

Center for Teaching 2014-15 Year in Review

Mission

The mission of the Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching is to promote university teaching that leads to meaningful student learning. By helping members of the Vanderbilt community become more effective teachers, the CFT supports the educational mission of the university and enhances the learning experiences of its students.



By the Numbers

In 2014-15, the CFT reached

308

full-time faculty members across campus through events, programs, and consultations.

That's **21%**

of all full-time faculty outside of the School of Medicine.

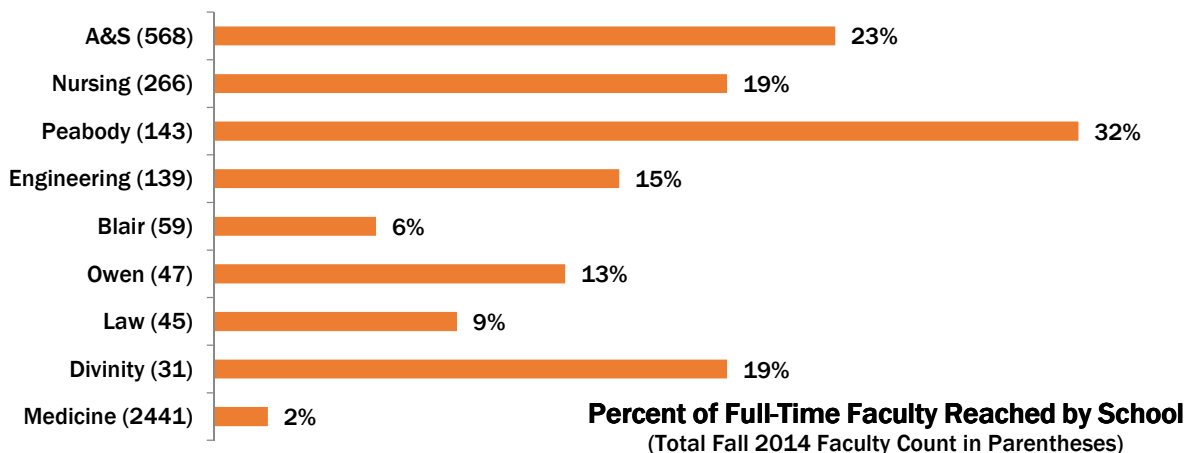
The CFT also reached

488

PhD students in 2014-2015 through its various offerings for graduate students.

That's **22%**

of all PhD students at Vanderbilt.



The CFT enhances the student learning experience by helping instructors develop and refine foundational teaching skills and explore new teaching practices.

Faculty and TA Orientations

The CFT's annual orientations provide new faculty and teaching assistants strategies and resources for launching effective teaching careers at Vanderbilt. This year, 45 faculty and 256 TAs participated in our orientations.



Teaching Workshops

The CFT offers professional development workshops on a variety of teaching and learning topics. This year, the CFT offered 9 events open to the campus and facilitated an additional 20 invited workshops for departments, schools, and programs.

Teaching Consultations

The CFT provides a range of confidential consultation services for instructors interested in reflecting on their teaching experiences and engaging their students in deeper learning. This year, CFT staff and graduate fellows conducted a total of 582 consultations with 380 unique individuals.



Junior Faculty Teaching Fellows

The faculty fellows in this yearlong program engage individually and as a cohort in a set of activities designed to improve their teaching skills and help them build courses that foster meaningful student learning.

The eight 2014-15 fellows came from the College of Arts and Science, the School of Engineering, Owen School of Management, and Peabody College.

"The JTF program really filled in a gap in my professor 'portfolio' - learning how to be a good teacher. My PhD trained me well in my subject matter and on how to do research, but I knew nothing about teaching. Now I have a great start and hope to learn more."

Jesse Blocher, Assistant Professor of Finance



Online Resources



The CFT website, cft.vanderbilt.edu, features more than 70 literature-based teaching guides on various topics authored by CFT staff, as well as regular blog posts

exploring perspectives on teaching and learning. The website received more than 1.6 million pageviews this year.

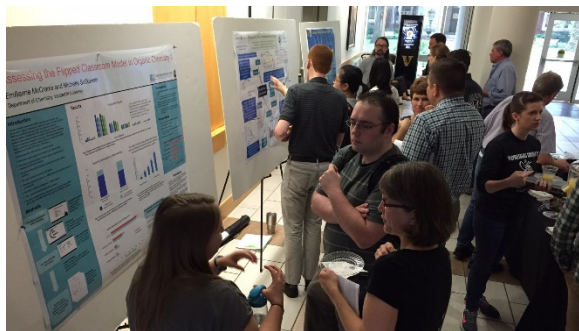
New Teaching Guides for 2014-15:

- Peer Review of Teaching
- Increasing Inclusivity in the Classroom
- Teaching Students with Disabilities
- Managing Student Stress
- Feminist Pedagogy

The CFT fosters innovative and effective use of **educational technologies** by supporting instructors as they incorporate both new and established technologies in their teaching.

Blended and Online Learning Design (BOLD) Fellows

The BOLD Fellows program supports faculty-graduate student teams in developing and assessing online learning modules for STEM courses at Vanderbilt. Participants gain expertise in creating digital learning experiences grounded in good course design principles and research on how people learn.



In 2014-15, ten teams participated in the program, including 13 faculty members and 10 graduate students from A&S, Engineering, and Medicine.

“My grad fellow’s participation helped me think about new ways that I could go about my own teaching. Her module will add to my teaching—and it made me think about other things I teach as well.”

Melanie Schuele, Associate Professor of Hearing and Speech Sciences



Conversations on Digital Pedagogy

Co-sponsored by the Vanderbilt Institute for Digital Learning, this conversation series features Vanderbilt instructors describing and reflecting on the ways they use educational technologies to enhance student learning.

Spring 2015 conversations focused on the use of Twitter in teaching and the “flipped” classroom. A total of 53 people attended, with faculty present from six colleges and schools.

Blackboard Support

During the fall of 2014, the CFT began coordinating and providing technical and pedagogical support for instructors using Blackboard, Vanderbilt’s primary course management system.



In collaboration with the Provost’s Office and the Blackboard Faculty Advisory Committee, the CFT also began leading strategic planning for Blackboard and other potential online platforms for supporting teaching and learning at Vanderbilt.

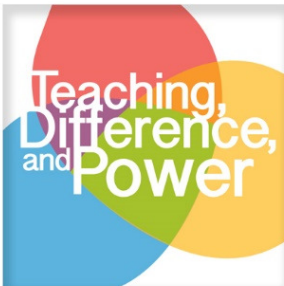
This year’s Blackboard highlights include

- Migrating the system from Vanderbilt servers to Blackboard servers, resulting in significantly improved speed and reliability;
- Updating the system over the summer of 2015, enabling new features such as rubrics, student preview, and profile photos; and
- Recruiting **Stacey Johnson** as the CFT’s new Assistant Director for Educational Technology to oversee faculty outreach and support.



The CFT supports **trans-institutional collaborations** by hosting and facilitating cross-campus conversations and programs that engage faculty, staff, and students.

Teaching, Difference, and Power



This aspect of the CFT's mission can be seen most clearly in activities associated with our 2014-15 theme, "Teaching, Difference, and Power." The CFT selected this theme as a way to explore

challenges educators face in negotiating difference and power in their classrooms.



Campus Symposium

On April 21st, the CFT hosted a campus symposium as part of its theme year. The event drew 65 faculty, staff, and students from six colleges and schools to discuss the importance of helping students – and ourselves – think more deeply and critically about difference and power.



Participants shared their personal experiences and perspectives and discussed steps they and others might take to continue creating a diverse and democratic campus culture.

Learning Communities

The CFT hosted two year-long reading groups on race and power, one for faculty members and one for graduate students. Each group met monthly to discuss topics such as stereotype threat, microaggressions, teaching race in the international context, and minority faculty experiences.

"Despite my long experience teaching, I learned new perspectives, language, and strategies in encountering these issues in the classroom with my undergraduate, graduate, and professional students."

Dennis Dickerson, James M. Lawson, Jr., Professor of History



Teaching Visits

The CFT organized 8 teaching visits this year that touched on the "Difference and Power" theme. Teaching visits involve senior faculty opening their classrooms to colleagues to observe their teaching and discuss shared teaching challenges.



Craig Smith, Associate Professor of Psychology and Human Development, hosted a teaching visit in a class that introduced students to racial stereotypes and how they relate to cognitive processes. Through conversation with Professor Smith, faculty visitors gained practical strategies for talking about race in their courses.

The CFT strengthens graduate education by providing professional development for students planning academic careers that involve teaching.

Certificate in College Teaching

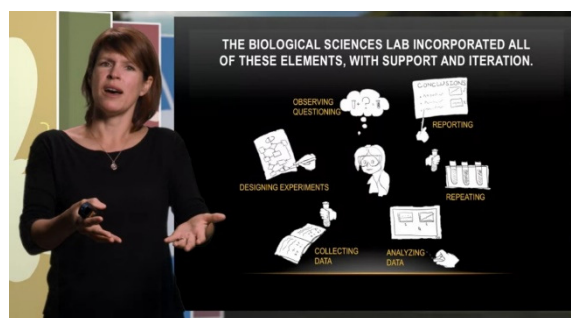
This two-semester program focuses on the research on how people learn as well as best teaching practices. This is our most popular campus program, with 58 graduates in 2014-15 and a semester-long waiting list.

“Being introduced to, and then having the opportunity to discuss difference choices in teaching with people of various fields was invaluable.”
CiCT Participant



An Introduction to Evidence-Based Undergraduate STEM Teaching

Funded by a three-year NSF grant, this open, online course is designed to provide future STEM faculty with an introduction to effective teaching strategies and the research that supports them.



Mellon Certificate in Humanities Education

Participants in the two-semester Mellon Certificate program explore and develop teaching skills that promote learning within a diverse student body with an emphasis on teaching a specific humanities discipline as part of a liberal arts curriculum. Eight graduate students and three Mellon-funded postdocs completed the program in this inaugural year.

The eight-week course draws on the expertise of experienced STEM faculty, educational researchers, and teaching center staff from more than a dozen universities.

Over 4000 participants from around the world were active in the Fall 2014 offering of the course, with 566 of them earning statements of accomplishment.

The CFT's scholarly work contributes to national and international conversations on teaching and learning.

Publications

Peer-reviewed publications by CFT staff this year included a chapter in *Doing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Mathematics*, two articles in *CBE—Life Sciences Education*, an article in the *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, and an essay in *#Alt-Academy*.



Invited Talks

In 2014-15, CFT staff gave invited talks at the University of British Columbia, Rice University, George Washington University, Amherst College, Khalifa University (UAE), Monterrey University (Mexico), and International Dialogue on Education (Germany), among others.

Conferences

This year, CFT staff presented at conferences held by the POD Network, Imagining America, the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative, and the CIRTL Network.

Staff

In 2014-15, the CFT employed eight full-time staff members as well as seven graduate fellows, including three supported by external grant funding.

Four members of the CFT staff have secondary appointments in the College of Arts and Science, each teaching one course per year in those departments.



Derek Bruff, PhD
Director
Mathematics



Joe Bandy, PhD
Assistant Director
Sociology



Cynthia Brame, PhD
Assistant Director
Biological Sciences



Nancy Chick, PhD
Assistant Director
English



Rhett McDaniel
Educational Technologist



Tracy Tveit
Program Coordinator



Melissa Penix
Administrative Assistant



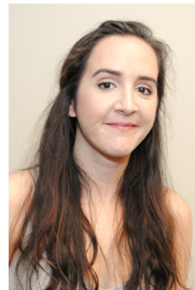
Juliet Traub
Administrative Assistant



Christian Ehret
Graduate Teaching Fellow
Teaching & Learning



Lauren Campbell
WIDER Fellow
Astronomy



Vivian Finch
Graduate Teaching Fellow
German



Ben Galina
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Spanish



Brielle Harbin
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Trey Mack
WIDER Fellow
Astronomy



Dani Picard
Graduate Teaching Fellow
History