

The Attraction, Value and Future of SoTL: Carnegie Affiliates' Perspective

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Abstract:

The Carnegie Foundation's initiative to promote the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) through the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) program ended in October 2009. The Carnegie Affiliates were a collection of 17 diverse institutions in the United States and Canada that chose to make a connection to the CASTL program within its last three years, several within the last year of the program. Each Affiliate agreed to explore the place of SoTL work in its institution, and to undertake activities that would provide support and recognition for ongoing inquiry into evidence-based improvement of student learning. In response to many questions posed about the sustainability and future of SoTL, this article reveals the Affiliates' viewpoint on these critical issues. Findings from their self-study indicate specific factors that led institutions to "officially" connect to the SoTL movement and the benefits that accrued as a result. Based on their collective experience and self-study, and informed by reflective discussions held at the final convening on October 21, 2009, the Affiliates offer lessons-learned and suggestions for colleagues or institutional leaders who are seeking perspectives and information about institutionally engaging with SoTL.

Key Words:

Carnegie Affiliates, CASTL, CASTL Affiliates, SoTL, scholarship, teaching, learning, cross-institutional, collaborations

Introduction

In addition to its rich history of advancing teaching and learning since 1905, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has been a major promoter of the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) for nearly two decades. In 1990, Carnegie President Ernest Boyer introduced the expression “scholarship of teaching” into the vocabulary of higher education with the publication of *Scholarship Reconsidered* (Boyer, 1990). This seminal work exhorted colleges and universities to embrace a new broader vision of scholarship in order to tap the full range of faculty talents and to foster vital connections between academic institutions and their local communities. Boyer proposed the recognition of four types of scholarship: discovery, application, integration and teaching. His description of the fourth type of scholarship contained many of the characteristics of what is now called the “scholarship of teaching and learning,” or SoTL. However, for many in the SoTL movement today, a fully developed definition of SoTL would include peer review and making results public (Hutchings, 1999; Smith, 2001). While similar concepts had previously been discussed (Cross, 1986) and later critical distinctions between scholarly teaching and the scholarship of teaching surfaced (Richlin, 2001, 2003), as President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Boyer was able to bring national and international attention to SoTL.

In 1998, under the leadership of his successor, Lee Shulman, Carnegie initiated new programs to promote SoTL across the academy under the CASTL (Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning) banner. The first of these was the CASTL Scholars program, which selected 140 post-secondary faculty, many distinguished researchers in their disciplines, to populate six cohorts of CASTL scholars over nine years. These scholars worked on individual scholarship of teaching and learning projects and many went on to become leaders in the SoTL movement. Carnegie also initiated the Scholarly and Professional Societies Program to encourage and garner recognition of SoTL by the disciplines.

To build support at the institutional level for the scholarship of teaching and learning, in 1998 the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching initiated the first of three programs aimed at institutions. The initial program, from 1998-2003, was called Campus Conversations. In it, institutions first undertook “campus conversations” to draft local definitions of scholarship of teaching and then initiated one or more Campus Inquiry Group(s) to study and act on a teaching issue central to the campus. Next came the Campus Cluster Program (2003-2006) followed by the Institutional Leadership Program (2006-2009). In these two programs, at the outset, institutions were joined together in themed groups, focusing on topics such as liberal education, undergraduate research, graduate education, mentoring SoTL scholars, building scholarly communities and the like. Most recently, the Institutional Leadership Program consisted of more than 100 institutions divided into 12 themed groups. Any institution that later on expressed an interest in joining either the Cluster or the Leadership Program was added individually as a Carnegie Affiliate. Each new Affiliate agreed to make a commitment to the scholarship of teaching and learning by exploring the place of such work in its institutional setting, and undertaking activities to provide support and recognition for ongoing inquiry into evidence-based improvement of student learning.

Unlike the other 12 groups in the 2006-2009 Institutional Leadership Program, the Carnegie Affiliates were not a themed group. We consisted of a collection of 17 very diverse institutions that chose to make a connection to CASTL within its last three years, several within the very last year of the program. The Affiliates included public and private institutions in the United States and Canada with two-year, four-year and graduate programs as well as one national center for science and civic engagement that itself serves many institutions both in the United States and around the world. Because of our variety and recent commitment to SoTL, we Affiliates are uniquely situated to contribute to the conversation about what attracts institutions to SoTL now and what is needed to sustain this movement that Carnegie has so ably promoted for the last two decades.

Now, at the beginning of the third decade of the SoTL movement, is a particularly suitable time to gather perspectives on the future of SoTL from relative newcomers to this work for several reasons. Just as the three-year CASTL Institutional Leadership and Affiliates Programs were entering their final year in 2008, the selection of a new President clearly signaled the Carnegie Foundation's intention to leverage its influence in other educational domains (Bryk, 2009). Perhaps in anticipation of this transition, during the last year of Shulman's tenure as Carnegie President, a number of newsletter and journal publications indicated that the SoTL movement was undergoing critical introspection. For example, the January 2008 issue of *International Commons*, the newsletter of the International Society of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, contained articles that questioned the role of the disciplines in the scholarship of teaching and learning (Becker, 2008; Healy, 2008; Prosser & Trigwell, 2008), and observed that not only is there no single national perspective on SoTL in the United States but that international perspectives vary a great deal as well (Reynolds, 2008). Willox and Lackeyram (2009) questioned whether SoTL has been placing too much emphasis on teaching and not enough on learning, while others offered defenses of SoTL (Dewar, 2008; Pan, 2009). Moreover, leaders of the 12 Institutional Leadership groups joined with CASTL staff (Pat Hutchings, Mary Huber, Barbara Cambridge, and Tony Ciccone) to draft a statement on the impact of SoTL. The resulting document (Ciccone, 2008), described by its authors as a "starting point for a discussion that will lead us to a better understanding of the nature of SoTL impact" (p. 13), acknowledged the existence of a tension within the SoTL community between viewing the work as discovery or as application.

Because various perspectives exist regarding the status and future of the SoTL movement, the Carnegie Affiliates, having made an official connection to the SoTL movement in the last three years, saw value in studying and reporting on factors that inspired our institutions to "officially" connect to the SoTL movement, ways we found this connection useful, and particularly influential strategies for initiating and implementing SoTL work on our campuses. The results reported in this article are derived from three sources: our Affiliate self-study survey conducted in May 2009, discussions at our Affiliates' presentation at the final CASTL convening on October 21, 2009, and an analysis of reflections on individual actions that could be undertaken toward sustaining SoTL at one's own institution written during the closing activity at our Affiliates' final convening session. Based upon this data and our collective experience, the Affiliates are able to offer suggestions and lessons-learned for colleagues or

institutional leaders who are seeking perspectives and information about engaging in SoTL.

Who Are the Affiliates?

So who are the Affiliates? By 2009, the 17 Carnegie Affiliates included 16 institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada and the National Center for Science and Civic Engagement listed below:

- Dominican University
- Hampshire College
- Holyoke Community College
- Indian River State College
- [Indiana University - Purdue University, Fort Wayne](#)
- [Loyola Marymount University](#)
- [Maryville University](#)
- [National Center for Science and Civic Engagement \(NCSCE\)](#)
- [Northern Alberta Institute of Technology](#)
- [Park University](#)
- [Purdue University](#)
- Southern Connecticut State University
- [Thompson Rivers University](#)
- University of Central Missouri
- University of Manitoba
- University of Rochester
- [Viterbo University](#)

Of this group, nine have their institutional stories published in this journal, and the links will take you to their respective articles. Each of these stories closes with a discussion of future challenges for SoTL at that institution. A synthesis of these challenges appears in the closing article in this journal.

Geographically, the Affiliates are widely dispersed across the United States and Canada, as Figure 1 indicates. They represent a broad spectrum of higher education institutions in the United States and Canada, including community colleges, liberal arts colleges, comprehensive and research intensive universities, and one national center for science and civic engagement, which has global connections across three continents. Institutions are evenly split between public and private. Fifty percent are master's degree granting institutions. Three were making the transition from being two-year to four-year institutions during their time as Affiliates. Some campuses had well-established centers for faculty development and others were working to establish centers. One of the Affiliates, Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, California, was tapped by Carnegie to serve as the coordinating institution to facilitate communication among the members of the new group of Affiliates and with CASTL leaders.

Changing culture:

- models for bipartite and tripartite faculty contracts where faculty at a single institution are committed to two types of work (teaching and service) or to three types of work (teaching, research, and service);
- the strategic importance of linking SoTL to other campus initiatives and to institutional mission.
- methods for evaluating the impact of faculty development centers and workshops.

Conducting SoTL Research and/or going public:

- human subjects considerations for SoTL work;
- ways to assist faculty in getting their SoTL work published;
- how to organize a “manageable” regional symposium on SoTL.

These conversations and shared resources offer a unique window into the concerns of higher education institutions and organizations while they explored the place of SoTL work in their settings. Significantly, these concerns and resources touch all ten areas listed in the Areas of Impact document (Cicccone, 2008) mentioned in the introduction.

The Carnegie Affiliates’ Self-Study

As the CASTL Institutional Leadership program drew to a close, each group, including the Affiliates, was afforded a space on the conference program to present a comprehensive report at the final CASTL convening on October 21, 2009. The Affiliates, not being a themed group, identified value in studying ourselves relative to SoTL given the diverse nature of our group. Because of how and when we came officially to SoTL, the Affiliates felt uniquely situated to contribute to the conversation about the following questions:

1. *What attracts institutions to SoTL now?*
2. *What benefits result?*
3. *What would assist in sustaining SoTL as a practice in higher education?*

Toward that end, a survey instrument was developed with input from Pat Hutchings, then Vice President of Carnegie, and distributed electronically to the designated coordinator for each Affiliate institution. Fourteen of the 17 Affiliates filled out the survey providing an 83% response rate. The fourteen responding institutions were quite diverse as to degrees granted (2 baccalaureate, 7 masters, 3 doctoral, 2 multi-institutional) and type (7 public, 6 private, 1 center).

Regarding the first point, What attracts institutions to SoTL now?, 20 years into the SoTL movement, the survey presented the following list of possible factors influencing the decision to explore SoTL.

4. Broaden our definition of scholarship.
5. Increase the profile of teaching.
6. Put a name to something we already do.

7. SoTL fits well with our mission.
8. A few individuals spearheaded our involvement.
9. SoTL offered an approach to professional development.
10. Make a concerted effort to understand student learning.
11. The Carnegie name affiliation attracted us.
12. Opportunity to work collaboratively with other institutions.
13. Help with the assessment of student learning.
14. A major curricular transformation was under way

Respondents were asked to rate on a Likert scale of 0 to 4 where 4 represents a Very important factor, 3 an Important factor, 2 a Somewhat important factor, 1 Not a factor, and 0 Don't know if it was a factor. The results are summarized in Table 1.

Relative Importance of Factors Influencing Institutions to Explore SoTL	
Factor Influencing the Decision to Explore SoTL as an Affiliate 4 = Very important factor, 3 = Important factor, 2 = Somewhat important factor, 1 = Not a factor, 0 = don't know if it was a factor	Rating Average
The Carnegie name attracted us	3.43
To increase the profile of teaching on our campus	3.29
To broaden our definition of scholarship	3.29
A few individuals spearheaded our involvement	3.14
SoTL fits well with our institutional mission	3.07
The opportunity to work collaborative with other institutions to explore the role of SoTL on our campus attracted us	2.86
To put a name to something we already do	2.79
Our campus wanted to make a concerted effort to understand student learning	2.64
To help with the assessment of student learning	2.50
SoTL offered an approach to professional development that our faculty would embrace	2.36
A major curricular transformation was underway and SoTL provided an important frame for this work	1.86

Table 1: Relative Importance of Factors Influencing Institutions to Explore SoTL

Of those factors with numerical averages of 3 or more, indicating “an important factor or higher,” not surprisingly, the most important factor in deciding to join the Affiliates was the Carnegie name affiliation (3.42). This was closely followed by the

desire to increase the profile of teaching, and the desire to broaden our definition of scholarship (tied for second place at 3.29). Then came a few individuals spearheaded our Affiliate involvement (3.14). A close fifth was fit with institutional mission (3.07). Although the next factor, opportunity to work collaboratively with other institutions on SoTL, fell a bit below 3 (at 2.86), we highlight it here because this factor will emerge as a highly rated impact.

To examine the second point of interest, *What benefits result?*, the survey inquired about the impact of CASTL Affiliate status. Ten possible benefits, derived from the list of factors potentially influencing the decision to explore SoTL, were presented for rating. The respondents were asked to indicate whether the potential benefit was realized as a result of their institution's CASTL Affiliate status or work by selecting a Likert scale rating of 5 (Strongly Agree) to 1 (Strongly Disagree). The results are shown in Table 2.

Relative Strength of Impact or Result from CASTL Affiliate Status or Work	
Impact or Result from Affiliate Status or Work Rated on a Likert Scale 5 Strongly Agree to 1 Strongly Disagree	Rating Average
It increased the profile of teaching on our campus	4.14
It helped to broaden the definition of scholarship on our campus	4.00
It gave our campus access to useful resources and information from other Affiliate campuses	4.00
It helped faculty develop skills that are useful in teaching	3.93
It brought greater recognition to SoTL work as a form of research	3.86
It offered an approach to professional development that our faculty found attractive	3.79
It helped our campus to understand student learning better	3.71
It helped faculty develop skills that are useful in assessment	3.43
It promoted a more positive attitude toward assessment	3.00
It provided an important frame for a major curricular transformation	2.71

Table 2: Relative Strength of Impact or Result from CASTL Affiliate Status or Work

The strongest impact based on the numerical average was it increased the profile of teaching on campus (4.14), closely followed by it helped to broaden the definition of scholarship, and it gave our campus access to resources and information from other campuses (tied for second place at 4.00). Rated fourth and fifth highest were helped faculty develop skills useful in teaching (3.93) and brought greater recognition to SoTL as a form of research (3.86).

A comparison of the results of Table 2 to Table 1 reveals how well the reasons for joining the Affiliates aligned with the results or impacts. The two most highly rated reasons for joining the Affiliates, after the attraction of the Carnegie name, were rated #1 and (tied for) #2 as impacts. On the other hand, institutions valued the positive

results from collaboration more than anticipated as gaining “access to resources and information from other campuses” moved up from sixth place as ‘a reason to join the Affiliates’ to (tied for) second as a ‘result or impact of participation in the Affiliates.’ In response to another survey item, the Affiliates strongly expressed overall satisfaction with the outcomes of their involvement, when 100% of the 14 responding institutions rated the results of their membership in the Affiliates as either better than or about as expected.

Open-ended items on the survey provided rich qualitative data and supplemental information. An open-ended question inquiring about influential SoTL documents, publications, or experiences (for example, conferences, workshops, or guest speakers), revealed that Carnegie publications and individuals associated with Carnegie as scholars or staff were an important influence on the decision to join or on the actual campus SoTL work. When asked what advice the Affiliates would give to similar institutions beginning to engage in SoTL, it was most commonly recommended to identify and recruit a group interested faculty to create a ‘ground up movement’ and to connect SoTL initiatives to faculty and institutional priorities. It was also noted that a supportive administration can provide critical assistance. Finally, institutions were encouraged to take advantage of existing networks or resources, such as the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning or the Carnegie scholars. Additional information about sustaining SoTL as a practice in higher education was gathered at the Affiliates’ final convening session and is discussed in the next section.

Results from the Affiliates’ Final Convening Session

The Affiliates’ final convening session drew an audience of 20 individuals, 18 of whom were from Affiliate campuses. After hearing the survey results, those attending the session broke into three groups to discuss the following questions:

1. *What would bring institutions to SoTL in the future?*
2. *What is needed to sustain and expand SoTL (institutionally) now?*
3. *What venues would we like to see for future collaboration?*

Discussions in the first group addressed not only *What would bring institutions to SoTL in the future?* but also *What would bring faculty to SoTL?* This group’s participants, first and foremost, highlighted the importance of demonstrating that SoTL work makes a difference; particularly, that it improves student learning. They felt that institutions would also find the opportunity to share experiences with SoTL among institutions of similar context mutually beneficial and attractive. It was noted that many faculty really don’t know what SoTL is. Therefore, opportunities to learn about SoTL in one’s own discipline and to share SoTL experiences within one’s own discipline might pull faculty toward SoTL.

In considering *What is needed to sustain and expand SoTL (institutionally) now?*, the discussion revealed three primary elements: policy, format, and culture. For the future of SoTL to remain viable, establishing institutional policy that correlates with and promotes SoTL was seen as essential. With the growing aspiration of many ‘colleges’ to become ‘universities’, some institutions have demonstrated their long-term

commitment to SoTL through structures that support SoTL work (i.e. release time for research, support for SoTL conference travel), and by establishing institution-wide policy that includes SoTL work in consideration for promotion and tenure. As primarily teaching-focused institutions consider the value of integrating Boyer's model (1990) into their campus philosophy, evaluation, and tenure processes, many research institutions also look for opportunities to expand the lines of inquiry included in their definition of scholarly work. Participants thought that an effective format for sustaining and expanding SoTL would include programs to introduce, practice and nurture SoTL thinking. They saw a need for programs that focus on the local campus community as well as those that connect universities and colleges to allow institutional collaborations. Finally, creating a campus culture that embraces a working definition of SoTL and encourages faculty discussion of SoTL ideas was deemed essential to sustaining SoTL. While the conceptualization and sustainability of SoTL will vary based upon local campus needs and uses for SoTL, a culture that integrates SoTL principles into its mentoring and faculty development programming could serve to promote long-term sustainability.

Our decision to include *What venues would we like to see for future collaboration?* as a third topic for discussion, stemmed from the fact that many of us had found the resources shared and interactive experiences to be quite valuable. Participants in this third discussion group shared their concern about finding ways to stay connected institutionally in the future, as opposed to maintaining individual connections alone. Brainstorming produced suggestions for an open Q&A forum, wiki, mentoring programs, and virtual resource repositories. A strong desire to have a centralized clearinghouse of resources and an annual opportunity to meet emerged. Participants noted that the ISSOTL Interest Groups seem more suited to keeping individuals connected than to facilitating cross-institutional collaborations. Participants requested that ISSOTL conference organizers find ways to allow space on future conference agendas for former CASTL groups, or other institutions interested in themed topics, to continue the conversations or collaborations begun in CASTL.

Although the three breakout groups were assigned very different topics for discussion, the reports of all three either commented on the value of cross-institutional collaborations or indicated a strong desire to continue them. Clearly, the Affiliates found great value in the cross-institutional collaborations, gained insights through the dialogue and resources shared, and believe that developing venues for similar collaborations is critical to sustaining SoTL in higher education. Our proposal to publish this dedicated issue of *Transformative Dialogues* serves as further evidence of our perception of the benefits that accrue from collaboratively and publicly sharing institutional lessons learned.

Results from the Take Away Reflection

Our Affiliates' final convening session closed with a reflective exercise designed to encourage future action related to the sustainability of SoTL at each participant's institution. The exercise began with each person receiving a piece of stationery with the prompt:

“Drawing upon the conversations I participated here (and in other sessions today), what I can do at my own institution in the next month regarding sustainability of SoTL is ...”

Participants also addressed envelopes to themselves so that their responses could be collected and mailed back to them in about a month. Permission was requested to do a qualitative analysis of their written responses to identify common themes, and the permission was unanimously granted on all submitted responses (n=19).

This closing reflection and documentation of intended subsequent actions was modeled after an exercise used at the end of Faculty Learning Community workshops (Cox & Richlin, 2004). This activity serves to remind participants of their previously declared action items when they later receive their self-addressed letters. In addition to potentially prompting action in support of SoTL, the activity allowed us to conduct a content analysis on the letters while they were in our possession.

Using open-ended coding (Mostyn, 1985) on the letters collected, we identified patterns in the data, which we deemed as *themes and subthemes*. These themes and subthemes emerged through several iterations of data review, while keeping in mind the purpose of content analysis as stated by Mostyn (1985), which is “to understand the meaning of the communication...within the context of the respondent’s own frame of reference” (p. 118). The results of the content analysis are itemized according to frequency, with the most frequent listed first, in Table 3. The following paragraphs explicate each theme and some of the subthemes in more detail.

Themes Emerging from an Analysis of Intended Action Items	
Theme	Frequency
Strengthen SoTL culture within institution	13
Make SoTL more public	8
Increase student involvement in SoTL	7
Increase SoTL institutional partnerships	6
Connect SoTL to institutional plan	6
Develop resources for SoTL	6
Other actions	5

Table 3: Themes Emerging from an Analysis of Intended Action Items

The most frequent theme was the concept of *strengthening the SoTL culture within their respective institutions* (n=13). Subthemes of this category include very programmatic oriented actions, such as, surveying faculty needs related to SoTL, facilitating SoTL workshops, developing reading circles, introducing SoTL to new faculty, and disseminating information to the university’s CASTL group. Also observed as a subtheme were intentions (n=2) to take action to incorporate SoTL into the tenure and promotion process. That so many individuals selected action items focused on strengthening SoTL culture on their campuses suggest that many institutions have not yet fully embraced Boyer’s call to broaden the definition of scholarship.

A closely related, and the next most common, theme addressed the notion of making SoTL more *public* (n=8). We collapsed into this category all responses that used the word “public,” as well as more underlying constructs related to increased awareness of SoTL work, either at the institution or outside the institution, regionally or nationally. Also included were the action items of creating a “SoTL award” (assumed for a SoTL-related project) and naming a “SoTL fellow.” Both these responses were from the same institution. Undertaking efforts to make SoTL public within and beyond an institution serves several purposes. Seeing examples of SoTL work from its own campus helps an institution develop a shared understanding of the nature and benefits of this work and garners recognition for it. These may be key steps toward valuing it as scholarly work.

One response straddled two themes – the notion of making SoTL more *public*, and *increasing collaboration with other institutions* (n=6). One respondent said that s/he would like to “create a regional online journal” which could house SoTL scholarly pieces. The use of electronic media was echoed more than once in the theme *increasing collaboration with other institutions*. Within this theme, one respondent expressed the intention to “explore the use of Web 2.0 tools” to enhance institutional partnerships. A second and different respondent hoped to investigate “electronic venues for collaboration.” We have already noted in this paper that the Affiliates had employed both videoconferencing and wikis to facilitate our collaborative work remotely.

The third most recurrent theme was *increasing student involvement* (n=7). “Student voices” are becoming more important and visible at SoTL conferences and in the SoTL community at large (Werder & Otis, 2009) as institutions begin realizing that the scholarship of teaching and of learning hinges on the participation of those who have high stakes in this area and knowledge to contribute – the students. Indeed, earlier on the day of this session, a panel of students who engaged in SoTL work at their respective universities were featured as the CASTL convening lunchtime plenary. Another example of a way that one institution hopes to increase student involvement is by “evaluating student experiences.” Faculty involving students in research is not a new idea, as faculty/student research projects within disciplinary content areas are becoming increasingly common at the undergraduate level. However, student/faculty collaborations in the study of pedagogies and learning is relatively novel and seems to be a growing phenomenon within the SoTL movement.

Another significant theme was that of *embedding SoTL into university strategic planning* (n=6). Here respondents identified the “core curriculum,” the “academic plan,” or “the freshman experience” as areas to connect with and embed SoTL. These examples have in common the intention to weave SoTL into larger instructional structures or already existing programs for student learning.

Developing resources for SoTL was another emerging theme for action (n=6). The recruitment of faculty mentors for SoTL was one fairly popular intention (n=3). Other resources identified to promote and sustain SoTL were increasing monetary support for SoTL on campuses (n=2) and learning how to incentivize faculty to engage in SoTL without money (n=1).

The remaining items lumped together as *Other actions* (n=5) were each mentioned two or fewer times. These included very specific pragmatic actions such as applying to continue to use the Carnegie name or joining ISSOTL, working on rubrics for learning outcomes or learning more about SoTL.

Overall, the breadth of responses demonstrates the intention of the respondents to move forward in various ways, at various paces, appropriate to their local institutional culture. Not surprisingly, some of the themes emerging from participants writing about their intended future actions echoed either the advice the Affiliate coordinators gave in the self-study survey or the comments reported from the break-out sessions. Among these were advice to connect SoTL to institutional mission or priorities and concerns about maintaining or increasing SoTL collaborations across institutions. The frequent mention of strengthening SoTL culture within institutions and making SoTL more public both on campus and across higher education as priority action items suggests these would be valuable strategies for sustaining momentum at institutions just beginning to embrace SoTL. Readers of this journal issue will find these themes reoccur in the Affiliates' institutional stories and addressed again in the closing synthesis article.

Conclusions

As the CASTL program drew to a close in 2009, the 17 CASTL Affiliate institutions were in an ideal position to contribute to the conversation about what attracts institutions to SoTL now and what is needed to sustain this movement. Through a self-study survey completed in Spring 2009, and through discussions and written reflections at our final convening session, we sought to shed light on these two important issues.

We believe that institutions would be attracted to SoTL now by a demonstration that SoTL makes a difference, especially if it makes a difference in student learning. This echoes the message of the *Areas of Impact* document (Ciccone, 2008). Through our self-study we identified several benefits deriving from our institutional participation in SoTL as members of the CASTL Affiliates program. It increased the profile of teaching on our campuses, helped broaden the definition of scholarship, and helped faculty develop teaching skills. Our cross-institutional collaborations provided particularly valuable shared resources and information, more so than we anticipated when our institutions joined the Affiliates. Findings also revealed that a few faculty leaders can have a significant impact in activating SoTL communities, and cautioned that SoTL initiatives are best seen as faculty-driven, although support from the administration can be very helpful. The importance aligning SoTL with institutional mission and priorities emerged not only from the survey but also from the discussions and reflections at the final convening. Strengthening SoTL culture within our institutions through programs and activities and making the results of SoTL work more public are seen as critical strategies for sustaining our SoTL gains. Recruiting and supporting human capital, both faculty and students, was deemed essential to successfully growing the SoTL movement. Therefore we should identify both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards and put into place appropriate recognitions or reward structures. Finally, we should seek ways to preserve and expand opportunities for cross-institutional collaborations of all types.

Although the CASTL Affiliate institutions are relatively few in number, we hope our results and insights can contribute to a better understanding of SoTL. While the

future role of SoTL within higher education may be impossible to predict, it seems that the CASTL Affiliates final convening session has ignited the imagination and harnessed the energies of those present toward sustaining the SoTL movement not only on our own campuses but also beyond our institutional boundaries.

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