

Center for Teaching 2015-16 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 2015-16, the CFT reached

412

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

That's **32%**

of all full-time faculty outside the School of Medicine¹.

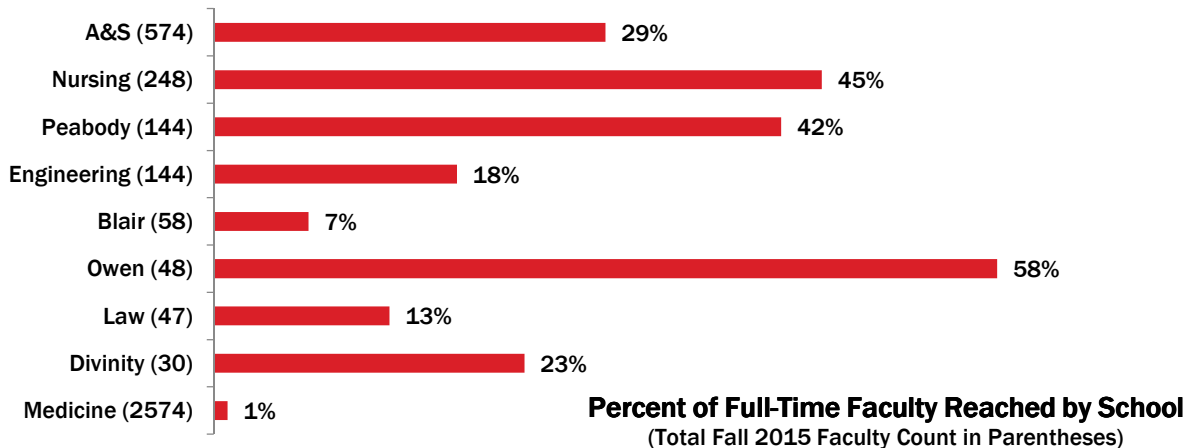
The CFT also reached

518

PhD students in 2015-2016 through its various offerings.

That's **24%**

of all PhD students at Vanderbilt.



¹ The School of Medicine is omitted here because many Medicine faculty have limited formal teaching duties.

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

Course Design Institute

The CFT offered its first Course Design Institute in May 2016. In this three-day workshop, 13 faculty members learned and applied a process for designing courses in which learning objectives, activities, and assessments are aligned.

This year's CDI theme was "Students as Producers," with participants focusing on ways to engage students not only as consumers of information, but as producers of knowledge.

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, 56 faculty and 265 TAs participated in our orientations.



Workshops & Events

The CFT offers professional development workshops on a variety of topics. This year, the CFT offered 17 events open to the campus and facilitated an additional 53 invited workshops for departments, schools, and programs. Frequent topics included course design, inclusive teaching, and educational technology.

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 conducted a total of 587 consultations with 380 unique individuals.

Junior Faculty Teaching Fellows

The faculty fellows in this year-long 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 program expanded this year from 8 to 13 participants with support from the School of Nursing to accommodate growing interest in the program. Other 2015-16 fellows came from Arts & Science, Engineering, and Peabody.

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to take the risk of trying something new and exciting. I learned a great deal; about myself as a teacher, about the students and what they are capable of, and about my own field of neuroscience."

Anita Disney, Assistant Professor of Psychology



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 almost 1.9 million pageviews this year.

New Teaching Guides for 2015-16:

- Effective Educational Videos
- Teaching First-Generation College Students
- Pedagogy for Professional Schools
- Cooperative Learning Groups
- Test-Enhanced Learning
- Teaching Beyond the Gender Binary
- Digital Timelines



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 2015-16, eight teams participated in the program, including 11 faculty members and 8 graduate students from A&S, Engineering, and Medicine. In addition, seven current and former BOLD Fellows presented their projects at national meetings this year.

“The feedback at the conference was really eye-opening. I had a number of people come up to me who were unfamiliar with the content but really interested in the implementation of the blended portion of the course. It was super cool.”



Samantha Tramontano, Master's Student in Earth & Environmental Science, 2014-15 BOLD Fellow

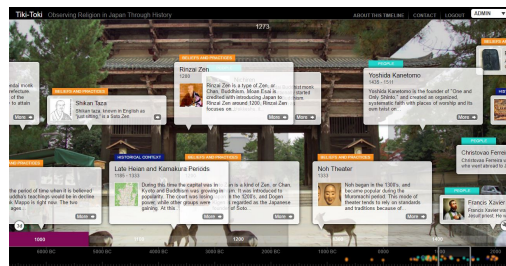
Conversations on Digital Pedagogy

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.

Panels this year focused on teaching with classroom response systems and the use of digital timelines, building on activities of the CFT's educational technology working groups. A total of 39 faculty, staff, and students attended, representing five college and schools.

Educational Technology Working Groups

The CFT hosted three working groups to explore ways particular technologies might meet their instructional goals. Topics included digital timelines, course blogs, and classroom response systems. A total of 77 faculty, staff, and students participated in these working groups, representing all of Vanderbilt's colleges and schools.



Blackboard Support

In August 2015, the CFT began offering technical and pedagogical support for instructors and students across campus using Blackboard, Vanderbilt's primary course management system.

Concurrently, the CFT launched a set of education and outreach efforts, including drop-in hours, workshops, and on-demand web resources, to help instructors learn ways Blackboard can support their teaching.

In the spring of 2016, the CFT facilitated a needs assessment and vendor selection process to determine Vanderbilt's next course management system, to be implemented in 2017.



The CFT supports the Vanderbilt community in developing a more diverse and inclusive environment for teaching and learning.

Campus Conversations

The CFT supported a number of university conversations on diversity and inclusion this year. CFT Assistant Director Joe Bandy served as executive chair for the Chancellor's Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Community. CFT staff also collaborated with the Faculty Senate and Vanderbilt Student Government on the design of two forums discussing gender awareness and inclusion.

Learning Communities

As an extension of its 2014-15 theme year on "Teaching, Difference, and Power," the CFT hosted a learning community on teaching, gender, and sexuality for faculty, staff, and students that met monthly during the academic year. The CFT also facilitated a spring-semester reading group on inclusive teaching for its Junior Faculty Teaching Fellows.

Workshops & Events

CFT staff designed and facilitated several workshops and presentations on inclusive teaching, some open to the campus, others at the invitation of individual schools and departments.

Teaching Consultations

CFT staff consulted with dozens of faculty and graduate student instructors on issues of diversity in the classroom and inclusive teaching.



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

Certificate in College Teaching

The two-semester CiCT program focuses on the research on how people learn as well as best teaching practices. This is our most popular campus program, with 55 graduates in 2015-16 and a semester-long waiting list.

"My experience in the CiCT provided valuable skills, tools, and techniques necessary to constantly analyze, assess, and refine my teaching practices. I am a more thoughtful and reflective teacher because of the CiCT."

Michael Fisher, PhD Student,
Graduate Department of Religion



Mellon Certificate in Humanities Education

Participants in the two-semester Mellon Certificate program explore and develop skills in teaching diverse learners in the humanities as part of a liberal arts curriculum. This year, 25 current and recent PhD students completed the program.

An Introduction to Evidence-Based Undergraduate STEM Teaching

Funded by a multi-institution NSF grant, this free online course is designed to provide future STEM faculty with an introduction to effective teaching strategies and the research that supports them. Over 2500 participants from around the world were active in the fall offering of the course.

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

Learning Communities

The CFT hosts a number of learning communities each year, intended for members of Vanderbilt's teaching community interested in meeting over time to develop deeper understandings and richer practices around particular teaching and learning topics.

Topics for 2015-16 included community engaged teaching; teaching, gender, and sexuality; and lab pedagogies. A total of 50 faculty, staff, and students from six colleges and schools participated in this year's learning communities.

Outside Speakers

CFT staff helped bring several outside speakers to campus in 2015-16, including educational technologist **George Siemens** (University of Texas-Arlington), biological science education researcher **Kimberly Tanner** (San Francisco State University), comics scholar and visual thinker **Nick Sousanis** (Calgary University), and cryptographer and Wikipedian **Elonka Dunin**.

Teaching Visits

The CFT organized 6 teaching visits this year, each of which involved experienced faculty opening their classrooms to colleagues to observe their teaching and discuss shared teaching challenges. Teaching visit hosts included faculty members from Arts & Science, Engineering, and Peabody.



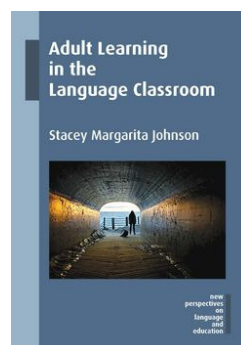
Kane Jennings, Professor of Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering, hosted a teaching visit in his course Molecular Aspects of Chemical Engineering, co-taught with Paul Laibinis. During the visit, students grappled with "clicker" questions that targeted common misconceptions about chemical phenomena.

Through conversation with Professor Jennings, visitors explored practical strategies for writing questions and cases, as well as approaches to co-teaching courses.

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 articles in *CBE—Life Sciences Education*, *Journal of Nursing Education*, and *The Language Educator*, as well as the book *Adult Learning in the Language Classroom* by CFT Assistant Director Stacey Johnson.



Invited Talks

In 2015-16, CFT staff gave invited talks at Pennsylvania State University, Texas Tech University, King Fahd University (Saudi Arabia), Wake Forest University, University of Houston, Tennessee Association of Independent Schools, Johns Hopkins University, and Western Michigan University, among others.

Conferences

This year, CFT staff presented at conferences held by Imagining America, HASTAC, the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages, and the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese.

Staff

In 2015-16, the CFT employed eleven full-time staff members as well as five Graduate Teaching Fellows and two post-doctoral fellows. Five members of the CFT staff have secondary appointments in the College of Arts and Science, each teaching one course per year in those departments.



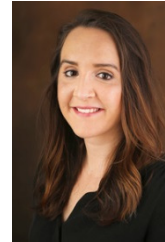
Derek Bruff, PhD
Director
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Joe Bandy, PhD
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Sociology



Cynthia Brame, PhD
Assistant Director
Biological Sciences



Vivian Finch, MA
Assistant Director
English



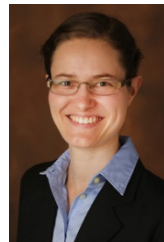
Stacey Johnson, EdD
Assistant Director for
Educational
Technology



Rhett McDaniel
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Technologist



Lee Scarborough
Instructional
Technologist



Rebecca Panter
Instructional
Technologist



Tracy Tveit
Program Coordinator



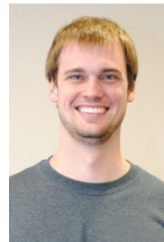
Melissa Penix
Administrative
Assistant



Juliet Traub
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Lauren Campbell
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Noah Green
WIDER Fellow
Biological Sciences



Ben Galina
Senior Mellon GTF
Spanish



Brielle Harbin
Senior GTF
Political Science



Danielle Picard
Senior GTF
History



Richard Coble
GTF
Divinity



Jane Hirtle
GTF
Psychology