Center for Teaching and Learning Newsletter

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CTL April Newsletter

The CTL Newsletter is distributed electronically every month during the academic year.

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To RSVP email us at CTL@stjohns.edu or call ext. 1859

Remember: The best places to look for faculty-related information are the CTL Webpage and the CTL Forum.
Looking Backward and Forward

Maura C. Flannery (College of Professional Studies, flannerm@stjohns.edu)

As the semester barrels toward an end, most of us are having thoughts about what we haven’t accomplished since January: the article that is still a rough draft, the course revisions that never got done, the new portfolio software that hasn’t been touched. This is hardly surprising; it seems to be very human to procrastinate, to think big, act little, and castigate ourselves for our deficiencies. Since most of us are in the same boat, maybe we should try what we encourage our students to do: collaborate, work in teams, or at least have one study partner. We seem to think it will work for them, so why not for us?

Now would be a good time to look around and find at least one other person to team up with on a project for the summer. Don’t think TOO large, or in September there will be two people castigating themselves instead of one.

If nothing else, having someone to check in with and share ideas with makes you feel less isolated: you are not the only one struggling to accomplish something. Perhaps most importantly, this is someone to whom you are at least mildly accountable. If you say that you are going to do something this week, and then are asked about it, that is painful. Being accountable to yourself just isn’t the same thing; it’s hard to embarrass yourself, but it’s easy to be embarrassed, even a tad, by someone else. Also, articulating your plans to a colleague often clarifies them for you; a half-baked idea becomes less gooey.

If you want something a little more formal than this, you can take advantage of one of the opportunities that was offered this semester, but you were just too busy to even consider. These are all being scheduled again:

Attend a Faculty Writing Retreat: The next one is scheduled for Friday, May 11 from 10 am to 4 pm in the Institute for Writing Studies in St. Augustine Hall. This is an opportunity to simply sit and write. Lunch with conversation is provided so you can share ideas and problems with like-minded faculty. This is a great way to start a summer writing project. You may even become interested in Wendy Belcher’s book, 12 Weeks to a Journal Article; That would leave you a couple of weeks for vacation.

Try out the Digication ePortfolio: All full-time faculty were given Digication ePortfolio accounts last fall and were informed by email about them. If that was one message you missed, just go to http://stjohns.digication.com and log on using your email user name and your St. John’s Central password. It’s easy to teach yourself how to use this software, but we’ll be having workshops this summer to help you with it. You can create a portfolio to use as your academic website, an electronic CV, a teaching portfolio, or something you would want to use with your students. Summer is a great time to play with Digication so you’ll be ready to use it in class in the fall.

Take a Distance Learning Pedagogy Course: If you are new to this approach to teaching then the first course is for you. For information, go to http://www.stjohns.edu/academics/undergraduate/distancelearning/faculty_resources/pedagogy1/pedagogy1.stj. There is also a follow-up course for those...
who have completed the basic course and want to learn more about different approaches to teaching online.

If none of these ideas seem exciting and intellectually stimulating to you, then come up with your own plan. But do it now. You are more likely to have a productive summer if you get yourself organized and set goals and deadlines. Not only will it make the summer less boring and more enriching, but it could prevent an end of the summer castigation session with yourself.

Interdisciplinary Research Roundtable Lunch: Writing Biography

The CTL’s biography luncheon this semester features Laura J. Snyder, Associate Professor of Philosophy in St. John’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. She will be discussing her book, *The Philosophical Breakfast Club: Four Remarkable Friends who Transformed Science and Changed the World* (Crown/Broadway Books, 2011). It was named a Scientific American Notable Book, an Official Selection of the TED Book Club, and winner of the 2011 Royal Institution of Australia Poll for Favorite Science Book.

Snyder is also the author of *Reforming Philosophy: A Victorian Debate on Science and Society* (University of Chicago Press, 2006), and numerous articles and book chapters. In addition, her work has appeared in *The Wall Street Journal*. She is currently writing a book about the relation between science—especially optics—and art.

In December, Dr. Snyder delivered the prestigious Dibner Library Lecture at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. This is the premier lecture in the history of science field. Past Dibner Library Lecturers have included British historian Richard Holmes, Anthony Grafton (Princeton), and Joyce Chaplin (Harvard).

This book is now available at the University bookstore at the customer service counter.

**Date:** Monday, April 30

**Time:** 12:15 to 1:40 p.m.

**Location:** Donovan Community Room

**To register:** Contact the CTL at CTL@stjohns.edu or ext. 1859.
**E-Portfolio Workshops on the Staten Island Campus**

As the University continues to move forward with technology they have initiated the use of e-Portfolios with faculty, current freshmen and seniors. Marilyn Dono-Koulouris, Roberta Hayes, and Chiara Cillerai from the Institute of Core Studies will be offering hands-on workshops on the use of e-Portfolios.

The workshops will be offered in April and May in order to have time to create a personal or class e-Portfolio over the summer months.

Choose from one of the following dates:
- April 26 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- May 1 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- May 10 from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m.

All workshops will be held in the Library Computer Lab.

Please RSVP to Marilyn Dono-Koulouris at donokoum@stjohns.edu.
The St. John’s Library Subject Guides: Your One Stop Shop for Research Projects

Joseph DeLorenzo (Graduate Student, St. John’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences)

The St. John’s University Libraries can be overwhelming, with literally thousands of information resources in all different formats available for St. John’s students, alumni, and faculty. Luckily, the St. John’s library subject guides are excellent resources to help researchers make sense of the vast world that is the University Libraries. The subject guides are pages put together by St. John’s librarians. Through these guides, subject-specialists in their areas of expertise offer researchers resources related to a particular discipline. These guides are guaranteed to point researchers towards legitimate and relevant information. The resources listed on the subject guides are all scholarly and of high quality, thus ensuring that they can be utilized appropriately for research projects in a wide variety of subject areas. Furthermore, the guides are easy to access; researchers have full access to all guides both on and off campus. Before we look at some specific examples of guides, here is the path to finding all the subject guides online:

1. Go to: http://www.stjohns.edu/academics/libraries
2. Under “Quick Links,” go to: “Resources by Subject”
3. Browse for the particular subject guide that best meets your needs and click into it.
4. Note: for some resources, you may be prompted to log in using your St. John’s Central username and password.

The Business & Economics guide was prepared by Professor Lucy Heckman, with Professor Andrew Sankowski. Professor Heckman has a second Master’s degree in Business Administration. This guide provides links to periodical databases and electronic journals the Libraries offer that are particularly useful for research in the fields of business and economics. The guide also provides links to useful websites that can be viewed on the open web. In the periodical database section, there are separate sections for databases for research in business, marketing, economics and finance, and accounting and taxation.

An example of a social science-orientated subject guide would be Professor Ben Turner’s History guide. Professor Turner holds a second Master’s degree in History. This guide provides a section on how to generate ideas and then narrow down topics for research papers, as well as very useful information on how to format citations and references in research papers and on how to understand the Libraries’ call number system. Professor Turner uses his expertise to provide researchers with links to the best periodical databases, electronic journals, historical newspapers, and online archives used in historical research. This guide even has an automatically updated feed for researchers that lists a selection of new books in the Libraries relating to history.

A third example would be the Religion/Theology guide prepared by Professor Kathryn Shaughnessy, who has a second Master’s degree from Fordham University in Philosophy and Religion, along with Professor Cynthia Chambers. This guide includes links to the most useful periodical databases, websites, and electronic journals in the fields of philosophy and religion. The guide also includes a section linking to electronic reference materials in philosophy and religion, materials that provide great ways to begin to become familiar with these exciting and important fields. Make sure to pay special attention to the tutorials this guide offers on how to appropriately search the academic databases and electronic reference tools.

In conclusion, the University Libraries’ subject guides are highly valuable resources that have been carefully put together by librarians who are experts in a wide variety of fields. These guides are highly

(continued on next page)
recommended for students, alumni, and faculty alike. How can one go wrong with links to the best resources on a particular subject or topic all in one location, easily accessible from anywhere?

Please also note that library faculty and subject-specialists would be more than happy to help you with your research. For a list of librarians with their subject expertise, please see: http://stjohns.campusguides.com/content.php?pid=16172&sid=487964.

**CTL Fellows on Research in Teaching and Technology**

On April 26, the 2010-2012 CTL Fellows made presentations on their projects which deal with integrating technology into their teaching. Over the two years of their fellowship, they explored active learning strategies and technologies that you might also find useful in your teaching. Short descriptions of their projects follow:

**Using Digication E-Portfolios in the Curriculum: Challenges and Rewards**

Kevin Rioux (St. John’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, riouxk@stjohns.edu)

An academic e-portfolio is a collection of materials selected by a student to demonstrate acquisition of skills and experience over the course of his or her academic career. Papers, projects, graphic works, performances, etc., are all examples of “artifacts” that can be collected within an e-portfolio.

Educational theorists have asserted that the use of e-portfolios encourages active reflection on academic and professional goals and lifelong learning (Penny-Light, Chen & Ittelson, 2010). E-portfolios are furthermore seen as tools for strategic planning, assessing student learning, and sharing work with prospective employers and/or graduate admissions officers (Sternberg, Penn & Hawkins, 2011).

As indicated by the “e-” prefix, the materials are stored, managed, and displayed within a web-based application, often administered by a vendor. St. John’s University has recently contracted with Digication to provide students and faculty with a platform for creating e-portfolios.

My project focuses on the initial implementation of Digication e-portfolio projects in two of my courses. Preliminary analysis of this process indicates mostly positive results. My students quickly and enthusiastically adopted the Digication e-portfolios, and were mostly successful in creating their efforts to collect academic artifacts in an e-portfolio format. There were challenges, however, as some students were stymied by a few technology glitches. Yet overall, the process was relatively smooth for students, and I am currently in the process of learning how best to use the e-Portfolio as a tool in course assessment.

**Teaching Historical Research by Writing Historical Fiction: The web-site, the on-line collaboration, the e-book**

Tracey-Anne Cooper (St. John’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, coopert@stjohns.edu)

My project as a CTL fellow was to create a website with Campus Guides with faculty and student input, which also operated as a platform for collaborative student writing. The outcome was a historical fiction novel which was published as both a hard-copy and e-book. My undergraduate class “After Rome 400-800AD” was a new class, which faced two challenges. First, many students lacked a perception of this period of history and had only vague ideas regarding the unhelpful term “Dark Ages.” Second, the topic involves a lot of brand new research which conceives of a transregional Mediterranean history. I decided to use historical fiction writing to meet these two challenges and create a desire in the students to conduct research to know more about the people living through these crucial times that
shaped the political, religious and cultural of the region, giving us separate the regions of Europe, Middle East and Africa, and Catholic and Orthodox Christianities and Islam. After spending the first half of the semester covering content, the class was divided into eight small groups to study one of eight Mediterranean cities: Arles, Ravenna, Split, Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, Carthage and Cordoba. Before the start of class, myself and a student worker created the basis of the web-site with information on each city. The student groups then expanded on this as they discovered more sources and information. Each week they also wrote a small piece of fiction around a theme – a journey, a cultural conversation, etc. and shared them on-line on the website with their group. One very useful technique was to have the students critique their own writing as they posted it – this removed a lot of anxiety about each writing being “successful” – students could experiment and decide they did not like their style or that they did not know enough about a certain aspect. The student groups then wrote a longer chapter together. This semester I worked with two interns, who had been class participants, and used google docs to revise and rewrite sections of what the students had submitted to make a single novel.

**Build a Digital Archive for Student Writers in an English Composition Course**

*Sophia Bell* (Institute for Writing Studies, bells@stjohns.edu)

I have archived student work and a variety of articles on writing-related issues for students on PBWorks, a wiki-based free software. This archive allows students to access prior writing by other students and writing by professional writers, on topics that come up for them during their writing process.

In addition, I have used PBWorks to develop ways for students to post and respond to each others' writing.

**Litigating on Smartphones, and Other Adventures in Law School Clinic Technology**

*Jennifer Baum* (School of Law, baumj@stjohns.edu)

Using technology to enhance the Child Advocacy Clinic has been a goal of the clinic since 2008. The Child Advocacy Clinic teaches second and third year law students litigation and other lawyering skills through representing children on abuse and neglect cases in New York State family courts. In my two years as a CTL Technology Fellow, my clinic has had the opportunity to experiment with numerous forms of technology, including: online document hosting; interactive online student feedback; a Twitter feed; online data storage and exchange; video production; presentation enhancements; streaming classes; cloud-based case management systems; and other adventures.

Some forms of technology proved more or less helpful than others, and this was an education, as well. Not surprisingly, the technology which worked best to enhance my teaching in the clinic was that which proved user-friendly, solved immediate problems, and contributed something to the classroom experience which was missing without it. The most successful enhancements were online document, photo, and video storage and exchange (Dropbox and Vimeo), brief and controlled “information bombardment” (time-limited Twitter feed), and online case management (Clio). This spring I will present a self-edited video (using iMovie) about a classroom experience to a national audience of law school clinicians; a few weeks ago student-made photos and a video of a foster home were uploaded to Dropbox and used in Queens County Family Court to prevent the removal of two young, traumatized children from their godparents. This summer I will be moving my clinic to a new cloud-based case management system, enabling students to access case files remotely, further enhancing their ability to serve our clients.

I had hoped that my time as a technology fellow would open the clinic up to a broader range of technology possibilities, and that is exactly what happened. The students are better educated (and we in the clinic are better teachers) because of it.
CTL Fellows Program in Teaching with Technology
This program is structured as a faculty learning community with the focus on assisting faculty in developing the technological aspects of their courses. This program is not targeting those who are technologically savvy nor those at the opposite end of the spectrum, rather, the focus is on taking faculty the next step, no matter where their starting point.

- Fellows serve for two years. The first few months are used to develop their projects.
- There are usually ten Fellows, drawn from full-time faculty throughout the University.
- There is a simple, one-page application form outlining the course and the technological aspects the applicant would like to enhance.
- The program begins with a one-day retreat in early Fall at which the Fellows develop their plans and discuss how best to structure the program.
- Fellows are obligated to meet at least once a month to explore relevant literature, to discuss plans, to deal with concerns, and to report on the status of their projects. There will also be guests invited to share their expertise in areas relevant to the Fellows’ projects.
- Each Fellow will be funded up to $2,000 for support (excluding hardware) to enhance technological aspects of their course or to attend a workshop or conference to develop their knowledge or skills related to teaching with technology.
- Support from the eStudio and the University Libraries is an essential part of this program. The support is primarily in the form of expertise which the faculty can draw upon to achieve their goals. Specific individuals will be identified as liaisons with the Fellows Program.
- Fellows are expected to make presentations and other forms of “publication” so that their efforts are communicated to other members of the faculty, particularly to members of their home departments or divisions. One of the best means to communicate with the larger higher education community would be through electronic course portfolios.
- The deadline to apply is Monday, April 30, 2012!

Faculty Growth Grant Program
The Faculty Growth Grants are intended to provide support for faculty members and are designed to support:
- Integration of technology into instruction.
- Exploration of pedagogical principles and their integration into the curriculum.
- Development of groundbreaking courses in a department or program.

The upcoming deadline to apply for a Faculty Growth Grant is: April 30, 2012.

Language Attitudes in Higher Education
St. John’s faculty are invited to participate in survey research that examines language attitudes toward international students in English-medium universities worldwide. You will find the brief survey form at: http://irsurveys.stjohns.edu/S11/LanguageAttitudes2012/

Thank you for your help and cooperation.
Herbert Pierson, Walter Petrovitiz, Alexander Nussbaum, Wang Lei and James Curley
Debunking the Myths of Federal Employment
Michelle Kyriakides, Associate Director, Career Center

“I’m not a Government & Politics Major...why would they want me?”
“I don’t want to move to Washington, D.C.”
“I heard the government doesn’t pay well…”
“Federal jobs are hard to find…”

If you’ve heard students repeating any of the above myths about working for the federal government, now is the time to encourage them to learn more about the diverse opportunities available to them through careers in federal service.

According to the Partnership for Public Service (2011), there will be career opportunities available within virtually every career path in the coming years. However, the “Mission Critical” areas for employment include Security & Protection (including over 50,000 hires in areas such as intelligence analysis, international relations, foreign affairs, security administration, and law enforcement officers), Enforcement & Compliance (over 30,000 hires including investigators, import and customs specialists), Medical & Public Health (over 50,000 hires including physicians, nurses, pharmacists, medical technicians and nursing assistants), Program Management & Administrative (over 17,000 hires including program managers and analysts who monitor program operations and effectiveness, and administrative staff), and Legal (over 23,000 hires including attorney, contact representative, paralegal, passport/visa examining and claims examining/assistance). (Partnership for Public Service, 2011).

In addition to the diversity of opportunities available to students with virtually any major, federal jobs can be found around the country – and even around the world. In fact, only 12.2% of federal jobs are located in the Washington, D.C. area. In 2012, the most entry level new hires will be made in California, Texas, Washington, D.C., Virginia, and right here in New York (Partnership for Public Service, 2009).

As for pay scales, the majority of agencies pay employees on the GS-scale, with college graduates starting at a GS-5, and those with outstanding academic achievement beginning their careers at a GS-7. Within each grade, there are ten steps, so employees have the opportunity to increase their salary within the same position over time as they gain more experience and expertise. Salaries also vary by location, and increase with cost of living. In addition to a competitive salary structure, candidates may also be eligible for additional benefits, including student loan repayment, healthcare benefits, retirement plans, tuition remission for graduate work, and flexible work schedules/telecommuting opportunities (Partnership for Public Service, 2011).

Over the past several years, the Obama administration has worked to streamline the process of applying for federal jobs with a focus on making the process more accessible to the general public. These changes included the elimination of the requirement for KSA essays during the initial screening stage, as well as the acceptance of a standard resume for most positions. In addition, the Office of Personnel Management has created three new “Pathway Programs” to recruit talent at the collegiate level. These programs include the “Internship Program,” a paid experience related to a students’ career goals/academic major while the student is enrolled in school; the “Recent Graduate Program,” which is open to graduates for up to two years after graduation; and the “Presidential Management Fellowship Program” (PMF), which is open to graduate students for up to two years after they’ve completed their advanced degree (Partnership for Public Service, 2011).

There are several online resources that students can access to learn more about these various opportunities. These resources include:

1. Making the Difference (http://www.makingthedifference.org): This site, developed by the Partner-
ship for Public Service, provides students with a variety of information about the types of jobs that are available, as well as information about agencies which they could target for potential employment based on their field of interest. The site also provides tips for the application process and updated news for college students interested in federal service.

2. USA Jobs (http://www.usajobs.gov): This site is maintained by the Office of Personnel Management, and lists job opportunities for all of the federal agencies. Students should create an account and set up a job search agent so they are notified via e-mail when a position is posted that matches their interests, since many federal jobs have a limited posting period.

3. Fed Scope (http://www.fedscope.opm.gov): This site allows students to search for information about the federal agencies in their geographic area and learn about the skill set that the employer is seeking.

4. Best Places to Work (http://bestplacestowork.org/BPTW/rankings): Here candidates can get the inside scoop about how each agency ranks in terms of employee satisfaction.

5. USA.gov (http://www.usa.gov): This site provides a comprehensive listing of all federal agencies, so students can conduct research and learn about additional career and internship opportunities.

In addition, the Career Center can support students’ federal job search efforts through one-on-one advising, or through classroom presentations focused on topics such as finding and applying for federal employment, the federal resume and interviewing, and the security clearance process. If you are interested in more information, please contact Dr. Michelle Kyriakides at kyriakim@stjohns.edu or 718-990-1361.

Works Cited

Project DNY
Project DNY is an online public forum for Discover New York student projects and research. The initiative began in Fall 2011 as a means of featuring research performed within Discover New York classes and sharing that work with the St. John’s University community and others through a publicly accessible wiki.

Student work from the spring semester will be available for viewing on April 26, 2012 at: http://projectdny.pbworks.com.

Student Written Book Launch
You are invited to join Dr. Tracey-Anne Cooper and her students on Monday, April 30 at 6 p.m. in the Institute for Writing Studies, Library room 150, for the launch of their book The Immortal Centurion: Tales of Longinus’s Mediterranean Travels 400-800.

The authors will read selections and copies will be on sale. Refreshments will be served. For more information contact Dr. Cooper at coopert@stjohns.edu.
Remember:
The best places to look for faculty-related information are the [CTL Webpage](http://www.stjohns.edu/CTL) and the [CTL Teaching and Learning Forum](http://www.stjohns.edu/CTL).

Faculty News:
If you would like to send an entry to “Faculty News,” the deadline for the May issue is April 27. We prefer that you email the information to [CTL@stjohns.edu](mailto:CTL@stjohns.edu). Please have your entries follow the style presented in “Faculty News.”

A Faculty Writing Retreat
**Location:** Institute for Writing Studies, Library Room 150, Queens Campus  
**Dates:** Friday, May 11, 2012 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
**To Register:** Contact the CTL at [ctl@stjohns.edu](mailto:ctl@stjohns.edu) or ext. 1859; participation is limited.

The Faculty Writing Retreat offers you the opportunity to commit to a day of writing surrounded by your colleagues who will have made the same commitment as you. Published research – and our own experience from previous St. John’s Faculty Writing Initiative writing retreats we’ve held – tells us the positive energy of being around faculty peers who are also writing (and struggling to write) helps faculty get substantial work done, even in one day.

As to the schedule for the retreat, you will arrive and begin writing. We are certain there will be much writing advice to be shared during lunch, which will be served at 12:30pm. We hope you will be able to join us. Please remember that **participation is limited; please RSVP at [ctl@stjohns.edu](mailto:ctl@stjohns.edu) or ext. 1859.** If you have any questions, email Anne Geller ([gellera@stjohns.edu](mailto:gellera@stjohns.edu)) or Maura Flannery ([flannerm@stjohns.edu](mailto:flannerm@stjohns.edu)).

If you would like to learn more about writing retreats or you are interested in research about faculty writing productivity, go to the CTL Forum Writing Page at [http://stjohns.campusguides.com/aeccontent.php?pid=71651&sid=589816](http://stjohns.campusguides.com/aeccontent.php?pid=71651&sid=589816).

Announcement from the Office of Online Learning and Services
**The Sloan Consortium** is an institutional and professional leadership organization dedicated to integrating online education into the mainstream of higher education, helping institutions and individual educators improve the quality, scale, and breadth of online education. Membership in the Sloan Consortium provides knowledge, practice, community, and direction for educators. Sloan-C offers a variety of online workshops to enhance faculty members' knowledge of effective online learning. These workshops cost $345.

St. John's University has joined the College Pass program which reduces the price to $100. St. John’s Office of Online Learning and Services will reimburse the $100 when faculty members seek approval in advance (just to be sure that we do not exceed our budget) and submit the certificate of successful workshop completion.

Please contact Elizabeth Alexander ([alexande@stjohns.edu](mailto:alexande@stjohns.edu)), or at 718-990-2353.