The Value of Saying No: An Exercise in Reframing

As an academic support unit, we are in the business of helping others. But it goes beyond simply service – we help instructors to help themselves. The reach and scope of our services can feel quite large since teaching and learning are so foundational to the university, and we receive numerous requests for our assistance. Our staff members’ interests and ideas for projects are also quite broad. However, sometimes we have to say no to requests we receive or ideas we generate. Is this ever a good idea?

The word “no” sounds so definitive and final – not very fitting or appropriate for a support unit. I remember being told once that anyone in a service role simply could not say no to a client request. That word simply should be removed from our vocabulary if we wanted to be successful. I understand how saying no sounds unresponsive and even uncooperative, but is this the only way to interpret this response? I don’t think so.

Travis Bradberry’s recent blog posting for the Huffington Post on habits to improve your life includes the advice to “say no”. He writes, “saying no to a new commitment honors your existing commitments and gives you the opportunity to successfully fulfill them”. So, saying no to one request is, in essence, saying yes to something else and vice versa. In the business literature, this decision-making behaviour of choosing one action over another is called “strategy”. As Maister (2006) indicates, “strategy is deciding whose business you are going to turn away” (p.1). That sounds pretty radical. And yet the rationale behind strategic decisions makes sense: “no operation can be good at everything simultaneously” (p.1) and “the broader the group of clients to which you try to appeal, or the wider the range of services you try to provide, the less customized your operation can be to each segment within that group” (p.2). You can’t be all things to all people all the time.

Bishop (1999) provides another reason why it’s important to be strategic and say no: employee morale. She recounts the errors she made in building an executive search firm. One example was taking on work for which they were ill-prepared. The result was exhausted and confused employees who spent too much time doing work that was not a good fit for them or their organization. Eventually she learned she should better define the business she was in as well as the business she was not in. But in the process, she learned that she had staff who believed their business was simply to make all clients happy. As a result, they were trying to do everything for everyone, and they were burning out.

How do these ideas relate to the work of CTE? We have a strategic plan that includes our ongoing core activities and our strategic priorities for a three-year timeframe. These two elements help to define the scope of our practice and areas of particular emphasis. As part of the self-study for our external review, we have been revising our strategic priorities based on a variety of inputs, including our recent instructor needs survey, meetings with the Faculty Deans, and current trends from the government and our professional associations. We will look to our new strategic priorities to provide guidance on how and where to focus our future efforts.

This all sounds straightforward, and yet I find it hard to leave opportunities behind. There are so many interesting new things to do! But the threat of burned-out staff is a real reminder of the importance of keeping our focus. As we do our mid-year check-ins on our individual performance goals this fall, I will look for help from all CTE staff members to remove (or at least defer for now) project ideas that are on the fringes of our scope, that might be better done by another person or unit, or that no longer fit our priorities. Saying no is not obstructionist in these cases: it’s empowering. I look forward to the value that our clients and our staff will gain when we say no in order to make strategic choices.
David Harmsworth: Teaching Intuition in Mathematics

David Harmsworth, a Lecturer in the Department of Applied Mathematics, has known he wanted to focus on teaching since he made the jump from an undergraduate degree in the arts to focusing on mathematics two decades ago. A desire to make mathematics clear and accessible to his students, perhaps especially to those students who are studying math for degrees in other programs, is what animates this instructor’s teaching philosophy.

It’s a matter of “knowing your audience,” Harmsworth says. Since starting his career at Waterloo, Harmsworth has been tasked with teaching both engineering and mathematics students, and he notices a difference in how those two cohorts approach the subject. For engineers, he points out, math is largely a tool. It’s not the end goal. So when Harmsworth sets out to teach a course for engineering students, he shakes things up. In fact, he gets students working backwards. “I turn the theorem-proof, theorem-proof, theorem-proof style on its head,” says Harmsworth. Traditional mathematics textbooks begin with a theorem and then turn to the proof. Harmsworth starts with the proof and guides the students as they work deductively to arrive at the theorem. “They can see the theorem coming,” explains the instructor. Harmsworth sees this anticipation—this ability to observe and formulate potential solutions, or to approach mathematics from the perspective of a problem solver—as central to the relationship future engineers will have with mathematics.

Harmsworth calls this type of problem solving a form of intuition. “It’s about getting students to think about why things work the way they do,” he explains, “rather than memorizing and proving every step.”
The former linguistics major believes that his focus on clarity in communication is also a big help. When he wrote the course notes for his first-year calculus class, Harmsworth set out with the goal to “make calculus readable.” It looks like he has reached that goal—one student went as far as to call the course notes a “page turner,” likening them to a Sherlock Holmes novel. Like his lectures, Harmsworth’s course notes begin with a typical case or problem and position the reader as a problem solver—a detective, almost—who systematically puzzles through the problem to arrive at an applicable theorem. Here we can see the efficacy of Harmsworth’s “backwards” teaching method.

In our interview, Harmsworth also talked about where there is room for improvement in his teaching: getting more feedback from students as a term progresses. That he would mention student feedback comes as no surprise from an instructor who so clearly prioritizes the student perspective and clear communication of course outcomes. Many instructors have found success with mid-term feedback, one-minute papers, exit tickets, assessment as feedback, and early low-stakes assignments. We can’t wait to see what this linguistics-major turned mathematics instructor will try next.

Note: The Centre for Teaching Excellence continues its series of teaching stories to honour excellent teaching and to inspire others. On the Centre for Teaching Excellence’s website, visit the Teaching Stories section, to read stories such as: “Wayne Chang: It’s Not Failure, It’s Iteration”, “Brian Forrest: Active Learning on Campus and Online”, and “Denise Marigold: Connecting Positive Psychology to Student Growth”. Visit the Centre’s website often as new stories are published regularly. If you would like to recommend that a specific Waterloo instructor be highlighted in a teaching story, please email the Centre for Teaching Excellence at cte@uwaterloo.ca with the instructor’s name and department.

Distinguished Teacher Award Recipients for 2017
Mónica Barra, Chemistry

Photo Credit: Martin Schwalbe

As current Chair of the department of Chemistry’s curriculum committee, Mónica Barra has had a lasting influence on students and faculty alike. Barra is highly recognized by her students (past and present) for her enthusiasm, patience, and passion for the course material. One alumnus noted that her lectures were “interactive and stimulating,” and that her lecture notes were “written in such a way that it was easy (and even fun) to follow along.” This, coupled with her expansive knowledge of the course content, is said to have made students “enamoured with her.” Colleagues wrote that Mónica “is a highly dedicated and caring teacher who goes way beyond the call of duty to help students learn and succeed.” This is evident in her work as Chair, as one lecturer highlighted that her leadership has reduced “the excessive workload that students faced in the third year of the program,” which will “benefit students for generations to come.” Barra has been a recipient of numerous awards and distinctions, including the ChemClub Periodic Table of Teaching Excellence Award (an award presented annually by undergraduate students), and the Excellence in Science Teaching Award.
Sanjeev Bedi, Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering

Sanjeev Bedi, founder of the Engineering Ideas Clinic, is well known for his energy, mentorship, and connectivity with students. From undergraduates to fellow colleagues, members of the University of Waterloo community have acknowledged Bedi for his “showmanship” and “his ability to empower students to innovate.” One undergraduate student described him as “ever engaging, full of humour, good cheer and patience, and effective at conveying complex topics to a bunch of ambitious (and challenging!) young men and women.” Students at all academic levels view his teaching as exceptional. One alumnus noted that “he was a model mechatronics engineer for [them].” Faculty members also take note of “his long track record of exceptional teaching,” as one lecturer commented that he inspires his students “to go forth and make an impact on the world.” Other colleagues added that he “loves his students” and his “impact on the Faculty of Engineering is far-reaching, positively impacting the development of students, teaching assistants, and instructors, alike.” Bedi’s past accolades for his teaching include the Outstanding Waterloo Faculty of Engineering Teaching Performance Award.

Dan Davison, Electrical and Computer Engineering

Dan Davison, former Associate Chair for undergraduate studies in the department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, is highly recognized as humble, approachable, and influential. Many speak fondly of Davison as “a strong lecturer, mentor, and teacher” who “always keeps the students attentive and encourages [them] to ask more questions.” One alumnus explained that “he was one of the reasons that [he] decided to pursue graduate studies in the field of control systems.” Another colleague commented that he achieves this exceptional record for teaching excellence “by setting the bar high and helping students reach it.” This is made evident in his support from his students, as one wrote that “he encourages [the students] to think through the material as it is taught in lectures, helping [them] build an intuitive and practical understanding of the concepts as opposed to just textbook formulae.” Another student added that “he is an asset to the Department, the Faculty, and the University. I cannot think of a professor who has inspired me more in my academic and professional life.” Davison’s past accolades for his teaching include the Sandford Fleming Foundation Teaching Excellence Award.
David McKinnon, Pure Mathematics

As the Associate Chair for undergraduate affairs in the department of Pure Mathematics, David McKinnon has a strong rapport with his students and colleagues through his dedication, enthusiasm, and consistency. When it comes to his work in the classroom, students say that McKinnon goes “above and beyond,” and makes them “genuinely excited to come to class every day.” Students find his lectures thoughtfully prepared and well organized, and remark that “he readily accepts questions, and pauses during lectures to make sure that everyone understands what is being taught.” One former student commented that they define an excellent teacher as one who is “armed with a sense of humour,” and says that McKinnon exemplifies this characteristic. One colleague added that McKinnon “has a sense of humour which the students enjoy and works hard to actively engage students in his classes.” McKinnon’s past accolades for his teaching include the Faculty of Mathematics Award for Distinction in Teaching.

Carlton Darby

Amit and Meena Chakma Awards for Exceptional Teaching by a Student Recipients for 2017

Alex Huynh, Psychology

Alex Huynh is an Arts PhD student in the department of Psychology. Students and faculty members recognized him as being approachable, innovative, and dedicated. A student remarked that “he is able to make the material relatable and interesting . . . [he is] always able to clarify any questions or concerns.” Another undergraduate student commented on his demeanour in the classroom, saying that “his presence in the class made him a good instructor.” “He was one of the best [instructors] I have ever had.” A graduate student added that “he manages to maintain a clear sense of professionalism, while also being very approachable when engaged with his students.” Huynh has also been described by faculty members as “an innovative and dedicated educator who truly cares about student learning.” Huynh continues to keep his classes informative, relatable, and engaging. Huynh has been an instructor for PSYCH 349R, as well as a teaching assistant for PSYCH 253, PSYCH 353, PSYCH 354, and PSYCH 355.
Houman Mehrabian, English Language and Literature

Houman Mehrabian, an Arts PhD student in English Language and Literature, is highly recognized for his dedication to learning and teaching. When asked about Mehrabian’s impact on student learning, one undergraduate student explained that “his teaching went [far beyond] and always incorporated [a] set of knowledge from other respected fields, such as philosophy and politics.” Another student wrote that “he enjoys what he is teaching and manages to allow that to flow over to his students. He is highly knowledgeable in what he is teaching and makes courses enjoyable. He’s a great influence.” In addition to his student support, one faculty member also highlighted that “he is the most dedicated student I have encountered in my 30 years of university teaching, and I can easily see how this commitment to excellence shines through in his teaching.” His support serves as a testament to this recognition. Mehrabian has been an instructor for ENGL 109, ENGL 309C EL, and DRAMA 387/ENGL 363 EL. He has also been a teaching assistant for ENGL 109 EL and ENGL 210F EL.

Mohammed Nassar, Electrical and Computer Engineering

Mohammed Nassar is a PhD student in the department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. In Winter 2016, Nassar received the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department Best TA Award. He has also been on the Dean of Engineering’s list for his exceptional course evaluation scores. Widely known for his energy, enthusiasm, and passion for teaching, several students commented that Nassar is “very devoted to his work” and “always made sure as much of the class understood the material as possible before moving on.” One student explained that “coming into my 3A term, I thought MTE 320 would be just another ‘circuits course’. Nassar changed that.” One faculty member recognized that Nassar’s “passion about teaching and his dedication stimulated students and encouraged them throughout the term to learn and discuss [course material].” Nassar has been an instructor for ME 269, MTE 320, and ECE 462. He has also been a teaching assistant for ECE 361 and ECE 668.
Lay Ling Tan, Chemistry

Lay Ling Tan, a PhD student in the department of Chemistry, is recognized for her diligence, patience, and dedication as an educator. Comparing her teaching to that of a “seasoned professor,” students say that “her teaching was very practical, insightful and memorable.” One undergraduate student added that “Lay Ling has a phenomenal knowledge and understanding of inorganic chemistry, but, more importantly, is exceptional at communicating and teaching complex chemical concepts and problems.” A faculty member noted that “in my 10+ years at Waterloo, I have not had as qualified and dedicated a TA as Lay Ling.” In addition to being named a recipient of the Amit and Meena Chakma Award for Exceptional Teaching by a Student, Tan has also received the Department of Chemistry Teaching Assistant Excellence Award on three separate occasions. Tan was a teaching assistant for CHEM 120, CHEM 212, CHEM 310, and CHEM 313.

Carlton Darby

Teaching Award Nomination Due Dates for 2018
Tips on writing a persuasive nomination letter can be found in Trevor Holmes’ blog entry ‘How to Write an Effective Nomination Letter’.

Distinguished Teacher Awards are given in recognition of a continued record of excellence in teaching at the University of Waterloo. The nomination deadline is Friday, February 2, 2018. For more information, visit the Distinguished Teacher Awards webpage.

Amit & Meena Chakma Awards for Exceptional Teaching by a Student are given in recognition of excellence in teaching by students registered at the University of Waterloo. The nomination deadline is Friday, February 9, 2018. For more information, visit the Amit & Meena Chakma Awards for Exceptional Teaching by a Student webpage.

Verna Keller

Educational Technologies Week
CTE’s annual Educational Technologies Week (February 27 to March 3, 2017) drew 283 attendees, the largest attendance in the three-year history of the event. The week’s 16 workshops were delivered by staff members from four support units: CTE, CEL, IST, and the Writing and Communication Centre. Five faculty members shared their experiences on a panel, and one graduate student also delivered a workshop. Survey feedback seems to indicate that attendees overall found the workshops to be useful: on a 5-point scale, the average response for “The session met my needs” was 3.9, and the average response for “I learned something of relevance was 4.0. In the spirit of continuous improvement that informs our work at CTE, we’re already aiming to offer an even better Educational Technologies Week in 2018.

Mark Morton
A Day of Cultivating Curiosity in Teaching and Learning

What drives curiosity in our classrooms? Can curiosity be fostered or taught? These were just a few of the questions on the table at the University of Waterloo Teaching and Learning Conference on April 27. Our ninth annual conference, this year’s event brought together over 320 participants from across all Faculties at Waterloo and neighbouring universities to explore the role curiosity plays in teaching and learning.

University of Waterloo’s President and Vice-Chancellor, Feridun Hamdullahpur, opened the conference with a territory acknowledgment and shared personal reflections on teaching and learning that highlighted the connections between this year’s conference theme, Cultivating Curiosity in Teaching and Learning, and last year’s conference, Learning from Challenge and Failure.

Curiosity is at the heart of inquiry and exploration and is a powerful motivator for learning. It speaks to our innate interest in seeking out novel ideas, and applies well to the learning process our students engage in every day. Curiosity also has real-life consequences—psychological research demonstrates that curiosity is linked to greater well-being (e.g., life satisfaction and expressing gratitude) and can also serve as positive motivation—studies show that curiosity can lead people to ask more questions, explore novel stimuli, and persevere when faced with difficult tasks.

A full roster of 34 research and practice-based sessions and 7 poster presentations engaged with curiosity in teaching and learning. These sessions brought together the work of instructors, graduate students, and staff members from across campus and across disciplines. Thought-provoking questions were explored, such as “How do we ignite students’ curiosity about our fields?,” “How can we teach students to ask meaningful questions that draw on facts, hunches, unusual connections, and imagination?,” and “How can we be curious about our students’ learning, motivations, and goals?”

In his keynote talk, Dr. Peter Felten, Professor of history at Elon University and Assistant Provost for Teaching and Learning and Executive Director of the Center for Engaged Learning, kicked off the conference by asking, “Can We Teach Curiosity?” In his interactive talk, Felten asked participants to consider curiosity as a set of practices—as something that can be cultivated—rather than a personality trait. Recognizing curiosity as something instructors can nurture in students, Felten then asked how we know when students are curious. What signs do they give us? Felten gave instructors concrete strategies to cultivate curiosity in students, such as encouraging our students to be curious by acting curious, creating low stakes activities and assignments that invite students to ask questions and explore ideas rather than present the correct answer, capitalizing on concepts in your field that your students can be curious about, and prompting students to reflect on their own curiosity. He gave participants the opportunity to reflect on the teaching strategies and opportunities that we currently use (and could potentially use in the future) that encourage students to ask “why.”

The conference also featured a special “Igniting Our Practice” session. Two inspiring University of Waterloo instructors, Drs Vivian Dayeh (Biology) and Brent Doberstein (Geography and Environmental Management) recreated the learning spaces they design for their students by demonstrating how they ignite their students’ curiosity about their field and course. During the session, Dayeh showed participants that creative analogies can be used in our teaching by asking the audience to act like axons—an activity that she uses to demonstrate to students how neurons in the brain communicate with each. Doberstein demonstrated a model for involving the public in decision-making with the nominal group technique—he asked the audience to vote on different initiatives in the Waterloo region. Both speakers pointed out that their teaching demonstrations involved physical, as well as mental, components of learning, and that certain strategies can make concepts “stick” for students.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to the conference. We are especially grateful for the vision of the conference and financial support from the Associate Vice-President, Academic, Mario
Coniglio. We also want to thank the Teaching Fellows, who were essential in shaping and promoting the conference. Departments across campus were also vital in promoting the conference.

We would like to extend many thanks to staff from Information Systems and Technology, Creative Services, and Community Relations who enabled the day to be documented in a variety of ways. We also thank UW Catering and Event Services for providing delicious food for participants every year as well as managing the registrations and logistics of the day, and we thank the Faculty Association of the University of Waterloo generously sponsoring breakfast for the conference.

Lastly, we thank the presenters who contributed their time and expertise to an exciting program that ignited lively and important discussions around teaching and learning. We hope you continue these discussions with each other.

For further details about this year’s conference, please visit the conference website. We look forward to welcoming you at the University of Waterloo Teaching and Learning Conference in April 2018.

Crystal Tse and Trevor Holmes

Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action in the CTE Context: Listen, Learn, Act

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students comprise less than 1% of our student population. To me this has several implications: how many more are there who remain unidentified because we’re asking wrong or uninviting questions; how can we better serve those students, staff, and faculty who are already here; how can we invite more indigenous students to choose Waterloo as their destination for further education?

Given the 94 Calls to Action coming from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2015, we are, in my view, overdue for considering such questions. In an effort to show a bit of leadership around our responses, I’ve immersed myself in some learning (especially around Calls 16, 62, 63, and 65) that I hope will help to ready our Centre for the faculty and graduate student support about which we are already beginning to field questions. Below, I talk a bit about my own journey as a teaching developer contemplating these issues.

Indigenization Action Group of the Educational Developers Caucus of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

Meeting virtually each month, this Action Group is seeking to set out possible frameworks and principles with general applicability but localized in regions, in support of educators at colleges and universities who are attempting to decolonize or indigenize their practices, curricula, etc.

Integrating Knowledges Summit – October 2016

I was part of a learning circle with Lila Bruyere, Amos Key Jr., and Shawn Johnston on “Making Indigenous Languages Official” and I attended another circle on Acknowledging Territory.

UBC MOOC and local meetings

Over 40 people from 5 of our faculties took the 6-week course “Reconciliation Through Indigenous Education” and some gathered in CTE space at the beginning, middle, and end of the course to share what we were learning. Participants hope to contribute to the Waterloo website devoted to TRC projects. Plans to follow up from the MOOC locally are underway. Some of my takeaways from the course and other experiences included:

- Thinking 7 generations back and 7 generations ahead, rather than only about immediate or near-term needs
- Relationships with people and with land are important – this I kind of believed anyway but it was deepened and confirmed for me in several ways
- Stories can be powerful ways of learning
- I’ll make mistakes; I need to open myself to being corrected and keep the conversation going
- Acknowledging traditional territory is a small and important first step we can easily take
- An ally who does a bunch of things without consultation with community isn’t much of an ally
- Culturally relevant pedagogy is possible in all disciplines, although it is not without critics

**Staff Conference**
In April, our new Senate Chambers filled up with people to hear CBC’s Jesse Wente speak, and then join a panel with the Waterloo Aboriginal Education Centre’s (WAEC) Lori Campbell, and Aboriginal Students Association members Amy Smoke and Emma Smith. I was honoured to be asked to join the session as a moderator. Panelists provided a rich variety of stories around the theme of “inclusion for success.” My role was to facilitate some audience interaction, and I told a story of my own about inadvertently using language in a way that excluded indigenous people when I used to recruit for a small university in the early 2000s and would praise the “residential experience” – without even thinking about the history of Residential Schools in Canada, a history I had learned about already by that point but hadn’t, clearly, transferred to my attention to language.

**Next steps:**
Over the Spring term, we will be compiling resources to support curricular change and best practices in teaching and learning from a decolonizing perspective.
In June, our annual professional development retreat will be in partnership with the Waterloo Aboriginal Education Centre.

**A few things we can all do in response to the Calls to Action**
- Educate one another about the territory on which we are working each day; acknowledge the territory in email signature files, on course outlines, on the first day of class. Some people assume that a) this should only be done orally, and b) this should only be done if you can personally answer questions about it fully. From what I have learned in talking with local students, however, they appreciate the acknowledgment equally well in text because they are in a text-based culture while studying here. And since we are reminding ourselves and others generally, we can admit to not knowing all the answers and that we are continuously learning about the Haldimand Tract land.
- In courses that use many examples from white Western history, consider examples from previously silenced or Othered cultures and histories, including indigenous.
- Watch and share this locally-made video about Indigenizing Post-Secondary Curriculum
- Download and start reading the #standingrocksyllabus to learn more about decolonization and education
- Meet people in our community – a great place to start is the WAEC Thursday Soup and Bannock Lunches (once a month in the Spring term, weekly in the Fall and Winter).

_Trevor Holmes_
Facilitator Development Workshop (FDW)

This May, the Centre for Teaching Excellence will once again offer the Facilitator Development Workshop (FDW) to ten participants interested in becoming trained Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) facilitators. These future ISW facilitators will dedicate a week of their time (40-hours) to their teaching professional development as they prepare to guide teaching colleagues through the ISW program.

What is the ISW Program?
The Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) is a comprehensive three-tiered instructor development program designed to enhance the teaching effectiveness of both new and experienced educators. The Facilitator Development Workshop (FDW) is the second tier of this program, where participants develop the capacity to lead the Instructional Skills Workshop. Completion of the ISW is a typical prerequisite to the FDW.

The prerequisite Instructional Skills Workshop is an intense 24-hour peer-based workshop that involves participants in cycles of mini-lessons accompanied by written, verbal and video feedback. It challenges the participants to explore new approaches to their teaching while at the same time being intentional about their lesson planning approach. The program started in 1978 in British Columbia and subsequently spread across Canada and the US. It is now an internationally recognized and facilitated program.

The follow-up five-day Facilitator Development Workshop is designed for individuals who have completed the Instructional Skills Workshop and who wish to run the ISW for their teaching colleagues. The activities of the ISW form the nucleus of the FDW as participants acquire further knowledge and develop new techniques for facilitating group development, explore other teaching methods and formative evaluation techniques, and receive feedback on their own teaching and facilitating skills. As with the ISW, the FDW is a peer-based model providing participants a small group setting in which to work on their facilitation skills. The small groups meet in plenary sessions each day featuring such themes as learner diversity, group development, giving and receiving feedback and the use of questions in teaching, among others. The FDW provides an opportunity for individuals to concentrate on their own professional development in a challenging and supportive atmosphere. Some chairpersons participate in the FDW to enhance their competence in providing constructive feedback for their teaching colleagues. Upon completion of the FDW, participants can become part of a larger instructional development network and continue to share teaching professional development ideas with peers both on this campus and at other institutions.

ISW at the University of Waterloo
The first Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) offered at the University of Waterloo took place in May of 2008. Nine years and almost 250 participants later, it is now a well-established component of CTE’s core programming, running 3 to 4 times a year (typically in February, May, August and December). The Facilitator Development Workshop (FDW) was first offered to a group of four participants in May of 2011. Since that inaugural FDW offering, the Facilitator Development Workshop has been integrated into CTE’s regular programming and now runs every other year in May with 10 participants (our last offering was in May of 2015 and our current offering will take place this next month, May 8-12, 2017).

If you are an ISW alumnus and are interested in becoming an ISW facilitator, I encourage you to contact me, Monica Vesely (mvesely@uwaterloo.ca), to have your name added to our waiting list. If you are interested in taking the Instructional Skills Workshop, please visit the CTE events page for future offerings. Our next ISW is scheduled for Monday, May 29 / Wednesday, May 31 / Friday, June 2, 2017.

Monica Vesely
Learning Innovation and Teaching Enhancement (LITE) Full Grants
The Office of the Associate Vice President, Academic, the Centre for Teaching Excellence, and the Centre for the Advancement of Co-operative Education are pleased to announce that 7 LITE Seed Grant projects have recently been funded. We are pleased to note that an increasing number of LITE Grants involve collaborations across departments/units, faculties, and institutions.

Congratulations to the recipients! To read descriptions of these and other exciting projects, please visit the LITE Grant website.

Process Facilitation Community of Practice
Sean Geobey (School of Environment, Enterprise, and Development)

Promoting professionalism among healthcare students using a multi-disciplinary, inter-institutional, blended learning model
Elaine Lillie (School of Pharmacy)
Margo Mountjoy (Department of Family Medicine, McMaster University)

Evaluating a Standard Assessment Tool Collaboratively Developed Amongst Ontario’s Pharmacy Training Programs
Andrew Tolmie (School of Pharmacy)
Henry Halapy (Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Toronto)
Annie Lee (Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Toronto)
Diana Spizzirri (Lead Ontario College of Pharmacists)

Learner-content interaction as a key to the effectiveness of a blended-learning model incorporating open access online modules
Eline Boghaert (Department of Chemical Engineering)
Jason Grove (Department of Chemical Engineering)
Marios Ioannidis (Department of Chemical Engineering)
Felicia Pantazi (Centre for Extended Learning)
Mary Power (Centre for Teaching Excellence)

Increasing the Visibility of Skills Development in Graduate Education: The Skills Awareness and Articulation (SKAATR) Module
Erica Refling (Co-operative Education & Career Action)
Christine Kampen Robinson (Co-operative Education & Career Action)
Meghan Riley (Department of English Language & Literature)
Janet Michaud (Department of Philosophy)
Kristin Brown (School of Public Health and Health Systems)
Faith-Anne Wagler (Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies)

Co-op Student Performance Evaluation Data as External Stakeholder Information for Engineering Graduate Attributes and Program Improvement Accreditation
Christine Moresoli (Department of Chemical Engineering)
Derek Wright (Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering)

Horizontal and Vertical Integration of Nanotechnology Engineering Curriculum Via Case-Based Teaching and Experiential Learning Activities on Laser Pointer Device Fabrication
Ariel Chan (Department of Chemical Engineering)
Hany Aziz (Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering)
LITE Grants Information

The LITE Grants provide support for investigating innovative approaches to enhancing teaching with a focus on fostering deep student learning at the University of Waterloo. Two kinds of grants are available: LITE Seed Grants fund projects up to $5,000, and LITE Full Grants fund projects up to $30,000.

The annual LITE Seed Grant application deadlines are February 1 and June 1. The annual LITE Full Grant application deadline is October 1.

For more information about the grants, please visit the LITE Grant website. If you are considering applying for a grant and would like to discuss your project, please contact Crystal Tse (ctse@uwaterloo.ca, ext. 31240) at the Centre for Teaching Excellence.

Crystal Tse

Graduate Student Programming Team

The Centre for Teaching Excellence would like to thank our graduate programming team for their hard work and dedication! The graduate programming team consists of doctoral students with teaching experience who successfully completed CTE’s Fundamentals of University Teaching certificate program. They were hired based on their interest in university teaching, strong communication skills, and commitment to supporting the teaching development of graduate students.

Our team members are:

Graduate Instructional Developers: Mahmoud Allam Alsanbawy (Electrical and Computer Engineering), Joseph Buscemi (History), Jhotisha Mugon (Psychology) and Laura Williams (Kinesiology)
TA Workshop Facilitators: Meghan Riley (English Language and Literature), Cathy Wang (Combinatorics and Optimization), Saisai Zhang (Actuarial Science), Sandra De Vries (Philosophy), Patricia Huynh (Social and Ecological Sustainability) and Luke Turcotte (Public Health and Health Systems)

Jessica Jordao

Staff Updates in CTE

Kristin Brown joins CTE from May 8 to Dec 15, 2017, as interim Educational Research Associate (the role recently vacated by Crystal Tse, now the Instructional Developer, Research and Consulting). She has worked in various roles at CTE for the past 3.5 years (in graduate programming and most recently as a research assistant for the Teaching Culture Perception Survey project). She is currently finishing her PhD in the School of Public Health and Health Systems and is thrilled to combine her research, program evaluation, and educational development experience in her new role. Outside of the office, Kristin enjoys hiking, skiing, and cooking.

Dr. Crystal Tse has assumed the role of CTE's Instructional Developer, Consulting and Research (a position formerly held by Julie Timmermans, who has moved on to a position at the University of Otago in New Zealand). Crystal was previously CTE's Research Associate. In her new role, Crystal will support faculty and staff members who wish to conduct research on teaching and learning by providing consultations, facilitating workshops on designing teaching and learning research projects, administering the Learning Innovation and Teaching Enhancement Grants program, and chairing Waterloo’s annual Teaching and Learning Conference. She will also liaise with other academic and support units as they systematically investigate teaching and learning.

Crystal received her PhD in social psychology in the Department of Psychology at the University of Waterloo. Her research involved applying psychological theory to inform evidence-based interventions that address educational and social issues. Crystal also teaches psychology courses for undergraduate students.
On May 30, 2017, Dr. Stephanie White, Instructional Developer, TA Training and Writing Support, will be going on leave until April 2018. During Stephanie’s leave, Tommy Mayberry will be working at CTE as Instructional Developer in the area of graduate and postdoctoral programming. Tommy will be in this role from June 1, 2017 to April 27, 2018. Over the last two years, Tommy was actively involved in the work of our Centre through his roles as a TA Workshop Facilitator and Graduate Instructional Developer and most recently, as a member of the teaching award committees.

Tommy is currently finishing his PhD in the Department of English Language and Literature. He has been the recipient of two Ontario Graduate Scholarships and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Doctoral Fellowship. Tommy was also one of the recipients of the 2015 Amit and Meena Chakma Award for Exceptional Teaching by a Student. His dissertation, “Gods and Monsters: William Blake’s Drag/Trans- Bodies,” focuses on Romantic Period and contemporary transgender visual culture as he “drags up” his academic writing to embody his research. Tommy can’t wait to rejoin CTE, and he is coming back fresh from teaching “ENGL 101B: Introduction to Rhetorical Studies.” Having been a TAWF and GID on CTE’s Grad Staff Team in recent years, he is absolutely looking forward to continuing that work and to becoming a full-time part of the CTE team overall.

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**Congratulations to CTE Fall 2016 and Winter 2017 grads!**

Congratulations to the following graduate students who have recently completed CTE teaching programs.

**Certificate in University Teaching (CUT) program:**

We had thirteen participants complete the CUT in **Fall 2016**: Rosanne Abdulla (ART), Mahmoud Allam Alsanbawy (ENG), Mostafa Farrokhabadi (ENG), Amanda Garcia (ENG), Dave Guyadeen (ENV), Ali Haghi (ENG), Ehsan Hashemi (ENG), Cathlene Hillier (ART), Ghada Khouqeer (SCI), Dorothy Larkman-Flood (ENV), Seyed Sepehr Mohaddes Foroushani (ENG), Sarah Ruffell (SCI), Laura Williams (AHS)

We had fifteen participants complete the program in **Winter 2017**: Balsam Alabdulkader (SCI), Abdullatif Alwasel (ENG), Kristin Brown (AHS), Heather Cray (ENV), Donata Gierczycka (ENG), Katelyn Godin (AHS), Abdelhalim Hiassat (ENG), Christine Kampen Robinson (ART), Jane Klinger (ART), Caitlin McArthur (AHS), Trevor Sabiston (ENG), Christine Sheppard (AHS), Lauren Sierens (SCI), Arash Soleimani Dahaj (ENG), Alana Ou Wang (SCI)

**Fundamentals of University Teaching program:** We had 50 participants complete the program in Winter 2017. The numbers by faculty are: Applied Health Sciences: 7; Arts: 10; Engineering: 16; Environment: 4; Mathematics: 4; Science: 9.

**Teaching Development Seminar Series program for postdoctoral fellows:** We had 27 (in Fall 2016) and 17 (in Winter 2017) Postdoctoral fellows complete our Teaching Development Seminar Series. The next offering of the Teaching Development Seminar Series program is scheduled for Fall 2017.

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*Donna Ellis, Trevor Holmes, Svitlana Taraban-Gordon, Mark Morton*

*Jessica Jordao and Monika Soczewinski*
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Previous Teaching Matters newsletters can be viewed in CTE’s newsletter archives.

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