



## Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

### Six Suggestions For Presidents To Improve Undergraduate Education



Arshad Ahmad,  
President, STLHE

Dear Mr. President,

Would you, as president of your university, make the following statement in a public forum? I quote: "For many university presidents and senior administrators, their experience over the last decade has been a frustrating one. In my view, the collective university membership has lost its way... As an administrator, I have mainly managed crises, juggled loaves and fishes, raised funds and learned alchemy. Is this my legacy?"

If you, as university president, were genuinely to refocus your leadership efforts, what kinds of questions would help you raise the quality of student learning? How does one instill an institutional culture committed to student-centered thinking? How do efforts to improve educational quality count when defining the prestige and reputation of the institution? What aspects of good teaching should be made public within the institution, with students, and with their parents?

The STLHE Newsletter serves as a window that provides answers that can help to improve the quality of the student experience. I begin with a few suggestions below to help move this important conversation forward.

#### If you, as university president, were genuinely to refocus your leadership efforts, what kinds of questions would help you raise the quality of student learning?

Would you follow it up with this? "Canadian Universities are tied at the hip to Canadian communities in an aspirational, experiential and consequential way. This need not be our narrative's exclusive focus but its foundation. All the rest emanates from this. And this foundation rests on the quality of the undergraduate student experience" [italics mine].

These were the refreshingly frank words of Robert Campbell, President of Mount Allison University, in an opening keynote address to the two-day workshop on transforming undergraduate education which was held recently in Halifax and organized by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (see p. 4 in this Newsletter). Intense discussion, brainstorming sessions and questions followed. The leading question was how university leaders can affect changes that students can actually experience. I left wondering what STLHE can do to help define a new student-centered, learning-focused covenant in Canadian higher education.

**1. Listen to more students and parents.** Very few Presidents do this. Students want more contact with faculty.<sup>[1]</sup> Students learn more outside the classroom.<sup>[2]</sup> Students have pragmatic suggestions. However most of them are not sure if their ideas will be heard, especially about emerging technologies. Engage them in policy decisions if necessary. As for parents, they tend to rely more on the media, especially on magazines that rank universities. Parents would be better served if they knew more about student learning.

**2. Identifying institutional learning goals can drive deep approaches to learning.** More and more students are getting by with superficial approaches to learning. These are reflected in the assessment of student abilities in successive courses they take, and upon graduation. Entwistle and Ramsden,<sup>[3]</sup> and Trigwell and Posser,<sup>[4]</sup> among others, link surface, strategic and deep approaches to learning with qualitative differences in learning outcomes.

**3. Teaching effectiveness measures must be more comprehensive than those currently in use.** A well-designed rating instrument by itself provides inadequate evidence to measure teaching effectiveness. Separating formative and summative

measures helps teachers to improve and students to participate in their learning. Woods<sup>[5]</sup> suggests dozens of additional measures that one can select, including Teaching Dossiers, Lancaster Approaches to Studying, Perry inventory, King and Kitchen-er's Model of Judgment, Peer Evaluation, and Exit Surveys.

**4. Embrace and champion a broader definition of scholarship.** Boyer's (1990) *Scholarship Reconsidered*<sup>[6]</sup> has been a landmark contribution in helping leaders to think differently about academic work. His work has sparked major contributions from Shulman,<sup>[7]</sup> Palmer,<sup>[8]</sup> Hutchings,<sup>[9]</sup> Kreber and Cranton,<sup>[10]</sup> and Healey,<sup>[11]</sup> who conceive the work of faculty in a broader set of overlapping areas of scholarship. This conception is inclusive, and critical to student learning particularly when compared to the traditional hierarchy of research followed by its two poor cousins, teaching and service.

**5. Globalization demands inter-disciplinary approaches to teaching and learning.** The tendency to specialize and departmentalize subject matter, knowledge and skills disintegrates education. Huber et al<sup>[12]</sup> point to the building of necessary skills for integrative teaching. Innovative programs that integrate curricula co-taught by teachers with different disciplinary views need encouragement, support and recognition from Deans.

**6. Institutional prestige has little or no relationship to the quality of education.** For many institutions, prestige and reputation equal research intensity. However, research publications by themselves do not increase the quality of education unless students are involved deliberately in producing, interpreting and disseminating knowledge (Terenzini and Pascarella<sup>[13]</sup>)

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Dear Mr. President, indeed there is much to do. Hearing the suggestions made above can lead to dramatic increases in the quality of student learning. The Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education wants to help, as do student-centered and learning-focused teachers. We need your leadership to work together. We promise to ask good questions and give good advice anchored by evidence and research.

*Note: This article was first published in HERSDA News and online by University Affairs.*

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## Co-Editors' Co-Editorial



**Sarah Keefer and Roger Moore**  
*STLHE Newsletter Co-Editors*

"April is the cruellest month ..." T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* begins with these words, and T. S. Eliot wasn't even a teacher: he was a poet. But although poetry may be part of our teaching curricula, we are teachers and educators, first and foremost, and here we all are, in April which is indeed the cruellest month for those in Higher Education, setting exams, distributing exams, invigilating exams, grading exams, holding oral exams and interviews, marking essays and assignments, evaluating projects, submitting grades, writing letters of reference, and held all the while to the strictest of schedules and deadlines.

Then, in addition to all of this, you are asked to contribute to the *STLHE Newsletter*. "What do you teach?" the co-editors ask you. Overwhelmed, most of you are unable to find the time to reply, for this represents more work and produces fresh deadlines, and you are unable to comply. As co-editors, we ourselves struggle with these and similar issues, and therefore we sympathize. And so, as co-editors, we have decided to answer our questions for you.

"What do you teach?" Well, between educational development, actual teaching and working with your colleagues, here are some of the things you do (and remember, most of these things will not appear on anyone's *curriculum vitae*). You teach patience; you teach real life skills; you teach organization and multi-tasking; you demonstrate how to prioritize. You embody a role model through commitment to long hours and to long-lasting efforts to get a maximum of work accomplished

in a minimum of time. You teach courtesy and unflappability; you rarely lose your temper; you demonstrate grace and kindness under pressure. You answer interminable emails from panicky students, and demanding (and equally panicky) colleagues. You show firmness and authority, yet you blend them with a willingness to be flexible when and wherever possible. You establish and maintain standards; you do not compromise on issues where truth and justice are central concerns; you commit yourself to fairness and honesty; you show no signs of racial or religious intolerance. You offer kind words even under the harshest of circumstances, and yet, when hard words are needed or hard choices must be made, you are not afraid to face those difficult moments. Finally you demonstrate cheerfulness, optimism, and faith: faith in yourself, in your students, in their accomplishments, and in the high ideals which you often share with them. In fact, you offer exemplary behaviour in your chosen career and you are admired by your students for your strength and determination in the face of the multiple adversities which April always seems to throw your way. This cheerfulness is available to you because you each have followed an idealism in choosing to work within the field of teaching and learning, and as such you are doing **what** you wanted to do all those years ago. This is a very important 'what' for us, never to be forgotten. I would imagine that most of us could answer "What do you teach?" with the reply "What I love."

Because you believe in what you do, you also teach your students that self-belief and faith in the future are vital components of an education, for you inspire them to stand on their own feet and to be independent and capable of making lives and careers for themselves, despite the difficulties of the current times. You have faith, too, that the students who are returning next September will again seek you out, and will work with you and show their confidence in you, while those who leave will be confident in the knowledge and skills you have given them. You know they will be able to juggle schedules, to multi-task, to think, to analyze, to criticize, to work in teams and on their own, to communicate, to write down their thoughts, to express themselves, to draw their graphs and pie-charts, to complete their projects and their experi-

ments without micro-management and close supervision, for this is what education in the twenty-first century looks like. And you know that they, like you, will be confident in their futures, even though the world seems to be passing through troubled times, for you have modelled tolerance and stability and fairness and justice for them all. Therefore you can be proud of what you have taught them because you have done a fine job, and even though "April is the cruellest month," you know that it is swiftly followed by May when all things suddenly appear possible.

For after April, when May follows and sunshine returns to warm our northern skies, we may be sure that we have given our students the abilities necessary to survive in this best of all possible worlds – which is, after all, the only one that we currently possess. As co-editors, we know that you were thinking of all these things and that you were ready to write them down and send them to us. We apologize for thrusting more demands into the already-crowded days of April. But we are also proud to salute you, for, although April is indeed the cruellest month, teachers are not the cruellest people. Through your efforts in our colleges and universities, you bring light and warmth and hope into an academic world which consists not only of teachers but of a much broader spectrum of people including our students and the friends, families, staff, assistants, and advisers who support both them and us in our time of stress.

For the autumn issue 58 of the Newsletter, deadline AUGUST 1, we solicit your responses (250 words maximum) to the question "Why do we teach?" As a second opportunity for a multilogue, we invite you to consider the queries about the immediacy and nature of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning posed at the end of the review of Nancy Fenton and Karen Szala-Meneok's Guide elsewhere in this issue: please send in your own definition (once again, a 250 word maximum) of what SoTL both is and should be in Canadian universities today.

Mail to: sarah.keefer@rogers.com  
roger.moore@rogers.com

## The Purple Professor Says



"What do I teach? What sort of stupid question is that? I teach what I'm told to teach, of course. Luckily, I've got seniority, so I've been teaching the same course for the last twenty years or so. Same course: different students; and I give my students good advice: 'Know the text!' I tell them. And I teach them the text, the whole text, and nothing but the text. 'Keep it beside your beds.' I tell them. 'Read it every night.' When they ask me what's on the upcoming test, I always tell them the same the thing: 'The next chapter of the text, of course.' And if they ask me what to prepare for the test, I tell them read the text and to know it all, off by heart, the footnotes, the small print, the headings for the diagrams ... all of it, everything, every last word. Is it a good text, you ask? Of course it is. It ought to be. I wrote it myself."

## Innovation is Nothing New

Howard Doughty, *Seneca College*

*Innovation is nothing new. The last two centuries alone have seen steam power, electrical energy and internal combustion engines; witnessed telephones, film, radio and television; and transformed production, transportation and communications. They have inspired hope and fear.*

### What's different today?

Students text, tweet and learn to "message" in under 140 characters (but at least they're writing). They read on postage-stamp screens (but don't remember postage stamps). They are said to be post-literate (as though that's a good thing?).

Meanwhile, information technology companies make billions. Political campaigns "organize" on-line. And "keynote speakers" enchant us with the news that the current generation is the most demanding, best-informed and tech-savviest "cohort" **ever**.

Really? Yes, we can communicate instantaneously with friends in Polynesia and Poland. Yes, stock markets can crash at a keystroke. But must we abandon all standards of

thought and expression to the technics of the specious present? Is history just data in cold storage, available to be recombined at a Wikithinker's whim? Must we embrace organized stupidity?

Arthur Kroker got it right when he wrote that "[t]echnology is not something restless, dynamic and ever expanding, but just the opposite. The will to technology equals the will to virtuality. And the will to virtuality is about the **recline** of western civilization: a great shutting down of experience, with a veneer of technological dynamism over an inner reality of inertia, exhaustion and disappearances ..."

Let's understand our job as teachers today. It is to remind our students that they, too, are human.

## Desire2Learn

### Innovation in Teaching and Learning Award

**Denise Stockley,**  
*STLHE Awards Coordinator*

It is with great pleasure that the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) announces a new partnership with Desire2Learn Incorporated (**Desire2Learn**) for the sponsorship of the **Desire2Learn Innovation in Teaching and Learning Award**.

Beginning with the 2012 STLHE Annual Conference, up to five annual awards will be presented to applicants who are currently teaching at a post-secondary institution anywhere in the world. The award celebrates and recognizes innovative approaches that promote learning in new ways at post-secondary institutions. Winners of this prestigious award will receive a two-year membership in STLHE, \$1000 towards expenses to attend the annual STLHE Conference, a one day pre-conference retreat at the STLHE conference, a framed certificate, and \$1200 in funding to attend the annual Desire2Learn FUSION Users' Conference.

For more information and the Terms of Reference visit [www.stlhe.ca](http://www.stlhe.ca)

## What am I teaching?

**Ruth Rodgers,**  
*Durham College*

When I offer a warm and genuine welcome to learners, I am teaching trust and openness, and the joy of learning.

When I offer an organized and thoughtful plan for my class, I am teaching professionalism, organization, and a valuing of my work and their learning.

When I show enthusiasm for my subject matter, I am teaching a passion for life and learning.

When I involve my students in their learning through interactivity, I am teaching the foundational skills for lifelong education.

When I offer a variety of ways for students to provide evidence of their learning, I am

teaching respect for diversity, and a palpable desire for their success.

When I evaluate student work fairly and consistently, using transparent grading rubrics, I am teaching equity and justice, as well as self-awareness and acceptance of consequences.

When I engage in further learning about teaching, I am teaching commitment to my chosen craft as well as my field of discipline.

What am I teaching when I am aloof, disorganized, rigid, inconsistent, authoritarian and careless in my teaching? I am shaping my students' expectations, beliefs, and actions in relation to higher education, either way.

## Pier 21 for Canadians

**Robert Campbell,**  
President, Mount Allison University

This is an important moment for Canadian universities' ambition to re-vitalize ourselves for our next century. At the heart of developing a "new narrative" is the ambition to animate what has been neglected over the last decade: the centrality and importance of the undergraduate experience.



Being at Pier 21 offers a great metaphor. In her CBC "Seven Wonders of the World" brief, the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation's CEO Roberta Jamieson characterized it as the personification of the promise of what this country holds. Universities have been—and should continue to be—Pier 21s for Canadians.

The *Grote Bier* docked here in 1953 after an oceanic journey from Rotterdam. A Dutch family entered Canada with armfuls of blonde children. Neither parent had a university education. Nonetheless all seven of their children went to university. I was fortunate to marry one of them who did a doctorate, wrote ten books, won a teaching award, headed a national association, won a Governor General's Prize, and became a member of the Royal Society. For the Verduyns, Pier 21 and Canadian universities provided a gateway to opportunity and engagement.

Like Pier 21, Canadian universities embody promise for citizens. Their graduates make enormous economic and social contributions while generating few burdens. University graduates add more to society than they take out of it, strengthening Canada and its communities. Canadian universities are tied at the hip to Canadian communities in an aspirational, experiential, and consequential way. This need not be our narrative's exclusive focus but its foundation. All the rest emanates from this. And this foundation rests on the quality of the undergraduate student experience.

Why does this need stating? The recent experiences of many university Presidents and senior administrators have been frustrating ones when the collective university membership lost its way. There is a context: massive enrollment pressures, cyclical waxing and waning of government support, revenues that have not kept pace with costs

and have been driven by unionization, rising professional standards and expectations, as well as by deferred maintenance. The list continues. As an administrator, I have managed crises, juggled loaves and fishes, raised funds, and learned alchemy.

To be honest, I have been part of the universities' re-engineering to contain unit costs. I was part of the process of overseeing the expansion of research and graduate agendas. Governmental PSE expectations focused on "outputs" and "impacts"—productivity, innovation, competitiveness, commercialization—and offered financial incentives for universities so as to embrace these agenda. Universities have shifted attention to ever-narrowing policy and financial issues in order to maximize revenues from research and related areas. Such focus "cherry-picked" the university promise and experience down at the output end of the university funnel—at Graduate Studies, Research and Development, and "Big Science"—neglecting to consider what was going on back upstream at the entrance of the funnel that feeds the high-end outputs.

We lost the foundational narrative thread in this process—imploding our vision and narrowing our focus on those high-end outputs of the university system. We lost sight of the broader promise of the universities—particularly the undergraduate experience—and at the same time lost connection with our broader communities.

The irony is that the overall quality of university staff, infrastructure and programming has improved in my lifetime. But we know that the character of the undergraduate experience has deteriorated in the last decade. We also know that this experience should and can be better. The overall size of many universities has become problematic. Class size has deteriorated. There is increasing use of contract teaching, and less personal interaction and immediacy. Faculty are less inclined to spend the last hour with students. There is too much emphasis on testing and not enough on writing and talking.

This results partially but not exclusively from financial necessities. But it also reflects internal institutional choices. There has been a willingness to let the resources for undergraduate education be the dependent variable in budget discussions. The "high-end" envelopes are often, if not typically, cross-subsidized by the undergraduate envelope. So: we confront an institutional or cultural context, where much of our community may not actually see a problem.

What is the students' role in all this? Strategic alliances with students have been undermined by competing discourses. The first is the student debt/tuition debate where our interests tend to diverge. As I joke to our student leaders, my job is to maximize revenues, not to minimize them—how else can we maintain quality? The other discourse is the job one. As the parent of four children, I am sympathetic to this. But I fear a potential "baby and the bathwater" scenario here. As we pursue our ambitions for improving the quality of the undergrad experience, we have to find a way to get equilibrium amongst a number of agenda.

Tolerance of the situation by both parents and society is surprising. They should be asking about the quality of their children's undergraduate experience; they have not tolerated a similar situation on the health side. This then is a challenge for the new narrative—we have got to get the parents and families on our side.

What is the operational agenda?

At the mouth of the funnel, we should emphasize **access** by re-connecting to our communities; we should act to ensure accessibility for new Canadians, rural and small town areas, aboriginals, young men, and first-generation attendees; we should work with high schools to provide students with skills preparation and motivation for university.

Within the funnel, we should work to maintain a **quality** experience, by being self-conscious about the core ingredients of quality; we should not be afraid to differentiate; and we must develop a financial sustainability model that "firewalls" the quality delivery of this program.

We should aim for community and national results at the funnel's **output**, by providing a transition for next steps, whether these be to graduate or professional schools, to community engagement, to the enhancement of employability, or to the development of research/knowledge; we should track, measure, evaluate, and communicate to our publics.

This is our story: we recruit, teach, and train young talent; we produce knowledge; we create opportunities and benefit the community; we are the site for major public discussions. This starts with undergraduate education. We should commit to this, do it, and tell it.

# EDC

Educational Developers' Caucus



**Nicola Simmons,**  
EDC Chair, University of Waterloo

The EDC is a diverse, collegial community that shares ideas and resources informally in support of educational development across Canada. We provide professional development opportunities for members—conferences, Resource Bulletins, and new this year, our first Educational Developers Institute in February. In addition, we provide grants in support of teaching and learning. Visit the Caucus at [www.edcaucus.com](http://www.edcaucus.com)

## EDC Conference

EDC members were enthusiastic about their experience at this year's conference in Sault Ste. Marie, the conference theme of "Deep Learning," and Ken Bain's keynote. Some highlights noted by participants run as follows:

*I thought the calibre of sessions was very high. Those I attended were very thought-provoking and really left me wanting to follow up on many of the ideas raised.*

*Connections—it is always reinvigorating to meet with colleagues struggling with the same issues as I am in my institution. There were some great sessions, with excellent discussions, and I commend the presenters for the quality of their contributions! I didn't have a bad session all conference (which is rare at most conferences)!!!*

*The quality of the sessions in terms of depth, engagement, discussion, and variety—because I was far more engaged and excited about what was happening in these sessions than I have been in a long time. I enjoyed every session I attended, and I don't even know when the last time I felt that way might have been.*

*The pre-conference Institute set a thoughtful, welcoming tone, and I highly recommend repeating this in the future.*

*It was wonderful that the conference was held in a smaller centre. I know this was a trade-off since the cost made the trip prohibitive for many unable to attend from a greater distance. However, the smaller venue resulted in a more intimate event.*

*There were more opportunities to connect with people repeatedly over the course of the conference, something more difficult when the numbers are greater.*

*The hosts provided a very warm welcome. Lovely to see something other than a large centre host the conference.*

*I really enjoyed the conference this year—it was small and intimate, but highly informative and invigorating!! Well done!*

## EDC Elections

On behalf of the EDC I'm thrilled to announce our newly elected members of the EDC Executive: Erika Kustra as Secretary, Natasha Kenny as VP, Communications, and Marla Arbach in the newly created role of VP, Conferences. We are delighted to welcome these colleagues to the Executive and look forward to working with them! For descriptions of their roles, see <http://www.stlthe.ca/en/stlthe/constituencies/edc/executive.php>.

We warmly thank all who agreed to stand for election and you can be sure we will think of ways to get your input! I also wish to express our profound gratitude to the nominating committee, Alice Cassidy, Carolyn Hoessler, and William Owen, who did an exceptional job bringing forward a strong slate of candidates and overseeing the election process.

## The EDC Living Plan

The EDC executive is looking forward to our May 2 retreat when we'll be revisiting the Living Plan (see <http://www.stlthe.ca/en/stlthe/constituencies/edc/documents.php>) and thinking about the best ways to move forward with initiatives we can implement on your behalf (and with your engagement!). Please contact me at [nesimmons@cogeco.ca](mailto:nesimmons@cogeco.ca) if there are ways you would like to be involved or things you would like to see your executive do.

We hope to see you at the STLHE Annual Conference and at the EDC Annual General Meeting in Saskatoon!

# Regional REPORTS

We invite all Regional Representatives to send us any kind of commentary—from informal notes to detailed reports—that will allow us to link STLHE members from coast to coast by letting them know what's happening in our provinces.

**Teresa Dawson,**  
*University of Victoria*

The UCIPD continues to go from strength to strength in BC as a non-hierarchical, regional support network of colleagues intensely committed to the collaborative work of promoting teaching and learning across a highly diverse range of institutions. The most recent meeting at Camosun College in Victoria was a huge success resulting in renewed collaborations, conversations and community building.

**Angie Thompson,**  
*St. Francis Xavier University*

I continue to connect with the members in the region sharing news regarding Board meetings and upcoming local and national conferences via monthly—or bimonthly—email messages. I believe it is important to connect with members in the region so that they know they have a voice at the Board level.

## Bilingual Advocacy Report

**Sylvain Robert,** *UQTR*

We must face the fact that few volunteers are pushing at the gates to take the place of Quebec's francophone representative on board. We have to change this seat for a representative position in French Canada (and not only in Quebec). We hope to increase the francophone representation significantly, which is currently one (yours truly).

We would also increase the number of original contributions in French in the Newsletter.

### Translation Committee

The translation committee has been busy in February to prepare its first translation for French Issue 56 of the Newsletter. We worked on several fronts and we are still honing our mechanics. We are preparing for the next phase, French Issue 57.

Parts of the committee members are more comfortable to do translations from French into English, and they have not been spoiled with Issue 56, since the original contributions were almost all in English. We would like to involve those members a bit more, but for this to happen, it is necessary to increase the number of original contributions in French in the Bulletin. Volunteers to write in French?



## Changing How Students Learn

**Calvin S. Kalman,**  
*Concordia University*

In the ongoing examination of student learning, I am the principal investigator of a research group with co-investigators at McGill [Bruce Shore and Mark Aulls], Ryerson University [Tetyana Antimirova], and the University of British Columbia [Marina Milner-Bolotin]. We are carrying on experiments at Concordia University in Montreal, Ryerson University in Toronto, Langara College in Vancouver, Hefei University of Technology in China, Tra Vinh University in Vietnam, and the University of Lisbon in Portugal. We are funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

We have begun pilot testing this year and will do full scale testing in 2011-12. Analysis will take up 2012-13. Our current experiments deploy instruments that can measure changes in students' learning before and after, using an array of activities. We employ a mixed design combining quantitative (conceptual tests) and qualitative (students' assignments, interviews) data.

All of the activities used in the experiments have been demonstrated to be effective in assisting students to understand concepts. The key question that we are now exploring is that if students are exposed to the entire panoply of activities, do they change their ways of learning in the course? That is, as a result of exposure to the activities in the course, does the student move towards a holistic approach to the subject, learning to look beyond what is close at hand, doing so not in order to look away from it, but to see it better within a larger whole and in truer proportion?

## Teaching Feedback

**Kate Greenan,**  
*University of Ulster*

We are teaching much more than a subject, though many students (and staff) fail to appreciate this. We are preparing students for a lifelong agenda of learning, both formal and informal, and we need to encourage students to recognise this. In the words of Albert Einstein, "once you stop learning, you start dying." Reflecting on these words highlights the fact that we (staff and students) should all be learning together, and lecturers should be role models as they seek feedback from students to help enhance their practice.

Encouraging students to communicate with us through giving us feedback must start with encouraging them to give feedback to one another. As confidence builds, students are likely to take the next vital step which is to give feedback to the lecturer!

This feedback should enable us to adapt lecturing styles to accommodate differing student needs as we reflect and act on the feedback received. This is just what we expect students to do when we hand them back an assessed piece of work, with feedback on it. Once again, modelling the process of "feedback > reflection > action" is important if we wish to encourage students to become lifelong learners.

The reflective practitioner is likely to be always learning, as students in 2011 will be very different from those in 2001. Feedback from students will identify their changing expectations, and will challenge the lecturer to find new ways of doing things. Einstein's words, however, should provide reassurance to us all as we continue to learn and live!

# The STLHE Board Draws A Road Map

**Arshad Ahmad,**  
*President, STLHE*

In my first message last fall, I quoted Goethe: *We must always change, renew, rejuvenate ourselves; otherwise we harden.* I went on to say that STLHE was created precisely to provide a space for renewal. In this spirit, the STLHE Board Retreat on April 20-21 marks a turning point in our evolution.

In preparation for our meeting, we generated and reflected on dozens of questions, including how we can keep abreast of your needs; or how we can improve our communication strategies within and outside our membership; or how to identify the most important educational issues today that STLHE must address?

We redrafted our vision so as “to strive to be the preeminent national voice and a world leader for teaching and learning in higher education.” We identified existing and future strategies that would strengthen our research, collaboration and innovation efforts. For example, we want to advance research on teaching, disseminate it widely, raise awareness and apply evidence to scholarly ways of teaching and learning. We identified existing drivers such as our national Conference, *CJSOTL*, *Green Guides*, *CELT* and this Newsletter. We also discussed how we can extend our partnership with ISSoTL, and how we might guide conversations on the development of national teaching chairs, our role in engineering a national grants program, and other regional events that would augment our research pillar.

We consolidated existing goals, and expanded and articulated new ones. For example, our existing goal of rewarding teaching excellence and educational leadership was extended to recognize outstanding contributions in educational innovation, service, mentorship and professional development. Accordingly, STLHE is committing itself to strengthen its awards program by adding several new awards with high profile sponsors that will complement the programs we already have, and meet the needs of our special interest groups.

We also outlined concrete steps to strengthen bilingualism and engage student participation. We voted to include an additional franco-phone seat on the Board which we hope will be ratified at the AGM in June. We recognized the enthusiastic and talented slate of sixteen nominees who put their names forward for the Student at Large seat on the Board, and encouraged each one of them to participate in the Society’s activities. We anticipated STLHE’s role in shaping, influencing and leading policy decisions that enhance teaching and learning in higher education at local, national and international levels.

In other words, we drew a road map to help us align a new vision, with appropriate goals and activities. We agreed on a list of new activities that we will champion for the next three years, while being cognizant of existing activities that are currently grouped under a burgeoning number of portfolios. In this exercise it was not surprising to acknowledge the need for increasing administrative staff and to consider an Executive Director to help us manage our affairs. These needs become indispensable, should our application for charitable status come through. Fund-raising activities will be necessary to give life to special events and projects, such as the ones identified above which we are capable of leading regionally and nationally.

By the time this Newsletter goes to press, our website will have changed dramatically. During the retreat, we strengthened a new architecture, conceived by Carbonated Inc., the firm which we have contracted to build our website. We realized that, even if we are fortunate enough to launch our new website at Saskatoon, this will be a work in progress. And even though our goal is to make [stlhe.ca](http://stlhe.ca) the “go-to” website to meet your needs, the dynamic aspects of our website will improve our social networking capability as more users engage in making our site worth visiting on a regular basis.

If you think we have taken on more than we can chew, you are right. This was the case when I participated in our previous retreat

which gave birth to incorporation and an organizational framework to channel our energies. As at that time, so also at this retreat, an ambitious agenda is what you expect from your elected representatives. More importantly, taking on more than our share is a reflection of what each and every one of you do as members of STLHE.

Throughout the retreat we felt reinvigorated and filled with the enthusiasm to move forward. These really are exciting times. We are fortunate to work with so many dedicated and thoughtful colleagues on the Board. I invite you to join us at every opportunity. Your ideas count. They will help us to build momentum. Your feedback is crucial. And most of all, your participation is critical. Help us to refine and implement the goals that we have begun to articulate. Check out [stlhe.ca](http://stlhe.ca) and get involved.

I also invite you to meet us on Thursday afternoon during the conference in a session entitled “Connecting With the STLHE Board: What Are They Up To?” and at the AGM where your voice and your votes will play an important role in shaping our future.

On behalf of the STLHE Board, I want to acknowledge the generosity of The Center for Leadership & Learning at McMaster which hosted us, and the facilitation talents of Alex Fancy who helped us to regenerate and renew. Look out Canada, here we come!



*Following the Strategic Planning Retreat, Arshad Ahmad meets with McMaster’s President, Patrick Deane.*



# 2011 3M National Teaching Fellowships

3M Canada and The Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education are delighted to introduce this year's 3M National Teaching Fellows:



**Diana Austin**  
Department of English  
University of New Brunswick



**Lisa Dickson**  
English Program  
University of Northern  
British Columbia



**Arne Kisenko**  
Department of History  
Ryerson University



**Maureen Mancuso**  
Department of  
Political Science  
University of Guelph



**Nick Mount**  
Department of English  
University of Toronto



**Scott North**  
Department of Oncology  
University of Alberta



**Fred Phillips**  
Department of Accounting  
University of Saskatchewan



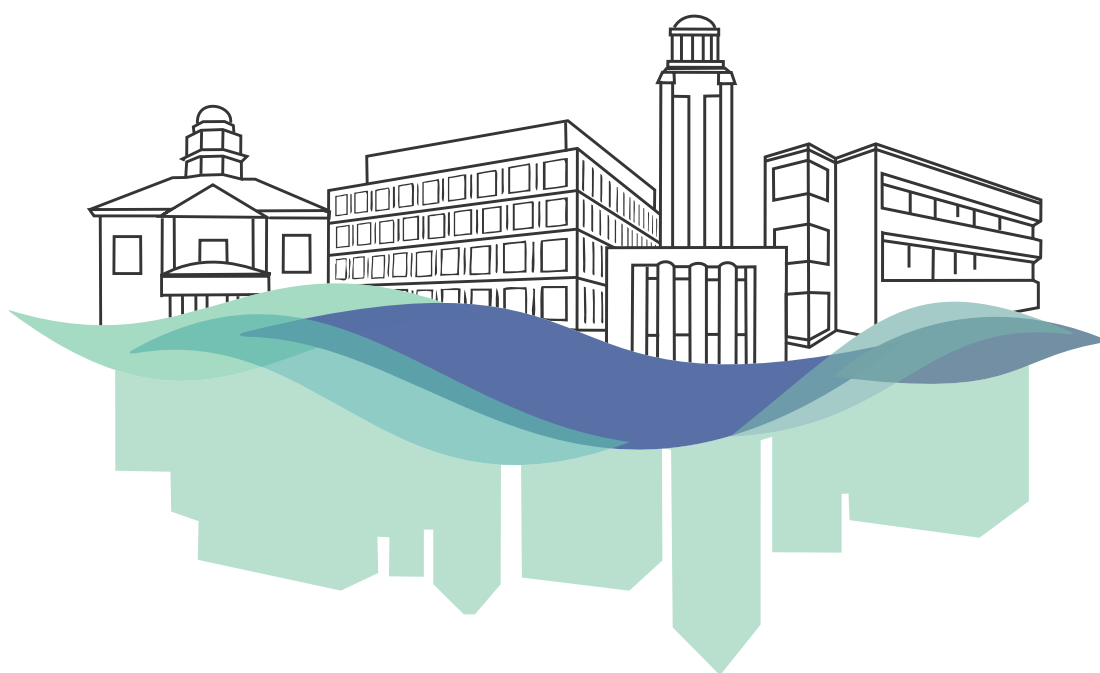
**Leslie Reid**  
Department of Geoscience  
University of Calgary



**Adam Sarty**  
Department of  
Astronomy and Physics  
Saint Mary's University



**Billy Strean**  
Faculty of Physical  
Education and Recreation  
University of Alberta



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**MONTRÉAL**

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# STLHE 2012 SAPES

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**LEARNING WITHOUT BOUNDARIES ?  
APPRENTISSAGE SANS LIMITES ?**

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**JUNE 19 - 22 JUIN**



**McGill**



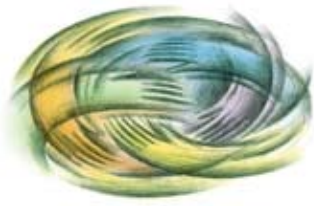
UNIVERSITÉ  
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**Champlain**  
COLLEGES SAINT-LAMBERT

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[www.mcgill.ca/stlhe2012sapes](http://www.mcgill.ca/stlhe2012sapes)



# ALAN BLIZZARD AWARD

Congratulations to the 2011 Alan Blizzard Award recipients: a twelve member health care team from the University of Saskatchewan, University of Regina, and Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology that has been collaborating since 2000.



*Back row (L to R):  
Krista Trinder,  
Megan O'Connell,  
Peggy MacLeod,  
Erin Beckwell,  
Arlis McQuarrie*

*Front row (L to R):  
Doreen Walker,  
Peggy Proctor,  
Nora McKee,  
Marcel D'Eon,  
Darlene Scott,  
Pat Wall,  
Jane Cassidy*

This team was selected for its exemplary project, **Saskatchewan Interprofessional Problem-Based Learning**, with the team submission coordinated by Peggy Proctor, School of Physical Therapy, University of Saskatchewan (peggy.proctor@usask.ca).

Congratulations to the 2011 Alan Blizzard Honourable Mention Award recipients, a six-member computing science team from the University of Alberta and the University of Denver, whose collaborative project began in 2004.

This team was selected as second place for its outstanding collaborative project, **CMPUT 250: Computers & Games**, with the team submission coordinated by Sean Gouglas, Director of Humanities Computing, University of Alberta (sean.gouglas@ualberta.ca).

The Alan Blizzard Award was established by the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) to encourage, identify, and publicly recognize those whose exemplary collaboration in university teaching enhances student learning. This is the 12th year of the Alan Blizzard Award, co-sponsored by McGraw-Hill Ryerson and STLHE.

The 2011 Alan Blizzard Award team will receive the Award and make a presentation on its collaborative project at the Blizzard Plenary session at the upcoming 29th Annual STLHE Conference to be held at the University of Saskatchewan, June 15-18, 2011. The Honourable Mention team will receive the Honourable Mention Award at the Blizzard Plenary.

**John Thompson**  
Coordinator, Alan Blizzard Award

The Society expresses its profound gratitude to John Thompson of the University of Saskatchewan for serving four years as Coordinator of the Alan Blizzard Award. With his unwavering commitment, creative intelligence, and attention to detail, John has magically lifted the profile of this Award, using the budget's slender shoestring. He has also done the work quietly, tirelessly, and with grace.



We acknowledge John for his generous commitment to the Awards Program, and also for his many contributions to teaching and to the Society he cares about deeply.

# Book

## Reviews

**Nancy Fenton and Karen Szala-Meneok:**  
*Research on Teaching and Learning Guidebook.*  
McMaster University: Centre for Leadership in Learning, 2010. 43 pages.

Reviewed by Roger Moore

This Guidebook encourages faculty at all levels to take a closer and more research-orientated look at what they are currently doing with their teaching. It begins with a basic description of the differences between Good Teaching, Scholarly Teaching and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (also known by its acronym SoTL). While good teachers “generally focus on their own personal growth in teaching,” scholarly teachers are “not only informed by the latest developments in the field, but also by research about instructional design and methods of assessing student learning.” In addition, scholarly teachers engage in “the scholarly contributions of others, reflecting on ... teaching practice and student learning ... and communicating and disseminating” their knowledge in appropriate forums. They also mentor other teachers and engage in communities of practice. In the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, on the other hand, the teacher considers a teaching problem “as an opportunity for scholarly investigation.” This scholarship may involve “elements of discovery, application, and integration” with an intention of advancing knowledge beyond the limits of the researcher’s own classroom.

Central to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, according to the authors, is the definition of the question that the researcher is asking, for their cycle of SoTL moves from the Topic of Interest, to Framing the Question, to Gathering and Analyzing Evidence, to Testing and Refining in the Classroom, to Going Public. Going Public and publishing in peer reviewed journals is essential to SoTL in all its multiple forms. The authors of this Guidebook suggest the following as possible topics for further research: an innate sense of difficulty, an awareness that something is other than what it should be, an influencer /shaper of the methodology, a success that merits deeper understanding, a failure that needs further examination, and a tacit or invisible learning process that asks for more attention. The authors make suggestions on how to find topics for research, how to frame questions, and how to gather and analyze evidence. They then address the important differences between quantitative and qualitative research, grouping various research paradigms together under each title and listing the many ways in which the researcher can go public with the results obtained.

The next section is dedicated specifically to conducting research at McMaster University. It outlines research board ethics at McMaster and its related hospitals and talks about the Key Ethical Issues, defining selected items such as Captive Populations, Confidentiality,

and Data Security. It offers a brief description of the Centre for Leadership and Learning at McMaster and continues with a description of McMaster’s Introductory 5 Day Program on SoTL Research. While this section of the Guidebook is designed principally for faculty at McMaster who wish to start research in the scholarship of teaching and learning, it is very appropriate reading for any who wish to begin the long journey towards evidence-based research in teaching and learning. The Guidebook concludes with a series of rubrics for developing thought on SoTL questions which may interest individual researchers. These include a twenty-questions exercise, examples of possible topics of interest, question framing, gathering evidence, and disseminating research.

While the authors provide us with an interactive guide, they also raise important questions for the reader. Do readers, for example, all have the same definition and view of SoTL? Is it helpful to sharpen the boundaries of SoTL from a more practice-oriented view of teachers as scholars? Should there be a broader SoTL methodology? My own reading of this Guidebook and of other material is that methodology sometimes has a tendency to be too rigid and almost formulaic. In this fashion the *question* is followed by the *literature review* is followed by the *methodology* is followed by the *results* is followed by the *discussion* is followed by the *conclusion*. I quote this sequence, not from Nancy Fenton and Karen Szala-Meneok’s Guidebook which I find quite enlightening, but from an examination of various recent articles on SoTL. Sometimes I fancy that the Euclidian QED (*Quod Erat Demonstrandum*, “that which was to be proved”) should be attached to some formulaic research.

At other times I wonder how qualitative analysis with its narrative and phenomenological structures (encouraged by Fenton and Szala-Meneok on page 18 of their Guidebook) can be limited to one question addressed in formulaic fashion to one in-class experience.

These questions find an important home in STLHE’s vision statement. In fact, Advancing SoTL is listed as the first of four strategic directions for STLHE ([http://www.stlhe.ca/en/stlhe/about/vision\\_and\\_goals.php](http://www.stlhe.ca/en/stlhe/about/vision_and_goals.php)). In this light, how would you advise the Society to move ahead? Should STLHE host a SoTL Conference or make it a part of each annual conference? Which STLHE publications should have SoTL elements? Should STLHE procure and give funds to encourage SoTL work? If SoTL is a defining feature of who we are, is our identity aligned with these aspirations?

While we realize that this important conversation has already begun, we feel that your views need to be heard by wider audiences. Therefore, as co-editors of the STLHE Newsletter, Sarah Keefer and I would like to ask the readers some follow-up questions to this review: What do you as educators understand by “SoTL” and how do you view its role in Higher Education? How broad should the field be? How specific? Most importantly, where are the places of intersection within its boundaries where all who form STLHE can find profitable fields for discourse and development?

We believe these to be seminal questions for education in the twenty-first century. Please send your comments (maximum 250 words) to us by August 1, in time for the Fall issue of the Newsletter.

## Call for Newsletter Submissions

Please submit your articles, book reviews, photos, and other teaching and learning news to the co-editors for consideration in the STLHE Newsletter.

**Deadline: August 1, 2011**

Submissions must be in accordance with STLHE Newsletter Writing Guidelines” (currently under revision). See Newsletter section of STLHE website for details.

If you have a recent publication you would like to have reviewed, or if you have suggestions regarding the new format of the Newsletter, please contact the co-editors. We would like to hear from you!

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## Electronic Discussion

The STLHE electronic mail forum, active since October 1988, supports the exchange of opinions, ideas and experiences concerning teaching and learning in higher education. To subscribe, contact the list coordinator: Russ Hunt, email [hunt@stu.ca](mailto:hunt@stu.ca) or visit Communication at [www.stlhe.ca](http://www.stlhe.ca).

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## STLHE SAPES

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