



The Center for Excellence in
Teaching and Learning

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A New Direction for CETL

Pending approval, faculty at MSU may see big changes happening at CETL in the near future. A recent proposal includes provisions for an overhaul of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. Among the potential upgrades are a new set of offices which would feature CETL, as well as CESR and other academic support offices, moving to the first floor of Memorial Library. The idea, according to CETL Director Stewart Ross, is “to create synergy among

people who can help faculty.” Ideally, the new setup would create a “comprehensive, holistic environment, capable of offering assistance to faculty in a wide variety of areas.” If the proposal is approved, a set of eight offices would be placed near the reception area in Memorial Library, offering faculty members easy access to a variety of instructional tools, including teaching technology, as well as literature and workshops on effective instructional



Dr. Stewart Ross, Director of CETL

methods.

Aside from the changes in location, CETL will also be transitioning to new leadership over the next three years. Stewart Ross, (Cont'd Pg. 2, left column)

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who has been an employee of MSU-Mankato for 34 years, is now on phased retirement. This means that Dr. Ross will retain directorship of CETL in the fall semesters of the next three academic years. A new Director will be appointed for the spring term of this year, and he or she will then become the full-time director in the fall of 2014.

Dr. Ross has dedicated much of his career to furthering the goals of CETL, and he's very much enjoyed having the opportunity to work with faculty at MSU. "In this job, it's incredible," he said, "When you look at it mathematically, the impact you can have working with teachers is so exciting. When you reach a faculty member, you are also reaching many of the students he or she will eventually come into contact with."

Furthermore, he said, "Working with faculty has been wonderful. Whenever one of our programs really works for them, they are so thankful right away."

Stay tuned to the CETL newsletter, as well as the University website, for more information about some of the upcoming changes. We look forward to growing and continuing to aid faculty in whatever way we can.

CETL's Fall Faculty Learning Communities are now underway. If you missed out this semester, we'll have plenty more in the Spring. Keep us in mind!

The SCOT Program: Building Understanding



By Brett Biebel



Brett Biebel is the current GA for CETL. He holds an MA in Communication Studies from the University of Minnesota, and is currently a member of the MFA Program in Creative Writing at MSU-Mankato. He has taught at Century College, Metropolitan State University, and the University of Minnesota.

In the last newsletter, I wrote a little bit about the benefits of the SCOT program for instructors. Over the course of the past couple of months, I've come to realize how beneficial it can be for students as well. In fact, putting successful students in contact with motivated instructors is a great way to build understanding between teachers and students.

Cheryl Peterson is in her second year as a SCOT. Describing her experience, she says, "After working as a SCOT, you start to notice more about teachers. You start to really understand how hard it is to stand up in front of a class and keep them engaged." She credits SCOT with "helping [her] see the viewpoint of the instructor and making [her] a better student." Though the

prospect of being evaluated by anyone can be intimidating, Peterson believes professors shouldn't be afraid to utilize SCOTs. "There are lots of positive things we tell professors," she said.

It's often easy to become cynical as an instructor. I've looked out at seas of laptop-absorbed students, seen text messages being sent, and even heard the ruffle of newspaper pages in the middle of a class discussion. By putting successful students in touch with teachers, the SCOT program can help build understanding and remind us why we venture into the classroom every day. By understanding more about each other, teachers and students can work to improve higher education. If you would like to sign up for a consultation, please contact CETL.



Dr. Stewart Ross leads a Faculty Learning Community

SCOTs Needed

As the SCOT program grows and some of our veteran consultants begin to graduate, new students need to become SCOTs in order to meet the demands of faculty. SCOTs should be motivated, attentive, and hard-working. If you have students who fit this description, you might be able to help us out by encouraging them to contact CETL in order to apply for a position. SCOTs are compensated for their time. If you feel comfortable, please consider referring the SCOT program to some of your students!

Peer Faculty Consultations

While it can be beneficial to get student feedback, we at CETL recognize that hearing from colleagues can be just as helpful.

One of our programs, the Peer Faculty Consultation Program (PFCP), provides instructors with the opportunity to set up an appointment with a fellow faculty member. Like the SCOTs, Peer Faculty Consultants will work with your schedule and do their best to offer input on the things you might do to help students become more engaged. The consultant will work with you to identify what you want to get out of your consultation while also taking into account your busy schedule.

In addition to benefitting from the expertise of your colleagues, the PFCP allows instructors the opportunity to build connections with faculty from all different departments and create a deeper feeling of community at MSU. Please contact CETL if you'd like more information about the Peer Faculty Consultation Program.

New Faculty Spotlight



Daniel Moen,
Department of Family and Consumer Science (FCS)

Professor Moen earned both a Bachelor's and Master's degree from North Dakota State University before going on to Utah State University for his Ph. D. He grew up in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, and is enjoying his first year teaching at MSU-Mankato. Even before arriving on campus, Professor Moen "already had an interest in teaching methodology," and it shows. He's a participant in all three of CETL's Fall Faculty Learning Communities and is "especially excited to hear about Team Based Learning." "I'm always looking to get as many new ideas as I can," he says. He's been impressed with the level of support offered to faculty. "At other places," he says, "You might feel like an outlier for focusing so much on students as learners. Here, it's normal."