

2014-2015

CTE annual report

The Centre for Teaching Excellence



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

A woman in a dark suit stands at a podium, holding a document, addressing a group of people seated at a table in a meeting room. The room has a red wall and a whiteboard. The scene is viewed through a glass partition.

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Fostering teaching and learning of the highest quality at Waterloo.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

I am very pleased to share our inaugural annual report with you. In reflecting on the activities from the 2014-2015 fiscal year, I am reminded of the great breadth and scope of our contributions to the University of Waterloo specifically and to the higher education community in general.

CTE's mandate involves acting as a resource to Waterloo's academic community to enhance instructional practices and deepen student learning; informing our practice through using and engaging in pedagogical research; and contributing our expertise to the broader external discussion on post-secondary education.

Overall, our work supports the goals of the University's Academic Programming (AP) Strategic Plan. In this annual report, you will read about the various activities and services that we provide in order to foster the high-quality teaching and learning needed to help Waterloo meet the AP strategic plan goals.

Within our own strategic plan, we have categorized our work into seven core activities. These core activities not only capture our specific programs and projects but also reinforce the breadth of CTE. This annual report uses these core activities to organize both the descriptions of our work and the evidence of our impact.

Our core activities work together to help us achieve our three overarching aims to build capacity, build community, and promote and advocate for an institutional culture that values teaching and learning. In this report, we strive to highlight how our core activities connect to these aims.

Finally, our strategic plan includes a limited number of strategic priorities that identify larger-scale projects or themes to emphasize. Each year, projects within our core activities seek to contribute to these priorities. For 2013-2016, we have five strategic priorities:

- » Promote the understanding, importance, and implementation of deep learning through various instructional methods, practices, educational technologies, and research projects
- » Broaden assistance with learning outcome development for both departments and instructors
- » Investigate and provide support regarding assessing learning
- » Participate in the development and implementation of the institutional and faculty-specific strategic plans and recommendations of the University's Task Force on Innovative Teaching Practices to Promote Deep Learning
- » Devise and implement a sustainable plan for assessing our own work

Throughout this report, you will also see links to these strategic priorities as we outline our progress towards achieving them.

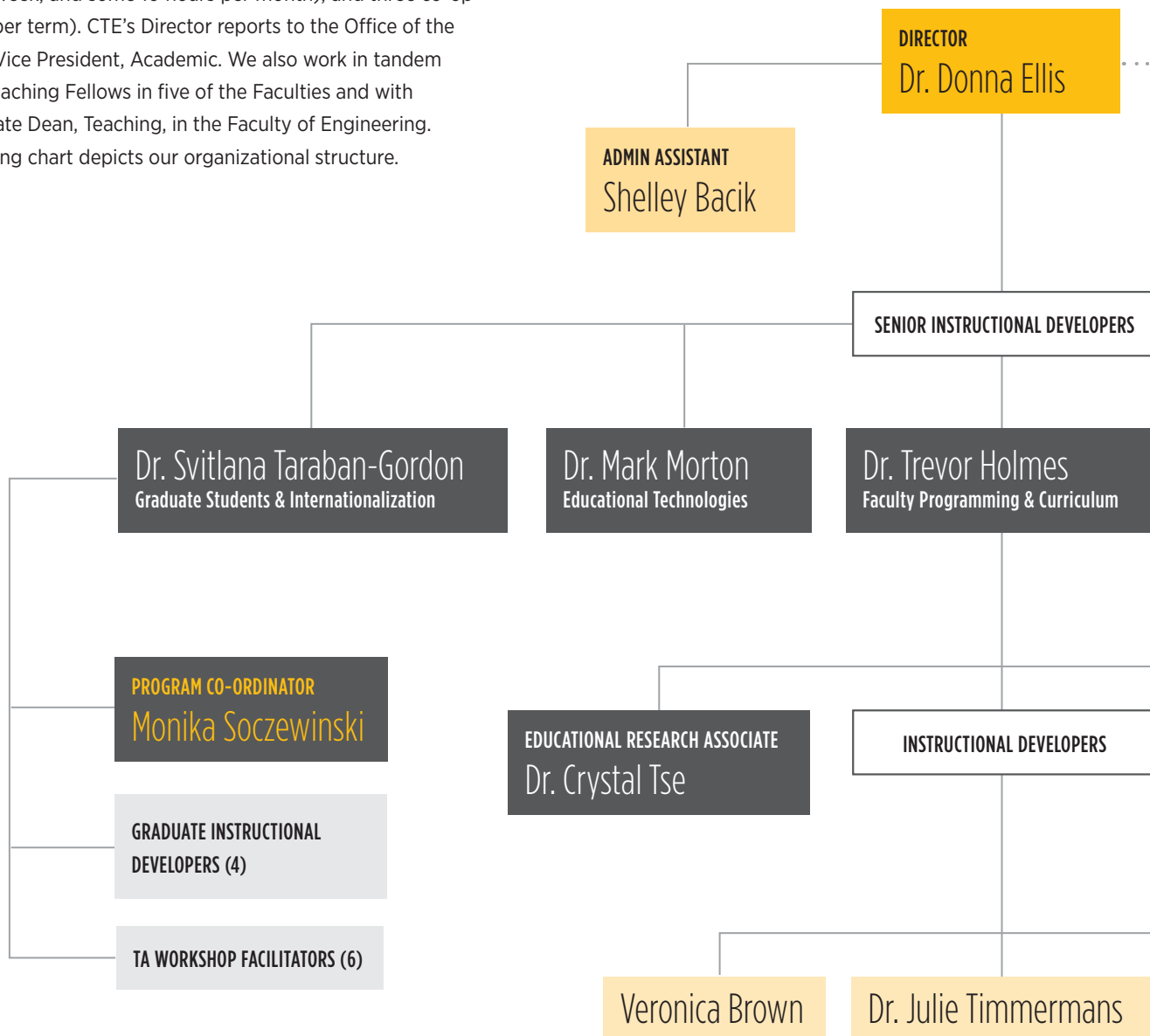
I am very proud to work with such a talented and professional group of colleagues. Their work and your engagement with them demonstrate that teaching and learning are valued at Waterloo.

DONNA ELLIS, Director
July 17, 2015



ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

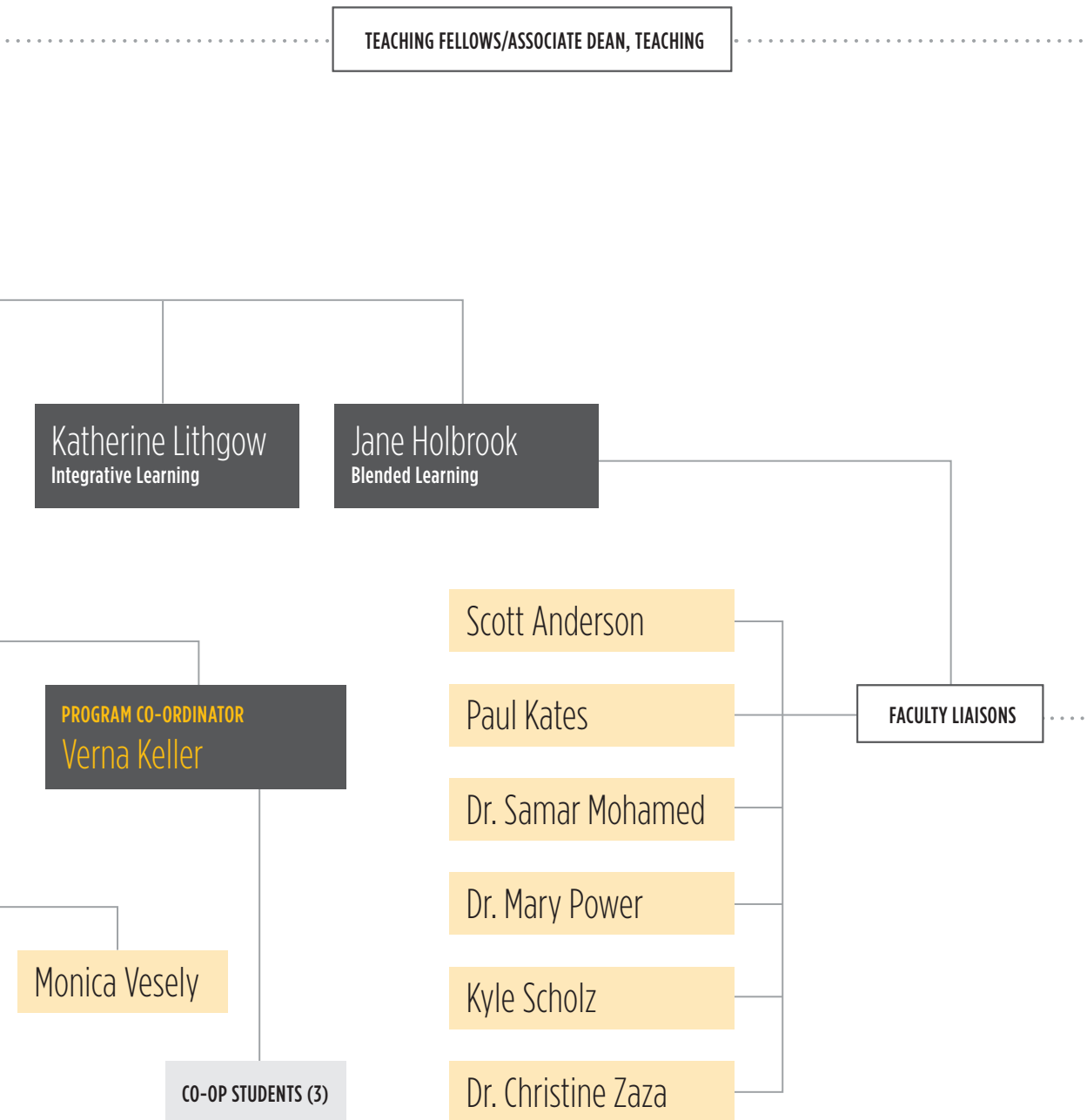
CTE's team comprises 19 full-time staff members, 10 part-time staff members (all graduate students, some of whom work 10 hours per week, and some 10 hours per month), and three co-op students (per term). CTE's Director reports to the Office of the Associate Vice President, Academic. We also work in tandem with the Teaching Fellows in five of the Faculties and with the Associate Dean, Teaching, in the Faculty of Engineering. The following chart depicts our organizational structure.



OUR PEOPLE

10 Part-time Staff Members

19 Full-time Staff Members





220 workshops delivered to 2,847 instructors and staff members



93% of instructors report being satisfied with the service they receive from CTE.

29 new faculty members were provided with workshops specifically designed for their career stage



CTE provided nearly

6,000

consultations to 1,222 instructors



We delivered

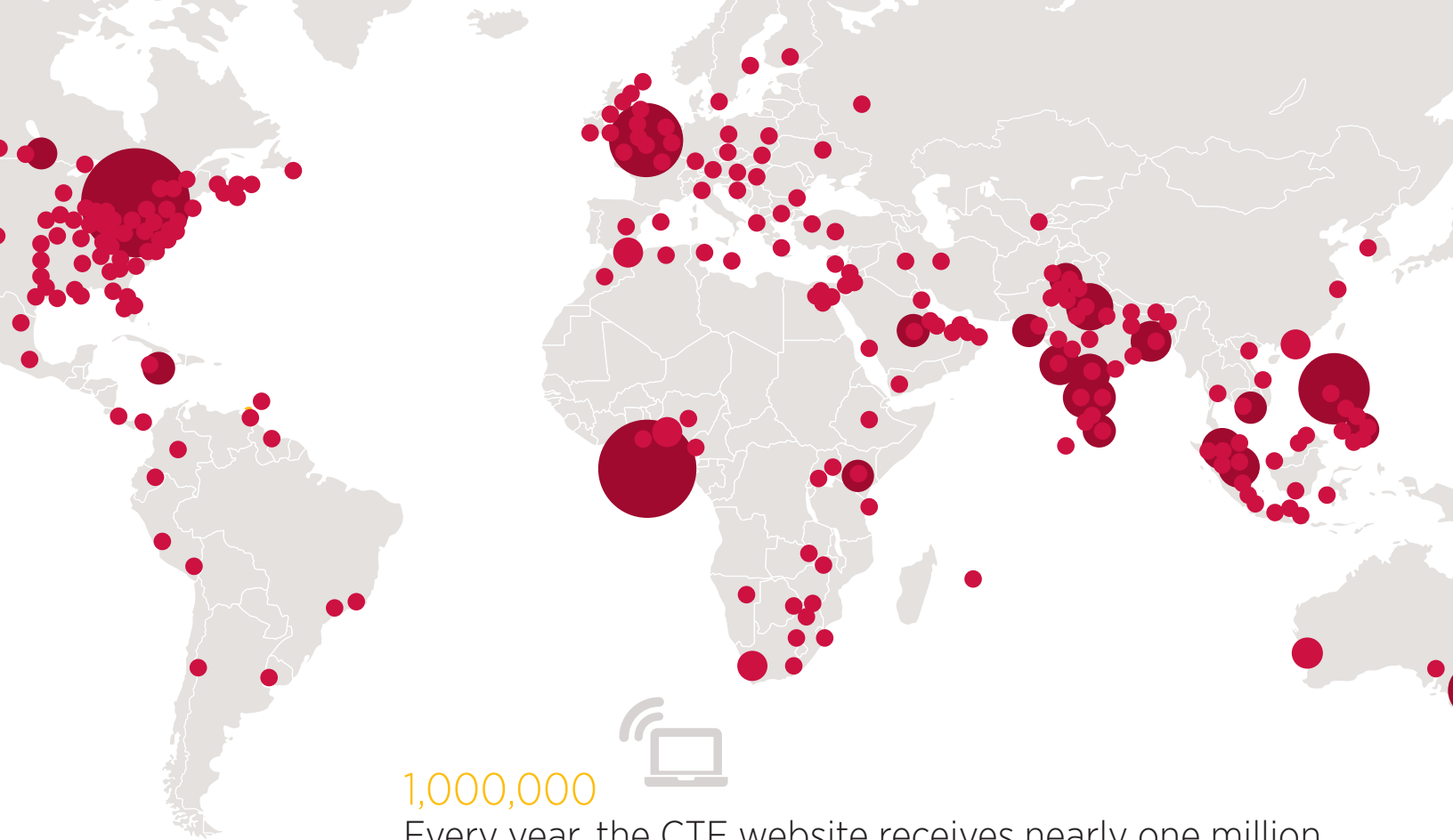
Teaching Development Seminars



to 9 postdoctoral fellows (bringing the running total of postdoctoral fellows who have taken those seminars to 147)

CTE delivered 134 workshops to 1,828 graduate students in the Fundamentals of University Teaching program and the Certificate in University Teaching program (bringing the running total to over 800 students who have completed either program)





1,000,000



Every year, the CTE website receives nearly one million visits from more than 200 nations. *The geographic location of those visitors is represented by the circles on the accompanying map.*

37 presentations *were given by our staff members at conferences or at other institutions and three articles were published in peer-reviewed journals*

4 research grants *were received by our staff members*

225 individuals *attended CTE's annual teaching and learning conference*



2 teaching award programs and grant programs

CTE facilitated

123 curriculum events *for*
27 departments involving
298 faculty members

1

Provide cross-disciplinary, institution-wide events and programs

2

Support instructional and curriculum development for individuals, departments, academic support units, and faculties

3

Foster leadership in teaching development across the institution

4



core activities

Promote and conduct research on teaching, learning, and educational development

Communicate best practices and the importance of teaching and learning at Waterloo

6

Share expertise with colleagues on and off campus

7

Engage in individual and centre-wide professional development and operational activities

1 PROVIDE CROSS-DISCIPLINARY, INSTITUTION-WIDE EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

Every year, CTE delivers an **integrated curriculum of events and programs** for instructors across Waterloo. The shared benefit of these offerings is that instructors from all disciplines and career stages have the opportunity to learn not only from CTE staff members, but with and from each other. A case in point is our 2015 annual teaching and learning conference which brought together 225 instructors and staff members from all faculties and from academic support units. A post-conference survey revealed that 95 per cent of respondents agreed that a benefit of the event was that it gave them a chance to connect with colleagues outside of their discipline – they were able to build community.

In 2014-2015, CTE delivered **220 workshops** – typically ranging from an hour to three hours in length – to help build capacity in areas such as course design, LEARN, blended learning, integrative learning, the flipped classroom, and documenting teaching for tenure and promotion, to name only a few. Specific cohorts of our university's community are also serviced through CTE's **programming for new faculty members, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows**.

Intensive, multi-day workshops include the four-day **Instructional Skills Workshop**, which focuses on lesson planning and classroom delivery, and the four-day **Teaching Excellence Academy (TEA)**, in which participants redesign an existing course.

One of the goals in Waterloo's strategic plan is to "assign a higher value to recognizing and rewarding high-quality teaching." The **Distinguished Teacher Awards**, which our staff members manage, help to support that goal by celebrating exemplary instructors. Additionally, our staff members assist individuals who want to nominate Waterloo instructors for external awards such as the **3M National Teaching Fellowship**. CTE also coordinates award programs for graduate students who have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to teaching: the **Amit and Meena Chakma Awards for Exceptional Teaching by a Student** and the **Certificate in University Teaching (CUT) Award**.

96% *of graduate students who participated in the Certificate in University Teaching program rated those workshops as*
helpful or very helpful

98% *of instructors who attended a CTE workshop in 2014-15 rated them*
helpful or very helpful

95% *of attendees rated our 2015 teaching and learning conference*
good, very good, or excellent

Certificate completions by graduate students:

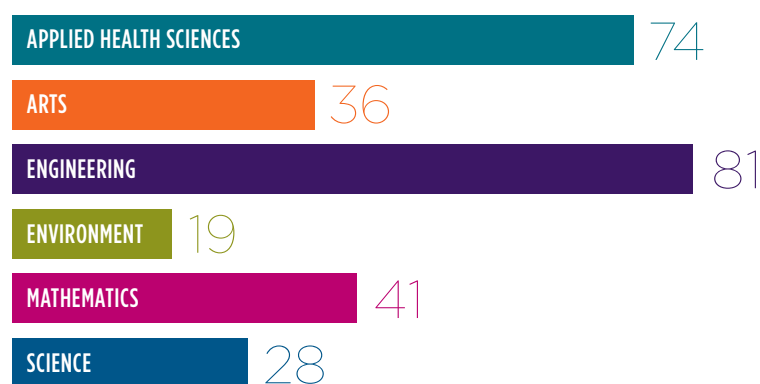


FIGURE 1. Number of graduate students who completed the Fundamentals of University Teaching or Certificate in University Teaching programs in 2014-2015.

Of the 225 individuals who attended our 2015 annual teaching and learning conference, 61 belonged to academic support units such as the Centre for Extended Learning, the Student Success Office, and the English Language Institute. Of the remaining attendees, 134 were instructors, with their Faculty affiliation indicated in the following chart:

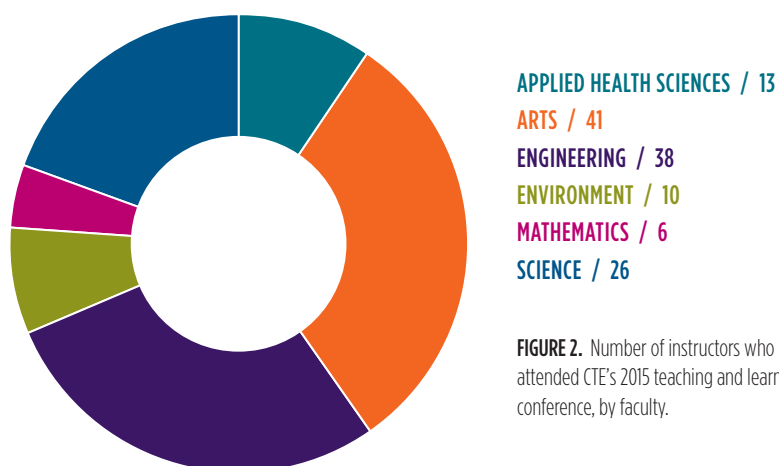


FIGURE 2. Number of instructors who attended CTE's 2015 teaching and learning conference, by faculty.

“Loved it. I will recommend the Instructional Skills Workshop to some of my colleagues.”

– ISW PARTICIPANT

“I used to justify my content choices by explaining the historical significance and/or contemporary influence of the readings chosen, and the assignment by saying ‘Essays are just what we do.’ After taking the Teaching Excellence Academy, I can now explain my content choices by reference to student-oriented goals.”

– TEA PARTICIPANT

“The interdisciplinary nature of the CUT program is the most valuable aspect of the program. As a program participant, you are surrounded by people who are bright and interested in teaching.”

– CARLOS MORENO,
CUT Award Recipient

2

SUPPORT INSTRUCTIONAL AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

for individuals, departments, academic support units, and faculties

“I had many comments after the curriculum review meeting about how effective you are as a facilitator. You got all of us thinking about the same thing at the same time and really helped us to understand the usefulness of the process.”

– **KATE LAWSON**,
Department of English Language and Literature

“I had no knowledge of the hardware and software options for developing online course content and now feel more informed. ... there seem to be people on campus (including yourself) who have expertise in this area that I can tap into.”

– **BRUCE HELLINGA**,
Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering

Not all programming or services are best delivered university-wide. There is also demand at the faculty and departmental level to develop communities around teaching. As such, CTE is often asked to provide **customized workshops** or other programming on topics of interest to a specific group. These topics include educational technologies, TA training, student motivation, and more.

CTE also helps departments **design, modify, and review their curriculum**, aligning their programs with the Degree Level Expectations that Waterloo has affirmed. Our process of supporting curriculum design and review has had tremendous buy-in. Since 2007 when we began to support departments in this area, we have facilitated 507 curriculum events and meetings.

One-on-one consultations are at the core of how CTE staff members assist Waterloo’s instructors. In 2014-2015, CTE engaged in 5,916 such consultations on topics such as classroom management, course design, course evaluations, and the use of LEARN for course activities. Instructors consult with our staff face-to-face, by phone, and by email.

Number of curriculum events and meetings:

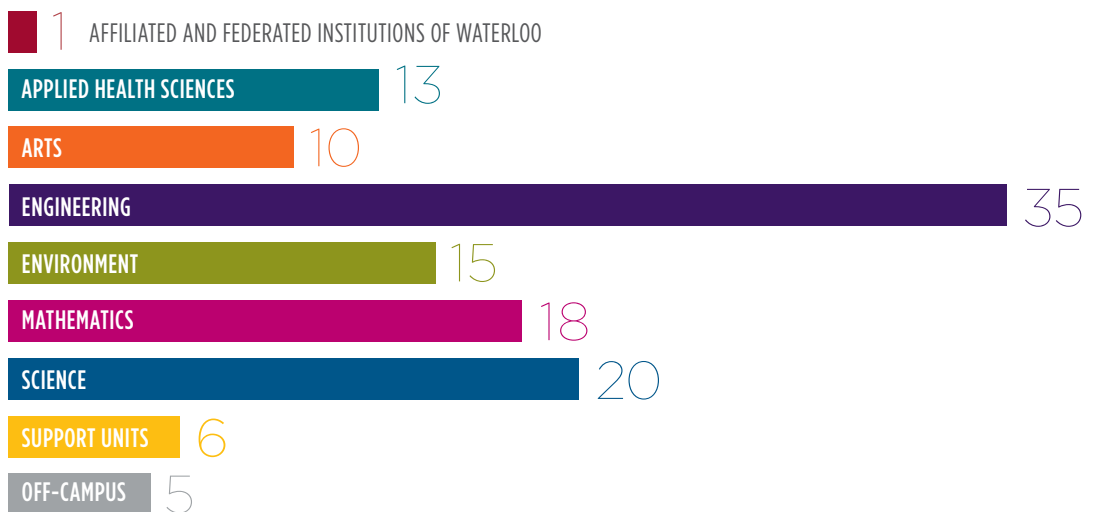


FIGURE 3. Number of events pertaining to curriculum renewal in 2014-2015

FOSTER LEADERSHIP IN TEACHING DEVELOPMENT

3

across the institution

“Through the CTE workshops I learned many transferable skills that I could apply outside of the classroom. I learned different ways to present my research, how to give colleagues effective feedback, and how to communicate complex ideas in a more approachable form.”

– **KRISTIN BROWN**,
Graduate Instructional
Developer

Helping instructors develop effective instructional skills is only part of CTE’s mission. We also strive to **build capacity** in those who seek to **champion teaching development**. To this end, CTE has provided training – such as the intensive 40-hour Facilitator Development Workshop – to instructors who now act as facilitators in the Instructional Skills Workshop. Each year, two faculty members co-facilitate the Teaching Excellence Academy, sharing their course redesign experience and helping to develop their colleagues’ course design skills. Our staff members have also been instrumental in helping instructors take on leadership roles through the Integrated and Experiential Learning Series, and in learning communities pertaining to large classes, case-based learning, ePortfolios, and blended learning.

CTE also fosters leadership in teaching development by giving graduate students the opportunity to help their peers learn more about teaching and learning. These students work at CTE either as **Graduate Instructional Developers** or **Teaching Assistant Workshop Facilitators**. Several of them, after completing their PhDs, have gone on to work in teaching centres at other universities in Canada and abroad, or in influential provincial agencies such as the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario.

Since 2012, Waterloo has benefited from the **Teaching Fellows and the Associate Dean, Teaching**, who work to raise the profile of teaching in each of the University’s six Faculties. CTE staff members work collaboratively with these faculty members, supporting and resourcing them so that they in turn can foster instructional development in their colleagues.

As a Teaching Fellow, Mary Louise McAllister worked with CTE over the past three years. McAllister, who has recently retired, was the recipient of a Distinguished Teacher Award in 2015.



4

PROMOTE AND CONDUCT RESEARCH on teaching, learning, and educational development



This image of a tree growing in a light bulb is the visual logo of the LITE Grants program. (Image courtesy of Matt Walker)

Every year, CTE coordinates the **Learning Innovation and Teaching Enhancement (LITE) Grants** that provide financial support for instructors who wish to investigate innovative teaching approaches that foster deep student learning. Funds for the program are provided by the Office of the Associate Vice President, Academic, with **grants ranging from \$500 to \$30,000**. These grants have helped nearly 100 individuals pursue their research since 2012. In 2014-2015, the 15 newly funded projects included:

- » The Military Project: Mapping Canada's World War Experience
- » ePortfolios for Career, Reflection, and Competency Integration
- » Communities of Practice: An Innovation in Experiential Education
- » Pop Up Intervention! A 30-Second Treatment Improves Students' Co-op Experiences
- » Blended Learning: Development and Evaluation of E-modules to Enhance Undergraduate Learning in Biomechanics

After completing their projects, instructors share their findings with the university community via the CTE website. The LITE grants encourage community-building around pedagogical scholarship at Waterloo. It's also important to note that the projects funded by the LITE Grant program encourage **interdisciplinary collaboration**: 52 per cent of the projects involved partnerships among instructors from different departments, faculties, or institutions.

CTE staff members also pursue **research agendas** of their own, and regularly share their findings in international journals and at conferences. In 2014-2015, they delivered **24 peer-reviewed presentations at conferences** in locations such as Toronto, Kingston, Quebec City, Texas, Alaska, Ohio, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Their presentations were on topics such as institutional teaching cultures, learning outcome assessment, flipped classrooms, threshold concepts, and experiential learning. In the same time frame, they published three articles in peer-reviewed journals.

Our staff members work hard to stay current in scholarly literature so that our workshops and resources are always informed by **evidence-based theories and practices**.

"The LITE grants have been a great opportunity for us to explore intercultural learning as part of our curriculum. It has enabled us to sensitize our students to the value of intercultural reflection ..."

– **EMMA BETZ AND GRIT LIEBSCHER**,
Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies

"The LITE grant was invaluable in providing the opportunity to experiment with a radically new course design for our high-enrollment online business writing course. ... students have to think about the authentic communication potential of their writing rather than just an assignment for grading."

– **DOROTHY HADFIELD**, Department of English Language and Literature

COMMUNICATE BEST PRACTICES

5

and the importance of teaching and learning at Waterloo



Gordon Stubley is one of 35 Waterloo instructors who have been profiled in CTE Teaching Stories. Stubley's Teaching Story focused on how he integrates his students' co-op work term experiences into his classroom.

Our university's Strategic Plan identifies a number of primary objectives, including **"Enhance Waterloo's excellence in academic programs"** and **"Ensure teaching quality of the highest international standard."** To support these two objectives, CTE has developed numerous resources in order to communicate best practices and effective teaching strategies to the university community. Our website features online resources on course design, blended learning, integrative learning, educational technologies, curriculum review, and more. Our repository of **Teaching Tips** comprises more than 100 documents developed by CTE staff, with each Teaching Tip detailing a practical, evidence-based teaching strategy.

We also communicate best practices through our ongoing series of Teaching Stories, each one profiling an instructor whose teaching is especially effective, innovative, or otherwise exemplary. Since 2013, we have published 35 Teaching Stories, many of which have been republished by other Waterloo websites. Such stories support a key objective identified in Waterloo's Strategic Plan:

"Seek global awareness of Waterloo's teaching expertise."

CTE staff members also share their expertise by participating in **institutional projects on teaching and learning**. Recent institutional projects include a review of clicker systems to help instructors facilitate peer instruction, and a project to explore institution-wide course evaluations. Such initiatives involve our **collaboration** with academic units and academic support units, such as the Centre for Extended Learning, Information Systems & Technology, AccessAbility Services, and the Student Success Office.

We keep the **university community informed** about CTE's activities and about events and opportunities pertaining to teaching and learning through a newsletter published each term, monthly emails, a weekly blog, daily Twitter posts, and other social media.

CTE
Online
Resources

receive nearly
1 million
visits/year

CTE
Teaching
Tips

have been adopted
by other universities,
and have been translated
into more than
4 languages



Listerv

for educational technologies has nearly
250 subscribers

CTE Blog

featuring weekly posts by CTE staff
and Waterloo instructors receives
16,000 visits/year

CTE Facebook

page has received over
700 likes



6

SHARE EXPERTISE WITH COLLEAGUES

on and off campus

CTE's primary mandate is to assist Waterloo's instructors, but we are also eager to **share our expertise with staff members** in Waterloo's academic support units. This year's OHD Staff Conference, for example, included a CTE workshop on productivity tools that was attended by 138 Waterloo staff members. That workshop was rated as "good" or "excellent" by 98 per cent of the attendees, and 93 per cent reported that its content was relevant to their personal or professional development.

Beyond our campus, CTE is recognized as a **leading teaching centre**. More than 60 educational institutions around the world – including McGill University, Yale University, University of Hong Kong, and Vienna University of Economics and Business – link to our online **Teaching Tips**. Likewise, our **YouTube videos** – each one featuring a teaching strategy or educational technology – are widely accessed: our most popular video, devoted to a podcasting tool, has been viewed more than 70,000 times.



CTE Director, Donna Ellis, with two faculty members from King Saud University

*One of CTE's Faculty Liaisons
received the 2014*

Warren Ober Award
for Outstanding Teaching
in the Faculty of Arts



In 2014-2015, our staff members **delivered 13 workshops or presentations** at the request of other groups and institutions, including universities in the United Kingdom, France, and Japan.

Our services were sought in a more intensive way by Saudi Arabia's King Saud University: in June, 2014, they sent 30 instructors to Waterloo to participate in a five-day training program on educational technologies. This was the third year that CTE provided a training program to instructors from **King Saud University**.

One of our staff members also served as a **Visiting Scholar** at the McMaster Institute for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning. Staff members have also provided training for other institutions by means of webinars. Numerous other individuals and agencies requested permission to **use or reprint resources** developed by CTE, such as a request from the University of Warwick to include one of our Teaching Tips in a forthcoming book. Additionally, some of our staff members **serve as reviewers** for educational journals such as *Innovative Higher Education*, *International Journal for Academic Development*, and *Advances in Physiology Education*.

We are proud that our teaching centre is **recognized internationally as a leader in the field of educational development**.

“Thank you for a wonderful presentation. It was honestly one of the best I’ve ever attended: useful, informative, visually appealing, funny, and more.”

– **JANETTE BARRINGTON**,
formerly of the Centre
for Teaching and Learning
Services at Concordia
University

7

Engage in individual and centre-wide

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES



CTE's staff members are a dedicated team who regularly **engage in Professional Development (PD) opportunities**. Some of those PD opportunities are developed internally. For example, at each of our monthly staff meetings, a CTE staff member facilitates a PD session with his or her colleagues. This past year, the focus was on learning theories and assessments of learning, which connected to our strategic priorities. Once a year, we also hold a PD day, in which CTE staff members facilitate thematically-related sessions.

Staff members also undertake PD opportunities that are offered externally.

In 2014-2015, two of our staff members completed the **Leadership Foundations Program** offered by Waterloo's Organizational & Human Development, while a third staff member completed the Certificate in Leadership offered by the Centre for Extended Learning. One staff member completed her PhD in 2014, meaning that nearly half of CTE's full-time staff members have earned doctoral degrees.

As of 2014, eight CTE staff members have completed the five-day **Facilitator Development Workshop**, which certifies them to offer the internationally-recognized Instructional Skills Workshop. Our staff members also engage in professional development by attending national and international conferences pertaining to teaching and learning in higher education.

Our staff members also participate in **annual performance reviews** with a view to assessing their work in light of CTE's seven core activities – the same core activities we have used to organize this annual report.

In 2014-2015, we also undertook a centre-wide collaborative project to revise and enhance how we assess our work. The addition of a new Educational Research Associate has greatly supported this ongoing project.

Faculty Liaisons

Scott Anderson: Environment; Accounting & Finance; Political Science; Economics

Paul Kates: Mathematics

Samar Mohamed: Engineering

Mary Power: Science

Kyle Scholz: Arts and University Colleges

Christine Zaza: AHS; Psychology; Sociology and Legal Studies, Academic Support Units



Scott Anderson



Paul Kates



Samar Mohamed



Mary Power



Kyle Scholz



Christine Zaza

Instructional Developers and Research Associates



Veronica Brown



Jane Holbrook



Trevor Holmes



Katherine Lithgow



Mark Morton



Svitlana Taraban-Gordon



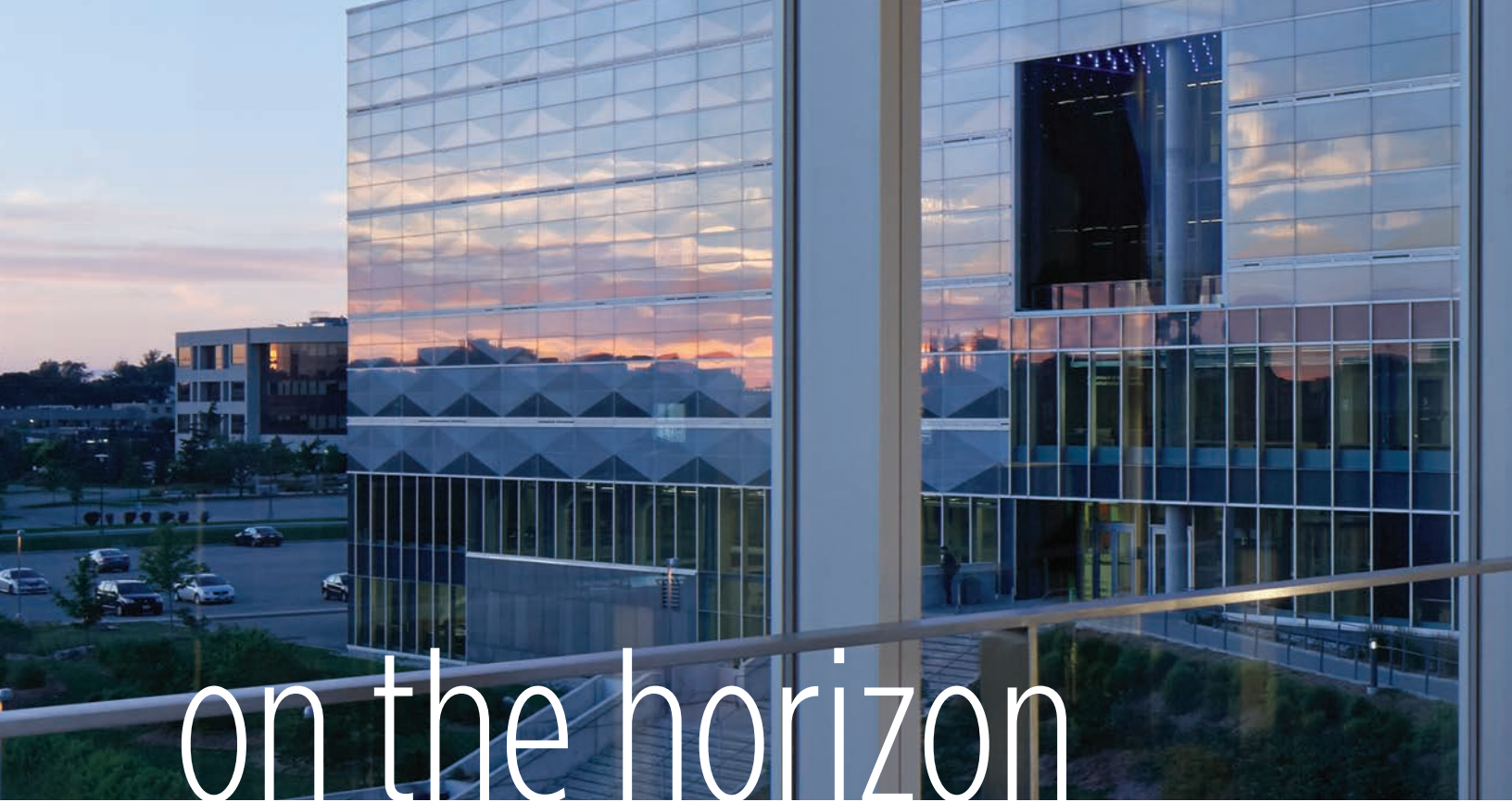
Julie Timmermans



Crystal Tse



Monica Vesely



on the horizon

While most of our core activities will continue in 2015-2016, we will also undertake a number of new initiatives:

- » We will be launching a **new program on graduate student supervision** in conjunction with the Graduate Studies Office. Created to address a gap identified in the Academic Programming (AP) strategic plan, this new program will bring together resources from various Waterloo units to support faculty members in developing the knowledge and skills required to attain Approved Doctoral Dissertation Supervisor status. The program is set to launch in Fall 2015.
- » To address our strategic priority regarding **assessing learning outcomes** and the AP strategic plan objective regarding high quality teaching, we will be developing a **new intensive workshop** on this topic area in conjunction with at least one of the University's Teaching Fellows.
- » Another AP strategic plan initiative to foster **improved communication skills in Waterloo students** has led to the approval of a **new instructional developer position** in CTE. We plan to have this new staff member in place by this fall to help faculty members and TAs learn more about the design and grading of communication-based assessments.
- » We plan to **expand our Teaching Stories** initiative to include stories about the outcomes **of curriculum work and LITE grant projects**. These stories will appear on our high-traffic website. This project supports the AP strategic plan objective to seek global awareness of Waterloo's teaching expertise.



- » We will be expanding programming related to high-impact practices that support deep student learning. Our focus will be on using **high-impact practices** in large classes.
- » In collaboration with Queen's University and Western University, we will develop a **blended course on university teaching** aimed at TAs and new instructors, thanks to the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities' Shared Online Course Fund. This project is expected to be completed in Fall 2015.
- » We will be working with CEL to systematically offer support to instructors who wish to reuse online content and activities from existing and new online courses in blended courses. This project supports the current academic programming strategic plan by **leveraging existing online course materials for other educational purposes**.
- » Finally, we will be piloting a **new, comprehensive assessment plan** for our Centre, with a firm roll-out set for Winter 2016. Our final strategic priority was to devise and implement a sustainable plan for assessing our work that will enable us to provide even better evidence of our impact. We thank you in advance for helping us with this plan by providing feedback on our services and your experiences in working with us.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

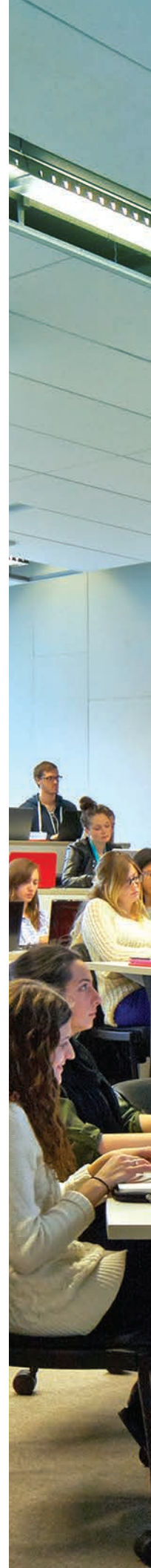
If you have any additional ideas for the Centre for Teaching Excellence, please let any of our staff know.

WHO USES OUR WORKSHOP AND CONSULTATION SERVICES

WORKSHOPS	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	UNIQUE PARTICIPANTS
Faculty/Unit		
Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo	61	26
Applied Health Sciences	379	95
Arts	360	141
Engineering	924	280
Environment	420	151
Mathematics	189	62
Science	341	128
Support Units	173	70
TOTAL	2,847	953

Role		
Faculty	450	204
Staff	198	98
Graduate Student	2108	620
Postdoctoral Fellow	50	17
Other	41	14
TOTAL	2,847	953

CONSULTATIONS	TOTAL CONSULTATIONS	UNIQUE PARTICIPANTS
Faculty/Unit		
Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo	341	70
Applied Health Sciences	200	71
Arts	1224	287
Engineering	1362	254
Environment	657	161
Mathematics	504	103
Science	1312	186
Support Units	302	68
Off-campus	14	22
TOTAL	5,916	1,222







UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

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