

The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) promotes the professional formation of all Seattle University faculty through a scholarly and interdisciplinary approach to teaching, learning, and career development. Following national standards, CETL's work with faculty is voluntary, formative, and confidential – three factors that have been shown to produce the most positive outcomes for promoting change and growth in the professional lives of faculty.

OVERVIEW

2011–12 was a year of acclimating to a downsized CETL: the temporary loss of the Associate Director position in 2010–11 became permanent in 2011–12 due to other university priorities. This returned CETL to the staffing level it had in 2005–06, with one director and one administrative assistant. The key for CETL has therefore been to stabilize activities based on this reduced staffing and to find ways to ensure that faculty are supported in their academic development, albeit in a more streamlined fashion than in the five-year period when we had two experienced faculty developers on staff.

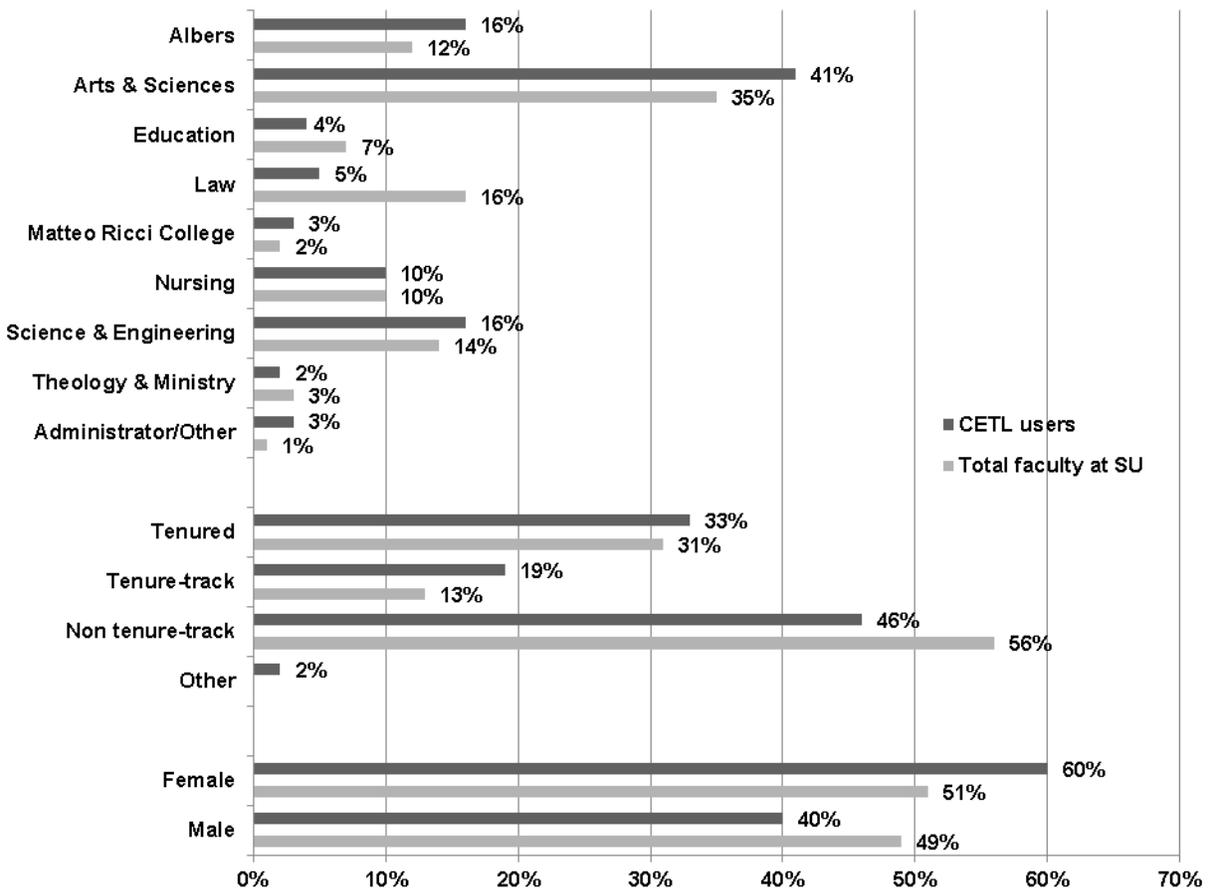
This has also been a significant year for scholarship in CETL. The director completed and published a co-authored book and became co-editor of an international journal on faculty development – a position that gives him insights into the ways in which the field is evolving around the world, all to the benefit of Seattle University.

Locally, we have sought ways this year to support and engage with the development of the new undergraduate Core Curriculum without being formally connected with that initiative. By the end of the year, we were looking forward to taking on some new responsibilities to support faculty in leadership roles starting in 2012–13.

WHOM DO WE SERVE?

In 2011–12, CETL worked with 266 faculty – more than a third (37%) of the university's 727 academics. This is an increase on last year of 50 individual faculty members, in part due to CETL's contribution to events related to the revision of the undergraduate Core Curriculum. Figure 1 shows a breakdown of CETL users by college/school, rank, and gender, along with a breakdown for the entire faculty at Seattle University.

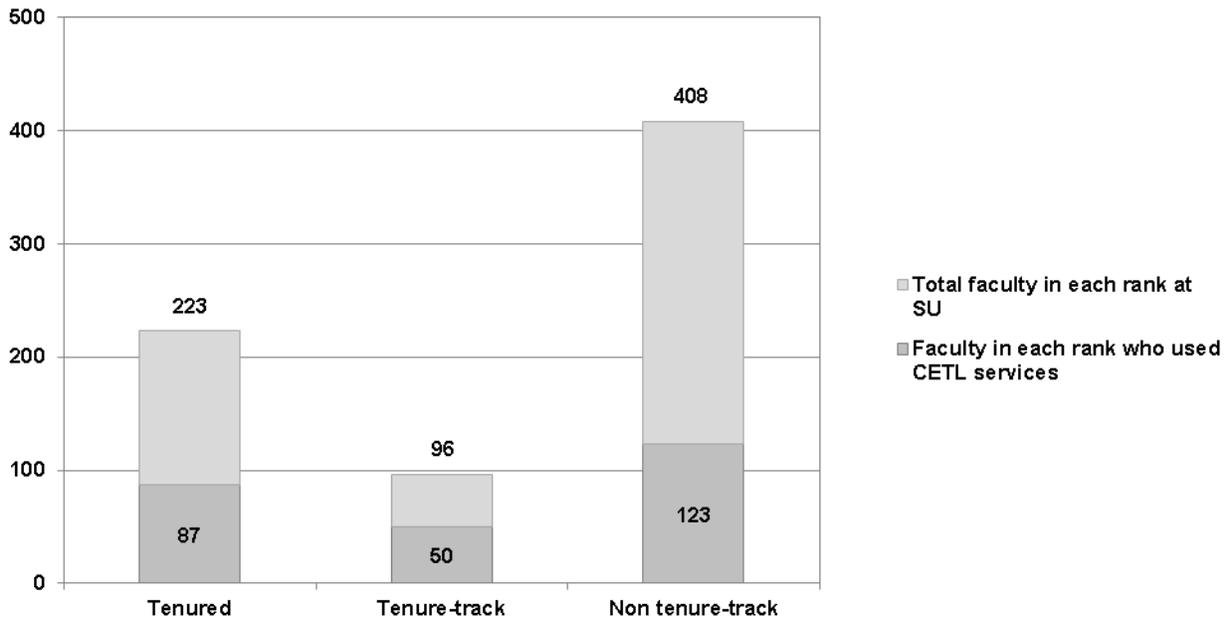
Figure 1. CETL users 2011–12 by school/college, rank, and gender vs. total faculty at Seattle University



The proportion of non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty we worked has increased 7% in the past twelve months, from 39% to 46% of CETL’s faculty users. As reported last year, CETL’s senior administrative assistant has worked hard to build relationships with administrative assistants in departments to ensure that NTT faculty receive reminders about our events and services each quarter/semester they are teaching. In addition, Faculty Services has been sending CETL bookmarks along with SU contracts for new NTT faculty. These bookmarks provide CETL’s contact details and list the range of services we offer. We know from past experience that many NTT faculty – and some of their department and program chairs – have been unsure about whether CETL supports them in their academic work. These seemingly small measures are paying dividends.

At first glance, Figure 1 may appear to suggest that CETL disproportionately serves non-tenure-track faculty. Figure 2 puts participation figures by rank into greater context. In 2011–12, CETL worked with 39% of tenured faculty (87 out of 223), 48% of tenure-track faculty (46 out of 96), and just 30% of non-tenure-track faculty (123 out of 408). So although we have clearly made in-roads in reaching non-tenure-track faculty on campus, their representation at CETL events is still lower than for other categories of faculty. Tenure-track faculty remain the most heavily supported group on campus.

Figure 2. CETL users 2011–12 by rank vs. total faculty by rank at Seattle University



CROSS-DISCIPLINARY CONVERSATIONS

Workshops and Candid Conversations

CETL’s workshops provide a key venue for interdisciplinary and scholarly discussions around Higher Education (HE), weaving current HE research with individuals’ practices and experiences, and generating new links across campus to strengthen SU’s academic community. In 2011–12, CETL organized 14 sessions with 292 total attendees and 168 faculty served. Of the 13 workshops during the year, 2 were co-sponsored (one with the Albers School, one with the Mathematics Department) and 1 was a session at an event organized by the University Core Implementation Committee.

In addition, we continued the “candid conversations” format for a one-off afternoon event to discuss the virtues and vices of “learning outcomes,” a topic that has garnered much national and international attention in recent years, and that has become pivotal to course design in the new Core Curriculum. In contrast to workshops, “candid conversations” are intended to be a little more polemical and to be lightly moderated discussions on hot topics on campus.

- The good, the bad, and the ugly: Analyzing and acting on student evaluation comments | Presented by Therese Huston (CETL Faculty Development Consultant) | 2 sessions; 35 attendees
- Rigorous enough to publish: Turning your teaching into a research project | Presented by Therese Huston (CETL Faculty Development Consultant) | 2 sessions; 34 attendees
- "Outcomes schmoutcomes" versus "Impressive objectives:" A candid conversation on Learning Outcomes | 1 session; 17 attendees

- Professional formation in the age of entitlement (Co-sponsored by Albers School of Business and Economics) | Presented by David Green | 2 sessions; 33 attendees
- POGIL: Award-winning pedagogy from Washington State's Professor of the Year, SU's Vicky Minderhout | Presented by Vicky Minderhout and Jenny Loertscher (Chemistry Department, College of Science & Engineering) | 2 sessions; 44 attendees
- Course design strategies: Constructive alignment (session at Course Development Workshop organized by the University Core Implementation Committee) | Presented by David Green | 1 session; 66 attendees
- Designing courses for the Core Curriculum using "constructive alignment" | Presented by David Green | 2 sessions; 24 attendees
- Oral reviews: Promoting deeper understanding, confidence, and satisfaction among students (Co-sponsored by the Mathematics Department, College of Science & Engineering) | Presented by Mary Nelson, George Mason University | 1 session; 16 attendees
- Our preconceptions of our students: Justified, unjustified, unjust? | Presented by David Green | 2 sessions; 23 attendees

Our workshops in the fall were specifically designed to help relieve the pressure on CETL's workload. Therese Huston ran workshops for us firstly on how to analyze course evaluation comments (a time-consuming activity that CETL has had to curtail given its smaller staffing this year); enabling faculty to analyze their own students' comments helps empower them to be more proactive in their reflection on student learning. Therese's second workshop on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) was designed to help faculty prepare to submit high-quality proposals for the SoTL writing retreat later in the year.

We also sought ways to dovetail with the Core Curriculum revision process, not only through the candid conversation on learning outcomes, but also by introducing faculty to the notion of "constructive alignment," a theory-driven approach to course design that can revolutionize faculty members' ways of thinking about their courses. The purpose of these activities was to provide opportunity for faculty to express concerns about the changing state of higher education, to move beyond these concerns to a more proactive state, and to help them use sound pedagogical research to underpin their own plans so that they can develop exciting, well-structured new courses that they will enjoy teaching and in which students will enjoy learning.

Observations

Higher attendance numbers at workshops suggest we have been successful in identifying topics that speak to SU faculty. In previous years, we have often included potential workshop topics in our end-of-quarter surveys of faculty. This year, we instead focused in on those areas that connected with university-wide initiatives (such as the Core Curriculum), with hot topics in higher education (such as the notion of "student entitlement"), and with areas that help faculty take ownership of their careers (such as course evaluation analysis).

Figure 3. Workshops: Percentage of faculty served by status

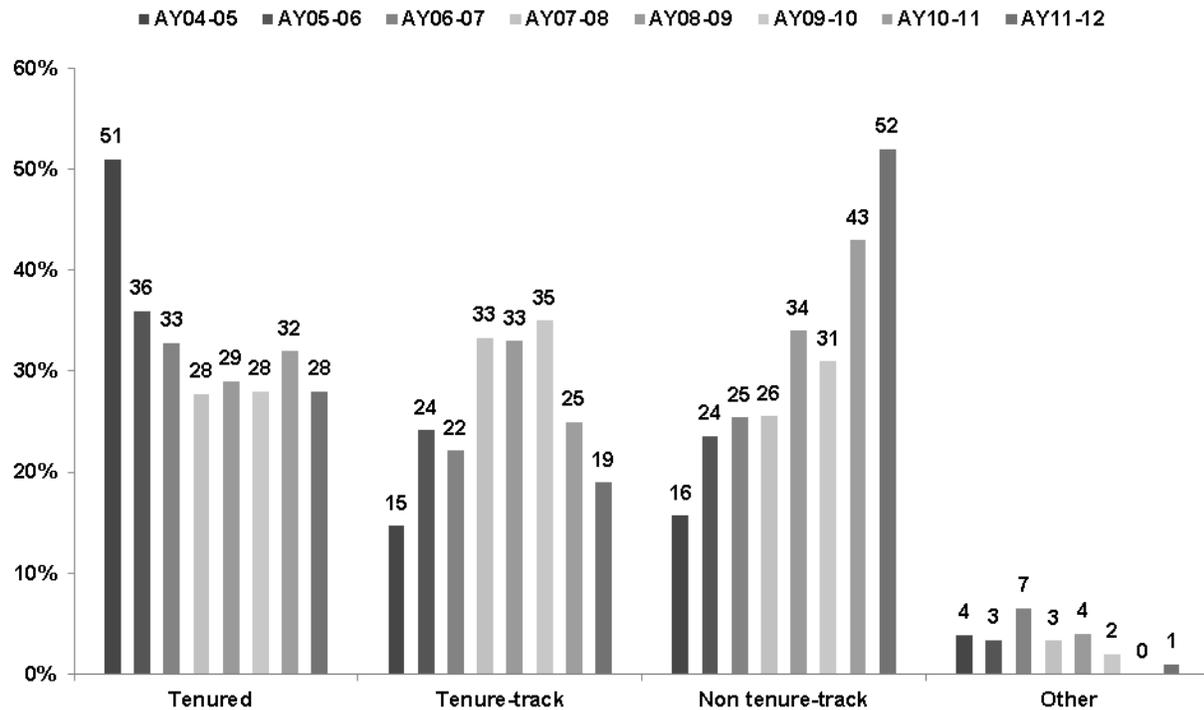


Figure 3 shows faculty participation in workshops by status. Again, non-tenure-track participation in CETL workshops has increased, which may in part be due to the large number of NTT faculty who teach courses in the Core Curriculum.

Chairs’ Community of Practice

Following a pilot in spring 2011, CETL continued to facilitate a monthly gathering of department and program chairs using Wenger’s (1998) “Community of Practice” model. These informal afternoon discussions center on topics chosen by the group and typically involve sharing practices, developing new ideas, and trouble-shooting difficulties. CETL’s director – a former department chair in the UK – facilitates the conversations and creates a summary of each session. Topics in 2011-12 included cultivating academic rigor, evaluating faculty colleagues, comparing and defining chairs’ job descriptions and roles, and life-work balance.

Seventeen different programs or departments were represented over nine gatherings, with participants from all five colleges and schools that have a department chair system. In an end-of-year qualitative evaluation, chairs noted the following as being most helpful in the community of practice:

“Hearing experiences and wisdom from chairs who have been in the position.”

“Talking about issues that usually aren’t talked about.”

“Ideas for helping me shape my vision and leadership skills.”

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Writing Retreat

CETL established the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Writing Retreat in 2007 as a way to support faculty committed to taking a scholarly approach to their work in the classroom. To date, 37 faculty have participated in the Retreat, and each year we receive a stronger pool of applications.

CETL's sixth annual SoTL Writing Retreat was held from June 12–14, 2012. Nine faculty were selected in a highly competitive process based on the strength of their SoTL writing proposals. We revised (and published) our assessment criteria to help applicants pitch their proposals at an appropriate level. In particular, we shifted our attention exclusively to projects that would lead to peer-reviewed publications, rather than accepting proposals that were primarily for conference presentations. In this way, we intend to align the Retreat with the university's scholarship goals more directly.

To prepare faculty for our higher expectations, CETL offered two workshop sessions in Fall Quarter – presented by Therese Huston – to encourage colleagues to think through their proposals and come to grips with the kinds of research methods they might wish to use for their projects. We also ran an informal informational session in Winter Quarter, providing opportunity for faculty to discuss their ideas with CETL's director.

The following cohort was selected for the 2011–12 academic year:

- Mark Cohan | Sociology, College of Arts & Sciences
- Kathleen Cook | Psychology, College of Arts & Sciences
- Angelique Davis | Political Science, College of Arts & Sciences
- Rose Ernst | Political Science, College of Arts & Sciences
- Gareth Green | Economics, Albers School of Business & Economics
- Teresa Ling | Economics, Albers School of Business & Economics
- Dean Peterson | Economics, Albers School of Business & Economics
- Toni Vezeau | College of Nursing
- Marco Zangari | History, College of Arts & Sciences

John Bean, David Green, and Therese Huston facilitated the Retreat using the Action Learning Set (ALS) model of small-group accountability to help attendees flesh out their manuscripts. We also invited Nalini Iyer, Director of the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Projects (ORSSP) to attend the Retreat as observer (and to shadow one of the peer groups), in the hope that ORSSP may begin offering similar retreats on broader research topics.

The Retreat received very positive feedback, including the following comments:

“Getting away/into a new environment gave importance to my efforts – made me work with more vigor.”

“I learned the importance of setting a specific plan in the ALS meetings. I appreciated the different new points of people coming from different areas, and our group leader.”

“The multi-disciplinary group really lifted me out of common traps in my writing.”

Faculty Writing Groups

CETL launched its first Faculty Writing Groups in 2008. Since 2010 our informational launch sessions have been a collaboration between CETL and ORSSP, typically in Fall and Spring Quarter each year. In 2011-12, CETL and ORSSP ran informational meetings for all faculty in the fall and spring, plus a meeting specifically for tenured faculty in the winter. CETL presented research on the effectiveness of writing groups over other forms of research accountability and organized 40 faculty into 10 interdisciplinary groups. Writing groups meet as regularly as they choose to (in most cases fortnightly), setting scholarship goals and holding one another accountable to those goals.

New Faculty Institute (NFI)

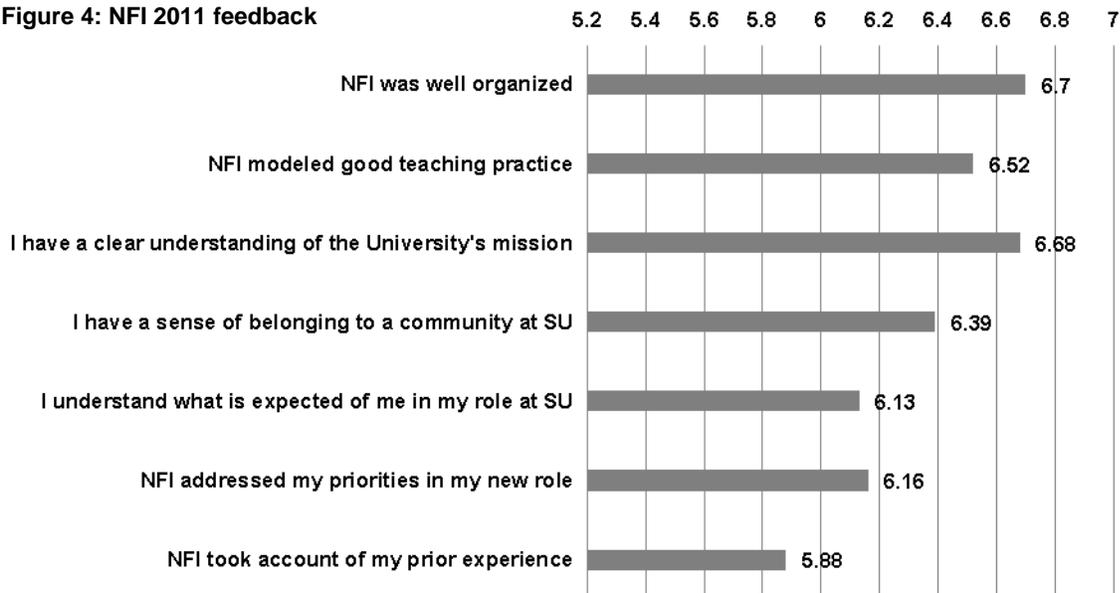
CETL successfully directed its fifth New Faculty Institute in September 2011. The 3-day event had 41 participants. New faculty were able to network with colleagues from across the campus, including the President and Provost, as well as hearing from undergraduate and graduate students. CETL and the NFI Planning Team coordinated 39 presenters (29 faculty and 10 students) for the 3-day event.

The Provost’s Office set the following goals for NFI in 2011:

1. To build community across campus through cross-disciplinary conversation.
2. To explore the Jesuit Catholic mission of the university.
3. To discuss the art of balancing teaching, scholarship, and service.
4. To model effective teaching practices.
5. To gain an awareness of key legal implications of working in higher education.
6. To explain University-level expectations around rank and tenure for tenure-track NFI participants (in a follow-up session).

At the end of the 3-day event in September, both qualitative and quantitative feedback were gathered to assess the extent to which NFI achieved these goals. On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is “strongly disagree” and 7 is “strongly agree,” mean scores were as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: NFI 2011 feedback



CETL also coordinated an NFI follow-up session on rank and tenure during the academic year. The session consisted of a panel of former University Rank and Tenure Committee members answering faculty questions on the tenure process at university level. This year, the session was open to all tenure-track faculty at Seattle University; not just new faculty. A further session on Seattle University’s mission was run by Mission and Ministry.

Observations

Again this year, we had some late invitees – faculty whose contracts were only signed in the two-to-four weeks before NFI – meaning that not everyone was able to attend due to the short notice. While we have streamlined our processes with Faculty Services, we realize that each year, there are likely to be a few faculty who join the university late. Our plan for 2012 is to ensure we hold a few places open at NFI for those individuals who are required to attend. We have also reached an agreement with the Provost’s Office to shift NFI to two days (half-day Thursday, full-day Friday) in 2012 to help accommodate School of Law faculty, since their semester has already begun and the previous sequence of three sessions from noon to 5 p.m. created difficulties for them.

Our decision last year to reduce the follow-up sessions to two – and to hold both in the fall – resulted in higher attendance than the previous year, with 17 participants in each session.

ONE-ON-ONE CONVERSATIONS

Consultations

Providing meaningful and useful consultation on faculty-driven issues continues to be one of CETL’s top priorities. During 2011-12, David Green, Therese Huston (Faculty Development Consultant), and Sven Arvidson (Senior Faculty Fellow) provided consultations to 109 faculty members, averaging 2.46 hours per individual or team.

Figure 5. CETL consultations 2011-12, organized by college/school and by rank

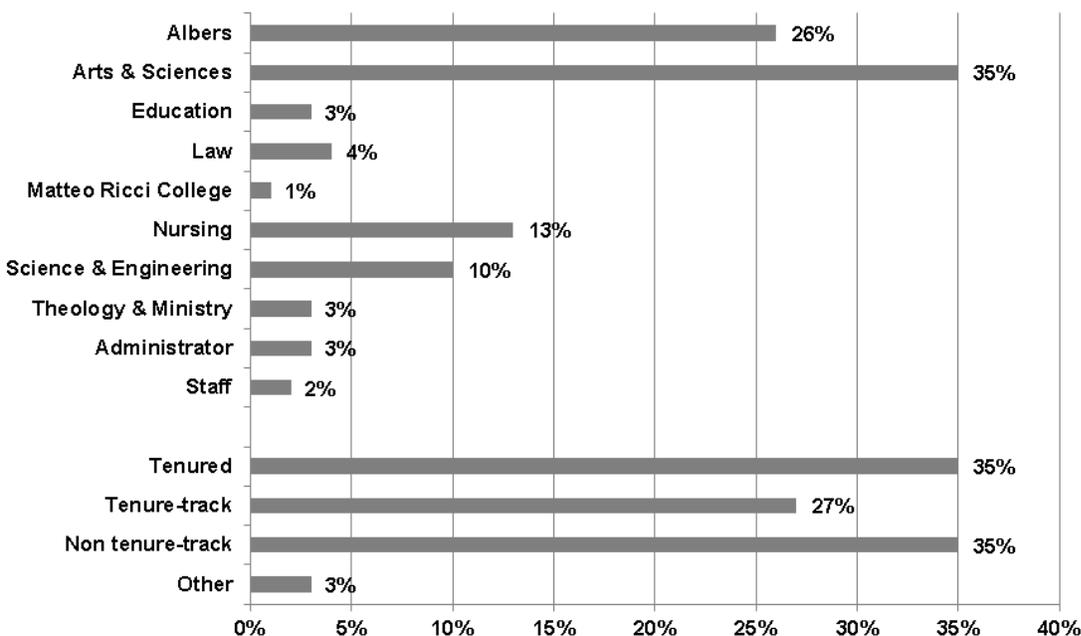
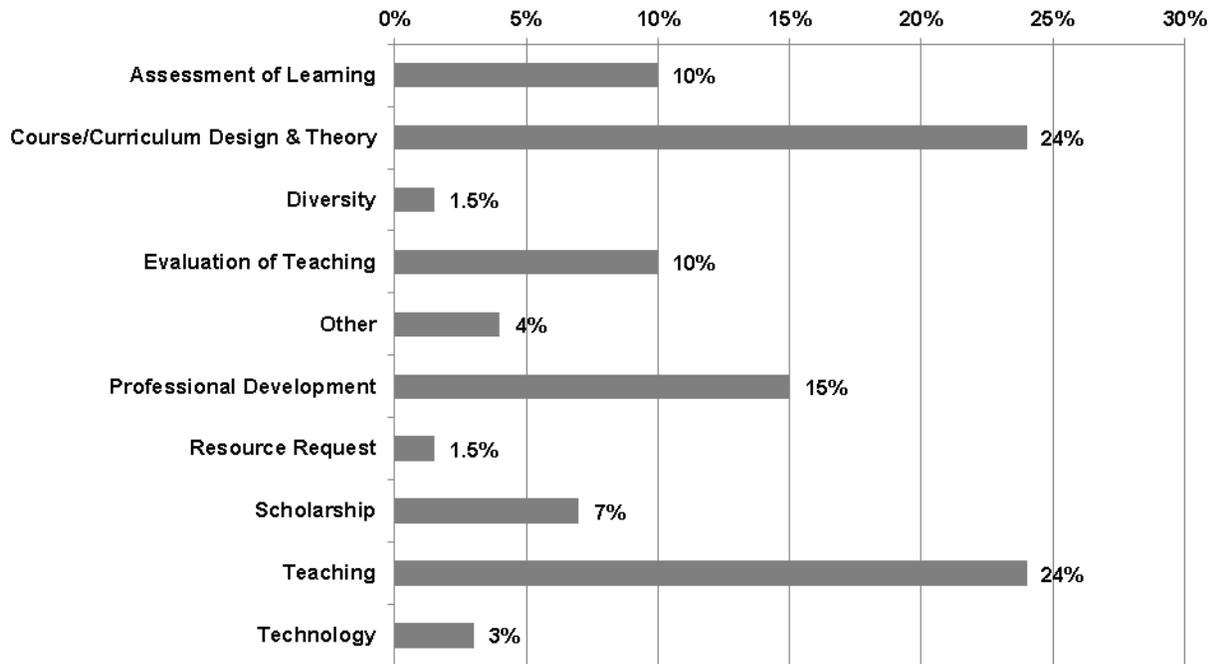


Figure 6. CETL consultation topics: Percentage by topic



Improvements and refinements to our database mean that for the first time, we can provide data on the broad topics discussed during consultations, as summarized in Figure 6. Most common were teaching and course design and theory (24% each), followed by professional development (15%). Looking at our 34 subcategories in the database (not listed here), we find that the most common discussions revolved around (1) curriculum design and theory in general, (2) active learning strategies, (3) learning outcomes and constructive alignment, (4) student course evaluations, and (5) assignment and test design. After success using these topic headings, we are now revising our method for recording our consultations to provide more fine-grained data from 2012 onwards.

Peer Consulting

CETL's Peer Consulting Program is designed to support quality teaching on campus by creating more opportunities for constructive and formative dialogues about teaching through one-on-one consultations with trained peer consultants from across the university. The following faculty continued as CETL's 2011–12 peer consultants:

- John Carter | Mathematics, College of Science & Engineering
- Michelle DuBois | Biology, College of Science & Engineering
- Nirmala Gnanapragasam | Civil and Environmental Engineering, College of Science & Engineering
- Lyn Gualtieri | General Science, College of Science & Engineering
- John McLean | Management, Albers School of Business & Economics
- Heath Spencer | History, College of Arts & Sciences

The peer consultants also came together in fall 2011 to discuss constructive alignment, connected with the Core Curriculum revision taking place.

In the end peer consultants took on far fewer consultees this academic year. This was for the most part because faculty consultation requests related to more intricate and problematic topics than the more regular conversations about teaching and learning practice that the peer consultants are accustomed to. Reasons for this are unclear. We suspect – and have heard anecdotal evidence to this effect – that faculty realize CETL is short-staffed compared to the past five years and so are only coming to us for questions that are more difficult to resolve. If that is the case, then we are concerned that we are underserving the faculty and are missing key conversations that could help make faculty work lives more manageable and enjoyable.

CETL'S INTERNAL CHANGES

Staffing

As mentioned in the introduction, CETL's staffing this year has been a story of losses and gains. In November 2011, after a protracted appointment procedure due to immigration regulations, David Green became director of the Center, having been interim director since January. CETL asked for funding to be released to replace David's former position of Associate Director, but that request was declined since the university is working on a number of initiatives that required available funds. This means that David remains the sole full-time colleague on campus to work with faculty on questions of teaching, learning, and research productivity. To ease the Center's workload, Therese Huston has continued to do one-on-one consulting with faculty up to one day a week for the entire academic year. Her presence has been essential for CETL to be able to support faculty in a timely fashion and at an appropriate level.

The gain for CETL is that we were able to readvertise internally for a 0.5 position for Faculty Professional Development in spring 2012. We previously attempted to fill this position in fall of 2010 but received no applications; this time, the position is as an Associate—rather than an Assistant—Director, and the job description has been somewhat revised from its last incarnation. By the end of the academic year, we were close to being able to make an announcement about the position-holder, whom we hope will begin in September 2012. This individual will work on areas of faculty development barely touched by CETL before now, including investigating how we best mentor junior faculty on campus, and running events for academic leaders.

Once this position is filled, we will be able to make headway in offering professional development to faculty in leadership roles or at particular phases in their careers. With regard to support for teaching, learning, and research productivity, CETL is still operating at 2005–06 levels. In 2012–13, we will be submitting a budget request for an experienced faculty developer as a full-time Associate Director and have exciting, innovative plans for a shift in CETL's activities to reflect the changing academic landscape, both nationally and internationally.

Strategic Planning

To help CETL steer through the continuing uncertainty of the past year, we have relied greatly on the collective wisdom and sharp thinking of our strategic planning group. A key function of this group is to help CETL use its limited resources well, offering collegial counterarguments and alternative perspectives to lead to better decision-making. Members of the group in 2011–12 were

- Joyce Allen | University Registrar
- Sven Arvidson | Philosophy and Liberal Studies, College of Arts & Sciences
- Amy Eva | Teacher Education, College of Education
- Holly Slay Ferraro | Management, Albers School of Business & Economics
- Christina Roberts | English, College of Arts & Sciences
- Lindsay Whitlow | Biology, College of Science & Engineering

Database

In 2011–12, we continued to improve the capabilities and usability of CETL's bespoke relational database. One key area of improvement is our ability to track the topics on which we consult with faculty. After analyzing historical data on which topics faculty consulted CETL about, we revised the topics, adding some, renaming others, and re-categorizing them. We then worked with an outside database consultant to improve the way the database tracks and reports on these topics, as was shown in Figure 6. This allows us to see trends in faculty needs and provide more or better resources in those areas.

PROMOTING SCHOLARSHIP

Impact on higher education practices nationally and internationally

CETL's director helps raise the profile of Seattle University by contributing to both the national and international dialogue on teaching and learning and on faculty development through presentations at conferences, publications, and professional service. In 2011–12, David completed and published one co-authored book, became North American co-editor of an international journal, published two articles and an editorial, and gave three conference presentations.

Publications: Books

Popovic, C., & Green, D.A. (2012). *Understanding undergraduates: Challenging our preconceptions of student success*. New York & London: Routledge. ISBN 978-0-415-66755-5

Publications: Articles

Little, D., & Green, D.A. (In press). Betwixt and between: Academic developers on the margins. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 17(3), 203–215. doi: 10.1080/1360144X.2012.700895

Ruppert, B., & Green, D.A. (2012). Practicing what we teach: Credibility and alignment in the business communication classroom. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 75(1): 29–44. doi: 10.1177/1080569911426475

Publications: Editorial

Green, D.A. (2012). The shifting lenses of academic development: On identities, careers, and programmes. Editorial, *International Journal for Academic Development*, 17(2). doi: 10.1080/1360144X.2012.668668

Conference presentations

Green, D.A., & Huston, T. (2011, October). *All for one and one for all: Action learning sets*. Workshop presented at the 36th Annual Conference of the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education: Create · Collaborate · Engage. Atlanta, GA.

Little, D., & Green, D.A. (2011, October). *Betwixt and between: How developers navigate institutional tensions*. Workshop presented at the 36th Annual Conference of the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education: Create · Collaborate · Engage. Atlanta, GA.

Little, D., & Green, D.A. (2012, June). *Marginal gains: Identity and academic development*. Workshop presented at the 3rd international conference on Academic Identities: Thinking, researching, and living otherwise. Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand.

Professional service

Co-Editor | *International Journal for Academic Development* (Journal of the International Consortium for Educational Development)

Conference submission reviewer | Annual conference of the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education; Biennial conference of the International Consortium for Educational Development