

Learning About Teaching

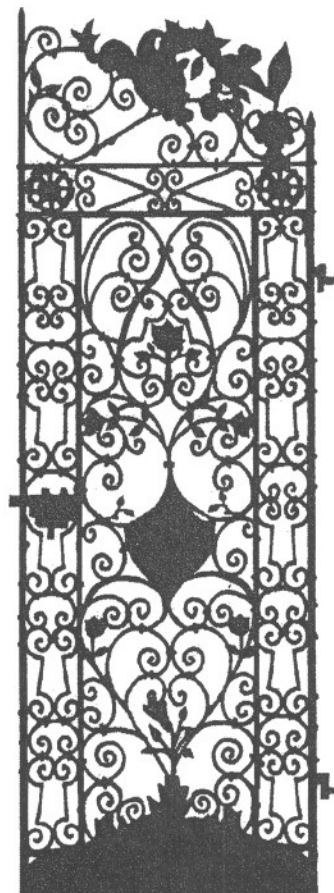
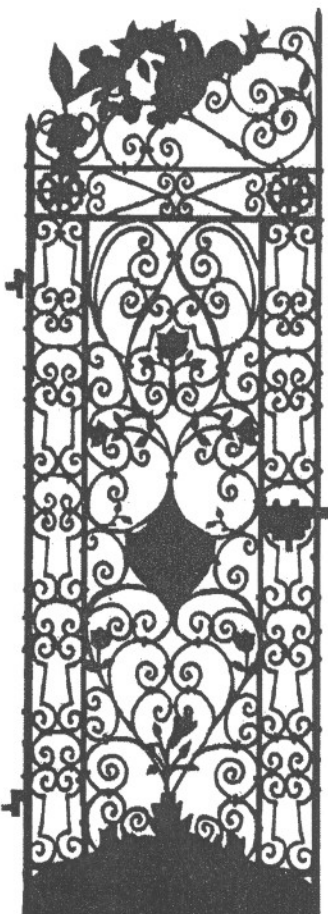
What teaching resources are available to help new faculty?

Where can seasoned faculty go to share their teaching expertise with each other?

How can instructors learn to take advantage of emerging technologies in their classes?

What off-campus resources can enhance teaching?

Until recently, finding the answers to these questions at RIT was difficult. In the past few years, however, several initiatives have popped up in a variety of unrelated areas, reflecting a genuine interest in developing the teaching strengths of this university. *LDC Lately* devotes this issue to an overview of these new interest areas. The connection between the Learning Development Center and learning about teaching may not seem clear at first. However, as Educational Development Faculty (EDF), LDC instructors are fundamentally concerned with student learning. We know that effective teachers are intentional about teaching. One of our areas of expertise is pedagogy, the science of teaching, and we're pleased to see that interest in this field is now spreading into content areas as college faculty engage in various activities to enhance their teaching skills. As a teaching university, RIT knows the importance of student learning. This has been LDC's message all along.



In fact, it's our mission as a learning center to support how students learn and how teachers teach. Now that we're hearing a similar theme from different areas on campus, it is only natural for us, then, to present this overview of campus initiatives. Many factors impact learning. An understanding of student development and the learning process can help teachers deliver content and facilitate student learning much more effectively. We begin this issue with thoughts on faculty development from Kit Mayberry, Associate Provost, and a profile of Lynn Wild, the new Assistant Provost for Teaching and Learning Services. We look at the New Faculty Orientation Program, led by Kathleen Martin, which has been instrumental in helping orient and support 125 instructors new to our campus. Another salient initiative has been the reactivation of the Institute Effective Teaching Committee (IETC). Their efforts have resulted in programming to share knowledge and scholarship in teaching and includes such activities as the Eisenhart Colloquium, the creation of a Faculty Learning Community, and various workshops and speakers. This quarter's IETC workshop by Dr. Laurie Richlin on the scholarship of teaching coincides beautifully with the proposed expectation that RIT faculty engage in various forms of scholarship, including the scholarship of teaching/pedagogy. Stan McKenzie, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost, states, "As RIT increasingly values the role of scholarship in effective teaching, we must also recognize that having faculty engaged in the scholarship of teaching and pedagogy is an essential element for effective learning."

RIT is a teaching university where student learning comes first. The renewed interest in teaching excellence has evolved from seemingly disparate areas that all share at their core the best interests of students. We in the LDC are proud to be part of the new direction, and we are pleased to share with readers the various initiatives taking place right now.

An Interview with Kit Mayberry, Associate Provost

Q: Kit, start with a little background of the history of faculty development at RIT.

A: Several years ago, we had a Faculty Development Office, which served as a resource for faculty and sponsored an annual Teaching Effectiveness Day. After that office was discontinued, not much was in place in a formal or centralized way. Of course, we have always identified ourselves as a teaching university. The Eisenhart Award and the Provost's Young Teacher's Award have reflected RIT's high esteem for excellence in teaching, as have the Provost's Learning Innovation Grants, which support the development of innovative or experimental teaching projects. About four or five years ago, we experienced a resurgence of interest in faculty development—both internally and externally.

Q: How do you account for the renewed interest?

A: Three factors. First, there have been growing concerns about accountability in higher education, with accrediting organizations and others asking the question: "How do we know that students are learning in your institutions?" Learning outcomes assessment became an important way to measure results, with faculty expected to identify intended outcomes of their teaching and measure the extent to which these outcomes occur. This intentionality about outcomes puts a much greater emphasis on teaching effectiveness. Second, and more recently, RIT began to look closely at retention. We recognized that quality of instruction and interaction is absolutely key to student success, and many teaching strategies involve relationships. Third, technology was becoming intertwined with education. While we don't believe that distance learning will be huge at RIT, we have seen a significant increase in faculty's interest in using technology as a teaching tool for their on-campus courses.

Q: What are the visible outcomes of this interest?

A: There are many. We now have an Office of Online Learning dedicated to offering support for faculty and students using online techniques in their classes. The Institute Effective Teaching Committee was revived, and it has become a strong voice for faculty development. The Faculty Institute on Technology (FIT) evolved into the Faculty Institute on Technology and Teaching (FITT), and will reappear this May as FITL, the Faculty Institute on Teaching and Learning. The recent addition of Lynn Wild, the Assistant Provost for Teaching and Learning Services, has filled in a missing piece. She will be able to add a more traditional faculty development service to other services already in place. Ultimately, we're working toward a Center for Teaching and Learning.

Q: What would be the purpose of a teaching and learning center?

A: We are not operating from a deficit model, but we are behind in supporting faculty in enhancing their own teaching skills. All the schools with whom we compete for students and faculty have teaching and learning centers, and the best ones are seen by faculty as a wonderful resource. A center would support new faculty in the development of effective teaching strategies, would support faculty going through the promotion and tenure process, and would meet specific developmental requests from individuals and departments. It would cross divisions in brokering connections throughout the institute.

Q: How do you envision the Center at RIT?

A: I see a physical space, run by a director. It would have ample facilities, perhaps a multi-media lab where faculty could work on their own or receive training in the technology. I see a couple of "SMART" classrooms for teaching faculty how to use the technology, and I see one or two basic classrooms, where faculty can work on new techniques—a kind of teaching laboratory. A center would contain a faculty lounge, where faculty would get to go with full permission to talk about teaching and learning, and it might even contain some kind of faculty dining room.

Q: What do you see as the future of teaching at RIT?

A: RIT is experiencing a paradigm shift as we focus on the concept of a university whose major mission is to ensure that students learn. The shift is subtle, but huge. It means that we will be more intentional about teaching. Learning is what matters; otherwise teaching is useless.

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An interview
with

Vinnie Gupta,

Chair of the Institute
Effective Teaching
Committee

Building a Community for Faculty

In 1998, according to Vinnie Gupta, IETC chair, the Academic Senate reactivated the Effective Teaching Committee. The new committee, under the leadership of Tom Upson and Barbara McKee, met to explore the charge from the Academic Senate and to formulate a set of recommendations. They examined the existing faculty development programs and met with the Provost and Deans to look at the incentives available to encourage faculty development. In 1999, the committee submitted formal recommendations to the Senate in response to the initial charge. The Provost approved appropriate funding to implement IETC's plan of work, and the committee went into full swing. In 2000-01, Vinnie Gupta became the Chair and the name was changed to the Institute Effective Teaching Committee.

The Institute Policy E11.0 describes the role and the responsibilities of the IETC: *The IETC will work for the faculty and with the Institute academic administration to foster quality teaching at the Institute. Each year their annual report will include the evaluation of the current Institute effort in promoting effective teaching and a projection of needs forward for two years. The responsibilities of the IETC shall be to identify development needs related to quality teaching and to foster collegiality and mentorship among faculty.*

The newly formed committee had excellent representation from all eight colleges, the Academic Council, the LDC, and the ETC. They met regularly, organizing their work around four initiatives:

Update, Innovate, Integrate and Celebrate. The programming that resulted included the following:

- Eisenhart Colloquium Series - quarterly panel discussions led by Eisenhart Teaching Award winners
- Outside Speakers - Milton Cox and a group of three area educators
- Faculty Development Workshops in cooperation with LDC
 - Creation of a Faculty Learning Community
 - Attendance at Lilly Conference
 - Expansion of Provost grants to two types: proof of concept, and department-wide adaptation and implementation programs
 - Faculty/Student Retreat (21 faculty, 22 students)
 - Coffee hours for faculty at Java Wallys
 - On-Line Learning Week, January 2002

The IETC has had a very successful year. Those of you who attended any of the programs know that they are filled to capacity and very well received.

Faculty/Student Retreat

One of the most successful new initiatives in 2001 was the Faculty/Student Retreat. It was particularly valuable to faculty as they realized that the students experience an uphill struggle to earn their degrees at RIT. Different students experience different problems with content, faculty, scheduling, format of courses, teaching style, and personal problems. Faculty also valued the

opportunity to meet colleagues from other colleges in a non-threatening atmosphere and to learn about different aspects of various departments and colleges. Students valued interacting with faculty as real people. They quickly realized that faculty are approachable, have senses of humor, can also feel timid at times, and like to have fun. Everyone felt it was a very positive experience and one of the few times at RIT that they had the opportunity to interact in such a wonderful way with a variety of faculty and students in a comfortable "off-campus" environment. The IETC hopes to repeat the event next year.

Rewards and Outcomes

One of the most significant outcomes of the IETC offerings is that faculty who participate have begun to appreciate the need for a sense of community. It is very effective for small groups of faculty to meet for coffee or to share lunch for a cross-fertilization of ideas, concerns and possible solutions with the added benefit of just getting to know each other.

For Vinnie, this has been one of the best committees he has worked on at RIT. Participation was close to 100%. People who couldn't attend meetings always called to report in. They worked together peacefully and were very productive. Even the committee work, itself, was a positive experience.

Why a Teaching & Learning Center?

Faculty are looking for ways to improve teaching by being more effective in the classroom and labs. They want, however, to learn in a non-confrontational way. They struggle with the question of how to ask for help without being penalized. It might be easier to explore improvements in teaching if faculty could work with someone outside their department. The IETC has responded to faculty concerns by proposing a Teaching & Learning Center.

In addition to a place for faculty to go for continuing professional development, we also need to consider new faculty. The emphasis on New Faculty Orientation is a good start. RIT is facing a huge transition in the next few years as many faculty retire and many new faculty are hired to replace them and to staff new lines in new colleges and major fields. It is an amazing time for brand new faculty. Most are still grappling with some of the material they were recently studying in graduate work, and they find themselves to be new faculty facing classes for the first time. They have so many questions – Where do you start? How do you eventually make the transition from the first emphasis on how to teach to the more sophisticated idea of facilitating learning? Who helps with and/or monitors this transition?

A positive step in supporting faculty is the addition of Lynn Wild, who has been hired as the new Assistant Provost for Teaching and Learning Services. She will work closely with the IETC as she oversees and develops a comprehensive range of services dedicated to the enhancement of RIT's learning environment.

The IETC has been very effective and productive. The committee is expecting to continue in the same manner for another year, and then it will be time for new ideas and approaches, another round of focus groups to assess new needs, new avenues and new solutions. In the meantime, the IETC will continue to focus on building a community for faculty. The IETC will also focus on building a structure that will invite faculty to participate in professional development in a setting with no risks. They need to be able to ask for help and feel that they are in a protective setting and can learn from mistakes and try new things with the support of department chairs, deans and colleagues.

Lynn Wild

Assistant Provost for Teaching & Learning Services

Lynn Wild is the newly appointed Assistant Provost for Teaching and Learning Services. She brings nearly twenty years of experience in the field of learning. She has worked in higher education in a variety of capacities and in the corporate world largely involved in training and organizational development. Lynn earned her Ph.D. in Education from the University of Pittsburgh and is a life-long learner!

As the Assistant Provost, Lynn is responsible for on-line learning, distance learning, faculty development, and other initiatives designed to strengthen RIT's mission on teaching, learning, innovation, and continuous improvement. The Office of Teaching and Learning Services is a one stop shopping office to help faculty be as effective as they can for the benefit of students.

Since Lynn has started, she has been in the "investigative" stage, and is very interested in meeting and talking with a variety of people on how she and her office can meet the needs of the faculty. Lynn has not set an agenda for the office, but is discovering how she can be most helpful to faculty and add the most value to their teaching. She views her position as being collaborative and has already begun work with the Institute Effective Teaching Committee.

The Office of Teaching and Learning Services will provide:

Instructional Development

- individual consultation
- classroom observation
- classroom videotaping
- National Teaching & Learning Forum newsletter online

Gathering Feedback on Teaching and Learning

- informal classroom assessment techniques
- formative/in process feedback
- small group instructional diagnosis
- teaching portfolio

Conferences, Seminars and Workshops

- new faculty seminar
- faculty institute on teaching, learning and technology
- experienced faculty workshops
- departmental workshops

A major goal of the office is to provide faculty with an opportunity to reflect on their teaching and see if the faculty are getting the outcomes that they desire.

Lynn is excited about all the growth and potential that are present at RIT. She extends an invitation to all faculty and any other interested parties to come forward if they are willing to talk and work on some of the goals that the OTLS is beginning to develop. This venture is truly one of collaboration for the benefit of all of our students! Lynn's office is located in the Library, room 1325, and she can be reached at x5-6543.

New Faculty Orientation

On August 30, 2001, 129 faculty began their RIT careers, and an extended day-long New Faculty Orientation program made its debut. Kathleen Martin, then Manager of the Center for Professional Development (CPD), spearheaded the planning, with the support of a cross-divisional team and the IETC. "Our retention studies taught us that students are looking for a sense of belonging," she said. "The same is true for faculty." The new orientation program was designed to offer a warm welcome to the newest members of the RIT community.

The day began with breakfasts held by the colleges for their new faculty. These gatherings, hosted by the deans, introduced the newcomers to their new colleagues in an informal setting. The small college groups then convened in the Xerox Auditorium for an Institutional overview. Provost Stan McKenzie summarized RIT's history, explained our vision, mission, and organizational structure, and highlighted RIT's core values: student success, shared governance, and diversity. Jim Miller, Vice President of Enrollment Management & Career Services, profiled demographics of the RIT student body, and Jim Watters, Vice President of Finance & Administration, described capital and strategic projects. After a luncheon and benefits orientation, faculty went on a walking tour of selected campus sites (including the LDC). The day closed with a reception hosted by the President and the Provost. Evaluations indicated that the orientation was a success.

The next New Faculty Orientation program, scheduled for August 29 and 30, 2002, will be similar, but will include modifications based on feedback from last fall. The benefits presentation, which will be more in-depth, will be held the morning of the second day, extending orientation to a day and a half. The RIT Inn will be the site for a portion of the activities, since freshman orientation will be in progress on campus at the same time. A guided bus tour of the campus may also be added to give the new faculty a sense of RIT's size and facilities.

Kathleen Martin is now Associate Director, Human Resources: Employment, Employee Relations, and Professional Development; CPD is under her umbrella of expanded responsibilities. Kathleen sees CPD as a critical infrastructure in providing top flight institute-wide training and professional development. What they do best is the behind-the-scenes work: program coordination, publicity, registration, logistics. These are the factors that are invisible when all goes well, but are sorely missed when they are not in place. She is a believer in the "power of partnerships" and sees the Institute as an "interdependent web." Kathleen, Markelia Weaver, the new Manager of CPD, and Lynn Wild, the new Assistant Provost for Teaching and Learning Services, have already started conversations about collaborations. Kathleen and Markelia see possibilities for CPD's web site to become the "central communication hub" for faculty development programs, and they are working with Lynn to develop a learning event specifically designed for the unique role of academic department heads.

Whatever direction faculty development takes, CPD is likely to be in the background, "connecting the dots . . . making it work, as simply as we can."

Periodicals available in the WML:

- **About Campus**
- **Change**
- **AAHE Bulletin**
- **The Teaching Professor**
- **The National Teaching and Learning Forum**
- **The Journal on Excellence in College Teaching**

New Initiatives from Online Learning

The Online Learning Department, according to Director Joeann Humbert, has been busy this academic year in spearheading new initiatives from the Provost's Office. In addition to assisting faculty with Distance Learning courses, Online Learning has adopted Prometheus, a course management system for on-campus courses, which allows faculty to enhance their face-to-face interactions with students with electronic posting of syllabi, files, lectures, and the use of online grading books, drop boxes for student assignments, electronic areas for team meetings, and text based chat for online office hours and synchronous meetings. Currently, 400 on-campus courses use some features of Prometheus. Information about training in the set-up and use of Prometheus is available at:

http://Prometheus_training@firstclass.rit.edu

The Online Learning Department is also offering a series of Lunchtime Workshops which address how using technology in courses can help improve student learning. The Teaching, Learning, and Technology Lab and a new self-serve video studio round out the facilities that are available for faculty use. Check out the workshops and resources listed on their web site or feel free to contact the Online Learning Department directly for ideas and assistance.

<http://tlt.rit.edu>
Online Learning
(585) 475-5089

On Monday, April 15, the Institute Effective Teaching Committee sponsored the presentation "Getting Credit for What You Do" and the workshop "Creating a Teaching Project for Your Course" by Dr. Laurie Richlin. Dr. Richlin, who is director of Claremont Graduate University Preparing Future Faculty Program, serves as the President of the International Alliance of Teacher Scholars (IATS). She is also executive editor of the *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching* and director of the Regional Lilly Conferences on College and University Teaching.

The morning presentation "Getting Credit for What You Do" provided a theoretical overview of the distinction between scholarly teaching and the scholarship of teaching. Scholarly teaching is teaching that is informed by previous findings (literature in the knowledge base) or pedagogy. Faculty employ systematic observation of student learning and develop methods and materials from the knowledge base to enhance student learning. In contrast, the scholarship of teaching follows a scholarly process of gathering baseline information, consulting the literature, applying an intervention, observing, documenting and analyzing the results, obtaining peer review, and adding to the knowledge base by disseminating the findings, either through publication or a professional presentation. The distinction is that there is an ongoing process in the scholarship of teaching that is based on traditional research methods, the results of which are subjected to peer evaluation, and, if deemed appropriate, are contributed to the current base of knowledge.

In order for faculty to get credit for what they do, Dr. Richlin suggests instructors create their own teaching portfolio, which would be separate from the scholarship portion of the dossier. The teaching portfolio consists of a course portfolio for each course taught. Many faculty probably have something along these lines in their current dossiers; however, Richlin urges faculty to remember that they teach students, not courses. Coming from this perspective, the description of teaching duties would be described in terms of the students. For example, to say you teach math 241, 242, and 243 doesn't describe much. But to say you teach undergraduate engineering students the required calculus sequence provides a context for substantiating, or getting credit for, what you do. Richlin also suggests that faculty engage in "innocent discussions" in which teachers can discuss fictional cases as a way to obtain feedback before formally submitting research for peer review.

The afternoon workshop "Creating a Teaching Project for Your Course" reviewed the concepts set forth in the morning presentation and provided a practical framework for applying Richlin's model to a specific course. As executive editor of the *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*, Richlin noted that she receives many manuscripts worthy of publication; however, any submission that lacks a formal baseline from which results can be measured is rejected. Surprisingly, this important first

step is more often overlooked than included. She suggests that faculty begin by observing the teaching-learning connection. What issues or problems are apparent? Once you've defined an issue or problem, document a baseline. Next, consult the literature. ERIC is probably the best data base to search by topic, and generally reading two to three of the most recent articles can bring you up-to-date on the current literature.

Now you're ready to choose an intervention to address the problem or issue. Most teachers do this implicitly; however, for scholarship, this must be done explicitly. Next, implement the intervention and conduct systematic observation. Document what you observe and analyze the results. Check your results against the baseline to determine the effects of your teaching intervention. If your findings are significant, obtain peer evaluation.

When preparing your project, the most important part is the list of learning objectives that will be met. These learning objectives must be specific and account for: you, the professor; your students (consider their learning style, previous experience, interest in the subject, and other characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, etc.); the content (level of the course, prerequisites, whether it's required or elective); and the environment (time of day, time of year, room set-up, noise, heat, etc.). Effective learning objectives deal with student behavior that is observable and measurable. Richlin suggests consulting Bloom's Taxonomy of Levels of Thought (see Fall 2000 issue of *LDC Lately*) for appropriate learning objective verbs. These will help you

Check out these books from wml:

TEACHING WITH STYLE
ANTHONY F. GRASHA.
ALLIANCE, 1996.

**CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT
TECHNIQUES.** THOMAS A.
ANGELO, K. PATRICIA CROSS.
JOSSEY-BASS, 1993.

TEACHING TIPS.
WILBERT J. MCKEACHIE.
HOUGHTON-MIFFLIN, 1999.

TOOLS FOR TEACHING.
BARBARA GROSS DAVIS.
JOSSEY-BASS, 1993.

articulate statements that elicit specific behaviors which can be measured for achievement. Of the six levels of thought, the last three—analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, are more difficult to objectively measure for higher levels of content. Also, any affective component is also difficult to evaluate objectively.

In order to present or publish your scholarship, it must demonstrate excellence in at least one of the following areas: research (must have important results), integration (provides a context for further exploration), innovation (an original idea or strategy for establishing effectiveness), or inspiration (combines personal values, insight, and experience to inspire excellence in teaching).

Richlin concluded the workshop with practical tips for submitting proposals. She noted that people who present their research have the advantage of receiving feedback to improve/refine their work before submitting it for publication. These people generally have more success in contributing to the knowledge base. Other tips are common sense: include a presentation title but not too many titles, construct coherent

objectives, activities and descriptions, be aware of time (45-minute versus 60- or 90-minute presentations), and, finally, make your presentation an adult learning experience.

If you're interested in developing a project, the IATS staff at Miami University are available to help with proposal development throughout the year. Their web site is www.iats.com.

The student is the "most important" individual on campus. Teaching is the most important activity or function of the faculty. Student learning and success are the most important outcomes of the teaching function. Learning involves collaboration between faculty and students and among students. Often, faculty learn as much from this interaction as do the students.

- Dr. Simone

CHECK OUT THESE WEB SITES FOR CONFERENCES . . .

American Association for Higher Education
<http://www.aahe.org/>

Lilly Conference on College Teaching
<http://www.units.muohio.edu/lillycon/>

Lilly Regional Conferences
<http://www.iats.com/>

New York College Learning Skills Association
http://www.rit.edu/~jwsldc/NYCLSA/general_info/annual_conference/2000.shtml

Professional and Organizational Development Network
in Higher Education (POD)
<http://lamar.colostate.edu/~ckfgill/main.html>

Faculty Learning Communities

In fall 2001, The Institute Effective Teaching Committee (IETC) invited eight tenured faculty members to become a part of a Faculty Learning Community. This pilot program is a structured, year-long opportunity for participants to explore the scholarship of teaching and learning with colleagues from other colleges.

Faculty learning communities provide opportunities for faculty support, reflection, and encouragement as members investigate and implement ways to enhance their teaching and students' learning. A decade long movement nationally, faculty learning communities are increasing dramatically. IETC's program is based on the award-winning model developed at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

Typically, faculty apply to be a member of a learning community. The IETC decided to pilot the program by selecting faculty recommended through IETC and confirmed by the college's dean and department head. The present members of the FLC are Mary Ann Begland (CIAS), Robert Barbato (COB), Mary Lou Basile (NTID), Tom Frederick (COS), James Heliotis (GCCIS), and Josef Torok (KGCOE). The community has been meeting bi-weekly since fall and set their agenda for the year under the theme, "Enhancing Teaching and Learning at RIT." Each faculty member within the community agreed to the following:

- Develop a project which will enhance their teaching in one of their credit classes
- Identify a faculty and student associate to offer assistance and feedback on the project
- Compile a portfolio for the course in which the project is implemented
- Present a panel to the campus community
- Attend the national Lilly Conference on College Teaching

Faculty are provided with background reading materials, a one course reduction in either winter or spring quarter, and funding to travel to the Lilly Conference.

In a mid-year evaluation of the FLC, members indicated that they most valued the group's attendance at the Lilly Conference, the collegiality and learning from other FLC members, and their renewed interest in the teaching process. Responses to the question, "How have your teaching and your

perception of yourself as a teacher changed as a result of your involvement in the FLC?" included these significant remarks:

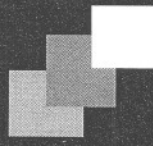
- "I have a new awareness of how students learn and the various stages of learning through which they progress."
- "I have been encouraged to expand the definition of the role of an instructor in the learning process and to recognize many of the issues that make for successful learning."
- "Involvement in the FLC has made me more actively aware of how I perform as a teacher. I consider changes and enhancements much more often and I feel emboldened to make changes."

The comments are very encouraging and indicate that the participants find this to be a valuable experience. They have found a renewed interest in the process of teaching and a willingness to try new approaches. They feel supported by their colleagues as they explore new ideas together.

On April 26, FLC members presented their projects to the RIT community. Project titles included "Toward More Effective Student Teams," "Collaborative Learning Activities in Economics," "Immunology Out of the Box," "Pre-tests for Reading Motivation," and "When the Numbers Don't Add Up."

The IETC will establish another FLC beginning in the Fall of 2002. Applications are available on-line at www.rit.edu/skgeme/FLC.pdf. For hard copy, contact Sue Provenzano at STP1013@rit.edu.

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