

## A NOTE FROM THE COORDINATOR, Marianne Sarkis, Ph.D.

In an effort to reboot its presence on campus, the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) is excited to launch this bi-weekly CETL Newsflash. We are hoping that this newsletter will serve as a means to announce upcoming events of interest to faculty, new content on the website, and to share teaching-related news from Clark and elsewhere.

As the interim CETL coordinator, I hope this Newsletter can become a forum for faculty to share and come together around teaching excellence.

**Do you have an idea for an innovative teaching strategy? Do you need help interpreting your course evaluations and identifying ways of addressing some of the feedback? Are you involved in an initiative or project that would you like to share with the rest of the faculty?**

Email [cetl@clarku.edu](mailto:cetl@clarku.edu) with any ideas, questions, or announcements. I look forward to hearing from you and working together on teaching excellence at Clark.

Marianne Sarkis, Ph.D.

## THE LEEP CORNER



Liberal Education & Effective Practice

### Learnings from LEEP Lunches

Throughout 2014, small groups of full-time faculty gathered with Dean Mary-Ellen Boyle to discuss their perspectives on LEEP implementation. Convivial conversations - and recommendations - ensued:

- 1) LEEP means being mindful, intentional, and explicit in our expectations for students. → *Therefore, faculty should make LEEP explicit where it is currently implicit -on syllabi, in assignments, and in discussions with students.*
- 2) We need to share pedagogical innovations and examples across disciplines. Some (not all) faculty are anxious, fear they aren't doing enough, or the right things in class. → *CETL will sponsor such a workshop this spring.*
- 3) "Practice" is still elusive, and uncomfortable to some. → *Exemplar communities are addressing and will be sharing campus-wide. Not all classes need to focus on practice, though majors need to build towards it.*
- 4) Misconceptions abound! → *LEEP myths will be explored in subsequent CETL New Flashes*
- 5) Students aren't always motivated to engage in high impact experiences, so we might consider a requirement. → *Stay posted for more on this as the semester unfolds!*

## IN THIS ISSUE

- A note from the Coordinator
- The LEEP Corner
- Faculty Development Opportunities
- Upcoming Events
- Web sites, blogs, and other resources on teaching
- CETL Community Conversation on Student Evaluations
- Faculty Survey on Student Evaluations

## CETL STEERING COMMITTEE

### Faculty:

Jing Zhang (GSOM)  
Louis Colonna-Romano (Physics)  
Robert Boatright (Political Science)  
Scott Hendricks (Philosophy)

### Staff:

Mary-Ellen Boyle (Dean of the College)  
Rachael Shea (Library)  
Cheryl Turner Elwell (ITS)  
Jen Plante (LEEP Center)

### Coordinator:

Marianne Sarkis (IDCE)

## ABOUT CETL

The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) offers programs and services to enhance the quality of education at Clark University. These programs are designed to serve faculty and PhD students, are created in response to faculty-identified needs, and are guided by the CETL Steering Committee.

The CETL website also serves as a resource for information related to pedagogy and the learning sciences.



@ClarkCETL

## FACULTY DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) Partnership Academy (July 13-17) at University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, is inviting applications for 12 community-academic partners to attend a week-long intensive CBPR course. Deadline to apply is March 16, 2015: For more information and the full CFP <https://ctsi.msu.edu/announcement/cbpr-partnership-academy-call-applications>

**Teaching Excellence Summer Institute at Assumption College (June 23-25, 2015):** The first Teaching Excellence Summer Institute will be held this year from June 23-25 on the campus of Assumption College, and will offer new, future, and early-career faculty the opportunity to learn about recent research on teaching and learning in higher education; to explore innovative approaches to course design, classroom practice, and assessment; and to gain feedback from our renowned institute faculty. Faculty include: James Lang, Ph.D., Sara Cavanagh, Ph.D., Derek Bruff, Ph.D., Andrew Kaufman, Ph.D. For more information: <http://www.assumption.edu/teaching-excellence>.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Th March 12 | <b>CETL Lunch (Lurie): Clark Alumni Perceptions of Institutional Support for the LEEP Learning Outcomes; Baseline survey report</b> |
| W March 18  | <b>Inclusion as Teaching Excellence Series: Students with Disabilities (Winton Dining)</b>  |
| H March 19  | <b>Difficult Dialogues teaching lunch (Higgins Lounge)</b>  |
| W March 24  | <b>Faculty Assembly</b>   |

For information about any of these events, RSVPs, and contacts, visit <http://www.clarku.edu/departments/cetl/>

## WEB SITES, BLOGS, AND OTHER RESOURCES ON TEACHING

A [“Best of” List that Celebrates the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning](#) from the Teaching Professor Blog: A list of top eight articles about innovative approaches to teaching, student engagement, self-assessment, improving student writing, developing and using rubrics, and student resistance. The Teaching Professor Blog is an active blog on effective college teaching.

A list of [favorite faculty development blogs from Prof. Hacker](#) writing for the Chronicle of Higher Education. The article has links to blogs by faculty developers and instructional designers with a wide range of topics, including flipping the classroom, developing blended courses, and teaching online courses.

Do you have a favorite blog that you follow on faculty development and teaching excellence? Please share it with us at [cetl@clarku.edu](mailto:cetl@clarku.edu).

## CETL Community Conversation on Student Evaluations

This semester, CETL has been tasked to review teaching evaluations at Clark. While we realize that this is a conversation that has taken place in the past, in light of LEEP’s implementation in the curriculum, CETL would like to solicit faculty’s feedback about their experiences and thoughts about the current system. We will synthesize this information, review what other schools are currently doing, and review the general literature on student evaluations. We will present our findings and recommendations to the administration at the end of the spring semester.

To obtain faculty’s input, we will be setting up a confidential and anonymous form that faculty can use to give us their feedback.

We will present the preliminary results from the survey in this newsletter. Stay tuned!

## FACULTY SURVEY ON STUDENT EVALUATIONS

Stark and Freishtat (2014) note in a recent article reviewing Student Evaluations of Teaching (SET) that:

*Among faculty, student evaluations of teaching (SET) are a source of pride and satisfaction—and frustration and anxiety. High-stakes decisions including tenure and promotions rely on SET. Yet it is widely believed that they are primarily a popularity contest; that it’s easy to “game” ratings; that good teachers get bad ratings and vice versa; and that rating anxiety stifles pedagogical innovation and encourages faculty to water down course content. What’s the truth? (2)*  
Stark, P. and Freishtat, R. (2014) *An Evaluation of Course Evaluations*.

<http://www.stat.berkeley.edu/~stark/Preprints/evaluations14.pdf>. Accessed February 15, 2015.

We would like to poll the faculty about their experiences with the student evaluations. Are there any specific questions you would like to us to ask in the survey? If so, please email [cetl@clarku.edu](mailto:cetl@clarku.edu). The link to the online survey will be sent in the next issue.