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Mission

The Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) at Connecticut College promotes engaged and effective teaching that cultivates significant student learning. The CTL fosters a campus culture that values a diversity of learning, teaching, and disciplinary styles, welcomes honest discussion of teaching and learning, and encourages the scholarship of teaching and learning.

To achieve its mission, the CTL organizes programming that facilitates the exchange of ideas about teaching and learning; offers resources and support for new faculty, including programs that promote their smooth transition into the college community and their success in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service; creates both formal and informal sources of support for faculty teaching at all stages of their careers; and engages in efforts to improve teaching and learning at small liberal arts colleges on the regional and national level.

Major Programs of the Center

Johnson Teaching Seminar for Incoming Faculty

Since 1998, Connecticut College's Johnson Seminar for Incoming Faculty has been supporting faculty in their roles as teachers, scholars, and community members. The Center sponsors monthly seminars that model and address particular aspects of effective teaching and learning. We also have a variety of informal meetings and discussions throughout the academic year, all aimed at supporting faculty and helping them become happy and successful members of the college community. Our distinctive "Peer Mentoring" approach, in which second- and third-year faculty organize and help run each seminar allows us to adapt easily to faculty needs, models effective strategies for new faculty, and provides a supportive cohort for newer faculty that crosses disciplinary and departmental boundaries. These cohorts of new faculty are forming bonds and transforming the teaching culture at the college. Teaching has become "community property" (Shulman)—something not only valued, but also shared and discussed. These connections have also led to interdisciplinary collaborations in research and teaching.

Talking Teaching

A series of teaching-centered discussions facilitated by members of the faculty. Inaugurated in 2001-2002, this twice-monthly program has addressed such topics as: civility and incivility in the classroom; using the Socratic method for discussion; teaching effectively to large classes;

designing effective writing assignments; universal course design; service learning; active learning in the science classroom; group learning; and information literacy.

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The Faculty Teaching Initiative

During January 2005 the CTL sponsored a week of intensive teaching development opportunities meant both to build upon our other programming and to move forward Connecticut College's new Freshman Seminar program. We will offer different workshops and seminars in May 2005.

Diversity Discussions & Dinners

This Spring 2004 series of discussions continued the work begun by the President's Commission on a Pluralistic Community (PCPC) and addressed the issue of teaching and diversity.

General Education Discussions

In cooperation with the Dean of the Faculty and the Educational Planning Committee, the CTL hosted a series of discussions that focused on proposals from members of the faculty for a new GE Curriculum at Connecticut College. Faculty members were asked to provide specific written proposals in advance and to lead the discussion of them. In Spring 2004 the faculty approved a new GE Curriculum that includes Freshman Seminars.

CTL-Johnson Teaching Grants

Begun in the 2002-2003 academic year, the CTL invites proposals from the faculty for projects designed to improve teaching and learning on campus. Recently funded projects include "Curriculum Discussions and Workshops" (Gender and Women's Studies Program); "Teaching Writing in the Sciences"; "Coaching as Teaching/Teaching as Coaching" (Athletic Department); "Reinventing Teaching and Curriculum in the Foreign Languages"; "Teaching Critical Thinking Skills"; "Ethnomathematics"; and "Technique & Creativity/Theory & Practice: Teaching Dance in a Changing World."

CTL-Target Grants

Since its inception, the CTL has supported teaching and learning activities as the opportunities arise, sponsoring or co-sponsoring a variety of activities to support faculty in their teaching, including faculty seminars on "Interdisciplinarity" and "The Future of Theory," departmental curriculum and assessment work, and the purchase of equipment that enhances classroom practice.

Faculty Teaching Seminar (formerly the Hewlett Teaching Seminar)

Twice-monthly meetings and workshops for Continuing Faculty focused on issues of pedagogy and the research on teaching and learning. Original groups of participants in the Hewlett Seminar developed and shared a pedagogical project. Formerly the CTL's second major faculty program, this seminar is on hiatus after four successful years.

Teaching on Campus

The CTL has sponsored or co-sponsored a variety of activities to support faculty and their teaching, all intended to improve student learning. We have brought to campus a variety of nationally known scholars and teachers to share their ideas about teaching with faculty and students on issues ranging from course design, portfolios, and learning styles to grading, diversity, and rethinking the liberal arts curriculum.

In addition, the Center for Teaching & Learning regularly collaborates with the Dean of the Faculty's Office on planning New Faculty Orientation and working with Department Chairs. We also work closely with Instructional Technology in order to advance the effective use of technology as a tool for learning.

For more information about the Connecticut College Center for Teaching & Learning, contact Michael Reder at reder@conncoll.edu or visit <http://CTL.conncoll.edu>