Teaching Matters

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This Issue

Register for CTE Events online at:

http://cte.uwaterloo.ca/events_registration/index.html

A "Welcoming" Teaching Centre

Four things conspired this past Spring term to lead to the words you're reading (with my gratitude, of course – I know that newsletters are not always top-of-mind as Fall Term begins!). First, I agreed to be Acting Director while Director Ellis took a study leave. At the time, I wasn't thinking ahead to last-minute newsletter article revisions! Second, I've been involved in two conferences and now a special issue of a journal in which several of us who work in teaching centres have been asking ourselves "if my university were the world, which country would my teaching centre be" and "who then has access to our borders and lands, freely traveling or coming to live or work for a while?" Third, the Centre for Teaching Excellence is in the process of consolidating two separate locations (Porter and MC) into one new home (EV1, part of the third floor). Finally, I've taken it upon myself whenever *I* travel (literally rather than metaphorically) to visit teaching centres near and far.

So in the midst of all these events, opportunities, or habits, I've found myself wondering what makes a Teaching Centre a warm and welcoming place to visit? I do believe that the majority of what we do involves relationships between people; I also know that we have some of the most generous and helpful people I have met here on staff at CTE, so we're covered on that front. But what of our *spaces* -- are they truly *places* you'd want to inhabit with us for a short or longer period? In what ways can we make our new space into a desirable and sustainable *place* for teaching and learning?

Not too long ago, I was trying to find a teaching centre on another campus. I followed all the directional signs and found the door. It was locked. I could see from a window to my right that the office was full of staff; this particular window had one of those roll-down metal shutters, but thankfully this was open. I walked over and hovered a little until someone at a desk some 20 feet away noticed me, bounded up with a smile, and asked me how they could help me (why, I thought, would they hide such a nice person away like this). I delivered the package I had brought to make its way to some mysterious unseen office in the depths of the cubicle warren, much preferring to have delivered it myself, but unable to do so because the

door was locked (and apparently my announcement that I was from another teaching centre myself was not the magic word to unlock said door!). Now, I understand completely that in a central support unit, one works with the space one is granted. But a drive-through teaching development window? Not optimal. Even when I worked at a much smaller university out of a library closet, I made sure that the "shop front" was designed to invite faculty members and TAs in while respecting their need to be a bit private about their browsing or their business.

Which brings me to my real point: our move to EV1's third floor office spaces. For the first time, we will all be together. Internally, this is great. We can bounce our ideas off each other much more easily. We will have things like windows, or at least a view of a lovely courtyard. But for our visitors (faculty, graduate students, close by or very far away), the ex- *"For the first time, we will all be together. "* staff instructors, people from other universities perience of visiting us will be different. Most of our offices will be former faculty offices rather than spokes around a central hub, like in Porter, or deep inside one spur of a building and housing our reading library as well (as in MC). Eventually, our workshop space will also be in EV1 (second floor), and renovating a space for the best possible learning environment will bring its own challenges. How will we make sure that people know they can come to the reception area during regular work hours? How will they differentiate the beginnings and endings of our spaces in contrast to remaining departmental or decanal spaces on the same floor? What will make our space feel like their "home away from home" as I like to think of any teaching centre?

For my part, I would like to suggest that signage need not be restricted to the dry and sterile nameplates ubiquitous at 1960s-built institutions. I'd like to see posters up based on the research many of us have been

involved in, but I'd also like to hang things that invite interaction (some kind of teaching and learning graffiti wall perhaps, or a touch-screen kiosk with resources of the week scrolling by and searchable by a user); I'd like to see directional signs to our library collection, which will travel with us to EV1 325; I'd like to see all staff members decorate their doors in some way that conveys something of themselves. Comfy chairs are mandatory in the reception space, whether for reading books and articles or waiting for a consultation with one of our developers. And some way to connect the building to the land would be nice – expect to see more plants than in previous itera-

tions of the CTE. Finally, I think that we should always have coffee or tea available, because many of the best ideas in teaching occur as a direct result of sharing a conversation over a beverage.
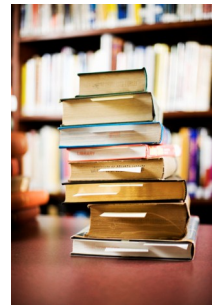
What kind of space would be a pleasant one to trek across campus in January or July to inhabit? What would make you feel welcome in our new space? Send your ideas to tholmes@uwaterloo.ca.

Trevor Holmes

Teaching Conferences for Fall 2011

12th Annual Lilly Conference on College and University Teaching
September 22-25, 2011, Traverse City, Michigan

ISSOTL11 - Transforming the Academy through the Theory and Practice of SOTL
October 20-23, 2011, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

36th Annual POD Network Conference
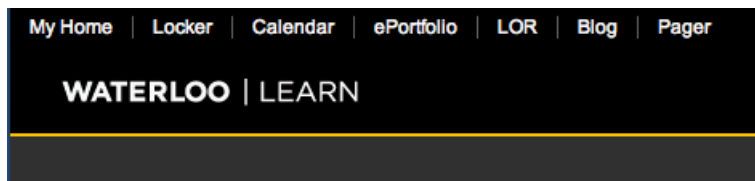**October** 26-30, 2011, Atlanta, Georgia

Centennial Symposium on Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
November 10-12, 2011, Banff, Alberta

Goodbye UW-ACE, Hello Learn

In March of this year, Desire2Learn was selected as the new learning management system to replace UW-ACE. Angel Inc (UW-ACE) was purchased by the mega-company Blackboard in May 2009 and this precipitated an intensive examination of our LMS needs. Our new system will be called "Learn" and will be used by all courses across campus in the upcoming winter term. ITMS, CEL and CTE have worked collab- oratively along with faculty members and representatives from the Library, OPD and STAC (Student Technical Advisory Committee) to select this system. More information about the LMS Project can be found at http://av.uwaterloo.ca/uwace/lms_review/index.html.

During the last spring term there were 12 courses running on a pilot site, 6 on-campus courses, and 6 fully online courses. This trouble-shooting phase went smoothly and there will be a limited roll-out of approxi- mately 225 on-campus and 40 fully online courses this fall. Some of the features that we are looking for- ward to in Learn are greater extensibility and mobile connectivity, an integrated ePortfolio tool, and acces- sibility features that exceed the requirements of the anticipated Ontario legislation.

Throughout the Fall term, CTE and ITMS will be partnering to offer campus-wide and departmental train- ing to on-campus instructors through formal group, hands-on sessions (see the registration procedure to sign up for **Getting Started with D2L, CTE 656** or contact your CTE Faculty Liaison about training for your department). All instructors will be given access to training materials and help documents that are housed in Learn and will be set up in their own sandbox course where they can practice using the system before their winter course shell is created. Instructors will also be able to book individual consultations with CTE Faculty Liaisons to discuss how to best organize their courses materials and develop online ac- tivities in Learn. We have also scheduled a series of informal drop-in sessions for instructors who want to work on their courses with two liaisons at hand to answer their immediate questions.

ITMS will be providing Winter UW-ACE users with more information about converting an ACE course into the new D2L format. If you have further questions please contact jholbroo@uwaterloo.ca or your CTE Faculty Liaison. Read about Linda Carson's experience using Learn in the Spring term (see page 4).

Jane Holbrook

Copyright at uWaterloo

Changes in copyright have occurred since August 31, 2011. Find out how the new copyright rules affect your course(s) by visiting the following links:

Copyright at the University of Waterloo: A Guide for Those Teaching Courses

Waterloo Copyright FAQ

Copyright Contacts at uWaterloo

If you have any questions regarding copyright at uWaterloo, please contact the appropriate individual in the Copyright Contact link noted above.

Verna Keller

Using D2L: An Instructor's Perspective

Linda Carson is a Lecturer with the Centre for Knowledge Integration in the Faculty of Environment. A true integrator, her background includes degrees in math, fine arts, kinesiology, and she is currently a PhD Candidate in Psychology, studying behavioural and cognitive neuropsychology.

Linda was one of the instructors who took part in the Spring term pilot of Desire2Learn (D2L), the software that will be replacing UW-ACE. Linda shared her experience with Scott Anderson.

Q: Why did you want to take part in the pilot of Desire2Learn (D2L)?
A: First, because I wanted to work in D2L. I had read about it and seen demonstrations of D2L and I liked what I had heard and seen. I also like to pilot things. I like to be in a position to give feedback and know that feedback might be useful and meaningful. It seemed like a cleaner interface and I was hopeful that would make it easier to work with.

Q: Easier for you or for the students or both?
A: Very much for both. I'm willing to put up with a fair bit because much of what I'm doing only has to be done once, like uploading documents. Things that make everyday operations easier for the students are a priority for me because they affect a lot of students over and over again.

One thing that I have to do repeatedly is marking. A high priority for me was looking at how marking worked and how I use marking. Marking needed to work well for me. The rest of it needed to work well for my students.

Q: How have you found using D2L?
A: I'm a big fan. It worked for my students, it worked for me. I've found that the marking works much better with the way that I use it. I don't think marking is perfect, but it's way better.

I know all of my students were very familiar with ACE, but they had no trouble getting up to speed with D2L and they still had positive things to say about D2L at the end of the term – I think the fundamental user experience is very positive.

It's not that students aren't running into things that still need work, they are – but the experience has been positive and their feedback has been useful. Submitting assignments seems to work much better for students – and that's saying a lot because I'm asking students to do a variety of different things and we've run into problems previously.

I have an assignment called Connections that comes up in a couple of my courses for which the file submitted could be almost anything…it could be a document, a presentation, an animation, a video, or a link to a YouTube video they've created. It needs to be pretty obvious to them how to upload it because they're stressed and handing it in right at the deadline. Normally, the day the Connections assignment is due, I expect to spend 1-2 hours communicating with students and troubleshooting. This term when it was due, I didn't spend any time handholding or back-and-forth explaining things to students. It's a smaller class and they may be a bit more savvy than first year students, but as a first guess, I'd say it worked better.

I didn't see any student do anything remarkable or above and beyond the call of duty in D2L, but I didn't

see anybody have any problem figuring out how to do anything of their own initiative, so it's clearly straightforward for a student to get up to speed, which is hugely important to me.

Q: What kinds of things were you using or doing?
If you were to characterize my teaching, it's not the big lecture hall thing, but it is really varied assignments with qualitative assessment and a lot of dynamic course content.

Conversations in the classroom will relate to something I've seen or read elsewhere and I want to make that connection. I want to be able to dynamically add in other relevant little nuggets like news, cool sites, something on twitter, or other optional reading.

I give my students a lot of qualitative feedback. I use comments as part of my feedback process and I like to be able to do it online in dropboxes or the gradebook.

Q: What are you looking forward to as you move into the Fall term when you're teaching two courses?
I'm looking forward to seeing how all of this scales with a larger class. Can I find a way to be really efficient in marking and in sending email? I think I've become a competent user this term but by Christmas I want to be a power user.

The rubrics are new and I'm more excited about them than I was 3 months ago. I didn't use rubrics enough or well enough this term. I got feedback from a student that as he was getting ready to whip together his essay at the last minute, he wanted to see what the requirements for the essay were again…the rubric area turns out to be the first place he looked for it because he'd seen a rubric for the previous assignment. That would have been a brilliant place for me to have a rubric posted along with the details of the assignment, but it never occurred to me to put it there.

Q: Do you have any words of advice or encouragement for instructors who will be moving to D2L in the coming terms?
For people who are dreading having to change, think of it like a car…it's a different make of car, but it's still a car. There's going to be a steering wheel, brakes and an accelerator…they're going to be subtly different, but for all practical purposes, it will do the things you want it to do. I think it's a better car. The quality of the ride and the handling is noticeably better.

Scott Anderson

Teaching Awards

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. Nomination deadline: Friday, February 3, 2012.

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. Nomination deadline: Friday, February 10, 2012.

Newly-minted Facilitators for the Instructional Skills Workshop at Waterloo
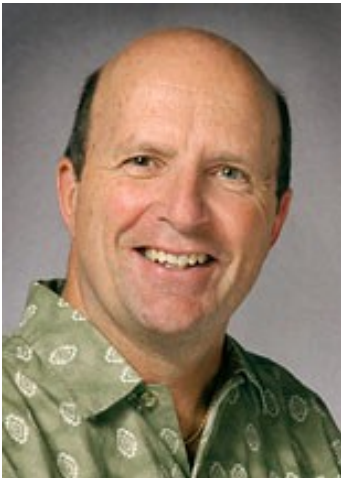
In June 2011, three "alumni" of the Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) bravely – or some might say foolishly – signed up for the 5-day Facilitator Development Workshop (FDW). Whereas the decades-old ISW is based around three core microteaching and peer feedback sessions in which you progress as you need to progress, the FDW involves a quality assurance process in which we need to be certain that the potential facilitators can lead the ISW process appropriately. All of the candidates from Waterloo – Bob Sproule (SAF), Monica Vesely (CHEM, WatPD, CTE), and Veronica Brown (CS, WatPD, CTE) survived and excelled in this new role, and each has already co-facilitated an ISW (this past August).

The model is one of peer support (faculty supporting faculty), though in recent years we've seen a mix of faculty, teaching staff, and educational developers take up the Facilitator role across Canada and beyond. Trevor Holmes asked each of our team members one question about the ISW/FDW experience so far. Here's what they said:

TH: *You've all taught at Waterloo quite a bit, but you have the longest track record Bob ... what motivated you to get involved in facilitating ISWs so close to the end of your full-time career here?*
BS: As a professional who entered teaching on a full time basis later in my working career; I was expected to bring my many years of experience along with strong teaching skills to my 'second' career. While I had the many years of practical experience, I felt compelled to address the requirement for stronger teaching skills. This inclination was further supported by my relatively high Nurturing rating on the Teaching Perspectives Inventory. So, during my time in post-secondary education, I continually look for opportunities to improve my teaching skills, which are directly related to the learning that occurs in my classrooms.
   Nurturing also comes into play at the peer level. Facilitating for ISW provides me with the opportunity, in a very specific way to support my peers. This role enables me to effectively take on a coaching role with a group of fellow instructors who are equally committed and passionate about teaching. ISW's provide an outstanding format to build community with like-minded individuals who share a similar passion, regardless of academic discipline.

TH: *What is it like to be on the 'other side' of the ISW? What do you take away from your first facilitation compared to your initial ISW experience?*

MV: ISW is a process; experiencing it from the facilitator side reaffirmed my initial impression of the importance of giving oneself over to the process. My first co-facilitation confirmed that the process (of ISW),

if faithfully followed, can allow the participants to self-define their own experience. Each ISW offering is unique, and yet predictable if the format is adhered to. The ISW's ability to cater to the particular developmental needs of a given group of instructor participants is its true value.

TH: *You facilitate so many different kinds of workshops and retreats in your role at CTE. What's the same and what's different about the ISW Facilitator role?*

VB: The greatest similarity between the two is my personal goal for the workshops. Regardless of whether it's ISW or a CTE workshop, my goal is to bring people together, to share their experiences, and give them an opportunity to shut out the rest of the world for a few hours and focus on teaching. Our lives are so busy as we balance our teaching with our other critical duties on-campus that it can be difficult to find time to talk to colleagues about what's happening in our courses. My role is to give people the opportunity to have those conversations.

   The greatest difference is that it is really important that I stop being "from the teaching centre." My role is to support ISW participants by stepping back and allowing the learning to happen. Participants learn from each other in ISW and while I can provide some guidance occasionally, it is not my role to have the answers. Peer learning happens quite a bit in our CTE workshops, too, but there is even more emphasis on the peer-learning model at ISW.

Trevor Holmes

Welcoming New Faculty

Whether you're starting a new position at a familiar place or moving from another institution to Waterloo, you'll have questions about balancing many roles, finding appropriate information when you need it, and generally figuring out how your new position "fits you." Each year, incoming faculty members spend an evening at the New Faculty Welcoming Barbecue, co-sponsored by President Hamdullahpur and the Faculty Association President, George Freeman. This year we ate at Victoria Park Pavilion in Kitchener, a city we are more intimately connected to than ever through such presences as the School of Pharmacy and the Critical Media Lab, for example. The next day, a resource fair showcasing the services available from support units across campus was bookended by two panels. The first was made up of campus administrators addressing research, teaching, service and co-op. The second was comprised of peers talking frankly about their own experiences as new faculty in the last four years as well as advice from the Faculty Association of the University of Waterloo (FAUW). Finally, we ate lunch together and departed for optional campus tours or the many other things going on at the beginning of another Fall term.

This year, based on feedback from prior iterations of our Welcome Events, we pushed back to mid-August (and expanded) some teaching workshops for those new faculty who wish to focus on teaching right away. Day One saw 20 people being introduced to "Teaching at Waterloo: First Things" and "Managing the Successful Classroom." A good deal of interactivity was forced on the unsuspecting group, but they conducted themselves admirably and thought about immediate applications to their own disciplinary settings. On Day Two, almost the same number of people appeared for a 5-hour "Course Design Fundamentals" workshop in which many sticky-notes were permanently fused to a concept map tying their course content, learning outcomes, assessments and activities together.

 Overall, the New Faculty Welcoming Barbecue and the next day's events are intended as a brief introduction to the beginning of a fruitful career at Waterloo, a career in which we "begin as we mean to go on" – collaboratively and in a community of scholars.

Trevor Holmes

Really Large Classes

Do you teach or co-ordinate a really large class? These large classes can pose many challenges, such as co-ordinating multi-section courses, providing opportunities for active learning, and assessments for hundreds of students. Although challenges exist, large classes can be full of energy, provide diverse learning opportunities, and inspire us to find new and creative teaching strategies to support our students. We formed the Really Large Classes learning community this past winter and, for the fall, would like to expand our membership. If you teach and/or co-ordinate a really large class (note – we are not defining this by number of students, instead, it is a really large class for your discipline), please consider joining our group. We plan to meet 4-5 times during the Fall term to exchange ideas on ways to enhance students' and instructors' experience in these large class settings. Register for the following CTE courses through myHRinfo under Learning and Development:

> Wed. September 28: Deeper Learning Through Online Discussion (Bob Sproule, SAF)
> Thurs. October 20: Behind the Scenes: Coordinating Really Large Classes (Tonya Noel, PD)
> Wed. November 9: Teaching Together in Multi-Section, Multi-Instructor Courses (Lori Case, CS)
> Thurs. December 1: Assessment Decisions (Carey Bissonnette, Chemistry)

If you would like to join our community or be a guest speaker, please contact Veronica Brown (CTE) at vmbrown@uwaterloo.ca.

Veronica Brown

Learning Initiative Fund (LIF) Grant Recipients

Learning Initiative Fund research projects are designed to enhance students' learning processes and outcomes in undergraduate and graduate courses through instructional initiatives and/or the creation of new learning resources. Congratulations to the LIF grant recipients for 2011.

Certina Ho (Principal Investigator)
School of Pharmacy
Co-Investigators: Olla Wasfi, Mary Power, Brett Morphy, Saurabh Patel, Calvin Poon and Boris Tong
Learning of evidence-based medicine and critical appraisal in undergraduate pharmacy students. Phase 1 – effectiveness of voluntary student-driven journal clubs.

John Lewis (Principal Investigator)
School of Planning
Development and assessment of an epistemic computer game for undergraduate urban planning education.

Grit Liebscher (Principal Investigator)
Germanic and Slavic Studies
Intercultural awareness and linguistic (mis)understandings in online overseas collaboration.

Uzma Rehman (Principal Investigator)
Department of Psychology
Teaching 'how': Developing and testing the use of client video simulations to enhance therapist competence.

Shirley Hall

New Graduate Instructional Developers (GIDs)

Julia Woodhall is currently a PhD Candidate in the department of Sociology and Legal Studies where she studies the workplace and health of fast-food workers. Prior to coming to Waterloo, Julia completed her BAH and MA at the University of Guelph.

Julia is currently enrolled in the Certificate in University teaching program and plans on completing the program in 2011. Julia entered academia specifically to teach at the university level and she has had experience as a teaching assistant at Guelph and Waterloo and as a sessional lecturer at Guelph. She continues to gain experience as a sessional lecturer and is looking forward to teaching at the University of Western Ontario and the University of Waterloo in the upcoming academic year. Julia is looking forward to working with the Certificate in University Teaching Program and is excited about mentoring other graduate students.

As Graduate Instructional Developer, Plinio works with graduate students enrolled in the Fundamentals of University Teaching program to help them develop their teaching skills. Plinio completed his undergraduate studies in Electrical Engineering and his Masters in Biomedical Engineering at the University of Campinas in Brazil. In 2009, he joined uWaterloo's Advanced Interface Design Lab (AIDL) at the Department of Systems Design Engineering to pursue his PhD in Human Factors Engineering. Plinio is actively involved in undergraduate teaching and seeks opportunities to support other graduate students in their professional development. His teaching, presentation, and facilitation skills have been developed through his work as a TA, invited lecturer, guest speaker, and leader of several groups and societies. He is the president of the Systems Design Engineering Graduate Student Association, Vice President of the University of Waterloo Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Student Chapter, and a member of the Graduate Student Planning Committee - Vision 2015. Plinio is passionate about student engagement and service to the academic community. He is excited to share his experience and knowledge with his fellow graduate students at the University of Waterloo.

GID News

Moving On
At the end of August, Gina Passante (Physics & Astronomy) and Prashant Mutyala (ECE) completed their 1-year appointments with CTE's graduate student programs. Both Gina and Prashant were wonderful teaching mentors to their graduate student colleagues. We thank them for their contributions to CTE and wish them well in their future endeavours!

Where Are They Now
Warm congratulations to our former Graduate Instructional Developers Richelle Mader Monaghan (Biology) and Mareike Mueller (Germanic and Slavic Studies) on completing their Doctoral degrees. Richelle is a sessional instructor at Wilfrid Laurier University and Mareike recently accepted a position as a Clinical Assistant Professor at the Department of Germanic Studies, University of Illinois in Chicago. As part of her new role, Mareike will oversee TA training program in her department.

Course Internationalization Grant Profile: VCULT 100

Waterloo International and the Centre for Teaching Excellence are pleased to announce the latest recipient of a course internationalization grant which provides funds to instructors who seek to internationalize their courses. Alice Kuzniar from the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies was awarded grant for her Film and Visual Culture in a Global Context course. Below is a brief summary of the proposed course internationalization strategies.

Film and Visual Culture in a Global Context (VCULT 100) is a new course in the Fine Arts department which will be offered in Winter 2012. It will be a required core course for the VCULT Minor as well as the Film and Visual Culture Major in Fine Arts. The course will serve as an introduction to film analysis via national cinemas and their worldwide reception, taking into account the role of new technologies. Course topics and learning activities will be approached through the lens of internationalization. For example, students will study (via specific films) how directors around the world both deploy and manipulate Hollywood classical codes to create new ways of seeing. Through this activity, students will become aware of how their own viewing practices are culturally encoded. They will begin by investigating how the norms of their spectatorship are grounded in a specific North American culture. They can then progress to asking how these norms can be altered through exposure to innovative cinema by directors from around the world.

The funds from the course internationalization grants will be used to hire an undergraduate research assistant who will put together a data bank of clips and images that will be used to develop engaging assignments and lectures.

Alice Kuzniar, Germanic & Slavic Studies

Course Internationalization Grants

Waterloo International and the Centre for Teaching Excellence are pleased to announce that Course Internationalization Grants, at $1500 each, are open to full-time faculty members at the University of Waterloo. For more information, contact Svitlana Taraban-Gordon at staraban@uwaterloo.ca.

Grant applications are accepted year round, subject to availability of funds.

Teaching Series for Postdoctoral Fellows

At the end of the Fall term, CTE will host the third offering of the Teaching Development Series for uWaterloo postdoctoral fellows. This one-week intensive program, offered once a term, comprises 6 teaching seminars that last 1.5-2 hours each. The program will be offered during the week of November 21, 2011. Registration is limited to 20 participants.

Congratulations to CTE Spring 2011 Grads!

The following 9 students completed the Certificate in University Teaching program in Spring 2011: Reine Al-Housseini (MATH), Walid Bahamdan (ENG), Jonathan Crossen (ARTS), Bissan Ghaddar (ENG), Igor Ivkovic (ENG), Hamid Mohebbi (ENG), Daniel Nadolny (ARTS), Marcel Pinheiro (SCI) and Martin Smith (SCI).

In addition to CUT graduates, 32 graduate students completed the Fundamentals of University Teaching program in Spring 2011.

Darlene Radicioni

Previous Teaching Matters Newsletters can be viewed in our archives.