

# Highlights 2010-2011

“Many of you in this room change lives on a regular basis, and your efforts are magnified by all of the students you teach.”

- Provost Richard McCarty



Teresa Goddu at the Celebration of Teaching



## ► Celebration of Teaching

Faculty and graduate students from across the university gathered on May 3 for the Celebration of Teaching. The annual event, held at the Center for Teaching, honored teaching across the university.

“Excellence in teaching is a fragile thing,” said Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Richard McCarty in his opening remarks. But it is something that Vanderbilt students seem to value and appreciate greatly.

“Undergraduates value the classroom experience,” McCarty said. “Many of you in this room change lives on a regular basis, and your efforts are magnified by all of the students you teach.”

Philip Ackerman-Lieberman, Teresa Goddu, and Gretchen Selcke also spoke at the event. Ackerman-Lieberman is an assistant professor of Jewish studies and law and a member of the Junior Faculty Teaching Fellows inaugural class. Goddu (pictured above) is an associate professor of English and director of the Program in American Studies. Goddu spoke about The Cumberland Project, a Vanderbilt faculty development workshop centered on sustainability and pedagogy.

“Sustainability is the educational question of the 21st century,” said Goddu, who collaborated with the CFT’s Allison Pingree and Joe Bandy to develop the workshop, which helps interested Vanderbilt faculty incorporate sustainability themes into their curricula.

Gretchen Selcke, a graduate student in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, discussed her participation in the Teaching Certificate Program, which helps Vanderbilt graduate students, professional students and post-doctoral fellows develop and refine their teaching skills through three cycles of teaching activities, each consisting of inquiry, experimentation and reflection phases.

Fourteen participants who completed the program during 2010-11 received a teaching certificate from the Graduate School and the Center for Teaching.



(left to right) Dennis Hall, Tim McNamara, Cathy Jrade, and William Luis at the Celebration of Teaching



**The  
New York  
Times**

Derek Bruff, CFT Assistant Director, was quoted on three occasions in the national media during Spring 2011, including:

- ▶ **“The Rise of Clickers Is Starting to Change How College Professors Run their Classrooms,”** *Village Voice*, January 5, 2011
- ▶ **“When One Person’s Tech Treasure Is Another’s Trash,”** *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 8, 2011
- ▶ **“Speaking Up in Class, Silently, Using Social Media,”** *New York Times*, May 12, 2011

## ▶ Campus Collaborations



The work of the Center to support teaching and learning at Vanderbilt takes many shapes and durations, ranging from single conversations to multi-year collaborative projects. In partnership with many other units across campus, we build bridges within the university, bringing together people with shared visions for teaching and learning who might not otherwise recognize the interests they have in common.

We thank our campus partners, as well as all those who have served as panelists and presenters at our events, for these alliances; such collaborations are crucial in helping us to support Vanderbilt in practicing, valuing, and rewarding university teaching and learning as vital forms of scholarship.

On the following pages, our work in collaboration with many partners on campus is showcased. We’d like to especially thank these partners:

- American Studies
- Alliance for Civic Engagement
- Center for the Integration of Research Teaching, & Learning
- The Commons
- The Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, & Public Policy
- The Division of Public Affairs
- English Language Center
- Graduate Development Network
- Information Technology Services
- The Office for Teaching & Learning in Medicine
- The Office of Career Development & Outcomes Analysis
- Program for Career Development of the College of Arts & Science
- Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities
- Undergraduate Writing Program
- Sustainability & Environmental Management Office
- Teaching-as-Research Fellows
- University Libraries / OAK
- Vanderbilt International Office
- Vanderbilt Institutional Research Group
- Vanderbilt Visions
- The Writing Studio

# Highlights 2010-2011

The last thirty years have seen the growth of a movement within higher education to encourage colleges and universities to be more engaged in public life – by conducting “public scholarship,” by supporting public service and community development, and by teaching students to become more critical and effective citizens. This movement, most often taking the name of “community-” or “civic-engagement,” has as one of its supporting pillars the pedagogy of “service learning.”

**“Service learning is what educators often call ‘high-impact pedagogy,’ because it tends to lead students to experiential learning in the community. It often asks them to engage in interdisciplinary thinking, critical problem-solving and sometimes group learning processes that are prime for leadership development.”**

- Joe Bandy in the January 2011 edition of the [Vanderbilt View](#).

Vanderbilt University is home to a long and distinguished history of community engagement and service learning. The list of innovative faculty, staff, and students who have been exemplars in this area is very long, and those who are interested in contributing to these efforts today are present across the entire campus community.

Among the many units at Vanderbilt that support this work, The Center for Teaching has long been a resource for faculty of all levels of experience who seek to incorporate community engagement into their teaching. This year, in addition to ongoing workshops and consultations on service learning, the CFT is proud to serve as host for new resources for the development of service learning at Vanderbilt:

## The Cumberland Project

On May 9-10, 2011, American Studies and the Center for Teaching convened the inaugural Cumberland Project, a



Cumberland Project participants. More information is available [online](#).



series of discussions among twelve faculty about multiple dimensions of sustainability in higher education. The primary goal was to inform and support the development of a curriculum on sustainability at Vanderbilt, in order to help Vanderbilt students achieve a critical understanding of social-environmental issues and problems.

The twelve participating faculty represented seven different departments, including Civil and Environmental Engineering, Earth and Environmental Sciences, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, English, Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology, Spanish and Portuguese, as well as the Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health, the Ingram Commons, and the Vanderbilt Initiative for Scholarship and Global Engagement (VISAGE).

# Public Scholarship

discuss the challenges and opportunities of service learning and community engagement in higher education.

Conversations often focused on faculty presentations of community-based teaching and research projects, the scholarship on service learning, or other related subjects. Vanderbilt faculty and staff Sharon Shields, Liz Aleman, Marshall Eakin, Bryn Samuels, and Janet Eyler were featured speakers at these meetings.

## Service Learning for Sustainability Event

On November 12, 2010, the CFT and the Tennessee Higher Education Sustainability Association (THESA) were proud to co-host a one day workshop integrating service learning and sustainability education entitled, "Service Learning for Sustainability."



Mayor Karl Dean

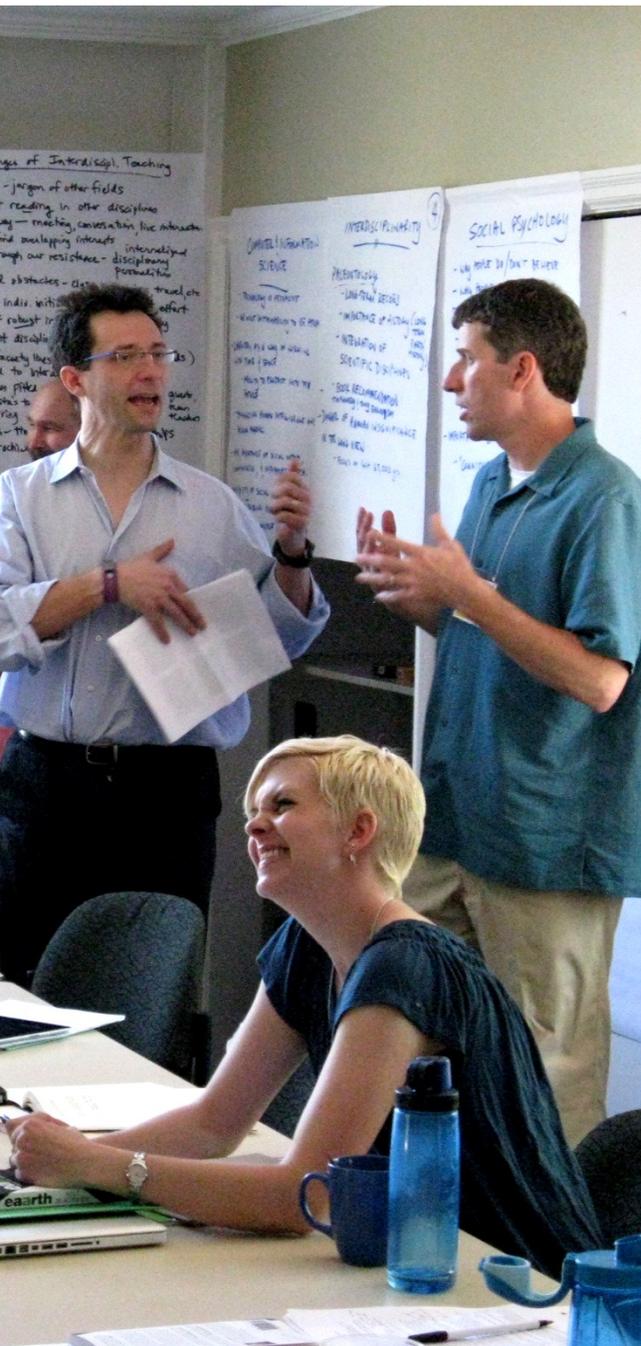
Both service learning and sustainability are areas of innovation in higher education that share a commitment to place, to community engagement, and to high-impact learning.

The event showcased the efforts of educators and community members across Nashville to create new synergies between teaching and community development, ones that yield high impacts for students and communities alike. The day began with a message of encouragement from Nashville Mayor Karl Dean, who highlighted the bright future that is possible when Nashville's institutions of higher education reinvigorate the already strong volunteer spirit among Nashville's communities.

“ This was, by far, the most useful faculty workshop I've been a part of at Vanderbilt. The knowledge I gained and connections I made will have a HUGE impact on my teaching, and I hope my research as well. I look forward to continuing to work with the other participants in the future. ”

- Leslie Kirby

Participant, The Cumberland Project



(left to right) Dana Nelson, Allison Pingree, John Morrell, Jonathan Gilligan, Joan Forry, and Joe Bandy during The Cumberland Project

The discussions were organized into four main areas: teaching sustainability, connecting to place, interdisciplinarity, and institutional transformation. The two days also included time for individual and group reflection, as well as moments of experiential learning as the participants learned from each other about elements of the Vanderbilt campus and the Dyer Observatory.

## Service Learning Working Group

This year the CFT revived an earlier working group on service learning for educators across campus. The Working Group met monthly during the Spring term to

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## ► Teaching Gender and Sexuality

On May 16-20, 2011, the CFT partnered with José Medina, Associate Professor of Philosophy, to sponsor a seminar for humanities and social sciences graduate students on [“Teaching Gender and Sexuality.”](#)

This interdisciplinary initiative provided 12 participants (representing eight departments and three schools across the university) with theoretical and practical resources for engaging gender and sexuality issues effectively in the university classroom.

The seminar launched with a panel of five additional Vanderbilt faculty (Ellen Armour, Religious Studies and Theology; Richard Pitt, Sociology; David Rubin, Women’s and Gender Studies; Michelle Shepherd, Spanish and Portuguese; and John Sloop, Communication Studies) joining Professor Medina to share their experiences and reflections on “What key influences have shaped how I teach gender and sexuality?” and “What ethical challenges and choices have I encountered in teaching gender and sexuality?”

These faculty then partnered with graduate student alumni (who participated in a similar version of the seminar in 2009) to facilitate sessions on creating an inclusive classroom; understanding similarities and differences between feminist pedagogy, queer pedagogy and radical pedagogy; addressing the vulnerabilities of being a graduate student instructor or junior faculty member; and the ethical implications of teaching gender and sexuality in classroom.

The seminar also included presentations on Campus Resources for Teaching Gender & Sexuality, featuring staff from the Central Library and from the Margaret Cuninggim Women’s Center and the K.C. Potter

“In my view, the seminar provided a genuinely open and encouraging intellectual space for thinking critically about the promises and challenges of teaching gender and sexuality at the university level.”

- Participant, Teaching Gender & Sexuality Seminar



Center. All week long, participants worked on individual projects (a teaching philosophy statement, a course or syllabus design, or key pedagogical strategies) and then presented them to the group at the end.

Feedback from both participants and facilitators was uniformly positive and enthusiastic, emphasizing the pragmatic benefits of the individual projects as well as the impressive array of resources available at Vanderbilt to support faculty and students in teaching gender and sexuality. In addition, participants underscored that the seminar deepened their understanding of and engagement with not only the topics but also with their students and their teaching colleagues:

► “There really is no other space at Vanderbilt where graduate students and faculty from so many different disciplines and programs can come together to think collectively and individually about the stakes, implications, and significance of teaching gender and sexuality. The Center for Teaching is not only providing that necessary space, but also a set of truly invaluable tools for enriching conversations at Vanderbilt and beyond about pedagogy, ethics, disciplinarity, and other imperative topics for any teacher.”

► “I have no doubt that the resources made available to me through this seminar will help me become a better, more thoughtful, sensitive, and engaged teacher.”

► “This was a generative and deeply moving week for me. Underneath the preparations and organizing for the week’s learning was a profound move to care for

# Creative Pedagogies



(left to right) Neal Palmer, Melinda Hall, Sandy Skene, and Manya Whitaker at the Teaching Gender and Sexuality Seminar.

## Farewell to Kat Baker

Kat Baker left the Center for Teaching at the end of May, in order to pursue teaching opportunities and develop a consulting business in Louisville, KY. Kat leaves a strong legacy at the CFT, where she served as a Graduate Teaching Fellow for two years, and later, as an Assistant Director for three. During her time here, Kat led our Contemplative Pedagogy initiative—the first of its kind in the country—creating a working group, [web guide](#) and video documenting contemplative practices in Vanderbilt classrooms which will be screened this fall at a professional conference.



In addition, she supervised and mentored our Graduate Teaching Fellows; enriched our work in diversity and inclusive teaching, including this spring's [Teaching Gender & Sexuality seminar](#); oversaw our TA and new faculty orientations; and was a gifted and responsive consultant to instructors across the university.

We'll miss very much her optimism, diligence, wisdom, and generosity of spirit—and wish her all the best in the ventures ahead.



(left to right) Michelle Shepherd, Natalie Cisneros, Jose Medina, John Maddox, and David Rubin at the Teaching Gender and Sexuality Seminar.

our students by really teaching them - encouraging them - making a space for them to think; not just to deposit information, but to reach for, plan for, organize for transformed minds. . . . There are precious few workshops that I attend that encourage me to retain and integrate my learnings. TGS will be one of two over the past 20 years that will cause me to keep the papers out on my desk and really incorporate learnings into teaching and practice..."

## ▶ Contemplative Pedagogy

Under the leadership of Assistant Director Kat Baker, the CFT this year has further developed resources and community in the practice of contemplative pedagogy. A working

group, comprised of faculty and graduate students from across the university, has continued to meet; moreover, Kat and CFT Educational Technologist Rhett McDaniel are producing a video documenting contemplative practices in Vanderbilt classrooms and featuring interviews with faculty teaching in various contexts. The film will be screened at the Professional & Organizational Development (POD) Network in Higher Education Conference in October.

In June, the Center hosted a visit from Richard Sclove, project director for a new initiative by the [Center for Contemplative Mind in Society](#), the Teaching & Learning Centers (TLC) project. The project seeks to foster the

growth of contemplative pedagogy efforts at teaching and learning centers across the country, and included the CFT on its tour because of our path-breaking work in this area. The visit included a meeting with faculty from Vanderbilt's Center for Integrative Health and from the Vanderbilt Law School, focusing on the work with mindfulness and contemplative practice being contextualized into their various educational efforts.

As a follow-up, Vanderbilt will participate in a strategic planning workshop, to be held at Amherst College, on the interface of contemplative pedagogy and university centers for teaching and learning.