



# Center for Teaching and Learning Newsletter

## Dates to Note!!

Monday, December 1  
[Transition to MySJU](#)

Tuesday, December 2  
[Organize Your Blackboard Course](#)

Wednesday, December 3  
[Embedding Links](#)

Friday, December 19  
[Faculty Writing Retreat](#)

For more information and to register visit:  
<http://campusguides.stjohns.edu/ctlevents>

Vol. 20, No 3

November 2014

## CTL November Newsletter

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

Highlights from our November issue include:

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**Remember:** The best places to look for faculty-related information are the [CTL Webpage](#) and the [CTL Forum](#).

### Follow Us on Twitter

The CTL is pleased to announce that it is now on Twitter [@sjuctl](#). Follow us for the latest news in teaching and learning as well as announcements of upcoming events.



## CAREER CORNER

### Leadership Transcends Aspiration Careers of College Students

Joni O'Hagan (Senior Associate Director, Student Development University Career Services, [ohaganj@stjohns.edu](mailto:ohaganj@stjohns.edu))

lead-er-ship *noun* \lĕ-dər-,ship\ : a position as a leader of a group, organization, etc.: the time when a person holds the position of leader: the power or ability to lead other people syn **ESSENTIAL SKILL OF COLLEGE GRADUATES.**

According to a recent article in *Forbes*, the issues facing our nation today are formidable and require "innovative, able leaders who are skilled in their fields and dedicated to pursuing creative and innovative solutions."

St. John's University's Career Services aims to provide students with the tools necessary to identify potential career paths which match their skills, values, interests and personality. Career Advisors specifically focus on assuring that students' choice of major is both satisfying and aids in their ability to build the necessary skills to succeed in their chosen career field. Through early and often career advisement, students gain a deeper understanding about the importance of their experiences, including internships, and are better prepared to market their skills, including leadership, to future employers.

Psychologist John Holland developed a theory of careers and vocational choice based upon personality types which resulted in the Holland Codes or the Holland Occupational Themes (RIASEC). For the purpose of this piece allow me to focus on just one type, enterprising (E). Enterprising types are described as individuals who like to work with people as they influence, persuade, lead or manage for organizational goals or economic gain: in other words, they are leaders.

I have explored career options with hundreds of students as a career advisor for the past 12 years. From teaching, finance and advertising to biochemistry, government and writing each career field requires some degree of leadership as an essential skill for success, as seen in the list below.

- Elementary Education (**SEC**)
- Biochemistry (**IRE**)
- English (**AES**)
- Finance & Banking (**ESR**)
- Advertising (**ESA**)
- Health Services Management (**ESC**)
- Public Administration (**ESR**)

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), leadership is among the top abilities that employers seek in today's college graduates, including the ability to influence others, to make decisions and solve problems and to verbally communicate with persons inside and outside the organization. With this in mind, Career Services offers students opportunities to actively learn and prac-

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**2014-2016 FELLOWS:**

Alyse Hennig  
Samantha Jellinek-Cohen  
Raeann Kyriakou  
Zaidalynet Morales  
Richard Waller

**2013-2015 FELLOWS:**

Joan Ball  
June Chen  
Randall Clemens  
Roberta Hayes  
Maureen Weicher

**CAMPUS GUIDES: CTL TEACHING AND LEARNING FORUM**

The site's main aim is to highlight the great teaching strategies developed by St. John's faculty.

Please visit: <http://stjohns.edu/campusguides.com/ctlforum>.

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tice the skills desired by employers. Whether they are practicing the clear articulation of their skills through mock interviews, exploring and then informing career decisions through shadowing a professional in their desired field, or sharing strategies for success through peer-to-peer mentoring sessions, Career Services bases its programs and services on the understanding that, regardless of chosen career field, our students need leadership skills for future success.

Klawe, M. (2014). Transforming Today's College Students Into Future Leaders. Forbes.  
Zenger, J. and Folkman, J. (2014) The Skills Leaders Need at Every Level. Harvard Business Review.  
Job Outlook 2015 | National Association of Colleges and Employers (November 2014)



## Research Month 2015

The research activities of St. John's students and faculty are increasingly diverse and intense: grant dollars continue to rise; publications are flourishing; students are presenting papers at conferences. We have good reason to celebrate our accomplishments. We expect that through Research Month activities the St. John's University Community will become increasingly aware, mutually supportive and proud of these impressive activities. For more specific information go to: <http://www.stjohns.edu/research/research-month>

**Monday, April 13**

- Interdisciplinary Research Roundtable: Writing Biography
- Annual Faculty Book Reception

**Thursday, April 16**

- Faculty Research Forum

**Monday, April 20**

- Interdisciplinary Research Roundtable

**Tuesday, April 21**

- Student Research Day: Queens Campus
- Poster Presentations
- Oral Presentations, Panel Discussions, and Roundtable
- Fine Arts Presentations
- Film Screening/Performance Art

**Thursday, April 23**

- CTL Fellows' Presentation on Research in Teaching and Technology
- Annual Grants Reception
- Research Day – Staten Island Campus

**Monday, April 27**

- Interdisciplinary Research Roundtable

Any questions can be directed to [studentresearch@stjohns.edu](mailto:studentresearch@stjohns.edu).

## Faculty News

**Dr. Irene J. Dabrowski** (Sociology & Anthropology, [dabrowsi@stjohns.edu](mailto:dabrowsi@stjohns.edu)) presented a paper, "Facilitating Person to Machine Communication in the Singularity," at the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology in Pittsburgh, PA (October 2014).

**Dr. Christopher Denny** (Theology and Religious Studies, [dennyc@stjohns.edu](mailto:dennyc@stjohns.edu)) presented a paper, "From Doubt and Decline towards Dialogue: Discussing Anselm's *Proslogion* in the Religiously Pluralist Classroom" at the "What is Liberal Education For?" conference at St. John's College in Santa Fe (October 2014).

**Dr. Maura C. Flannery** (Computer Science, Mathematics and Science, [flannerm@stjohns.edu](mailto:flannerm@stjohns.edu)) presented a paper, "A Meeting of the Arts, Humanities, and Science in Digital Archives," at the National Conference on Liberal Arts and the Education of Artists in New York (October 2014).

**Dr. Steve Puig** (Languages and Literatures, [puigs@stjohns.edu](mailto:puigs@stjohns.edu)) presented a paper entitled "Representations of New York in 90's French Literature," at the Society of French Professors of

America conference at New York University (October 2014).

**Dr. Judith Ryder** (Sociology & Anthropology, [ryderj@stjohns.edu](mailto:ryderj@stjohns.edu)) co-authored an article "Constant Violence from Everywhere': Psychodynamics of Power and Abuse amongst Rural and Small-town Youth" in *Critical Criminology* (October 2014); presented two papers at the European Society of Criminology Meetings in Prague, Czech Republic: "Theory-building Youth Relational Violence: Gender, Mind, and Context" and "Close to Home: Serving Girl Offenders in New York City" (September 2014) and presented a seminar entitled "Conflicting Relations: Adolescent Girls and Violent Behavior" at the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research at the University of Glasgow (September 2014).

### Faculty News:

If you would like to send an entry to "Faculty News," the deadline for the December issue is **November 21**. 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."

## Faculty Writing Retreat

**Date:** Friday, December 19

**Time:** 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Location:** Institute for Writing Studies

[REGISTER](#)

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.

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/aecontent.php?pid=71651&sid=589816>.

## Engagement Indicators & High-Impact Practices: Results from the 2014 National Survey of Student Engagement

Yuxiang Liu (Director of Institutional Assessment, Institutional Research & Academic Planning, [Liuy@stjohns.edu](mailto:Liuy@stjohns.edu))

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which has been administered annually since 2000, collects data from the first-year and senior students about the nature of their undergraduate experience. The survey is designed to evaluate the extent to which students engage in effective educational practices empirically linked with learning, personal development, and other desired outcomes. St. John's University participated in NSSE in 2001, 2002, and every other year thereafter, and the survey results have been used as part of St. John's student engagement and outcomes measures.

In 2013, based on its previous findings and research as well as suggestions from institutional users, plus a two-year pilot study, NSSE made changes in its contents. The changes mainly include: a) new survey items were added to expand coverage of student experience, including learning strategies, quantitative learning, and effective teaching practices; b) some items were refined to improve coverage of collaborative learning, experiences with diversity, and quality of interactions; and c) Engagement Indicators (EI) were developed to replace the previous Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practices, and High-Impact Practices (HIP) on student learning and retention were identified.

This brief summary provides information on Engagement Indicators (EI) and High-Impact Practices (HIP) from NSSE 2014. St. John's data is compared with that of the Carnegie peer institutions, and the survey results by college are also presented. For detailed survey results or other information, please visit the website of Institutional Research & Academic Planning: <http://www.stjohns.edu/about/administrative-offices/institutional-research>.

### I. Engagement Indicators (EI)

Before 2013, NSSE survey items were grouped into five Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practices: These five benchmarks are: Level of Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Relations, Enriching Educational Experiences, and Supportive Campus Environment. Each benchmark score was derived from converting student responses into a 100-point scale and then getting the mean score of the items under the benchmark. Therefore, the scores of the five benchmarks were on a 100-point scale.

Starting from 2013, ten Engagement Indicators (EI) were created to replace the previous benchmarks. The number of items under each EI varies, ranging from 3 to 8. The scores of EIs are all on a 60-point scale. **Table 1** below presents EI scores for the first-year students at St. John's University and the Carnegie peer institutions, and scores by college are also provided.

**Table 1. Scores of Engagement Indicators for the First-Year Students: NSSE 2014**

Engagement Indicator (60-point scale)	Carnegie Peers	St. John's University	By College				
			SJC	EDU	CPS	TCB	PHM
1. Higher-Order Learning	40	40	41	41	40	37	41
2. Reflective and Integrative Learning	36	36	38	37	36	37	34
3. Learning Strategies	40	40	41	43	41	39	39
4. Quantitative Reasoning	28	27	26	26	23	32	29

*(table continued on next page)*

Table 1. Scores of Engagement Indicators for the First-Year Students: NSSE 2014 continued

Engagement Indicator (60-point scale)	Carnegie Peers	St. John's University	By College				
			SJC	EDU	CPS	TCB	PHM
5. Collaborative Learning	32	29	28	34	25	28	37
6. Discussions with Diverse Others	41	45	47	47	43	47	44
7. Student-Faculty Interaction	21	22	21	33	21	24	18
8. Effective Teaching Practices	40	39	39	38	40	40	38
9. Quality of Interactions	41	40	39	41	40	41	42
10. Supportive Environment	37	38	37	38	36	37	41

The score for each EI was derived from converting student responses into a 60-point scale and then getting the mean score of the items under the EI. For example, the first EI, Higher-Order Learning, consists of four survey items. The question on these four items is: During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following? The four items are:

- A. Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations
- B. Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts
- C. Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source
- D. Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information

For the above four items, students are asked to select one of the following four options: 1) Very much, 2) Quite a bit, 3) Some, 4) Very little. When converting student responses into a score, each of the four options is assigned a value: Very much = 60; Quite a bit = 40; Some = 20; Very little = 0. The average of the four items under the EI of Higher-Order Learning is the score for this EI. As **Table 1** reveals, both St. John's and the Carnegie peer institutions scored 40 on Higher-Order Learning, indicating that on average, students engaged QUITE A BIT (40 = Quite a bit) in the four items listed under this EI.

The Carnegie peer institutions include 29 institutions that participated in NSSE 2013 & 2014, including DePaul University, University of St. Thomas, and Hofstra University. They belong to the same Carnegie classification as St. John's does, i.e., Doctoral/Research Universities.

As **Table 1** reveals, for 8 of the 10 EIs, St. John's scores are similar to those of Carnegie peers, with a difference of two points or lower. For the other two EIs (#5 & #6), St. John's scored slightly higher on Discussions with Diverse Others, 45 vs. 41, but slightly lower on Collaborative Learning, 29 vs. 32.

The data by college indicates that TCB first-year students were more engaged in Quantitative Reasoning (scored 32) than students from other colleges; EDU and PHM students were more engaged in Collaborative Learning (34 and 37, respectively); and EDU students had more Student-Faculty Interactions (33).

**Table 2** on the next page presents EI scores for senior students.

Table 2. Scores of Engagement Indicators for Senior Students: NSSE 2014

Engagement Indicator (60-point scale)	Carnegie Peers	St. John's University	By College				
			SJC	EDU	CPS	TCB	PHM
1. Higher-Order Learning	42	42	48	41	38	40	40
2. Reflective and Integrative Learning	40	38	44	37	38	37	30
3. Learning Strategies	41	40	44	44	37	38	39
4. Quantitative Reasoning	30	30	36	22	24	34	27
5. Collaborative Learning	33	32	33	30	28	35	34
6. Discussions with Diverse Others	42	45	51	45	42	46	40
7. Student-Faculty Interaction	25	26	33	33	25	28	16
8. Effective Teaching Practices	41	40	46	41	39	41	34
9. Quality of Interactions	42	41	42	42	41	43	36
10. Supportive Environment	34	36	39	34	36	38	32

As **Table 2** indicates, the difference in the EI scores between St. John's and Carnegie peers for senior students were also minimal, all within two points except for #6, Discussions with Diverse Others, on which St. John's scored slightly higher, 45 vs. 42.

The data by college reveals that SJC seniors became more engaged in most areas as compared to its first-year students; SJC seniors were also more engaged than students from other colleges in such areas as Higher-Order Learning (scored 48), Reflective and Integrative Learning (44), Discussions with Diverse Others (51), and Effective Teaching Practices (46).

## II. High-Impact Practices (EI)

Based on its intensive research, NSSE identified six High-Impact Practices (HIP) on student learning and retention. These six practices are listed in the survey as individual items. **Table 3** below presents the survey results of the six practices. As the table reveals, three practices apply to the first-year students, and all six for senior students.

Table 3. Practices with High Impact on Student Learning and Retention

High-Impact Practices	Student Response	Carnegie Peers	St. John's University	By College				
				SJC	EDU	CPS	TCB	PHM
<b>1. First-Year Students</b>								
1. Service-Learning	In some or all courses	55%	93%	94%	93%	87%	94%	98%
2. Learning Community	Have done or in progress	16%	15%	18%	19%	10%	25%	9%
3. Research with Faculty	Have done or in progress	6%	5%	7%	8%	4%	3%	4%



High-Impact Practices	Student Response	Carnegie Peers	St. John's University	By College				
				SJC	EDU	CPS	TCB	PHM
<b>2. Senior-Year Students</b> (Pharm.D students were excluded in #6, Culminating Senior Experiences, as Pharm.D is a six-year program.)								
1. Service-Learning	In some or all courses	64%	86%	91%	100%	74%	98%	83%
2. Learning Community	Have done or in progress	27%	30%	35%	48%	29%	39%	14%
3. Research with Faculty	Have done or in progress	24%	21%	41%	7%	7%	22%	13%
4. Internship or Field Experience	Have done or in progress	51%	58%	53%	76%	57%	73%	51%
5. Study Abroad	Have done or in progress	14%	28%	35%	21%	26%	26%	23%
6. Culminating Senior Experience	Have done or in progress	49%	30%	35%	57%	21%	27%	33%

For the first practice, Service Learning, the survey question is: "About how many of your courses at this institution have included a community-based project (service-learning)?" As **Table 2** demonstrates, a much higher percentage of both St. John's first-year and senior students indicated that some or all courses included service-learning than Carnegie peers did: 93% vs. 55% for the first-year students, and 86% vs. 64% for seniors. Apparently, the survey results reflected the fact that starting from Fall 2009, academic service learning has been integrated into the course of Discover New York, and in addition, it has been expanded to other courses.

For Practices 2 to 6, the survey asked students whether they have been engaged in such activities. As the table presents, for the first-year students there was not much difference between St. John's and Carnegie peers: 15% of St. John's students participated in learning communities as compared to 16% of Carnegie peers; 5% of St. John's students worked with faculty on a research project as compared to 6% of Carnegie peers.

For senior students, a slightly higher percentage of St. John's students participated in learning communities than Carnegie peers, 30% vs. 27%; a slightly lower proportion of St. John's students conducted research with faculty, 21% vs. 24%, a much higher percentage of St. John's students had internship or field experience (58% vs. 51%) and studied abroad (28% vs. 14%), but a much lower proportion of St. John's students had culminating senior experience, 30% vs. 49%.

The results of the NSSE survey results are the perceptions of students about their engagement status in curricular and extracurricular activities. The data is very useful and can be employed with other data in the action plans for University priorities.

### Faculty Growth Grant Program

The upcoming deadlines to apply for a Faculty Growth Grant are:

**December 1, 2014 and May 1, 2015**

If you have any questions regarding the application procedures look at our website under [Growth Grant Program](#) or email us at [CTL@stjohns.edu](mailto:CTL@stjohns.edu).



## Remember:

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[www.stjohns.edu/  
CTL](http://www.stjohns.edu/CTL)

*This newsletter is published monthly during the academic year by the Center for Teaching and Learning.*

**Managing Editor:**  
Lisa Getman



## Using Digital Resources in the Classroom

Many of us use digital tools in the classroom and ask our students to use them as well. For example, I assign a portfolio project and allow students to present their work in the format of their choice. Some use PowerPoint, but more frequently work is "handed in" electronically in the form of a [Digication ePortfolio](#), a [Tumblr](#) or [Weebly](#) website, or a [Prezi](#) presentation. I do not demand a single format, nor do I offer students assistance in choosing or using a platform. This is probably why some students submit Word documents: this is easiest to use for them.

I have been rethinking this hands-off approach for a number of reasons. One is that it's becoming clear to me that students arrive at the university with a very broad spectrum of digital skills. I cannot assume that they are familiar with any specific technology, beyond texting. This is an especial problem in my class because I teach a core course (Scientific Inquiry), so many of my students are freshman. As more and more digital tools are used in teaching and learning—and throughout our culture—it is becoming necessary for students to have some baseline level of technological skill. It's imperative that teachers get into the game and provide guidance.

Many faculty already do this, providing in-class assistance with Blackboard or Digication or some other platform that they wish their students to use. I haven't chosen to do this because I want to use class time to teach the best subject in the world (biology, of course). However, I don't think I can continue to have this luxury. Why? Because students flounder without support and become frustrated. If I want them to present a biology portfolio then I am going to have to help them construct it.

I am more convinced of this approach after reading the *Educause Review* article by Anita Say Chan and Harriett Green, [Practicing Collaborative Digital Pedagogy to Foster Digital Literacies in Humanities Classrooms](#). They describe two case studies of classes where they integrated digital tools into courses. In one case, a course on Food Networks, used several tools including [Scalar](#) for digital publishing and [Easel.ly](#) for data visualization. In the other, Information Ethics, only [Scalar](#) was introduced. In each case, the students gave positive reviews of their experiences, both in terms of learning about powerful software and of seeing how it can be used to develop ideas. However, they also had criticisms of the tools, which the authors then used in designing future courses, including deciding to introduce fewer tools per course.

The question remains in my mind whether students really *need* to learn such tools, but I think the answer is yes. They are going into a world that is using more and more software, and their facility with it will give them confidence whether or not they go to graduate school or directly into the workforce. There is another benefit here—one for the teacher. If I want to learn to apply a tool well, there is no better way to do that, than to brush up so I can share it with my students.

