

CENTER FOR TEACHING 2013-2014

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.

HIGHLIGHTS



The core of the CFT’s mission statement—“university teaching that leads to meaningful student learning”—inspired the CFT’s theme for the 2013-14 academic year: “**Students as Producers.**” Through a series of workshops, panels, teaching visits, teaching guides, and blog posts, the CFT promoted and supported ways to help students become not just consumers of information but also producers of knowledge who engage in meaningful, generative work in their classes. This initiative was cited in the *2014 Horizon Report*, an annual report from the New Media Consortium on trends in technology in higher education, and the CFT director gave an invited talk about the work at the University of British Columbia this summer.

In April, the CFT held a **Celebration of Learning**, the final event in its “Students as Producers” theme year, featuring an exhibition of 25 student projects from all four undergraduate schools and a keynote by Randy Bass, Vice Provost for Education and Professor of English at Georgetown University. Over 120 faculty, students, and staff participated in the Celebration of Learning. This event differed from the CFT’s traditional end-of-year event in its focus on deep student learning—the outcome of effective teaching.



This year the CFT **expanded its work at the program level and above.** A senior staff member co-facilitated a day-long curriculum revision workshop for the Department of English, resulting in a new design for its major. The CFT director served on the Provost’s Committee on the Evaluation of Teaching and Learning, helping to draft the committee’s final report.

And CFT senior staff designed and facilitated invited workshops on topics such as course design, discussion leading, the flipped classroom, and mentoring graduate students for the Schools of Law, Medicine, and Nursing, as well as Peabody College, the Graduate School, and the Ingram Commons.

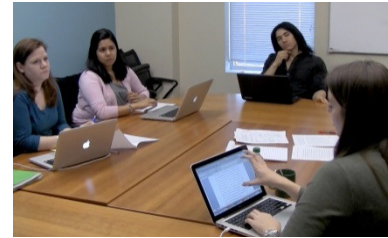
The CFT was awarded two significant external grants this year. A \$750,000, multi-institution **National Science Foundation WIDER grant** supports the creation of two MOOCs (massive open online courses) on evidence-based teaching practices for future STEM faculty. CFT staff, including two graduate fellows funded by the grant, are preparing for the start of the first MOOC this fall, collaborating with the Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL).



The CFT is also participating in the **Mellon Partners for Humanities Education** project, funded by a \$1.475 million grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. This project, led by the Dean of the College of Arts & Science, provides specialized training for current and recent Vanderbilt doctoral students in the humanities interested in teaching at small liberal arts colleges and historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). As part of this project, the CFT will launch the Mellon Certificate in Humanities Education this fall, developed by a senior staff member and graduate fellow funded by the grant.



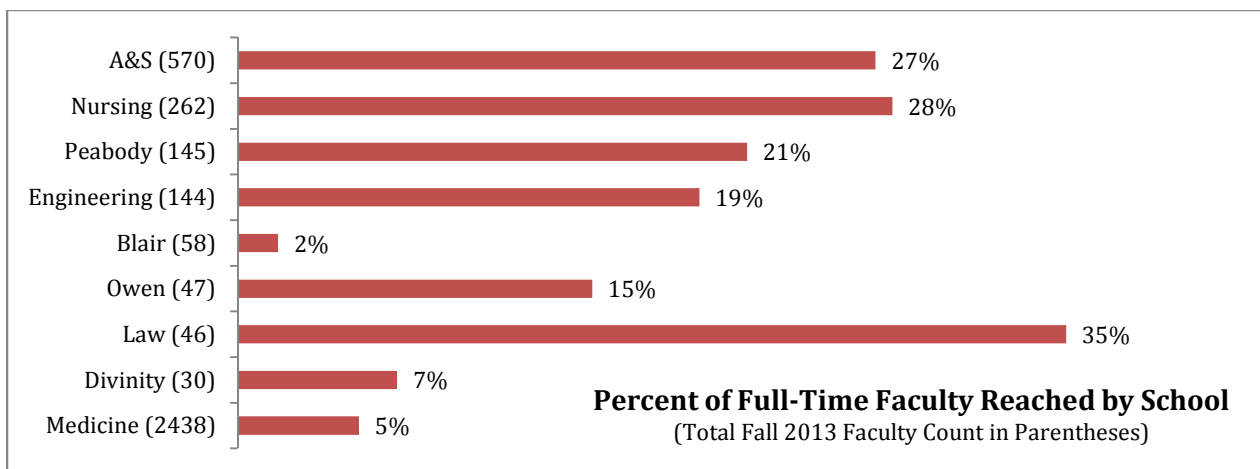
In response to growing interest among faculty in digital learning, this year the CFT created the **Blended and Online Learning Design (BOLD) Fellows** program with support from the CIRTl Network. Three faculty-graduate student teams completed this inaugural year of the program, each designing, implementing, and assessing an online learning module used in a course at Vanderbilt. Given the success of this year's BOLD Fellows, the program is expanding next year to support eight teams, in collaboration with the Vanderbilt Institute for Digital Learning.



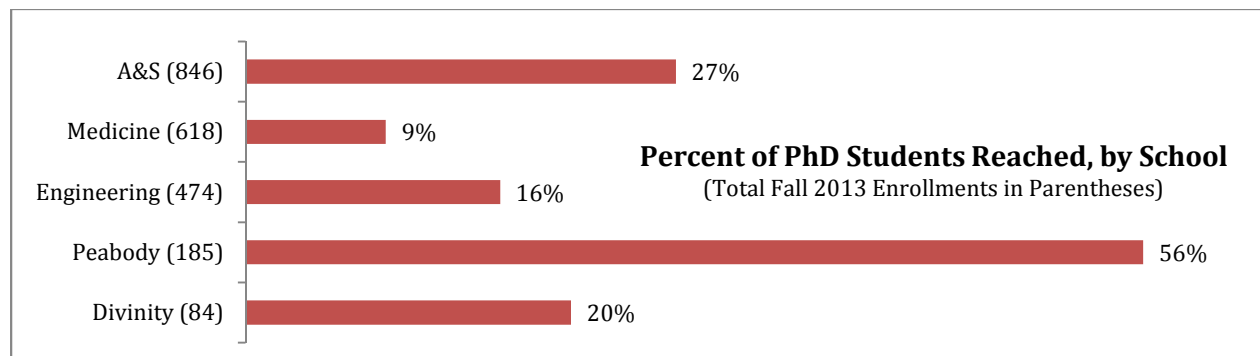
REACH

The CFT reached **457 full-time faculty across campus** in 2013-14 through its events, programs, and consultations—up from 261 the previous year. Leaving aside faculty from Medicine, the CFT interacted with **23 percent of all full-time faculty** on campus this year.

The graph below shows the percent of faculty in each school involved in CFT offerings during 2013-14. The nature of CFT-faculty interactions vary by school. For instance, most of the CFT interactions with faculty in Nursing, Peabody, and Law came in the context of invited workshops, whereas interactions with faculty in A&S and Engineering were more balanced across invited workshops, open events, and consultations.



The CFT also reached **475 PhD students** in 2013-14—up from 381 the previous year. The graph below shows the percent of PhD students in each school involved in CFT offerings in 2013-14. Graduate students interact with the CFT in a variety of ways, including consultations, invited workshops, TA Orientation, GradSTEP, and the Certificate in College Teaching program.



ACTIVITY

The CFT's major activities fall into four primary, overlapping areas that advance its mission:

- Providing opportunities to develop and refine **foundational teaching skills** through workshops, seminars, and individual consultations;
- Consulting with educators as they adopt and evaluate **new teaching practices** as part of their continuing professional development;
- Fostering **campus conversations on teaching and learning** that are informed by national and international higher education developments, as well as local issues and priorities; and
- Identifying, sharing, and advocating for **research-based practices** in university teaching and the resources that support them.

FOUNDATIONAL TEACHING SKILLS

- **Teaching at Vanderbilt** – The CFT's new faculty orientation introduces strategies for launching a successful teaching career at Vanderbilt. This year, 51 new faculty attended the half-day event.
- **Teaching Assistant Orientation** – This one-day August event, facilitated by a trained staff of 14 experienced TAs, prepares new TAs to assume their teaching duties. This year, 205 graduate students attended TA Orientation.
- **Junior Faculty Teaching Fellows Program** – Each of the eight Fellows in this year-long program participate in activities designed to help them develop and refine their teaching skills. This year, the program was partially funded by a gift from the parents of a current undergraduate as an investment in the future of teaching and learning at Vanderbilt.
- **Certificate in College Teaching Program** – This two-semester program introduces effective teaching practices to graduate students and post-docs interested in pursuing faculty careers. 28 participants completed the program in 2012-13, the first offering of the



redesigned program. This year, 41 graduate students and post-docs earned their certificates.

- **The CIRTl Network MOOC** – In collaboration with the CIRTl Network through a National Science Foundation WIDER grant, several CFT staff are creating a MOOC (massive open online course) titled “An Introduction to Evidence-Based Undergraduate STEM Teaching.” The course, scheduled to start in October 2014, is aimed at current and future STEM faculty members.

NEW TEACHING PRACTICES

- **Blended and Online Learning Design (BOLD) Fellows** – Co-sponsored by the CIRTl Network and the Vanderbilt Institute for Digital Learning, the BOLD Fellows program supports faculty-graduate student teams in developing and assessing online learning modules for STEM courses at Vanderbilt. Three teams completed the program in this inaugural year.
- **GradSTEP** – Held in January, this one-day event provides graduate students and post-docs a chance to explore new teaching practices through a plenary session and a variety of workshops. 67 participants attended this year’s event, which focused on the “Students as Producers” theme.
- **Teaching Workshops and Conversations on Teaching** – Throughout the year, the CFT offers workshops and panels on a variety of teaching and learning topics. This year, it held 14 such events open to the campus, several as part of the “Students as Producers” theme, with 152 faculty, students, and staff in attendance.
- **Teaching Consultations** – The CFT provides a range of confidential consultation services for instructors interested in developing their teaching skills or exploring new teaching practices. In 2013-14, CFT senior staff and Graduate Teaching Fellows conducted a total of 414 consultations, including 54 that involved the gathering of mid-semester student feedback and 53 based on classroom observations.
- **Work with Departments, Programs, and Schools** – This year, CFT senior staff designed and facilitated 26 invited workshops for departments, programs and schools, reaching a total of 502 unique participants. Requested topics this year included the flipped classroom, leading discussions, mentoring graduate students, and educational technology. A senior staff member also hosted and co-facilitated a day-long curriculum revision workshop for the Department of English.



CAMPUS CONVERSATIONS ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

- **Celebration of Learning** – As part of the “Students as Producers” theme, the CFT held a Celebration of Learning in April featuring an exhibition of 25 student projects from all four undergraduate schools and a keynote by Georgetown University’s Randy Bass. Over 120 students, faculty, and staff participated in the event.



- **Teaching Visits** – The Teaching Visits series invites participation by small groups of faculty who observe a senior colleague’s class on a selected day, then engage in an hour of conversation about the instructor’s teaching choices, building collegiality and expertise around teaching and learning. The CFT hosted 8 visits this year with a total of 37 participants.
- **University Service** – This year, CFT staff served on the Provost’s Committee on the Evaluation of Teaching and Learning; the Educational Technology Steering Committee of the Chancellor’s strategic planning initiative; and the Graduate Development Network. CFT staff also contributed to efforts to create a Vanderbilt Center for Community Engagement, collaborated with a number of partners on various digital humanities efforts, consulted with departments and schools on classroom design and renovation projects, and continued supporting the University’s work on MOOCs and other digital learning initiatives.

RESEARCH-BASED PRACTICES

- **SoTL Scholars Program** – This program introduces graduate students to the principles and practices of the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), bringing a research-based lens to what happens in the classroom. This year, 16 students participated in the program, most completing a project suitable for publishing or sharing at a conference.
- **Teaching Guides** – The CFT website features 68 teaching guides on various topics. Popular guides include ones on gathering mid-semester feedback from students, Bloom’s taxonomy of learning objectives, writing multiple-choice test questions, and flipping the classroom. The CFT website received over one million pageviews this year, most driven by our teaching guides—up 97% over the previous year.
- **Teaching & Learning Inquiry** – *Teaching & Learning Inquiry*, the official journal of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL), publishes insightful research, theory, commentary, and other scholarly works that document or facilitate investigations of teaching and learning in higher education. With a senior staff member as its co-editor and a graduate teaching fellow serving as editorial manager, the CFT hosts the journal’s editorial office.
- **Publications and Presentations** – This year, CFT staff presented at conferences held by the Professional and Organizational Development Network, the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, the American Sociological Association, the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, the Course-Based Undergraduate Research Experience Network, and Coursera. CFT staff gave invited talks at Indiana University at Bloomington, the University of Iowa, McMaster University, Mt. Royal University, Centenary College, and the University of the South, among others, and published articles in the *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching* and the *Journal of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Education* and book chapters in *Shaping Healthy Communities: Nashville* and *The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Across the Disciplines*.



STAFF

The CFT employs eight full-time staff members as well as four Graduate Teaching Fellows (GTFs). In 2013-2014, external grant funding supported an additional three graduate fellows.

Four members of the CFT's senior staff have secondary appointments in departments in A&S and teach one course per year in those departments (Derek Bruff – Mathematics, Joe Bandy – Sociology, Cynthia Brame – Biological Sciences, Nancy Chick – English).



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