

MIDWEST FACULTY SEMINAR

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING
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MEMBER SCHOOLS

Augustana College
Carleton College
Carthage College
The College of Wooster
Colorado College
Denison University
DePauw University
Dominican University
Elmhurst College
Hope College
Illinois College
Illinois Wesleyan University
Kenyon College
Knox College
Luther College
Macalester College
McKendree College
Monmouth College
North Central College
Oberlin College
Saint Ambrose University
Saint Mary's College
St. Olaf College
University of St. Thomas

January 12, 2010

Dear Deans and Faculty,

When the Mellon Foundation renewed their support for the MFS in March 2009, they added funding for a program devoted to the professional development needs of our graduate students. I am writing to you to announce this new program and to enlist your help in locating faculty talented in the area of college teaching and curriculum design. In other words, we would like to extend the network of relations between our institutions by drawing on the pedagogical expertise of your faculty and extending it to future faculty.

Preparing Future Faculty: A New Midwest Faculty Annual Seminar

Each June, rather than examining another text or research topic, we invite faculty from the colleges – both those who have visited one or more of the seminars, and those who have not yet attended a seminar - to discuss with advanced graduate students, how they integrate new learning into their teaching. *We invite these faculty to investigate with their audience, moments of pedagogical change- on the level of the course, the curriculum or the program – and to explain what motivated that change, how these changes were intended to support student learning and how they actually impacted student learning.* In other words, we invite college teachers to ‘think out loud’ about their pedagogy in the context of some concrete question or project, in order to make pedagogical analysis more transparent to beginning instructors.

For instance, how do faculty evaluate the success of a course revision? How often do faculty in a department discuss curricular issues? What questions do departmental faculty ask when they are revising a curriculum, or just adding or changing a single course within that curriculum? Listening to experienced educators would help our students understand the expectations of an undergraduate program at the departmental level, and it’s connection with the institutional mission. They could begin to understand the role of faculty in such endeavors, what goals it aspires for its students to achieve, and how to begin preparing for such challenges.

Many of our graduate students are interested in pursuing careers in educational institutions where teaching really matters. While many of them have taught one or more courses, seldom have they had an opportunity to teach in a liberal arts college and to watch experienced teachers think analytically about their pedagogy. The panel conversations addressing the questions described above will serve as an introduction to this kind of pedagogical endeavor.

Please do hesitate to call or write with comments or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth O’Connor Chandler
Director

PREPARING FUTURE FACULTY FOR CAREERS IN TEACHING:
A New Annual Midwest Faculty Seminar

Each year, the University of Chicago will host a two-day seminar engaging topics in college teaching. **The seminar dates are June 10-11, 2010.**
Please refer to the attached letter for discussion of topics.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

****Proposals are due on Thursday, April 1, 2010. Please email them to Emily Dendinger at edendinger@uchicago.edu****

PART A. DESCRIPTION

Please submit a description of a course revision or curriculum project, no matter how large or small, which includes answers to the following questions:

1. Overview of aims. Describe what motivated this revision. What sorts of evidence suggesting the need for change led you to this project?
2. What changes did you introduce and how did you arrive at them?
3. Did you assess the impact of these changes? If so, what form did assessment take and what did you learn?
4. What, if any institutional, or collegial support did you receive for this project?

PART B. RELATED DOCUMENTS

1. Please include a letter of support from your dean.
2. Please include any other relevant information such as course syllabus, assignment description, or curriculum overview.