

Students Consulting on Teaching

Faculty Handbook



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For more information contact CETL:

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Introduction to the Program

The Minnesota State University Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) provides a program in which student consultants respond to professors' invitations to gather data on classroom activities and give them feedback.

The Students Consulting on Teaching (SCOT) program is dedicated to quality education at Minnesota State Mankato and to providing faculty members with information that helps them have a better sense of what is happening in their classrooms. The program is available to all instructors at the university.

The SCOT student consultants are carefully selected and trained MSU students who are interested in the teaching and learning process. They can serve as excellent resources to faculty members, providing valuable insights to supplement student evaluations and peer reviews. Students are paid about \$10 per hour for their work.

Some of the advantages of SCOT include:

1. Student consultants provide objective perspectives about what is happening in a course, because they are not working for a grade.
2. Student consultants can offer a helpful perspective because they have experienced wide range of college teaching situations and styles.
3. The SCOT program is a helpful introduction to the further resources available at the CETL.

If you have general questions or ideas you want to share, please call SCOT director Stewart Ross at 1098.

Please read on to learn more about the benefits of the Students Consulting on Teaching. CETL hopes this program will provide you with a fresh way to look at your teaching activities and enhance your students' learning.

How the Program Works

Requesting a Student Consultant

- Instructors who wish to participate in the SCOT program select an option from “Requesting a Student Consultant” (pg. 11 in this handbook) and fill out the form, returning it to the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.
- (The form is also available on the CETL website: www.mnsu.edu/cetl)
- The instructor receives a handbook via email that describes the program further and outlines the role of the student consultant. The instructor also receives an Instructor Evaluation form to be completed and returned upon completion of SCOT services.
- The SCOT coordinator assigns a student consultant to the instructor according to the class time and the observer's availability.
- The SCOT coordinator gives the student consultant the name, office address, e-mail address, and campus telephone number of the instructor and the student consultant arranges for an initial visit with him/her. The coordinator also gives the student consultant's name, telephone number, and e-mail address to the instructor.

Consultation Process

- The instructor and student consultant meet to get acquainted and clarify expectations, including setting up a time for a follow-up appointment.
- The student consultant visits the instructor's class, gathers the information appropriate to the option(s) that the instructor selected, and prepares feedback for the instructor. S/he provides the SCOT student coordinator with a copy of this feedback.
- The student consultant meets with the instructor to provide him/her with feedback.
- The instructor can choose to continue on with the consultation, select another option, or discontinue participation. The instructor may also elect to work with a different student consultant to get another perspective.

Final Evaluation

- When the instructor is ready to discontinue participation, s/he fills out the evaluation form sent via email (also on pg. 12) and returns it to stewart.ross@mnsu.edu. The evaluation form is also available online at www.mnsu.edu/cetl
- The instructor may also pre-arrange for a student consultant for an upcoming semester/term.

Steps for Participating in the SCOT Program

Step 1: Selecting an Option

Several possibilities are available as instructors consider ways to use SCOT services. These include:

1. *Recorder/Observer*: The student consultant records in writing what went on in the classroom (such as chronology of classroom activities; time spent in questioning, board work, small group discussion; and so on) and gives the record to the instructor. In this case, the student consultant describes rather than evaluates.
2. *Faux Student*: The student consultant takes notes as if s/he was a student in the class and returns them to the instructor.
3. *Interviewer*: The instructor leaves the classroom for the last fifteen minutes of class while the SCOT conducts interviews with students to assess how well they are learning and how they perceive the class. The SCOT asks the students to respond verbally and in writing to these questions:
 - What helps your learning in this class?
 - What hinders your learning in this class?
 - What suggestions do you have for this class?
4. *Primed Student*: The SCOT meets with the professor prior to class for pointers on what to watch for. For example: How often do certain students respond? Why aren't the students getting involved in the discussion? Are the students asking questions among themselves? What hinders their learning?
5. *Combination*: The SCOT combines some of the above at the request of the requesting faculty member.
6. *Student consultant*: The instructor asks the SCOT consultant for evaluative feedback on classroom activities or particular learning issues.

Please return the options form at your earliest convenience so that you can be served in a timely manner. As soon as the student coordinator receives your request, every effort will be made to match your class time(s) with a student consultant's schedule. You will receive your student consultant's name, phone number, and e-mail address as soon as possible. You can expect to hear from your student consultant within one week of returning the form. If no student consultant is available, you will be notified and will have the opportunity to use the SCOT program for a following semester.

Step 2: Meeting Your Student Consultant

Plan to meet briefly with your student consultant prior to her/his first visit to your class. Your student consultant will contact you to arrange this meeting. In this meeting it would be helpful to:

- Get acquainted with each other and the SCOT program.
- Discuss course goals.
- Clarify each others' expectations.
- Verify details such as class time and place, etc.
- Plan a follow-up meeting.

As you meet, remember that the SCOT program is "professor-driven." Student consultants are involved in the program to serve you. They may have ideas and suggestions, but their role is to assist you in getting what you want out of the program. To help them best serve you, you may want to share with them your course objectives, course syllabus, and any concerns or problem areas you have identified.

Student consultants are committed to keeping the entire consultation process confidential. They recognize that this service and the information they gather are for *your* use only.

Step 3: Receiving Feedback

After the student consultant visits your class, meet with him/her for a feedback session. Your student consultant can provide several types of feedback, ranging from simply descriptive observations of the class to recommendations for improvement. For most options, they will provide you with a written report.

The nature of the feedback depends on the option you select. For example, if you select the interviewer option, you will receive a report of comments and suggestions from students in your class. If you select the filmmaker option, you will receive a videotape/DVD of your class session. Clarifying your feedback preference in your initial meeting will ensure that you get the feedback you need.

Step 4: Continuing, Selecting another Option or Consultant, or Discontinuing the Program

Once again, this program is professor-driven. Feel free to employ your student consultant for more than one observation so that s/he can collect more data. If you are interested in trying other options, you are welcome to continue with the program. Simply discuss these options with your student consultant. You may ask to work with a different student consultant to get a different perspective.

Step 5: Evaluating the SCOT Experience

When you are ready to discontinue SCOT participation, inform your student consultant, fill out the evaluation form sent to you via email (also in this handbook and online at www.mnsu.edu/cet/ and return it to stewart.ross@mnsu.edu.

Form: Requesting A Student Consultant

Date:

Name:

Phone:

May the student consultant call you at home?

No: Yes, my home phone number is:

Office: Office Hours:

E-mail address:

Course Information

Course Title:

Class Days and Times:

Class Location:

Semester/Term: Fall Winter Spring Summer Year:

Evaluation Options

Please mark all the options that you are interested in:

1. Recorder/Observer - consultant records what went on in the classroom (e.g. lecture chronology), describing rather than evaluating
2. Faux Student - consultant takes notes as if s/he were a student in the class
4. Interviewer - instructor leaves classroom for last 15-20 minutes while consultant interviews students to assess what helps and hinders their learning, and what suggestions they have for the class.
5. Primed Student - consultant records in writing what went on in the classroom, focusing on specific issues requested in advance by instructor
6. Student Consultant - instructor asks consultant for evaluative feedback on classroom activities or particular learning issues
7. Combination: Some combination of the above roles

Send this form to: SCOT Coordinator Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Form: Instructor Evaluation of Students Consulting on Teaching (SCOT)

Instructor's Name:

Date:

Phone:

Course(s) Observed:

Room(s):

Student Consultant's Name:

Please rate your overall experience with the Students Consulting on Teaching (SCOT) program and with your SCOT Student Consultant:

	Extremely Negative 1	Negative 2	Somewhat Negative 3	Neutral 4	Somewhat Positive 5	Positive 6	Extremely Positive 7
Students Consulting on Teaching Program							
Student consultant							

In your view, what are the weaknesses of SCOT?

What suggestions do you have for your individual student consultant?

As a result of participation in SCOT, what one or two things have you discovered about the teaching and learning in your course(s)?

As a result of SCOT, what have you done (or plan to do in the future) to implement these new ideas in your teaching?

In your view, what are the strengths of SCOT?