

# Teaching Commons News

## Talking About Teaching



Welcome to this double-month newsletter. As the nights start to draw in, the leaves have fallen and winter boots reappear in the shoe shops, we can start to reflect on how well the semester is progressing. Did you try something new in your classrooms or online this year? If so, how did it go? Did you try something you heard about at last year's TIF maybe, or another conference? Have you been inspired by any of the ideas shared at Teaching Commons workshops or courses?

If so – we would like you to put pen to paper, or fingers to keyboard, and write a proposal for our second annual **Teaching**

**In Focus – TIF** – Conference which will take place on May 22, 2014. The theme for this year's conference is 'Educational Transformation and Innovation'. We are seeking papers, workshops or posters on any aspect of your teaching that you would like to share with the community – with a particular interest in sessions related to eLearning, Experiential Education, Student Engagement, and joint projects between Seneca and York. Proposals should be submitted by December 23<sup>rd</sup> by uploading a word document or PDF at <http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=88805>

As always we have a range of **events and workshops** on offer – details can be found at our website – [teachingcommons.yorku.ca](http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca). We encourage you to attend. Feedback from our events consistently tells us that, in addition to the content of the event, participants most value the opportunity to meet with fellow teachers and to discuss their work. Perhaps you'd like to lead a session on an aspect of your teaching? An example of a recent faculty-led workshop was on using your voice effectively in lecturing and presenting, facilitated by Assoc. Prof. Eric Armstrong of the Dept. of Drama, Faculty of Fine Art.

Paradoxically teaching can be such a solitary exercise. We in the Teaching Commons are keen to help reduce the potential isolation and to engage the community in debate, reflection and discussion. To this end we are pleased to announce the development of a **lounge area for York teachers** which will be available for groups to meet to discuss issues around teaching and learning. We hope to have this ready for the new year – so look out for your invitation!

If you prefer to join in electronically may we remind you that we have been hosting a series of **blogs on eLearning** for some time now – do join in the conversation by visiting <http://teachingcommons.blog.yorku.ca/>



## Looking for a good read?

York subscribes to several journals on university level teaching. Speak to your Liaison Librarian to find articles on general issues and on teaching in your discipline

Read a good book or article on teaching lately? Contact us at [teaching@yorku.ca](mailto:teaching@yorku.ca)

[We will share suggestions in the next newsletter](#)

## Teaching Awards

In late October the Provost, Rhonda Lenton, the AVP Teaching and Learning, Sue Vail, and the Teaching Commons were pleased to host a lunch for recent teaching award winners. We are proud of York's reputation and tradition as a University that values teaching. Recognizing these award winners is just one way of illustrating this pride. If you are interested in a teaching award and wonder what is available, check out our page at <http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/awards-grants/> where we provide a run down of Faculty, University, Union (YUFA and CUPE) and external teaching awards. We would like to see more of our teachers recognized for their work, so if you are interested in guidance on completing an application for an **external** award please contact us at [teaching@yorku.ca](mailto:teaching@yorku.ca).

We also like to see our undergraduate students succeed, so if you have a gifted student who has demonstrated leadership and commitment to his or her school and community, you may want to consider encouraging them to apply for the 3M National Student Fellowship Award - worth a smooth \$10K! Details of the 2014 call can be found at: <http://www.stlhe.ca/awards/3m-national-student-fellowship/>

## A chance to observe a highly regarded teacher in action!

We are pleased to report that interest in our recently launched teaching observation scheme has been high – a growing number of highly regarded teachers have agreed to be observed by a fellow teacher. See: <http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/teaching-observation-scheme/>

## Just in Case Teaching

We have been collecting videos of York teachers talking about their teaching. We would love to hear or read stories of how you teach, top tips for others or innovations you have tried. We have a very brief case study format which can be written or recorded, and which will be shared on the TC website. If you'd like to contribute or recommend someone, including asking students, please get in touch at [teaching@yorku.ca](mailto:teaching@yorku.ca).

## Highlights of Forthcoming Workshops and Events

Please remember all our courses are free of charge and are open to Course Directors, including tenured, non-tenured, contract, or adjunct. Graduate student TAs have their own extensive suite of events (see <http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/for-all-graduate-students/>).

Building on the theme of inclusivity in last month's newsletter, we have workshops on Human Rights in the Classroom (November 14<sup>th</sup>) and Developing Inclusive Teaching and Learning (January 16<sup>th</sup>).

eLearning and Experiential Education remain key priorities for the university – if you want to learn more about either of these consider our popular eLearning at York course which begins another run in November, and again in February, and EE @ York which kicks off in February.

Details of all our courses and workshops can be found at: <http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/professional-development/>

We know that York doesn't always get the press it deserves, in particular with regards to campus safety, so it is encouraging to see one faculty member willing to voice a different view – see **Dawn Bazely's blog** on campus safety in the light of a recent article in Toronto Life <http://dawnbazely.lab.yorku.ca/2013/09/toronto-lifes-fortress-york-piece-doesnt-let-the-data-get-in-the-way-of-their-good-story/>

## What do participants say about our workshops?

Course Design:  
'Everything you have given me is gold. All course directors should come on this workshop.'

You can view and register for upcoming TC events by visiting our calendar <http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/calendar/>



## Tailored Workshops or courses

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Remember we are very happy to work with individual Departments, Units or Program Teams on issues of particular relevance to you. Recent examples of such collaborations include:

- Using technology in teaching, for the Faculty of Health
- Interdisciplinarity and Teaching, for Social Sciences, LA&PS
- Writing Learning Outcomes for programs involved in Cyclical Review
- TAs as online tutors for the Faculty of Education (online course using Moodle)

## Teaching Related Conferences

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In October our Director Celia Popovic attended the International Society for Scholarship of Teaching conference in Raleigh, where she was presenting on an international research project into Boundary Spanning and educational development. The main themes of the ISSOTL conference were the participants' shared passion for research into the practice of teaching in HE, and the equally shared incredulity that there are some souls out there who do not share the passion! In the coming months and years the Teaching Commons intends to reach out to those in the York Community who are interested in researching their practice or already do so, and in learning more about and contributing to the burgeoning literature on University level teaching and learning.

You don't have to go south of the border to find a conference – consider submitting proposals to EDC, STLHE and our own TIF.

Details of the EDC – Educational Developers Caucus are here:

<http://www.stlhe.ca/constituencies/educational-developers-caucus/edc-conferences/>

And for STLHE go here: <http://www.stlhe.ca/conferences-events/stlhe-annual-conference/>

### FEED Summit – Faculty Engagement in Educational Development

In October, 19 of Ontario's 21 universities were represented at an event organized by the Council of Ontario Education Developers. Celia is the Chair-Elect and member of the Executive of COED, she worked with colleagues to organize the event held at McMaster and the Council of Ontario Universities (COU). Over a hundred senior administrators, Teaching Centre directors, faculty members and union representatives met to discuss ways to raise the profile of teaching and learning at Ontario Universities. The healthy dialogue and engagement of all who attended was invigorating, as we shared good practice between different universities, and among delegates with differing perspectives.

### Keep in Touch

Be sure to let us know if you are presenting at a learning and teaching conference, or if you'd like more information about the kinds of things faculty present on, how to conduct research into your teaching or preparing a proposal for a scholarly teaching and learning journal or conference.

## Your place, or ours?

We may be able to arrange curriculum and /or teaching development workshops tailored for your Dept/Faculty. Contact [teaching@yorku.ca](mailto:teaching@yorku.ca) for info.



Visit the teaching and learning resources in YULink at <https://yulink.yorku.ca/group/academic-resources/teaching-and-learning1>



This newsletter is available as a .pdf at <http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/tcnewsletter/>