Changing Pedagogy into Scholarship:
Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

Karen Hahn Ph.D., Carol Todd, Ph.D., and Carol Walker, Ph.D.
Saint Leo University

Implementing SoTL at Saint Leo University

The change in philosophy from "stand and deliver" to active learning techniques and research regarding teaching and learning can be challenging especially when students, faculty, and administrators are housed at different locations. A transition, to be university wide, requires a systemic approach involving all stakeholders.

To understand the complexity of the situation, a review of Saint Leo's outreach and vision is necessary. Saint Leo University is unique in that it serves and offers graduate and undergraduate courses to students in many different locations and through a variety of delivery methods. University campus is a residential campus that teaches the traditional aged student. The campus population is 1,800 students who are mostly Florida residents, with international students representing 18 different countries. Twenty-one centers located in seven states support non-traditional student populations that may be civilian or military. The Center for Online Learning (COL) enrolls over 3,000 students who earn bachelor and masters degrees.

This diversity enriches the University's commitment to teaching and learning across all disciplines and in all locations. The University's Benedictine foundation of Core Values (Respect, Integrity, Personal Development, Community, Responsible Stewardship, and Excellence) holds the university community accountable to students no matter where they are located.

Strategic planning is critical to the success of any university. Each December the university president, vice presidents, and representatives of various schools and departments throughout the university meet for two days to develop plans for the next academic year. Out of these discussions, Key Result Areas (KRAs) are developed. In 2007 one such area was Academic Excellence and teaching expectations. A subcommittee of the KRA developed a list of teaching expectations for the university based on its Core Values. These expectations *Core Values and Teaching: Competencies and Expectations* (Appendix A) are for all full time, part time and adjunct faculty in all disciplines and all locations covering all delivery methods including online, on-ground, and blended courses.

After developing and implementing the *Core Values and Teaching: Competencies and Expectations* the next step was to expand the committee to be more representative of the university faculty and include all schools and centers. The SoTL Committee (later renamed the Forum on Teaching Excellence Committee) continued

and expanded the work of the KRA. Committee membership represented the three schools, on campus, and center and online programs and faculty throughout the university.

Changing Pedagogies

After brainstorming using multiple methodologies to reach consensus, the committee identified three areas of importance: (a) Achieving Balance and Scholarship, (b) Student Ability and Motivation (c) Relationships with and Engaging Adjuncts. Faculty volunteered to form subcommittees exploring each of the three areas. Exploration included clarifying the issue, delineating why the area was important to teaching and learning at Saint Leo University and identifying what each faculty member hoped to achieve by actively contributing to the work of the subcommittee. Each subcommittee defined the outcomes and actions needed to implement SoTL at Saint Leo University.

Achieving Balance and Scholarship

Achieving Balance and Scholarship was defined as identifying those items that must be accomplished or completed, prioritizing the items, and focusing on those items that need to be accomplished well. Teaching is a priority at Saint Leo and must be done well to achieve the core value of excellence. Achieving Balance and Scholarship is important as scholarship demands continuous learning and is an avenue for effective teaching and learning. Faculty engaged in this work set teaching and learning goals and facilitate more effective teaching and learning by creating resources for faculty to achieve a balance.

Student Ability and Motivation

Students have changed and this change is in part a result of technology and the accessibility of colleges and universities to more individuals. The diverse student populations at Saint Leo and individual students differ in communication and learning styles, academic goals and how they define their learning. At Saint Leo it is imperative all faculty respond to where students are in order to meet all learner outcomes and institutional goals. This includes connecting with students and respecting who they are, incorporating technology into the curriculum, examining teaching and looking for ways to capitalize on student strengths while at the same time enhancing students' learning. This focus has afforded faculty the opportunity to learn more about our diverse student population; consider teaching strategies that connect with specific groups of students; and share in professional learning environments that relate to teaching and learning thereby helping students achieve their goals.

Relationships with and Engaging Adjuncts

The culture at Saint Leo is to continuously improve teaching and learning for all faculty. Adjuncts are the largest part of the core faculty and play a significant role in

transforming students to well education students. The role of the SoTL subcommittee was to learn what adjuncts want and/or need to help them as they engage in making the university's culture change a reality. To achieve our core value of community, adjuncts are valued and need to feel valued, welcomed and respected. The subcommittee sought to know who our adjuncts are, what they want and need from the university to feel valued and develop means to capitalize on their strengths and in so doing supporting teaching and learning. Faculty engaged in this task were interested in how to expand opportunities and for adjuncts to feel valued and more engaged and included in the university. Faculty identified ways adjuncts are involved and making meaningful contributions and ways to build on their contributions. The subcommittee identified the need for a summer institute in teaching and learning celebrating adjuncts' contributions to scholarship; engaging adjuncts as a teaching and learning resource not just a recipient; and bringing more adjuncts to campus.

Awareness and Professional Development

Awareness was considered central in engaging all faculty in implementing SoTL at Saint Leo. To commence this task, the SoTL committee presented at two university-wide faculty development days, connected faculty with a SoTL guest speaker and a university IRB presentation aligning implementing SoTL to the university's research protocol.

First, the SLU Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Committee presented at the university-wide January 2010 professional development day. The presentation outlined the committee's research and work thus far to implement SoTL and areas of focus for the development of university-wide projects and outcomes. SoTL was defined and the work of the committee presented in the context of agreed upon scholarly definitions. The committee presented faculty with examples of selected national university and faculty initiatives and SLU scholarship of teaching and learning initiatives followed by a discussion of putting the scholarship of teaching and learning into practice and implications for Saint Leo faculty. In addition, the committee provided faculty with opportunities for collaboration and resources to support their work.

Next, the committee designed and facilitated a second university-wide professional development day deepening faculty awareness of the scholarship of teaching and learning to meet student outcomes. A subcommittee representing all colleges and online learning centers planned the professional day initiative. Using an online conferencing tool, faculty met to determine initial topics and then administered an online survey eliciting faculty interests. Using the data acquired as a result of the survey the committee identified nine topics for round table discussions to be facilitated by faculty from different disciplines. The purpose of the round table discussions was for faculty to learn from each other and to learn and share best practices across disciplines. Faculty members participated in three roundtable discussion groups of their choosing. The day began with storytelling, with two faculty members share their stories of "*Why I Got Into Teaching"* with the entire group of faculty participants. This was followed by

participants sharing their own stories of "why I got into teaching" with others seated at their roundtable.

Professional Development Day evaluation data suggested a pattern of positive agreement for each session in that the session (a) was interesting; (b) helped the faculty member become better; (c) was informative; and (d) would be recommended. Session topics with the highest aggregate mean scores included (a) writing across the curriculum, (b) critical thinking, and (c) motivating millennials. Anecdotal evidence and faculty comments such as "This was the best faculty development day in my 8 years here" and "If future faculty development days continue with this format, I would enjoy participating rather than just attending because it is expected" supported the quantitative Likert scale evaluation data. Committee members and faculty expressed the program exemplified Saint Leo's core values of community and personal development.

Liz Grauerholz's presentation, *Exploring the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)* (Grauerholz, 2010) helped faculty university-wide to begin discover its identity in relationship to the scholarship of teaching and learning and provided faculty with a framework for typing SoTL projects. Her types of SoTL framework was embraced by the committee providing a schema for future Saint Leo SoTL projects. In addition, Saint Leo IRB purposes and procedures were presented to the committee to ensure all SoTL projects are in compliance with federal regulations. The presentation included IRB committee membership, types of reviews and the university's procedures for submission.

Implementing SoTL and Teaching Excellence at Saint Leo University

The Department of Graduate Studies in Education offers courses on the University campus, online, and at seven off campus sites. In addition to the nine full time faculty members, the department utilizes approximately 50 adjuncts per semester. The University requires the use of a master or standardized syllabus for each course. The department has also created an online shell for courses in the Educational Leadership specialization. As the department offerings grew so did the concern for fidelity. How could the faculty ensure that the adjuncts received adequate training and support?

The faculty members developed the Graduate Education Curriculum Conference (GECC) held in May and August 2010. This was designed to provide training and support for the adjuncts. At the conference University policy and procedures, effective on ground and online teaching, and the University core values were discussed. The integration of technology and active learning strategies were presented. Finally, the faculty curriculum designers were available to discuss specific courses with the adjuncts.

The conference was well received but it soon became evident that all adjuncts needed access to this information. In response to this need, the graduate education

faculty developed an online presence that would house information needed by the adjuncts to enhance their effectiveness. Thus G.R.E.A.T. (GRaduate Education Adjunct Topics) was born as eight online training Blackboard ® modules. Training from the curriculum conference and subsequent quarterly online conferencing designed and uploaded into GREAT. Elluminate and other online trainings are found in Module One. All adjuncts are required to complete the Blackboard ® training course found in Module Two. This allows the adjunct to review the training material over time. New and seasoned adjuncts have continued access to the University policies and procedures and effective teaching strategies found in Module Three. Each program and specialization has a module In (Modules Four – Eight). Within each of these modules the course designers have listed the most recent syllabi and resources to facilitate effective and consistent teaching of the courses. These modules are a work in progress as both adjuncts and faculty continue to contribute resources to the course designers. Active professional development can be found within the GREAT in the form of a Book Study. Each year a book of common interest is selected for study throughout the academic year. The first study was of the book, *Death and Life of the Great American School System* (Ravitch, 2010).

A second Graduate Education Curriculum Conference will again be held in May and August 2011. Using survey data from adjuncts the focus of this conference will be the integration of technology into the graduate education courses.

Saint Leo faculty adopted SoTL in a variety of informal and forma venues including local and national presentations earning presentation awards, juried journal publications and university dissemination of faculty scholarship of teaching and learning initiatives. For example, a member of the math faculty presented and published multiple SoTL studies comparing (a) student attitudes toward math between students in undergraduate Learning Interdisciplinary Knowledge curriculum (LINK) math courses and math major courses; (b) student performance on common assessment for no mediated learning and with mediated learning homework; (c) student performance on a common assessment in a specific Center for Online Learning (COL) course to determine if instructor is associated with a different level of student success rate; and (d) investigating student demographics to determine if there is a relationship between certain criteria and success rate in college. A religion faculty member published the scholarship of teaching and learning and its relationship with social justice in juried journals and presented at national conferences. A graduate education faculty member is investigating changing online pedagogy to better facilitate online learning and sharing the process and results with university faculty.

Current Status and Future Plans

What was learned through this process? When implementing change, there will always be a natural resistance. A way to increase involvement has been to increase awareness of the scholarship of teaching and learning. Involving the majority of the stakeholders through technology has been an effective technique. The university climate encourages growth and change. This allows the freedom to fly the plane at the

same time it is being built. SoTL is emerging and changing to meet the needs of all stakeholders at Saint Leo. In order to do so, the SoTL committee is expanding and becoming the Forum on Teaching Excellence. The name change enables SoTL to be fully implemented and allows for greater alignment with the university's KRA and academic expectations, SACS Quality Enhance Plan (QEP) focus on how critical thinking and our core values impact decision making. In keeping with the university's Benedictine values, SoTL and the Forum on Teaching Excellence will continue to evolve to meet the needs of students and faculty to improve teaching and learning at Saint Leo University.

References

Grauerholz. L. (2010). *Enhancing teaching and research by combining both: Doing the scholarship of teaching and learning.* Unpublished manuscript.

Ravitch, D. (2010). *Death and life of the great American school system. How testing and choice are undermining education.* New York: Basic Books.
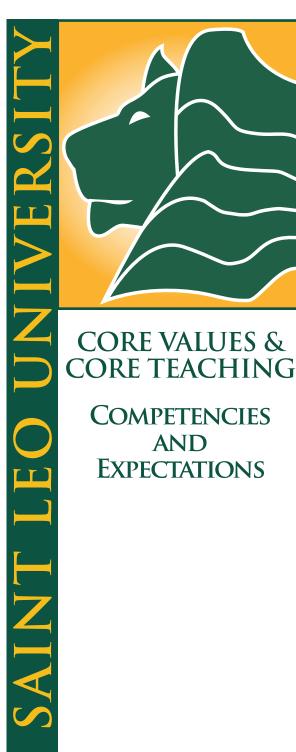
Saint Leo University is not just about policies and procedures. While these are necessary, our University is, most of all, about people with a mission to educate and prepare other people to make a good living and a better life for themselves and their communities. Benedictine monks and nuns founded Saint Leo University. We emphasize today the core Benedictine values of community, respect for all and stewardship, along with the values of excellence, personal development and integrity. We work hard in all of our many locations to fulfill our mission and establish environments that manifest these values.

- Dr. Arthur F. Kirk, Jr.
President, Saint Leo University

All Saint Leo University full-time faculty, instructors, and adjuncts are teachers committed to serving our students and our communities. Our core values are directly related to teaching expectations and evaluations will be focused on academic instructional skills. We hold high expectations for both our faculty and our students. Instructional competencies for all on-ground and on-line faculty, full and part-time, are outlined in this brochure.

SAINT LEO UNIVERSITY

SAINT LEO UNIVERSITY
33701 State Road 52
PO Box 6665, MC 2066
Saint Leo, FL 33574-6665

CORE VALUES &
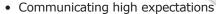CORE TEACHING

COMPETENCIES
AND
EXPECTATIONS

respect

- Respecting diverse talents and ways of learning
- Demonstrating, through attire, demeanor, and use of the language of the field, what it means to work as a professional in higher education as well as in the field of study
- Using strategies to accommodate different learning styles and experiential backgrounds
- Drawing connections between new information and prior student knowledge
- Providing feedback to students on assessments beyond right/wrong
- Providing corrective feedback to wrong answers/incorrect information posed by students
- Providing prompt and meaningful feedback
- Using students' names when asking or answering questions
- Modeling respect towards others
- Responding to questions from students quickly and with clarity

community

- Facilitating student-to-student interaction
- Encouraging contact between students and faculty
- Developing reciprocity and cooperation among students
- Designing and planning situations where students can learn from each other
- Encouraging thoughtful student participation
- Fostering a caring environment

excellence

- Communicating high expectations
- Clearly stating goals or objectives for the instructional session
- Assuring that objectives are demonstrable and measurable
- Planning and implementing lessons that utilize varied motivational strategies and resources
- Using examples and non-examples relevant to student experience and course objectives
- Using active learning techniques
- Giving clear directions and checking for understanding
- Demonstrating an appropriate depth of knowledge and thought for the course
- Communicating knowledge of subject matter in a manner that facilitates student learning
- Demonstrating the ability to analyze difficult concepts and procedures and to present them in terms of component parts
- Organizing and sequencing steps to ensure and enhance learning
- Demonstrating appropriate instructional and delivery strategies for the content to be learned
- Recognizing common novice misconceptions in the subject area and being able to correct them
- Guiding and prompting learning
- Using effective written and oral communication skills
- Summarizing main points at the close of the instructional session
- Ensuring methods of assessment are clear to the student
- Utilizing informal assessments when appropriate

responsible stewardship

- Encouraging time on task
- Using appropriate technology to enhance learning
- Maintaining smooth and efficient routines
- Using learning time effectively
- Re-engaging students who are off-task
- Actively monitoring the learning environment
- Guiding students in the application, retention, and transfer of course content to their personal and professional lives

personal development

- Presenting up-to-date developments in the field
- Regularly reflecting on his/her teaching and making changes as necessary
- Actively engaging in activities that enhance personal and professional learning
- Modeling a commitment to life-long learning

integrity

- Assuring information provided in classroom interactions is accurate
- Maintaining honesty in all dealings with students
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Presenting the content as outlined in the curriculum guide
- Assessing the goals/objectives
- Accurately maintaining student records