

## **SoTL, CASTL, and the CSTL at Southeast Missouri State University: A Symbiotic Relationship**

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### **Abstract:**

*Communities are built on a foundation of shared commitments, goals, and ideals. The Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning provides the infrastructure necessary to organize, support, and illuminate SoTL efforts, establishing communities within and across disciplines and institutions. Our experience with CASTL demonstrates that programs that encourage and reward the willful participation in a SoTL Community—be it through our SoTL Fellows Program, the CASTL Campus Program, or the CASTL Institutional Leadership Program—have a direct, profound, and lasting impact on the legitimacy, quality, and proliferation of scholarly work, as well teaching innovation and learning outcomes.*

### **Key Words:**

Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, CASTL, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, SoTL, Community, scholarly work, teaching innovation, learning outcomes.

### **History and Perspective**

Advancements in any field of study seldom occur in isolation; rather, they are defined by a network of interconnections among related elements converging around a common theme. Such is the case with the scholarship of teaching and learning. Faculty

from often disparately related fields separated by disciplinary borders and institutional boundaries become curious about how students learn. They question the effectiveness of their teaching methods. Amidst an onslaught of new technologies and age-old curiosities, they entrust the fate of their fields and the noble concept of simply being well educated to their students, hopeful that they will become good and effective consumers and producers of knowledge themselves.

In some instances the efforts appear relatively solitary –a professor deciding to teach or grade or interact with students differently- and noting the students’ reactions. In other cases they may be well orchestrated, part of a clearly defined objective designed to enhance the quality of teaching or the level of student comprehension and to share the results with the broader academic community. In many cases it is reasonable to posit that it is a combination of both, and perhaps the development of the latter by and through the efforts of the former. Perhaps there are teaching and learning innovations that emerge from internal and external influences. Regardless of size, scope, or motivation, there exists a common denominator: active engagement in the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Southeast Missouri State University presents an interesting case study not only of the evolution of advancements in the scholarship of teaching and learning, but also of an institutional history intertwined with developments in SoTL as a field and the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning as an organization intimately related to many of the most recent and profound developments associated with that field. The symbiotic relationship that exists among and between the institution, the organization, and the field may be instructive to others wishing to pursue such a path.

### **Context**

Founded in 1873 as a teacher’s college, Southeast Missouri State University has grown into a comprehensive University with more than 200 academic programs in six colleges, plus the Kent Library. The University offers bachelor’s degrees, master’s degrees, and a select number of joint doctoral degrees. With more than 10,500 students and an average class size of 25 to 30 students, the student-faculty ratio is 18 to 1.

While the University requires and rewards research and scholarship, the teaching focus remains a defining characteristic of the institution. Excellence in teaching and learning is part of our ethos, rooted in and reinforced by at least four prominent campus cornerstones: a nationally-renowned general education curriculum --the University Studies Program; a well-established Center for Scholarship in Teaching and Learning (CSTL); an institutionally-designed and adopted Teacher-Scholar Model; and a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Fellows Program. A fifth element that has been essential to our efforts is the Office of the Provost. Since 2000, Dr. Jane Stephens, Provost, has been a proponent not only of the teacher-scholar model, but the SoTL Fellows Program as well. In addition to providing administrative support and a voice to the scholarship of teaching and learning, she identified our SoTL Fellows Program as a Provost’s Initiative when it was first launched. She has been an indispensable ally in our efforts to create and grow a program that values, supports, and rewards scholarly teaching, pedagogical research, and interaction between the CSTL, CASTL, and SoTL.

Several faculty have been actively involved in the SoTL-CASTL nexus over the years, but five in particular merit attention at this juncture. David Starrett, professor of Biology, Dean of the School of University Studies and Academic Information Services, and Director of the Center for Scholarship in Teaching and Learning was an original member of Southeast's CASTL Campus Program team, along with Paul Lloyd and Ken Callis, both professors of Psychology. David has served as Director of the CSTL since 2000, and chaired the Teaching Associates committee as it developed the SoTL Fellows program and successfully obtained the first round of internal grant dollars to fund it.

An original member of that committee, and currently its chair, is Brian Smentkowski, associate Professor of Political Science and Faculty Associate in the CSTL. As Faculty Associate, Brian oversees the CSTL's Teaching, Learning, and Assessment efforts, and chairs the Teaching Associates Committee, the Technology Associates Committee, the SOTL Fellows Program, and the Teaching Enhancement Workshops for New Faculty. He was a member of the Teaching Associates Committee that authored the Teacher-Scholar Model, the SoTL Fellows Program, and he authored the Core Continuing Grant that currently funds the SoTL Fellows Program.

Kathleen Conway, professor of Elementary, Early, and Special Education, has been a very active member of the Southeast-CASTL team. Her professional interests, teaching, and research involve the development of reflective thinking by teacher candidates; constructivist approaches to teaching Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies; and the use of cooperative learning by teacher candidates in their teaching. Kathy held a SoTL Fellowship in 2006-07, and currently serves as an active member of the SoTL Associates Committee. On our campus, she ranks among the most active of faculty in her engagement with colleagues involved in the scholarship of teaching and learning.

### **The Subtle Yet Profound Significance of Adding an “S”**

In her 2008 book, *Enhancing Learning through the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: The Challenges and Joys of Juggling*, Kathleen McKinney noted that while different disciplines and institutions have different histories with SoTL, some dating back to the middle of the last century and others only now appearing on the horizon, as a concept, the scholarship of teaching has been commonly used and accepted in higher education for approximately 15 years. Several factors are responsible for the “SoTL Surge”, ranging from the Spellings Commission<sup>1</sup> to the technological savvy and demands of the millennial student to desires of faculty and institutions to simply reconnect with teaching. A common institutional response was to create teaching and learning centers on college campuses. Paralleling developments observed by McKinney et al, Southeast laid the foundation for its first-ever Center. Now, in the wake of its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Southeast Missouri State University's Center for Scholarship in Teaching and Learning (CSTL) has grown in size, complexity, and diversity, much as

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<sup>1</sup> Informally titled after Margaret Spellings, Secretary of Education from 2005-2009, “the Commission on The Future of Higher Education” developed strategies for reforming post-secondary education. The Commission focused on access, affordability, standards of instruction, and accountability.

had the field itself. Importantly, the connective tissue binding and stimulating the growth of the two is CASTL.

Almost thirty years ago, the idea of what would become the CSTL began when a handful of faculty perceived the need for a centralized unit to provide resources for the systematic enhancement of teaching. In 1982 this group was able to enlist the administrative support of the Provost, and in November 1984 the University Board of Regents authorized the development of a Center for Teaching and Learning. Originally, the Center consisted of a loose confederation of entities including a Writing Center, an Instructional Materials Center, a University Tutorial Services, and a computer laboratory for students, and an office for faculty development. In order to forestall any political or territorial problems that might arise by locating the Center within an academic college, the Director of the Center reported to the Director of the Library. The program was funded entirely by hard money; the budget did not support a wide range of professional development activities that were funded at the departmental, the college, or the university level at that time (e.g., professional development funds, support for faculty research or teaching enhancement projects).

Despite its meager beginnings, the Center quickly grew in size and scope due to a traditionally strong commitment to teaching excellence shared along the institutional hierarchy. In order to maximize the efficiency of the Center, certain realignments were necessary. The Writing Center (now the Center for Writing Excellence) was placed under the direction of the Dean of University Studies; the Instructional Materials Center began reporting directly to the Director of the Library; and the computer lab became the responsibility of the Computer Science Department. These developments are significant because they created the space for activities directly related to enhancing teaching and learning to expand and for faculty development to flourish. Efforts to enhance teaching and learning became more salient as the decade progressed. In the fall of 1990, a new director was hired and, as part of an increased emphasis by the University upon teaching, the Center was given greater visibility by being assigned to the Office of the Provost. The new director, a Professor of History, retained his faculty status and insisted on teaching one class a semester in order to maintain credibility with his colleagues, a status that the current CSTL Director maintains.

1990 was a pivotal year not only for Southeast, but for the nexus of CSTL, SoTL, and CASTL. In that year, Ernest Boyer, a former President of the Carnegie Foundation, published *Scholarship Reconsidered*. Almost instantly colleges and universities began subscribing to “the Boyer Model”, taking seriously the contention that teaching is scholarly work. Consequently, the scholarship of teaching and learning became more visible, more focused, more promising, and –in some ways—more challenging. Boyer’s book effectively upped the ante on SoTL, and institutions and organizations alike had to respond. For Carnegie, meeting the challenge meant devising ways to enhance the legitimacy, credibility, and proliferation of SoTL work. The seeds of CASTL were thusly, albeit quietly, sown. On campus, an era of clarity and direction emerged. The loose confederation of entities that fell under the rubric of a Center for Teaching and Learning were gone. So too was its nebulous state of being. In its place was a clear articulation of goals and objectives. The primary goals of the Center were to: (1) facilitate the instructional improvement of the faculty; (2) enhance student learning; (3) serve as a

professional development resource for all interested in the teaching/learning process; and (4) enhance the institution's reputation for teaching excellence at the local, regional and national level. Activities to achieve these goals included a mandatory, week-long Teaching Enhancement Workshop for all newly hired faculty, sponsoring a variety of workshops and conferences focused on teaching and learning issues, providing peer observation focused on the improvement of teaching, coordinating a university-wide student evaluation system, and –importantly-- supporting and conducting research on teaching/learning issues.

The last part of the previous sentence did more than reflect the impact of Boyer's seminal work; it added the **S** that was missing in the original title of the Center. The Center was renamed the Center for Scholarship in Teaching and Learning (CSTL) in 1994. Three years later, at the same time *Scholarship Assessed*, by Charles Glassick, Mary Taylor Huber, and Gene Maeroff was published, the Office of Instructional Technology (OIT) was created within the Center. The Center was thusly poised to not only provide expert assistance on new and emerging technologies effecting teaching and learning, but to ultimately begin the process of authoring and administering its own comprehensive and robust course content delivery system, the Online Instructor Suite (OIS). The CSTL increasingly became a place of innovation, experimentation, and faculty support; a common ground for faculty to meet and explore teaching methods and technological tools and techniques. A year later, the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning began laying the foundation for its CASTL Campus Program. Consisting of 12 thematic clusters, each comprised of a number of institutions of higher learning, the Program was designed to explore various issues, obstacles, and opportunities relating to the scholarship of teaching and learning. Southeast Missouri State University was an original member of the *Organizing to Foster the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* cluster, formally beginning a nine year relationship with CASTL in furtherance of accomplishing "...significant shifts in thought and practice" about the scholarship of teaching and learning.

### **The CASTL Campus Program, Our Teacher-Scholar Model, and SoTL: Early Engagement and Lasting Impact**

A culmination of forces, internal and external to the University, created the momentum necessary to move beyond elementary notions of scholarly teaching and to a more sophisticated understanding and practice of *the scholarship of teaching and learning*. One of the most important steps in this direction involved the delineation and adoption of the core principles of the Teacher-Scholar Model. Simultaneously, the *Organizing to Foster the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* cluster and the University began the process of defining the mutually reinforcing role of teaching and scholarship and the intersection of the two in furtherance of teaching and learning. On campus, what began as a task undertaken by the Teaching Associates Committee –one of the two major committees that works with the CSTL Director on the development and implementation of strategies to enhance teaching and learning—has become a hallmark of the institution's ethos. Picking up where the Boyer Model left off, the Teacher-Scholar Model at Southeast (Figure 1) encourages and recognizes intellectual activity that stimulates teaching and learning, forming an integrated process whereby scholarship complements teaching. It acknowledges that teaching fosters continued scholarship and

that learning flows naturally from the relationship between teaching and learning. For the teacher-scholar, professionalism in teaching, learning, and service is demonstrated in scholarly acts which do not necessarily result in traditional publication yet which are tangible, public and open to review by self, students, colleagues, constituents, and one's disciplinary peers.

**Figure 1: The Teacher-Scholar Model at Southeast Missouri State University<sup>2</sup>**

Under the teacher-scholar model, faculty are challenged to undertake intellectual activity that stimulates teaching and learning, forming an integrated process where various forms of scholarship and service complement teaching. Importantly, the model promotes an environment where teaching fosters continued scholarship, and learning flows naturally from the relationship between teaching, scholarship, and service. For the teacher-scholar, professionalism in teaching, learning, and service is demonstrated in scholarly acts which do not necessarily result in traditional publication yet which are tangible, public and open to review by self, students, colleagues, constituents, and one's disciplinary peers.

1. The quality of one's teaching, whether in the classroom, the lab, the studio, the field, or on the Web, is of paramount importance to the teacher-scholar who continuously evaluates his or her teaching activities for validation and improvement.
2. The teacher-scholar is not only concerned with the means whereby knowledge and skills are imparted to students, but is also a participating member of a broad community of learners related to one's discipline or area of expertise.
3. For the teacher-scholar, participation in a broadly acknowledged community of learners may take many forms, including:
  - the generation of new knowledge,
  - application and dissemination of existing knowledge,
  - integration of knowledge,
  - inquiry into existing knowledge,
  - the production, exhibition, and performance of creative works,
  - and pedagogical research related to one's discipline.

The forms of this participation will vary among disciplines, among faculty, and throughout an individual faculty member's career.

4. The teacher-scholar strives to maintain and integrate appropriate activities that relate to membership in a broader community and those that relate to instruction, such as the use of knowledge to:
  - serve the profession or the University,
  - serve regional, national, or international needs,
  - solve societal problems, and
  - engage in professional consulting.

Presented as a genuine voice of the faculty from a committee whose existence is dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in teaching and learning, the document quickly accumulated the support of both the faculty and the administration. Strategically, this was important; if the administration had proposed a new direction --a fundamental reconsideration of the value of teaching and the definition of scholarship-- faculty would certainly have reacted more adversely. It could have been perceived as policies or rules or values that flowed downwardly from a higher, non-academic echelon. Instead communication flowed upwardly, gaining legitimacy and credibility en route to the faculty senate and the office of the Provost.

<sup>2</sup> See also: [http://www.semo.edu/facultysenate/correspondence/index\\_16439.htm](http://www.semo.edu/facultysenate/correspondence/index_16439.htm)

Having established a general consensus on the attributes of the Teacher-Scholar Model, it was necessary to complement the words with action. It was vital to develop a program that supported “teacher-scholars” and not just “teachers” in one corner and “scholars” in the other. It was decidedly the goal of the CSTL for the University to become an institution that values, encourages, supports, and rewards the scholarship of teaching and learning. The mechanism for accomplishing this objective was the SoTL Fellows Program.

The SoTL Fellows Program represents another convergence of institutional-organizational involvement. On campus there existed a ground-swell of support for efforts to enhance SoTL activities. Through our participation in CASTL’s *Organizing to Foster the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* cluster, ideas for stimulating the growth, development, and diffusion of SoTL emerged. Chief among them were objectives relating to sharing and developing strategies for promoting SoTL and investigating SoTL grant programs. Indeed, these ideas became the twin pillars upon which Southeast’s Program would be built. Specifically, Southeast’s goal was to create a grant-based program that would identify, support, and reward the scholarship of teaching and learning campus-wide. In 2004, the CSTL authored a Funding For Results Grant Application in furtherance of a Provost’s Initiative to establish and maintain for a term of three years a SoTL Fellows Program.

Based on the premise that there is a strong connection between classroom innovation and enhanced learning, the CSTL proposed to foster student learning by supporting groups of faculty in designing, implementing, and evaluating the impact on learning of innovations in their courses. At its core, the SoTL Fellows Program was designed to develop cohorts of teacher-scholars actively engaged in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning through the invention, adaptation, or application of teaching innovations in the classroom. The idea was to not only support individual projects annually, but to develop a growing base of innovative instructors campus-wide. From its inception, a key component of the Program was to develop a sense of community among SoTL Fellows, both within cohorts and across them. A second and related step involved developing a sense of community beyond our borders, and this was expected to occur via the presentation and publication of SoTL work.

Importantly, part of the philosophical and practical foundation of both the original (and continuing) grant and the Program itself is derived from our institutional affiliation with CASTL. Southeast’s active membership in the Carnegie Campus Program enhanced our credibility and commitment to SoTL while at the same time providing ideas worth pursuing through the SoTL Fellows Program. CASTL provided more than a chip of legitimacy to throw into the game; it provided a sense of direction, experience, and commonality. It fostered the sense that a grant-based program would be both practical and realistic. Southeast took the risk of writing the grant application and was, in fact, awarded a three year Demonstration Grant. The significance of this is, on the one hand, obvious—it enabled the Program to come to life—but on the other it revealed a hidden promise, or hope: if all goes well, the evidence gathered during the three year period would demonstrate the value of the Program to the academic community, increasing the odds of procuring a Core Continuing Grant, a subject we will address shortly.

With University support, a funding stream, and a committee dedicated exclusively to the SoTL Fellows Program firmly in place, it was necessary to identify and recruit SoTL Fellows and create a system to help them succeed. Identifying potential SoTL scholars is a difficult task. One cannot simply announce that a support program exists and wait and see who applies. Faculty are notoriously critical creatures. Consequently, before actually seeking to identify Fellows, it was necessary to generate information and enthusiasm about the Program. To this end, members of the Teaching Associates Committee—who represent all colleges on campus—disseminated information within their respective colleges, both formally and informally; the Dean of University Studies and CSTL Director primed the program at the administrative level; workshops were designed and implemented to generate knowledge about and interest in the scholarship of teaching and learning; open forums on the subject and how to apply were sponsored by the CSTL and the Teaching Associates; and a detailed Call For Proposals was issued that thoroughly described the program, its requirements, and its rewards. Frankly, three items were routinely emphasized: professional development, compensation, and support.

Once the public relations campaign was completed the first Call for Proposals was issued. Faculty were invited to apply for one of up to ten Fellowships to be awarded annually. The review process was and is blind and competitive. According to the CFP, proposals would have to identify an *idea* intended to improve teaching and learning, specify learning *goals* (how the project will enhance student learning), map out a *strategy* for systematically executing the project and examining data, articulate methods of *implementation*, and propose a method of *evaluation and measurement* of project outcomes. The CFP (Appendix B) indicates that faculty must also address at least two University Studies Objectives (part of our general education governing principles) in the application.

On the sponsoring side of the equation, the CSTL needed to be able to help the faculty succeed. The CFP essentially asks instructors to take great risks; to step outside the comfort of their own fields of study and into a realm where their efforts may not be viewed as research proper. It was obviously essential that a robust support system be in-tact. It was decided that the Teaching Associates (and now the SoTL Associates), by virtue of their dedication to and accomplishments in the field of teaching and learning, would serve as peer mentors. By design, they would meet with all Fellows in nine to ten separate meetings throughout the academic year, as well as in small groups and one-on-one consultations. The schedule of meetings was (and remains) deliberately front-loaded in order to stimulate active participation, get the fellows started in the right direction, and identify/address various research-oriented needs. Most of the work of the SoTL Fellows and Associates occurs in intense working groups structured around the interests of the Fellows, and many special sessions focus on research design and methodology. As semesters progress the dependence on the SoTL Associates is deliberately decreased and attention turns how innovations may be refined, how results may be systematically analyzed, and how projects may be prepared to be publicly shared through presentations and publications.



## Signs of Success: The SoTL Fellows Program and the transition from CASTL Campus Cluster to CASTL Leadership Institution

As we had hoped, the first three years of the SoTL Fellows Program were a success. Thirty-one Fellowships were competitively awarded to faculty representing 18 of 22 departments and 6 of the 7 colleges in the University structure. All of the Fellows who successfully completed the Program delivered at least one on-campus presentation, while a majority of participants presented work at regional-, national-, and international conferences. A subset of those faculty have published the results of their projects in peer reviewed SoTL journals and discipline-specific journals dedicated to teaching and learning. Moreover, ideas about innovation were beginning to spread across disciplines and departments, and in some cases curricula were revised on the basis of SoTL work. These success stories were parlayed into two other, significant accomplishments –inclusion in the CASTL Institutional Leadership Program and procurement of a five year Core Continuing Grant.

Just as CASTL helped Southeast develop a successful SoTL Program, the strength of our SoTL Program enabled Southeast to earn its place in the CASTL Institutional Leadership Program's *Building SoTL Communities* cluster. The cluster consists of seven institutions representing three countries and two continents: Dartmouth College, Kwantlen University College, Queen's University, Ryerson University, Southeast Missouri State University, The Ohio State University, and the University of Glasgow. The diversity of the cluster lends itself to the task of developing a global interconnectedness among institutions of higher learning much as the strength of each institution lends itself to the task of conceptualizing and operationalizing SoTL as a multi-faceted construct and endeavor. Its mission is to develop a sense of community among and between institutions of higher learning, structured around a shared commitment to the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Community Building is a noble but nebulous concept. What is a SoTL Community and how is one built? There is no static answer. But if we delve into the roots of the word "community" a bit of conceptual clarity emerges. *Communis* means something in common; something public and shared. Dissection of that word reveals that *com* means together and *munis* pertains to performing some sort of service; doing or accomplishing something. So, by definition, building SoTL communities involves working together to create and share a body of knowledge including but not limited to theories, methods, data, and practices about the scholarship of teaching and learning. When we speak of building SoTL communities, we may be addressing things we do on our own campuses, in our own classrooms, as well as those activities that extend beyond our borders, all of which reveals a shared effort and have a shared value. Consequently, there is not a single "community" per se, but several different communities that emanate from a set of core principles.

One way to imagine SoTL communities, as Southeast has, is to envision three concentric circles (Figure 2). In the inner-most circle there are the activities of the instructors who comprise a community of teachers and learners, and a project designed to measure the effects of some teaching innovation. In the outer-most circle there exists the academe. It is vast but informed by what happens in the smaller circles as much as the smaller circles are informed by the collective body of work and scholars in the

extended outer circle. Consider here the value of “going public” and engaging in the giving and getting part of scholarship; sharing results with the broader academic community and retrieving information from it for further investigation and work. In-between lies the institution, and herein one finds such things as SoTL Fellows Programs, teaching and learning centers, professional- and institutional development offices, and the like, all structured around the core principle of engaging in, supporting, and valuing SoTL work.

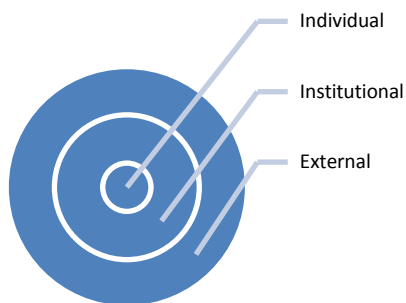
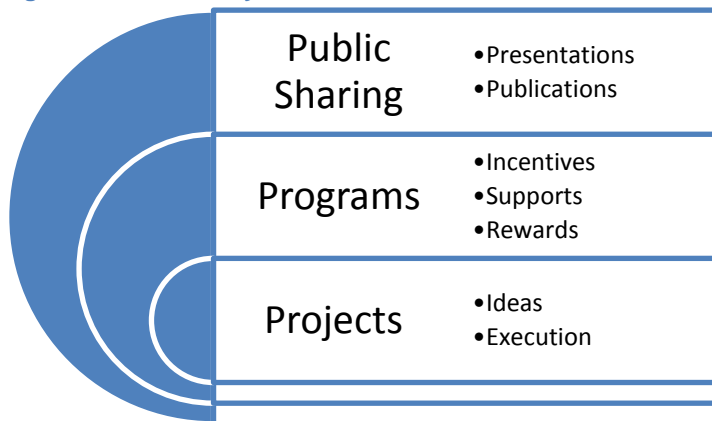


Figure 2 SoTL Communities

If we label these different communities, from smallest to largest, individual, institutional, and external, we can get a glimpse into their respective roles and their interconnections. Moreover, we can identify the processes by which communities at different levels influence one another (Figure 3). For example, at the individual level the focus is on the project. How do we engage, assist, assess and reward faculty undertaking a systematic analysis of

the impact of teaching innovation or critical reflection? How do we foster a sense of community and identity among them? At Southeast, the SoTL Fellows Program is the intervening variable in-between the idea stage and the public sharing stage. It provides the incentives, supports, and rewards intended to value and encourage both innovative teaching and scholarship.

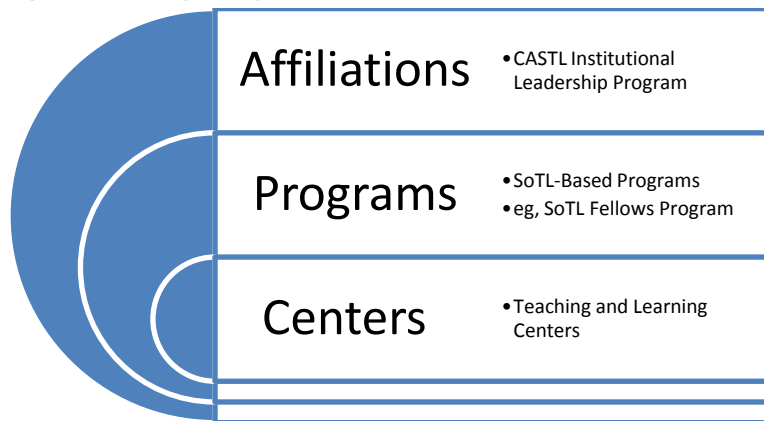
Figure 3 Processes by which communities at different levels influence one another



At the institutional level the focus is on the development of programs, centers, and institutional development. The goal or exercise for faculty to consider at this stage is how to create the best intervening variable imaginable. In the case of Southeast, an existing and thriving Center was already intact. However, as much of this paper has already suggested, it

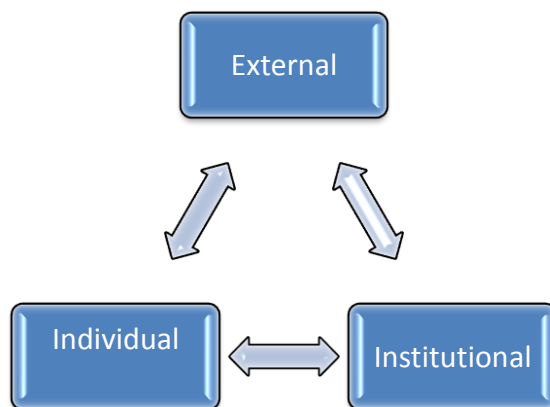
was vital to develop *systems* of engagement, assistance, assessment, and value. One of the core objectives was to have a Center widely recognized for its role in the scholarship of teaching and learning. This required the CSTL to become engaged at three levels at once: at among the professoriate, through faculty development; at the administrative level, shoring up support; and beyond campus borders, sharing experiences with the broader academic community. The SoTL Fellows Program and both iterations of involvement with CASTL have enabled us to accomplish that goal, the nature of which is discussed in greater detail, below.

Figure 4 Gaining recognition for the Center's role in SoTL



In the external community, the questions and objectives pertain to developing an identity and a sense of community beyond the campus borders. What is the relationship between the individual, the institutional, and the broader external community? How does each benefit from the other?

Figure 5 Relationships between individual, institutional and the external community.



A concrete example of the external environment benefitting the institution and stimulating its growth and development may be derived from how Southeast succeeded in securing a second SoTL program grant. As alluded to earlier, the not-so-hidden agenda of the CSTL was to secure the original, demonstration grant confident that we would be able to demonstrate the success and promise of the SoTL Fellows Program and the value of SoTL itself. The second grant, a Funding for Results *Core Continuing Grant*, is part of an internal, institutional grant program. Units on campus compete for multi-year grants to improve student learning. The process is a remarkably competitive, for the selection of programs to be funded requires and indicates that its objectives are considered essential and defining characteristic of the University. Based in part on our affiliation with the Building SoTL Communities cluster, we were able to legitimately and justifiably request funding on the grounds that we had created and maintained a highly successful and internationally recognized SoTL Fellows Program. We were able to argue that in addition to establishing institutional credibility in the realm of the scholarship of teaching and learning, our involvement with CASTL enabled us to accumulate and share with the campus community new perspectives, developments, and knowledge, as well as methods of teaching and learning drawn from around the

world. CASTL affiliation conferred legitimacy on our claims that what we were doing was not only respected, but revered in the wider scholarly community. Evidence of value granted from outside the university environment is highly regarded in the quest for institutional support for programs of any kind. The value added through our continued affiliation with CASTL was beneficial to our case, and in 2008, we were notified that the CSTL had been awarded a Core Continuing Grant to support the SoTL Fellows Program for five years, with \$50,000 in funding.

External support for a program would not exist in the absence of stellar internal efforts. To assess how the individual level benefits the institutional level, it is instructive to examine the productivity of the SoTL Fellows Program on campus. Evidence of the success of the SoTL Fellows Program can be found not only in the number of Fellowships competitively awarded, but in the diversity of academic programs they represent. Core Continuing Grants require that a program be of value to the entire university. As Table 1, below, indicates, between 2005 and 2009, 42 SoTL Fellowships have been competitively awarded to faculty in 21 departments and all 7 academic colleges including Kent Library.<sup>3</sup> This diversity demonstrates a commitment to enhancing teaching and learning across the curriculum, as opposed to within specific sectors on campus, and establishes a shared sense of value among students and faculty for continuous efforts to improve student learning.

Another key indicator of SoTL success is derived from feedback indicating that the faculty are integrating successful elements of their projects into other classes they teach, that other faculty are adapting methods from the Fellows, and that word-of-mouth is encouraging participation in the SoTL Fellows Program. One of the latent goals of the Program was to foster this sort of grass roots movement whereby faculty learn from one another and not necessarily from a presumably authoritative source such as the CSTL. The first sign of success in this regard was frightening: the CSTL and the SoTL Associates sponsored a series of open forum to discuss the SoTL application process and to help faculty write successful proposals. The number of attendees was abysmal, yet we received 16 project proposals. As it turned out, faculty were consulting one another. With 42 former Fellows on campus it was easy for interested faculty to seek out and work closely with colleagues who have held and successfully completed SoTL Fellowships. The impact of continued use over time and across the faculty not only created a community of practice campus-wide, but several communities in which teaching and learning are enhanced.

Finally, there is the issue of how the individual and the institutional environments contribute to the external environment. In the three years since we have become a CASTL Leadership Institution, we have witnessed the presentation and publication of scores of SoTL papers. We have also taken very seriously the notion of building communities in our region. To this end our institution has hosted two SoTL symposiums, each featuring a prominent voice in the field, and intends to continue this program on an annual basis. The CSTL Faculty Associate and author of the SoTL grant has visited various institutions in the state to give keynote speeches and to discuss SoTL-related topics including program development, engaging the campus community, developing

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<sup>3</sup> In April of 2009, 10 proposals were selected for AY 2009-10, bringing the total awards to 52 in five years.

successful programs, and concepts of community. He has also presented work at national conferences on the subject of Building SoTL Communities and Methods of Engagement, Assessment, and Reward. Various Southeast faculty remain active in SoTL-based communities in the state and through organizations such as POD.

One of the main contributions of Southeast Missouri State University to the Building SoTL Communities cluster and the academe writ large is the creation and hosting of the cluster's official website. The purpose of the website is to give a sense of identity to the cluster, to highlight the interactions between the cluster and CASTL, and the contributions of the member institutions. An obvious but important reality is that a web-presence transcends time and space. It is global. Anywhere, at any time, people from around the world can seek out or stumble upon a digital presence and learn about the scholarship of teaching and learning. From the main page, visitors can learn about Building SoTL Communities, the activities of the teaching and learning centers of member institutions, their SoTL-based activities, or simply link to the Carnegie page to learn more about the parent organization, other clusters, and related issues and events. For the cluster and its visitors, it is a common ground, a vital electronic neighborhood in the SoTL community.

A key feature of this site--and of the cluster's efforts-- is the index of SoTL research available to the user via the SoTL Project Database. This has been by far the most challenging yet potentially most promising project associated with the cluster. On the designer's side, it is incredibly difficult and time consuming to develop and maintain a properly functioning data submission program. On the member's side --and we are a member--it is very difficult to stimulate, organize, and facilitate the submission of projects. As such, it has proved remarkably difficult to populate the database. There appear to be two major, but solvable, reasons for this predicament. The first involves logistics. For data to be submitted, they must first be identified, and this requires each institution to have at least one person who effectively serves as a conduit between the faculty and the database. This is more difficult than it sounds, for even on a "small" campus it is difficult to identify all of the faculty doing SoTL work. The task becomes increasingly complicated as the faculty must then be instructed as to how to submit their information, or to procure the manuscripts and supporting documentation to be submitted by the contact person him- or herself. One solution to this, which is in the works, involves the development of a streamlined form that can be distributed to faculty for direct submission.

The second issue involves a reluctance among faculty to release work that has not, yet, been published. The cornerstone of the argument is that incomplete work that goes public may be regarded by editors as "published", thusly diminishing its status as original, first-release work. Compounding this is the sense that works in progress may be taken up by others, beating them to the publishing punch. Gradually, we are beginning to see progress in this regard, encouraging faculty that inclusion in the data base is much like providing unpublished papers at conferences; the work is safe and sound and not necessarily for citation without the consent of the author. Again, a solvable but labor intensive effort, but one which gives us hope. In the final analysis, we are optimistic that the database will be populated so that the searchable index can

reveal the diversity of projects, faculty, disciplines, interests, and outcomes associated with the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Figure 6 SoTL Fellowships Awarded by College, 2005-2009

College	2005 -06	2006 -07	2007 -08	2008- 09	2009 -10	Tota l	Faculty N*
Health & Human Services	3	4	2	3	1	13	83
Liberal Arts	4	2	3	1	2	12	149
Science and Math	1	1	3	4	1**	10	78
Education	1	3	0	1	2	7	39
Business	1	0	2	1	2	6	44
Kent Library	1	0	0	0	0	1	8
Poly-Tech	0	0	0	1	2	3	24
<i>Annual Totals</i>	11	10	10	11	10	52	

Figure 7 SoTL Fellowships Awarded by Department, 2005-2009

Department	2005 -06	2006 -07	2007 -08	2008- 09	2009 -10	Tota l	Faculty N*
Accounting and MIS	1	0	2	1	1	5	18
Biology	1	0	0	1	0	2	20
Chemistry	0	0	0	1	0	1	13
Communication	3	0	0	0	0	3	16
Communication Disorders	1	0	0	0	0	1	9
Computer Science	0	0	0	1	0	1	8
Criminal Justice	0	0	1	1	0	2	7
Early, Elementary, and Secondary Education	1	2	0	1	2	6	16
English	0	0	0	1	1	2	23
Foreign Languages (Spanish)	0	0	1	0	0	1	12
Health, Human Performance, Recreation	0	1	1	0	0	2	16
History	1	0	0	0	1	2	14
Human Environmental Studies	1	0	0	1	0	2	26
Industrial & Engineering Technology	0	0	0	1	1	2	16
Kent Library	1	0	0	0	0	1	8
Management/Marketing	0	0	0	0	1	1	15
Math	0	1	2	1	**	4	27
Middle and Secondary Education	0	1	0	0	0	1	6
Nursing	1	3	0	1	1	6	20
Political Science, Philosophy, and Religion (Political Science)	0	0	1	0	0	1	14
Psychology	0	2	0	0	0	2	17
Physics and Physics Engineering	0	0	1	0	1	2	14
Theater and Dance	0	0	1	0	0	1	12
<b>Number of Departments</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>		
<b>Number of Colleges</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>		

**Total Number of Departments Participating in SoTL Fellows Program, 2005-2009**

**22**

**Total Number of Colleges Participating in SoTL Fellows Program, 2005-2009**

**7**

\*\* denotes total number of full-time faculty in each unit.

\*\*\* denotes a project deferred from 2008-09 and awarded in 2009-10.

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- CASTL Institutional Leadership Program:  
<http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/programs/sub.asp?key=21&subkey=2025&topkey=21>
- Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (POD):  
<http://podnetwork.org>
- Southeast Missouri State University Center for Scholarship in Teaching and Learning:  
<http://www.cstl.semo.edu>
- Southeast Missouri State University SoTL Fellows Program:  
<http://www.cstl.semo.edu/sotl>
- Southeast Missouri State University Demonstration Grant Information:  
<http://www2.semo.edu/provost/ffr/demo.htm>
- Southeast Missouri State University Core Continuing Grant Information:  
<http://www2.semo.edu/provost/ffr/core.doc>