonham)
November 12	Creating Illustrations with PowerPoint [CIT 1205]: 9-10:30 am (Steve Bonham)
November 19	MERLOT Colloquium [CIT 1305]: 4-5 pm

"I would like to beg you to have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves... Live the questions now." _ Rilke

"Information cannot replace education." _Imparato & Itarari

* CET's new banyan tree logo by Prentiss Price