

# CTE Notebook

Newsletter of the Reinert Center for Teaching Excellence

Volume 5, Issue 2, Fall 2002

## **Rethinking and Redefining Mentoring**

**By Dr. Charles Marske, Mentoring Committee Chair  
Reinert Center for Teaching Excellence,  
Chair of the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice**

As the recently appointed chair of the Mentoring Committee of the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE), I initially found myself rather reluctant to write this article. What did I know about mentoring? I have never served as a mentor, at least not in any formal sense.

When Dr. Ellen Harshman, Senior Vice Provost, asked me if I would be willing to chair the Mentoring Committee, I wondered why she asked me, a department chair, to take on this assignment. I already had all the committee assignments and meetings I needed. On second thought, wasn't I struggling with how to orient and socialize six tenure track assistant professors, all of who had been in the department for one year or less?

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Mentoring Links ..... 14

The Ten Commandments of Mentoring ..... 19

Early in their career, faculty certainly need to be socialized into the norms, values, and culture not only of their department but, more broadly, those of their school or college and the university at large. They also need help in understanding specific departmental procedures and policies. What about mentoring for tenured faculty? How can we craft a meaningful notion of mentoring that would be of benefit to experienced faculty?

Although many of the concerns I reflect on as a department chair relate to senior faculty, I know that fashioning a set of meaningful activities, resources, and experiences would be particularly challenging, given the conventional image of mentoring as experienced faculty mentoring early career faculty. How are senior faculty responding and adjusting to the significant changes made in our department in response to the increasing emphasis placed on scholarship, particularly grant writing and publishing, at St. Louis University? Are they successfully incorporating the increasingly broad range of new technology into their classroom teaching? Are they satisfactorily dealing with balancing their teaching and their research? If so, what strategies are proving worthwhile? Given the current ideas that the term mentoring calls

forth, maybe we ought to employ a new term with a far broader set of connotations, particularly in reference to mid and late-career faculty. One among many possibilities would be to think about experienced faculty from different departments partnering together where two, three, or more individuals who either share certain mutual concerns or insight are able to come together, express their concerns, and hopefully learn from one another in the process. For instance, are there senior faculty who might want to share their thoughts with one another about how service obligations and expectations might shift throughout one's career as a faculty member?

Having spent a good portion of my life in administrative positions – not only in higher education, but also with state and federal government, and in numerous not-for-profit organizations – one of my core beliefs is that a common characteristic of effective organizations is that they share information effectively. As a Catholic, Jesuit university have we created the structures and mechanisms and, more importantly, the levels of trust and concern that allow individuals to effectively share helpful information in a non-threatening and supportive manner? Isn't this the very essence of what

partnering or mentoring or whatever we call it ought to be about?

The role of the Mentoring Committee is to serve as a resource to help create and make accessible the mechanisms and resources needed to expand our abilities as faculty members through coming together with one another as we strive to become better teachers, advisors, writers, researchers, time managers, and colleagues. For example, how can we better inform faculty about the array of teaching resources available at the Reinert Center for Teaching Excellence including videos, articles, books, videotaping classes, and having experienced teachers available for discussing teaching techniques, etc.7er? Isn't n Tw{aa)



*Dr. Camille Nelson, Assistant Professor of Law, Photo courtesy of the Law School*

At first blush the notion of mentoring seems uncontroversial. However, consideration of various forms of mentoring and the perceptions produced by the term indicate some interesting matters deserving of reflection. According to the American Heritage Dictionary, a mentor is a wise and trusted counselor or teacher.<sup>1</sup> The term has roots in Greek mythology for Odysseus's trusted counselor, in whose guise Athena became the guardian and teacher of Telemachus, exemplifies the concept of a formidable mentor.<sup>2</sup>

Conceptualizing a mentor as counselor, teacher and guardian is appealing. I would add, however, that conceptualizing a mentor as protective advocate is equally important. In the brief analysis that follows, I will explore

some of the forms which mentoring takes, discussing the advantages and disadvantages of each. This reflection implies the definition set out above. Through it all, a good mentor must, in my opinion, feel responsible for the development of their mentee—they must feel and be invested in their success and do their part to nurture their mentee's growth. They must facilitate the mentee's unobstructed view of the field, give the mentee tips and strategies for the game and, if consistent with the goals of the mentee, they should assist in the mentee's quest to secure a tenure touchdown.

## A) Formal/Assigned Mentoring

Given the ambit of this publication, I will focus my comments on professional and academic settings. Before one even reaches the issue of whether the formal assignment of a mentor is a good idea, I want to highlight that from an institutional setting, the faculty, department or center which recruited and hired the candidate in the first place should have an institutional interest in the success of the new recruit. As a collective, the faculty should be invested in ensuring the developmental prosperity of the

new member of the team. To this end, it is my hope that even those who might have voted against the candidate, or who expressed concerns about the candidate within the confines of the faculty meeting, shift gears and embrace the new faculty member as a legitimate part of the collective. To embrace this member is to put aside initial opposition and to facilitate the progression of the new recruit, or at least not to impede the professional growth of the new member. Part of this departmental investment in the new faculty member might be manifest in the assignment of a formal mentor.

Personally, I believe such an assignment to be valuable. If sensitive and sensible deliberation and evaluation is made in advance, the assignment of an appropriate mentor, who is truly interested in and capable of mentoring, can be more than just a fruitful exercise—it can be a respectful collaboration without the ego-stroking aspect so distasteful to many would-be mentees. Specifically, the assignment of an inappropriate mentor, without due thought, can be worse than having no mentor at all. Indeed, such an assignment may prove devastating to the new recruit who might



## B) Informal Mentoring

Informal mentoring is more appealing to some as it seems more natural and, hopefully, develops for everyone through the normal course of professional personal interactions. Ideally such a relationship is akin to friendship, but with many of

the benefits of formal mentoring relationships. Informal mentoring relationships are often developed through

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*Dr. Belden  
Lane, photo  
courtesy of  
Theological  
Studies*

As a  
teacher,  
w h a t  
gets you through the night?  
How do you make it to the  
end of yet another semester?  
Those are familiar questions  
asked in teaching, because, at  
least for most of us, it's a pro-  
fession in which experiences  
of ecstasy are fairly few and  
far between.

So what is it that sus-  
tains you in your sense of call  
to teaching as a profession?  
On those really rough days—  
when you suspect you ought

But the rabbi said, "My friend, we must obey the will of O. If it's decreed in heaven that pits be dug and we are commanded to jump, then pits will be dug and jump we must. If we fail, God forbid, then we'll be jumping into the arms of God—whatever happens." As they approached the edge of the pit, now filling up with bodies, the rabbi looked down at his tired feet, closed his eyes and commanded in a powerful whisper, "We are jumping." Then they opened their eyes and found themselves on the other side of the pit.

The other man started jumping up and down, yelling, "Rabbi, we made it. We're alive. There must be a God in heaven after all. How did you do it?" Rabbi Israel said, "I simply closed my eyes and held on to the coattails of my father, and my grandfather, and my great-grandfather, of blessed memory and I jumped. Then the rabbi said: "Tell me, friend, how did you reach the other side?" And the other man said, "Well, I was holding on to you!"

What is the leap of faith

that is made possible—the ability to press on despite all the reasons not to—that comes to us in holding on to the skirt-tails of the mothers and grandmothers and great-grandmothers that came before us? That's one way of maintaining our vision in teaching during hard times—looking back to the teachers that taught us.

I think of Miss Helen Needham—an English composition teacher I had my freshman year in college. Everybody hated her. She was impossibly demanding. Everything I slaved over to write for her came back bleeding with red ink. Over two semesters of a six-hour course I took from her, I painfully worked my way up from an initial "F" on my first paper, to a "C+" that I wore like a badge of courage.

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which had brought a flash flood of water some ten feet deep rushing down that narrow gorge with a violence I could hardly imaging by the time I'd gotten there.



During the last three years, I have taught a SLU2000 course, German 210, the third course in the language requirement sequence. The SLU2000 course, the regular, monthly SLU2000 meetings, and the last two annual SLU2000 conferences have provided me a forum in which to explore issues ranging from pedagogy, curriculum reform, student assessment, to student and professor expectations. The SLU2000 forum has also been beneficial in my involvement with local high school teachers, whom I visit annually as part of my responsibility coordinating the German courses in the 1818 Program. Together, the SLU2000 program and 1818 Program have focused my attention on foreign lan-

## **CTE Faculty Resource Room Hours**

In late August the Reinert Center for Teaching Excellence announced the addition of the CTE Faculty Resource Room to provide a casual, flexible space for faculty to browse CTE collections and exchange ideas about teaching. Along with a computer station and comfortable reading chairs, this room now contains our expanding print resources and houses our videotape library along with a television and VCR. Our print resources and videotape library cover a wide range of topics related to teaching. The room also has a conference table and chairs, providing an excellent site for small discussion groups or brown-bag lunches. We now are posting the resource room schedule on our web site: [www.slu.edu/centers/cte](http://www.slu.edu/centers/cte). Walk-ins are welcome during our “open hours.” The CTE Resource Room is also available for small faculty discussion groups by contacting the main CTE office in Verhaegen 314, (phone 977-3944; email [tebbebc@slu.edu](mailto:tebbebc@slu.edu)).

### **List of Mentoring Resources Available in Faculty Resource Room**

“Explicating Practical Knowledge: an extension of mentor teachers’ roles” by Anneke Zanting,

Among the things that have impressed me about Saint Louis University is the willingness of faculty members to share their experiences and expertise in teaching with colleagues. This is true with not only teaching in general, but also with teaching with technology. I have seen

many examples of faculty assisting faculty with integrating technology into teaching. I have seen this form of mentoring occur individually and in groups, informally and formally. Sometimes it involves one-on-one follow-up after a professional development workshop. Other times it comes about through informal conversations and demonstrations among colleagues.

A recent study, Faculty Technology Mentoring Programs: Major Trends in the Literature by Chuang, Thompson and Schmidt of Iowa State (available online: [www.public.iastate.edu/~mstar/mentor/Technology\\_mentoring\\_0128.htm](http://www.public.iastate.edu/~mstar/mentor/Technology_mentoring_0128.htm)), identified several themes present in faculty technology mentoring. Some of the themes point to results that one would expect from mentoring in general – e.g., the establishment of open dialogue and collaborative relationships. Other

**COS Research Grant Program--Association for Institutional Research (AIR).**

The subject area of the grant is the Improvement of Institutional Research in Postsecondary Education Institutions. Research grant proposals are solicited from education administrators, professional staff and faculty affiliated with a U.S. postsecondary institution or governance agency. The program provides grants of up to \$30,000 for principal investigators to:

- conduct research on institutional research in postsecondary education using the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) and National Science Foundation (NSF) national databases;
- conduct other institutional

August/September 2003 are due April 15, 2003. The association anticipates awarding up to 10 research grants per year. Research Grants Program awards are for up to \$15,000 for one-year projects and up to \$25,000 for two-year projects. Funds may be used for summer salary, release time, research assistant (RA) support, equipment, travel, supplies, computing time, etc. Institutions may not charge indirect costs on these awards. AERA/OERI Research Grants American Educational Research Association, 1230 17th Street, NW Washington, District of Columbia. 20036-3078. <http://fundingopps.cos.com/cgi-bin/getRec?id=63728>.

**Spencer Foundation-- Research Communication and Mentoring Grants**

The Spencer Foundation announces a number of educational grants that support Practitioner Research Communication and Mentoring. Grants are intended to support the development of strong communities of teacher researchers. The purpose of Practitioner Research Communication and Mentoring Grants is to establish or strengthen channels for rigorous examination and discussion of the characteristics and knowledge produced by well-constructed teacher and educator research, to provide teacher and educator researchers with the opportunity to enhance their research skills through consultation with others in the teacher and educator research and traditional academic communities, and to support high quality teacher

and education research projects. The upper amount for each grant is \$50,000. The anticipated deadline is February 15, 2003. The record will be updated when new program information becomes available Eligibility for the grants extends to: Teacher researchers, groups or networks of teacher researchers. Also collaborative partnerships between teacher researchers and university researchers are eligible to apply. Applicants must be affiliated with a not-for-profit agency through which funds will be distributed. Practitioner Research Communication and Mentoring Grants Program, Spencer Foundation, 875 North Michigan Avegram, Spe

## Links about Mentoring



Faculty Mentoring Program, Northern Illinois University  
<http://www3.niu.edu/facdev/development/mentoring.htm>



Empowering the Faculty: Mentoring Redirected and Renewed  
<http://www.gwu.edu/~eriche/Reviews/243a.html>  
<http://www.ntlf.com/html/lib/bib/95-3dig.htm>

Faculty Mentoring Program Guidelines, Stanford University  
<http://www.med.stanford.edu/fm/?/school/facultymentoring/&guidelines.html&www-med.stanford.edu>

Faculty Mentoring Program for Teaching, Penn State  
<http://www.psu.edu/dept/eis/html/mentoring.html>

Faculty Mentor-Mentee Program, Portland State University  
<http://www.oaa.pdx.edu/cae/default.html>

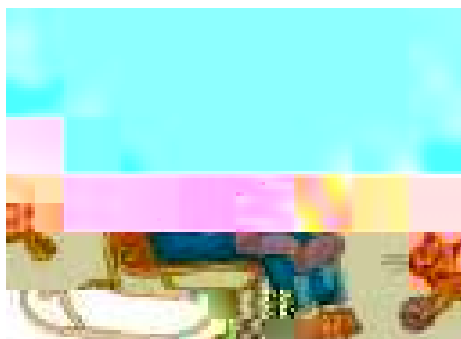
Faculty Mentor Program, Arizona Western College  
<http://www.awc.cc.az.us/cte/mentor.asp>

Mentoring Resources from Portland State University  
<http://www.oaa.pdx.edu/CAE/programs/menresc.htm>

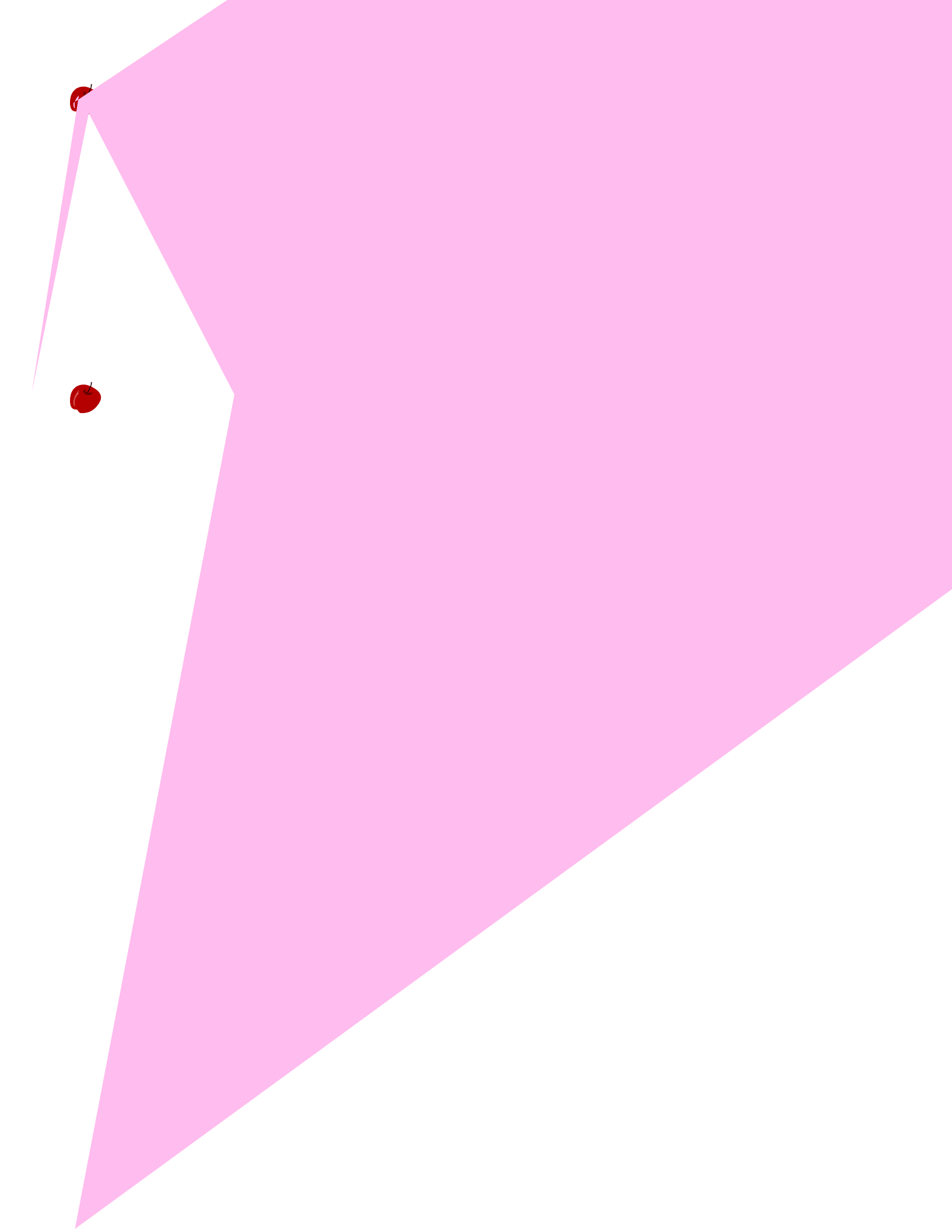
The Mentors Directory, Mentors Peer Resources  
<http://www.mentors.ca/mentor.html>

### FACULTY, MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The CTE Faculty Portfolio Retreat is scheduled for March 21 and 22, 2003



**After Mid-Term Exams—A Fun Link for Teachers**  
The Grandmother Syndrome  
<http://biology.ecsu.ctstateu.edu/People/ConnRev>



# CTE EFFECTIVE TEACHING SEMINAR SCHEDULE

## Remaining Fall Schedule

October 29 @ 1:30 p.m. & November 1 @ 1:30 p.m. Verhaegen 212	Integrating Technology in Teaching Strategies Dr. Mary Stephen, Associate Director Reinert Center for Teaching Excellence
November 4 @ 1:00 p.m. Health Sciences Center Center for Advanced Dental Educ. Ringenberg Lecture Hall	Using Cases in Teaching: Considering “Why?” and “How?” Dr. Jim Fisher, Marketing, CSB
November 5 @ 2:00 p.m. Verhaegen 212 & November 8 @ 1:30 p.m. Verhaegen 219	Syllabus Development Dr. Ann Rule, Educational Studies
November 12 @ 1:30 p.m. Verhaegen 212, Xavier 203 (counts as an elective seminar)	“Does Your Online Course Need Extra Credit to Pass?” Teleconference co-sponsored with School for Professional Studies
November 18 @ 1:00 p.m. Ringenberg Lecture Hall Center for Advanced Dental Educ. Health Sciences Campus	“Tailoring Your Talk: Applications of web-based resources for diverse audiences” Martha Allen, Dr. Miriam Joseph, Jamie Schmid, Pius XII Memorial Library
November 19 @ 11:00-1:00 p.m. & November 22 @ 11:00-1:00 p.m. Verhaegen 219 (Brown Bag Lunch, CTE will provide Beverages)	Active Learning Dr. Russell Blyth, Mathematics
November 26	Deadline for completion of portfolios for December certificate awards
December 6 @ 3:30-5:00 p.m. Verhaegen 119	Certificate Ceremony



## **Spring Schedule**

January 14 @ 1:30 p.m. &  
January 17 @ 1:30

Finding a Professional Identity

**REINERT CENTER FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE  
TEACHING MENTORS**

**List of current mentors**

## *The Ten Commandments of Mentoring*

1. Don't be afraid to be a mentor. Many mentors underestimate the amount of knowledge that they have about the academic system or their organiza-

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Teaching Excellence**

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***Theodore Vitali***

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***Patrick Welch***

Economics

***Stephen Wernet***

Social Service

***Kathleen Wright***

Public Health

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the Web at [http://www.slu.edu/  
centers/cte/](http://www.slu.edu/centers/cte/) or call (314)977-  
3944

CTE Notebook Designed and  
Published by the Reinert Center  
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Please contact Lori Hunt, *Note-  
book* editor, if you have any com-  
ments, suggestions or questions,  
[huntla@slu.edu](mailto:huntla@slu.edu).

## ***Special Thanks***

The Reinert Center for Teaching Excellence would like to express gratitude to two of our colleagues who have stepped down from the Advisory Board, Dr. Gerry Magill, Director of the Center for Health Care