

Centre for Teaching Excellence

2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT

May 1, 2020 to April 30, 2021

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Message from the Director

DONNA ELLIS





The year of the pandemic.” A phrase we didn’t anticipate but which now seems all too familiar. A phrase that evokes uncertainty, stress, and even fear. There were many times over the past year that the Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE) staff experienced those feelings as we strove to support Waterloo instructors through unforeseen changes and new challenges. But as with any crisis, this new reality also gave us opportunities to innovate, rethink, regroup, and re-imagine. And that we did.

In this year’s annual report, you’ll read about a year of intense work that was more user-driven and responsive than ever before. Just when I wondered how my team could give any more, they dug deeper to provide ongoing, outstanding support to our resilient and committed Waterloo instructors and their students.

CTE staff worked closely with our colleagues in multiple academic support units, particularly the Centre for Extended Learning, IST’s Instructional Technologies and Media Services, and the Library, as part of the Keep Learning (KL) team. The KL team’s coordinated efforts and combined areas of expertise led to innovative and timely solutions to remote teaching questions and the issues experienced by our instructors and students. And while it sometimes felt like every day uncovered yet another challenge, this group worked tirelessly to find the opportunities and provide top-tier support.

I believe that one aspect of CTE that helped us contribute with such consistency and quality is our shared core values. This year, we completed an exercise started just before the pandemic, articulating the values underlying the ways we collectively and individually approach our work. We began, in the previous fiscal year, by asking all staff to share their thoughts about CTE’s values. This year, a small working group drafted three statements based on that input, and then sought feedback with a litmus test asking “Is this your CTE?” before finalizing them in September 2020 as our Core Values (see textbox).

These statements are far more than words. They capture the essence of the CTE work environment and the strengths that our staff bring to any project or activity. We are supportive. We are creative. And wow, are we invested.

I am exceptionally proud to be part of such a well-rounded unit, full of talented colleagues who value curiosity, persistence, and the well-being of themselves and those we work with. Because our unit is about the people first: both who we are and who we serve.

I encourage you to check out our activities, including the highlights about how we lived our values this past year (see pages 10-11). And I thank you for trusting us to provide the help that you needed. At times we were all learning together, making the best decisions we could based on what we know about how people learn, whether instructors or students. It has been quite the experience!

I hope the coming year allows time for some much-needed reflection so we can determine what professional development for instructors at all levels should look like moving forward. We’ll continue to need your input and your feedback to help with our planning. Our (virtual) doors are open – let’s explore the opportunities together.

CTE’s Values

Our values are what ground us; they are the foundation on which our work is built. At CTE, we value being:

SUPPORTIVE

We show care and respect to our colleagues and ourselves while also asking questions to help encourage growth and change.

CREATIVE

We develop ideas for the future, adapt evidence-based practices to fit evolving contexts, and foster the courage needed for risk-taking.

INVESTED

We take pride in our work, bringing our best every time, and show a clear commitment to our mandate, vision, and mission.

CTE staff members

AS OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2021

DIRECTOR



Donna Ellis

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR



Trevor Holmes

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF



Maris Weiss



Brianna Bennett



Monika Soczewinski

SENIOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPERS



Katherine Lithgow



Mark Morton



Mary Power



Veronica Stephenson



Svitlana Taraban-Gordon

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE



Kristen Archbell

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPERS



Kristin Brown



Kyle Scholz

FACULTY LIAISONS



Scott Anderson



Natalie Chow



Paul Kates



David Thiessen



Monica Vesely



Richard Li



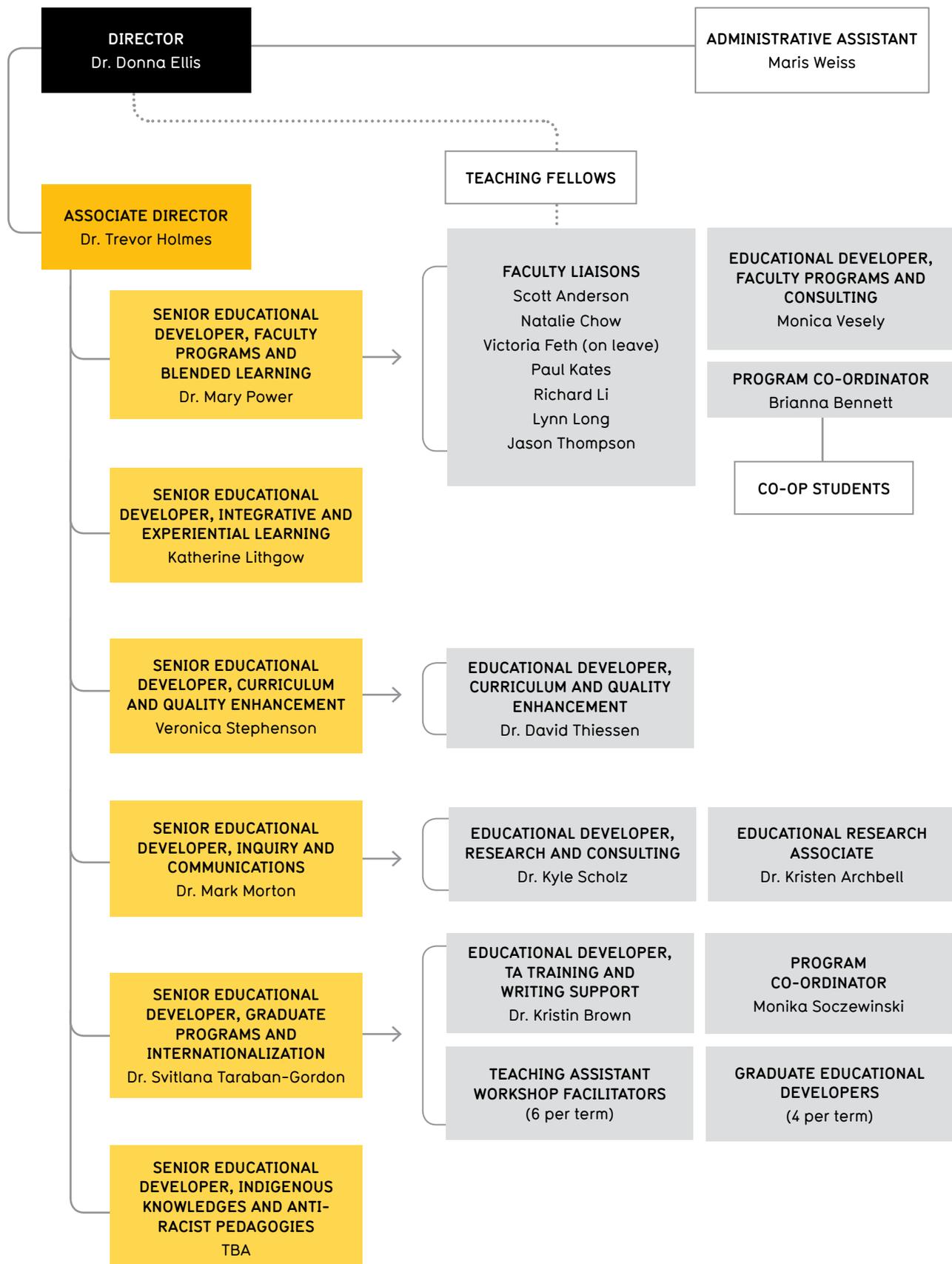
Lynn Long (Victoria Feth on leave)



Jason Thompson

Organizational structure

AS OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2021



CTE at a glance

IN THE 2020-2021 FISCAL YEAR

CTE

SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

84 FACULTY- ORIENTED WORKSHOPS

769 unique instructors
(1,424 total completions)

86 GRADUATE STUDENT WORKSHOPS

482 unique student instructors
(1,390 completions)

59 CUSTOM SESSIONS

(online modules, webinars,
workshops, and events)

1,093 participants

CONFERENCE

TEACHING AND LEARNING CONFERENCE

486 internal and
external participants

CONSULTATIONS

4,841 CONSULTATION REQUESTS

1,313 unique
instructors, graduate
students, and staff
members

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

38 DEPARTMENTS

109 events and consultations

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

12 LITE GRANTS AWARDED

30 instructors and staff members

ONLINE RESOURCES

2.06 MILLION PAGEVIEWS

Figure 1: Individuals who engaged with CTE's services (2020-2021), by faculty/unit

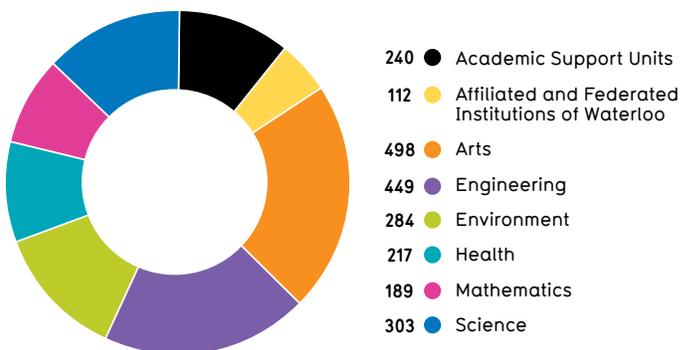
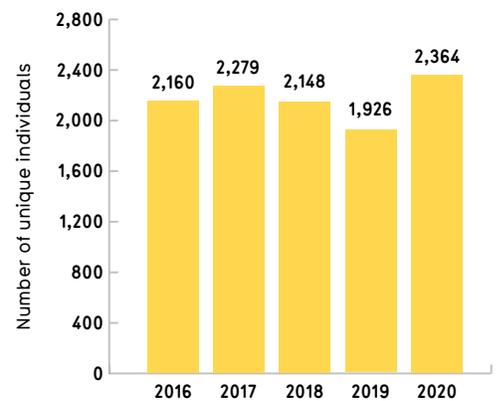


Figure 2: Number of unique individuals who have engaged with CTE's services, by fiscal year



Wrapping up our 2018–2021 strategic priorities

Despite the new challenges we faced over the past year, in responding to shifting institutional priorities, we continued to work on projects that advanced our Centre’s strategic priorities. Here are some highlights from that work. For a preview of our next set of strategic priorities (2021–2025), see “On the horizon” (page 21).

1

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Promote and support deep and active learning within and across disciplines through high-impact practices, educational technologies, and research on teaching and learning.

This past year, we provided extensive support to instructors at all levels on how to redesign courses and activities to encourage deep and active learning in a remote teaching environment, a pedagogical context unfamiliar to most. We also helped them incorporate new and existing educational technologies to support their course goals.

With support from our senior online learning assistants, we collaborated with the Student Success Office and the Centre for Extended Learning to develop a series of short, actionable “Early Engagement Quick Tips” designed to help instructors foster and sustain student engagement. The tips are brief, easy to implement, and grounded in the theory and practice of early engagement. Tips were emailed to instructors at specific points in the term, to help them support their students’ evolving needs.



The early engagement tips are very useful now, with new ideas to consider and implement.

They are excellent reminders. It will all be extremely useful again when I go from a project-based grad course this term to two large undergrad “lecture-based” classes in the fall.

JONATHAN KOFMAN,
Systems Design Engineering



The early engagement tips have been so helpful. It feels like there is a teaching coach with me.

JANE HUTTON, Architecture



2

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Provide support to develop and integrate evidence-based practices for assessing learning outcomes at the course and program level.

We designed programming to help instructors assess learning outcomes in a remote environment, including teaching tips and workshops such as:

- › Beyond the Final Exam
- › Groupwork/Teamwork and Evaluation in Remote Teaching
- › Remote Assessment with Crowdmark

We also developed an “Assessment Design Café” and a teaching tip sheet: “Making the Transition to Online Exams.”

The Program Outcomes Assessment Community continued to explore program-level assessment. More than 70 faculty, staff, and graduate students participated in the community, which has covered a wide variety of topics, including the following:

- › defining program outcomes
- › identifying assessments that authentically evaluate outcomes
- › assessing the affective domain
- › tools and technology to support data collection and analysis
- › building a departmental culture that values the program outcomes assessment process



I had not made the effort to map learning outcomes to assessments as meticulously before.

This is a new skill (so requires practice and thinking) and I will apply it across my teaching.

ANONYMOUS FEEDBACK,
Faculty Workshop

3

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Support our diverse campus community by promoting and modelling inclusive educational practices.

Given the challenges of remote learning and a heightened awareness of student well-being, we developed six workshops on creating an inclusive learning environment for all students. To model inclusive teaching practices, we offered our workshops in both synchronous and asynchronous formats. Three asynchronous modules – Supporting Student Mental Health, Social Anxiety in the Classroom, and Culturally Responsive Teaching – were integrated into the Fundamentals of University Teaching program and are now available every term in that format. We made Supporting Student Mental Health available to all departments and TAs through our new training site in LEARN and adapted it for instructors as an independent (online asynchronous) module. Other synchronous offerings included the following:

- › Teaching Practices to Cultivate Well-being and Compassion, featuring graduate students and staff from ENGWellness
- › Universal Design for Learning, facilitated by CEL and CTE staff
- › Gender Pronouns and Cultures of Respect, delivered by a former CTE staff member



“Supporting Student Mental Health” was an incredibly valuable module. I appreciated the concrete (and relatable) examples and the myriad resources, links, and documents that were offered as points of reference.

ANONYMOUS FEEDBACK,
Graduate Student



I love the recommended teaching strategies to support individual students with social anxiety. They are practical and easy to apply, like offering space and time for preparation. I will try them in future teaching.

ANONYMOUS FEEDBACK,
Graduate Student



4 STRATEGIC PRIORITY



I often access your web resources. Most recently, I shared/used your page on online discussions. It's amazing and the best I have found. Your impact is wider than your own community.

DONNA KOTSOPOULOS,
Dean and Professor, Education,
Western University

Participate in the development and implementation of institution-wide teaching and learning initiatives related to the University's Strategic Plan.

We continued to contribute pedagogical guidance for institutional initiatives impacting teaching and learning at Waterloo, working with the following groups and teams:

- › Student Course Perceptions Advisory Group
- › Complementary Teaching Assessment Project Team
- › Teaching and Learning Spaces Steering/Operations Committees
- › Resiliency Working Group
- › Learning and Development Community of Practice
- › Career Education Working Group
- › Waterloo ExL Initiative
- › PebblePad Operations Team
- › Learning Environment Operations Group
- › Student Performance Evaluation Working Group
- › New Faculty Planning Committee

5 STRATEGIC PRIORITY



*Your website has been so helpful.
Your resources are great!*

LECTURER, Simon Fraser University

Enhance the internal and external communication of the profile and scope of CTE's supports and services.

The CTE website received 30% more pageviews in 2020-2021 than in the previous year: 2.06 million versus 1.58 million. Our Teaching Tip Sheets continued to be the most popular resource, receiving 1.71 million page views, a 31% increase over the previous year. Our staff also developed several new tip sheets and resources for the Keep Learning website. We added 30 new presentations and workshops to our YouTube channel, a 23% increase in a single year. The reach of these videos greatly exceeds the number of people who participated in the original workshops (up to 500 views each).

Living and working our values

Accompanied by the mounting pressures and stress of a global lockdown, the pivot to remote teaching left many instructors adopting unfamiliar teaching strategies. CTE responded quickly, drawing on not only our expertise but also our shared values (see “Message from the Director,” page 1), which grounded our approach to meeting instructor needs. CTE staff members are creative, supportive, and invested. We believe these values have a positive impact on our work.

INVESTING IN RELATIONSHIPS

CTE leaders collaborated closely with leadership from the Centre for Extended Learning (CEL), IST’s Instructional Technologies and Media Services (IST-ITMS), and the Library to develop and implement a coordinated pedagogical response to the pandemic, providing ongoing input and guidance to senior administrators and instructors at all levels.

CTE staff also collaborated with colleagues from these units to provide services and develop resources designed to support instructors via the Keep Learning website and consultations.

Finally, the urgent demand on our resources meant that CTE staff – always very collaborative to begin with – supported one another by pivoting to take on tasks outside of their usual areas of responsibility, in order to meet instructor needs in a timely way. We worked as a cohesive and coordinated team and strengthened our relationships with colleagues within CTE and beyond.

ENABLING CREATIVITY

By adapting priorities, cancelling some scheduled workshops and events, and reassigning staff, we gained the time needed to develop and offer programming specific to remote teaching. We approached this work creatively, revising existing resources, collaborating, and developing new learning opportunities to maximize instructor access via online workshops and independent asynchronous modules. We also highlighted instructor successes and lessons learned to facilitate peer learning. See “Meeting instructors’ needs” (page 15) for more details.



The Keep Learning Team, including CTE, has been one of the most effective parts of the University’s COVID-19 response. Academic support units invented new and effective ways to work together and did a remarkable job of producing timely, tailored, effective support to instructors, including many who had no prior experience with remote instruction. The experiences and working relationships created by Keep Learning will help the University capitalize on the lessons learned as we plan for the future. CTE is obviously a crucial player in the evolution of teaching and learning at Waterloo.

DAVID DEVIDI, Associate Vice-President, Academic



SUPPORTING GROWTH AND CHANGE

Our faculty liaisons and educational developers were in high demand this year, as instructors faced a steep learning curve to meet student needs. The total number of instructors seeking specific support from CTE staff rose significantly compared to previous years (Figure 3). We did all we could to meet the steady demand.

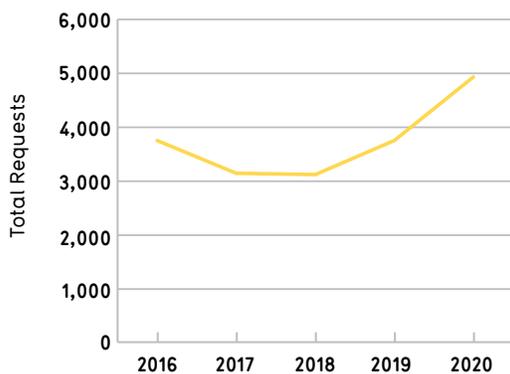


FIGURE 3: Consultation requests over the past five fiscal years

Our graduate educational developers did an excellent job of supporting graduate students who were teaching or TAing this year in addition to performing teaching observations as part of the Certificate in University Teaching program. They adapted the classroom observation model to an online context, conducted over 20 online teaching observations, and engaged in rich conversations about teaching online during pre- and post-observation meetings with graduate students. Many participants commented on how useful these conversations were for their confidence and the development of their online teaching skills.



I appreciate the enthusiastic, welcoming, encouraging tone of your communications. I'm sure your workload has increased significantly yet the impression you give is that you will gladly make time to help any instructor who needs it. I have sent many instructors your way!

DENISE MARIGOLD,
Renison University College



I've been hearing about the fantastic job that you [as a faculty liaison] are doing to help faculty adjust to the new realities of online teaching. Your replies have been prompt, good-natured and extremely helpful, often on weekends and evenings. Thank you for going above and beyond.

KEVIN HARE, Mathematics



[Our graduate educational developer] created a positive and supportive environment by making us feel relaxed, giving us clear instructions, and giving us structured feedback that was balanced between constructive improvements and aspects to celebrate.

ANONYMOUS, Graduate Student

What was the uptake of our services?

CTE worked with 2,364 unique individuals in the past year, a noteworthy increase compared to the past four years. In 2020-2021, numbers were higher than previous years, largely due to a significant increase in individual consultations. While the bulk of our participants came from Arts, Engineering, and Science, individuals from all faculties worked with CTE. See “CTE at a glance” (pages 4 and 5) for graphics illustrating these trends.

FIGURE 4: Unique participants in CTE workshops by role (Fiscal Year 2016-2020)

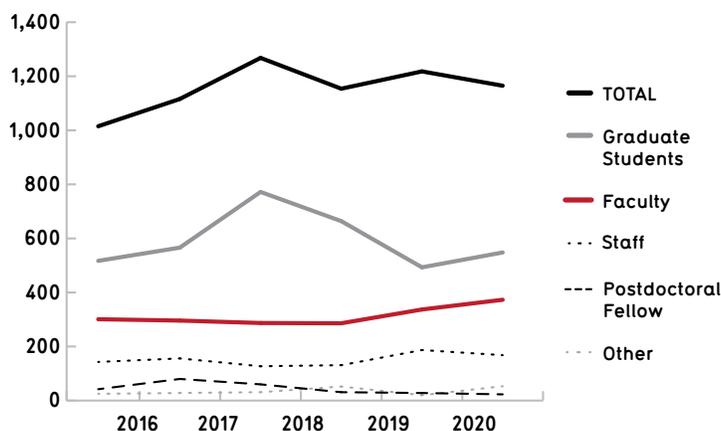
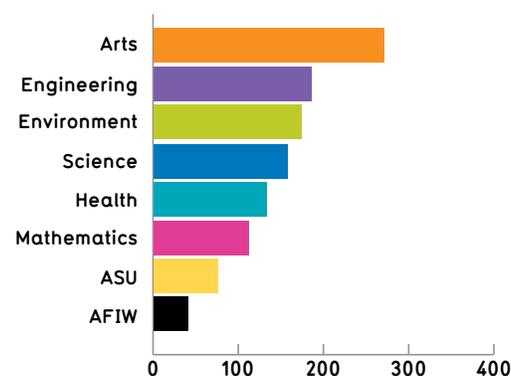


FIGURE 5: Unique workshop attendees by faculty/unit (2020-2021)



WORKSHOPS

Figure 4 shows the number of faculty, staff, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows who participated in CTE workshops over the past five fiscal years. Despite this year’s move to fully online delivery, participation remained relatively stable, with higher numbers of faculty participants compared to previous years (Table 1). Arts had the highest number of workshop participants, followed by Engineering and Environment (Figure 5).

TABLE 1: Workshop participation over five years.

ROLE	2016-2017 PARTICIPANTS		2017-2018 PARTICIPANTS		2018-2019 PARTICIPANTS		2019-2020 PARTICIPANTS		2020-2021 PARTICIPANTS	
	TOTAL	UNIQUE								
Faculty	853	296	804	287	863	286	868	337	716	373
Staff	363	156	265	127	217	131	471	187	394	168
Graduate Student	1762	566	2301	772	1729	664	1494	493	1563	548
Postdoctoral Fellow	379	80	263	60	73	31	96	28	59	23
Other	70	28	104	31	100	52	49	20	82	53
TOTAL	3,427	1,116	3,737	1,267	2,982	1,154	2,978	1,065	2,814	1,165

The sum of each column differs from the total because some participants identified with multiple roles during the reporting period.

CONSULTATIONS

CTE faculty liaisons and educational developers responded to 4,841 consultation requests with a total of 1,313 unique instructors, graduate students, and staff members from Waterloo and beyond. Instructors in Engineering requested the highest number of consultations followed by Arts (Figure 6).

Other members of the Keep Learning team (from IST-ITMS, CEL, and the Library) provided additional consultations.

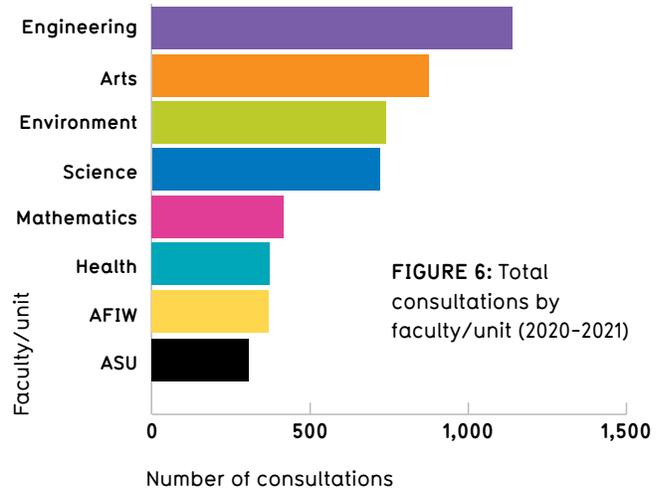


FIGURE 6: Total consultations by faculty/unit (2020-2021)

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Our curriculum team pivoted to remote consultations and curriculum events to continue their support of the cyclical review process and program design initiatives. They worked with 38 departments across all faculties to align courses with overall program outcomes and prepare for cyclical program reviews and accreditation (Figure 7).

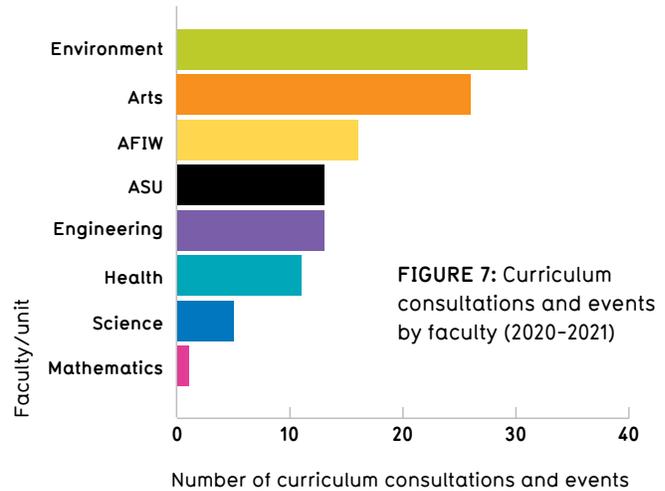


FIGURE 7: Curriculum consultations and events by faculty (2020-2021)

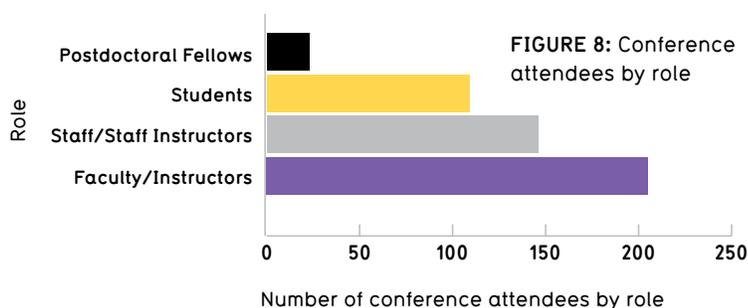


12TH ANNUAL TEACHING AND LEARNING CONFERENCE

This year’s conference prompted attendees to consider the role that assessment plays in teaching and learning, and how assessment can be an integral part of the learning process.

The conference was held entirely online over two days via a virtual platform that allowed participants to connect with one another and engage with all aspects of the conference, including presentations, panels, workshops, posters, an assessment showcase, and networking opportunities.

The online format allowed us to significantly expand our reach both within and beyond Waterloo: attendance included almost 500 individuals from 59 institutions across eight countries! Most attendees were instructors (Figure 8).



SUPPORT FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING RESEARCH

CTE administers the Learning Innovation and Teaching Enhancement (LITE) Grant program, which supports Waterloo researchers investigating student learning and alternative approaches to teaching and assessment. Funding comes through the Office of the Associate Vice-President, Academic.

Twelve research projects were funded this past year, involving 30 researchers representing all six faculties, one federated and affiliated institution, and two academic support units (Table 2). Topics of funded projects fell under the broad themes of “teaching strategies” and “understanding learners” (Table 3).

TABLE 3: Examples of LITE grant research topics

LITE GRANT RESEARCH TOPICS: EXAMPLES
Development and Implementation of a Universal Augmented Reality App to Enhance Classroom Teaching in Chemistry and Biochemistry
Fostering Mathematical Communication Through Children’s Book Design Projects
A Student-Generated Open-Access Digital Textbook
Assessing the Effectiveness of a Novel Wellness Check-In Activity Among Third-Year Students
Examining the Relationship Between Undergraduate Students’ Writing Habits, Writing Apprehension, and Writing Self-Efficacy
Long-Term Study Groups in a Remote Teaching Classroom as a Way to Promote Connectedness, Cooperative Learning and Effective Study Skills



Thank you so much for this amazing conference – this is incredibly inspiring and exciting!

ELISE LEPAGE, French Studies

You’ve put a heck of a lot of work into the Teaching and Learning Conference, and it shows in how well organized everything is.

JAMES SKIDMORE, Germanic and Slavic Studies

It was the best organized and best run remote conference I’ve ever attended (and one of the best conferences of any kind, for that matter).

BRANDON DEHART, Engineering

TABLE 2: LITE grant recipients by Faculty/unit

FACULTY/UNIT	Number of recipients
Science	10
Engineering	7
Health	4
ASU	3
Arts	2
Environment	2
AFIW	1
Mathematics	1

How well are we meeting instructors' needs?

CTE bases programming on the needs of Waterloo instructors. This year, we worked with other members of the Keep Learning team to identify needs by:

- › tracking consultation topics;
- › working with Waterloo's Institutional Analysis and Planning unit to survey instructors and students about what was and was not working with remote teaching; and
- › surveying instructors teaching on campus to find out how we could better support them.

The data we collected informed the development of CTE programming as well as resources for the Keep Learning website.

ADAPTED PROGRAMMING

We quickly adapted much of our standard programming.

Course Design Fundamentals became Remote Course Design Essentials (ReCoDE), a series of synchronous sessions and self-paced, asynchronous tasks designed to help instructors prepare to teach remotely. Launched in April 2020, we offered this series throughout the most recent fiscal year and also designed an independent, fully asynchronous version hosted in LEARN.

We developed an online version of the Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW), which focused on instructional skills in online teaching. As with the in-person version of the ISW, the online version offers an authentic and interactive environment for learning and practicing facilitation and assessment skills.

NEW PROGRAMMING

We developed new, custom workshops and webinars to support remote teaching, including:

- › Online Delivery Skills for Synchronous Teaching
- › Virtual Meeting Platforms and Synchronous Delivery
- › Remote Assessment
- › Teaching Practices to Cultivate Well-being and Compassion



Remote Course Design Essentials helped me rethink and simplify my learning outcomes. At the same time, it helped me explore options and reminded me to be flexible as we prepare to teach remotely or online.

ANONYMOUS FEEDBACK, Faculty Workshop

The (online) Instructional Skills Workshop was an informative, participatory adventure that modeled what it preached. The facilitators shared their expertise while allowing participants to embrace discovery. I appreciated the careful feedback, kind challenges, and exciting opportunity to learn in different ways.

ANONYMOUS FEEDBACK, Faculty Workshop



OVERALL, CTE WORKSHOPS WERE RATED “EXCELLENT” OR “GOOD” BY:

- › 90% of faculty participants
- › 94% of graduate student participants

And 87% of participants reported that CTE met their needs.

What are the outcomes from engaging with CTE?

For the last five years, both faculty and graduate students have consistently reported that workshops are meeting their needs and helping them learn ideas and strategies to apply in their teaching (see Figure 9 for faculty feedback). Both faculty and graduate students reported fewer opportunities to connect with other participants this past year, which is no doubt due to the remote nature of our programming. We are working on ways to address this decline.

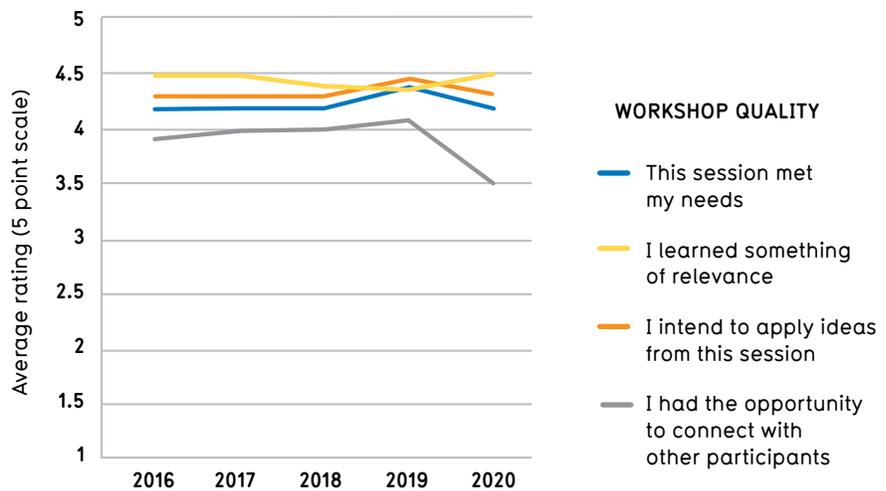


Figure 9: Faculty workshop outcomes

Unsolicited feedback and comments on outcomes surveys indicate that participants found CTE programming helpful and supportive. The following is a sampling of their comments about the impact of CTE programming on their teaching. Some instructors reported that they had already successfully applied CTE’s input to their teaching:



I attribute my success to great advice I've had from my teaching fellow and CTE, including tips for online engagement. I didn't try to recreate my in-person course at all. I made something totally new that works in the remote and asynchronous context and that didn't kill me in the process.

REBECCA ROONEY, Biology



Thank you for all your time and energy this term in helping me support students while improving how I organize material. It's been a rough learning curve, but it feels so good to have student feedback that demonstrates that the intended learning outcome was achieved.

ANGELINE RAM, Graduate Student

Thanks for helping me clear my mind and have a better perspective to plan my lectures. Your support and time spent with me was well used.

ANONYMOUS FEEDBACK, Instructor

Others indicated that they learned specific skills and perspectives that they plan to apply to their teaching. In some cases, this related to feeling more prepared – specifically after participating in the Remote Course Design Essentials workshop:



I feel less anxious about preparing for remote course design and teaching now that I have been provided with multiple resources, tools, and contacts to utilize as I prepare and deliver my course.

ANONYMOUS FEEDBACK,
Faculty Workshop



I was afraid to teach online. I am less afraid and slightly less overwhelmed now.

ANONYMOUS FEEDBACK, Faculty Workshop

I have a clearer idea of the obstacles of remote teaching. I think I had a much rosier idea of remote classes before starting. However, I also feel more equipped to overcome these obstacles.

ANONYMOUS FEEDBACK, Faculty Workshop

Some participants identified specific new strategies that they planned to incorporate:



I had initially thought only about fitting existing midterms and a final exam into the remote setting, but now I'm thinking about how to incorporate discussions into teaching/learning activities as well as assessment.

ANONYMOUS FEEDBACK, Faculty Workshop

I will be using the frameworks provided – especially the alignment of objectives and assessment – to guide my decision-making going forward. I started planning my week-to-week activities and have a better idea of what I need to do.

ANONYMOUS FEEDBACK, Faculty Workshop

I thought I would just narrate the PowerPoint slides I used last year for my lectures. I now realize that won't work. People tune out after 10 minutes, so I will need to talk less and intersperse other activities.

ANONYMOUS FEEDBACK, Faculty Workshop



Finally, a number of participants reported a shift in their understanding of and approach to remote teaching – and in some cases, teaching in general:



I realized that online teaching can be as engaging as in-person teaching if the lessons are designed appropriately.

ANONYMOUS FEEDBACK, Faculty Workshop



You have provided me with a much more logical approach to course design overall, not only for remote courses.

ANONYMOUS FEEDBACK, Faculty Workshop

I am re-designing my course from scratch to be the best possible version of a remote class – not simply a class moved online.

ANONYMOUS FEEDBACK, Faculty Workshop

Graduate students in the Fundamentals of University Teaching (Fundamentals) program and the Certificate in University Teaching (CUT) program have consistently agreed that they **met the intended learning outcomes** of the program (Figures 10 and 11).

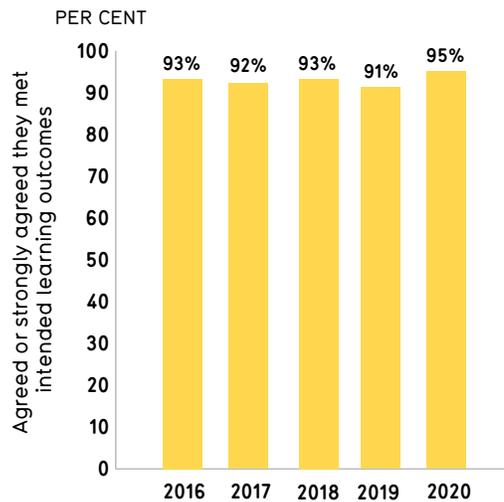


FIGURE 10: Fundamentals of University Teaching – percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that they met the intended learning outcomes of the program. Response rate: 28%.

Intended Learning Outcomes (Fundamentals):

- › Use classroom delivery and general presentation skills effectively
- › Develop lesson plans that are interactive and designed to meet specific learning outcomes
- › Identify and practice strategies that foster active learning
- › Give and receive effective feedback
- › Demonstrate confidence and self-awareness as a university teacher

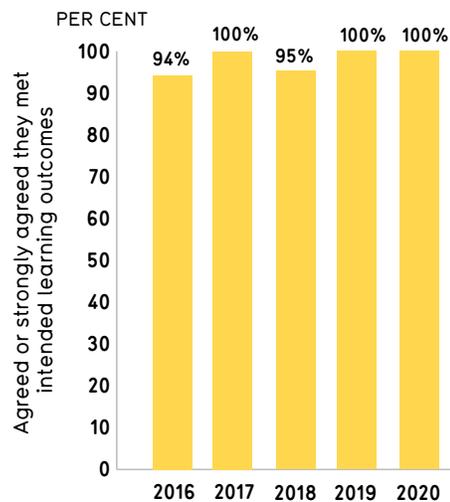


FIGURE 11: Certificate in University Teaching (CUT) – percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that they met the intended learning outcomes of the program. Response rate: 48%

Intended Learning Outcomes (CUT):

- › Apply theoretical knowledge about teaching and learning in higher education to my teaching practice
- › Adopt a reflective approach to teaching through collecting feedback and continually modifying instructional approaches
- › Develop and implement active learning teaching methods
- › Articulate a teaching philosophy and document teaching effectiveness in a teaching dossier
- › Locate, summarize, and present research on teaching and learning as it applies to my field
- › Demonstrate confidence and knowledge as an instructor in higher education



How do we continuously improve?

We bring a critical eye to all we do, from our programs and services to our internal administrative processes. We regularly assess our work and seek to use the results. Our client groups provide important input for our quest to improve, and we also seek regular engagement in professional development for our own staff to help further inform our ideas for improvements.

This past year, perhaps more than ever, we invested in our own learning. In the surge of activity that characterized our response to the pandemic, we paid close attention to gaps in our own abilities and knowledge. This year marked a time of accelerated and “on the fly” learning about remote teaching in addition to expanding our understanding of the manifestations and impacts of systemic racism.

INTERNAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

CTE staff members continued to seek opportunities to further develop skills applicable to our work.

- › Staff members continued to meet regularly to discuss current teaching and learning research via a monthly journal club.
- › Our graduate programs team engaged in regular discussions related to inclusive educational practices and strove to explicitly model these practices to TAs across campus.
- › We launched a CTE anti-racism working group to unpack and interrogate white privilege and systemic racism as they relate to our work, while actively engaging in unlearning/relearning. We are identifying learning resources and opportunities for our instructional community and are making changes to (for example) our individual thinking, our hiring practices, and the types of curriculum conversations we can facilitate.
- › Our director engaged in provincial, national, and international discussions with other teaching centre leaders to share strategies in response to the pandemic and remote teaching.

LEADERSHIP FOR EXTERNAL PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Our participation as leaders in professional associations facilitated other opportunities for growth.

- › Monica Vesely held the position of chair on the Council of Ontario Educational Developers.
- › Kyle Scholz served as grants coordinator for the national Educational Developers Caucus and is also an associate editor with the Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.
- › Donna Ellis was president of the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network, a professional association for educational developers based in the United States.

Through this work, we have been able to extend our Centre’s networks by working closely with educational developers from other institutions, who often share new ideas we can draw upon at Waterloo. Those directly involved have been able to further develop their leadership skills and apply the lessons learned within the Centre, while also making more transparent for other CTE staff members the benefits and challenges of taking on such roles. Roles like these contribute to increasing the visibility of our Centre and the University as leaders in teaching development in higher education.

On the horizon

This annual report highlights key initiatives, successes, and challenges from the past year. Last year we committed to updating our strategic priorities given Waterloo's 2020-2025 strategic plan. We developed six new strategic priorities to run from 2021-2025 (see text box) and have many exciting ideas about how to advance them this year. Here's a sampling of what we plan to do.

Engage in institutional strategic priorities –

We will contribute to evolving institutional projects like teaching assessment processes and classroom redesign, as well as emerging initiatives around teaching innovations and systemic changes. We will bring pedagogical and change management expertise to these initiatives.

Expand our ability to support Indigenization, decolonization, and anti-racism –

CTE is fortunate to have received central support for new staff positions to assist instructors in these important goals. This year, we will welcome a Senior Educational Developer, Indigenous Knowledges and Anti-racist Pedagogies, who will provide leadership within the Centre in these areas and start to build a team to provide support for instructors. Our Anti-Racism Working Group – a learning community of CTE staff from across our various teams – will also continue our efforts to learn and grow our skills to assist our new colleagues with this important work.

Support the Teaching Fellows' Blended

Learning Initiative – Along with the Centre for Extended Learning, CTE staff will help instructors transition their remote courses to ones that use a flipped classroom model. Specifically, we will be offering workshops and consultations to help instructors leverage materials and activities developed for their remote courses as they shift to create redesigned courses that integrate online and in-person components for cohesive and engaging learning experiences.

Contribute to the evolution of the Keep

Learning team – As we start to move beyond the pandemic, many decisions must be made about the future of teaching and learning at Waterloo. The Keep Learning team members have been discussing opportunities to harness and learn from key shifts in practice versus unconsciously drifting back to the pre-pandemic's status quo, looking at both our ways of working together and approaches to instruction. In CTE, we want



to capitalize on synergies created from the pandemic response and continue to deepen our partnerships with complementary units.

Enhance our assessment practices to include longer-term evaluation of impact –

The next step in our Centre’s assessment plan involves evaluating the impact of our programs and services over time, not just right after an event. We will be creating sustainable methodologies to engage in this work so we can provide richer descriptions of how instructors (and departments) have built capacity and community around teaching and learning as a result of engaging with our unit. These kinds of changes can result in strengthening an institutional culture that values effective teaching and meaningful learning, which is a key part of CTE’s mission.



CTE’S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: 2021–2025

1

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Engage in the development, implementation, and leadership of institution-wide teaching and learning initiatives related to the university strategic plan.

4

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Cultivate the exploration and effective use of an expanded range of teaching modes and approaches amongst instructors that build on research and their prior experience.

2

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Model, promote, and guide inclusive and respectful educational and workplace practices, particularly those focused on Indigenization, decolonization, and anti-racism.

5

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Investigate and communicate the impact of CTE’s programs and services and continually improve the supports we provide.

3

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Advocate for evidence-informed, learner-centered assessment practices that integrate flexibility, autonomy, and risk-taking for both students and instructors.

6

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Develop flexible and reciprocal frameworks for our work with internal and external partners.

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