

In Good Company: Active Learning and SoTL at Texas Tech University

Texas Tech University (TTU) has been making strides implementing active learning and encouraging faculty to publish scholarly work related to active learning. We regularly hold workshops on active learning and host Spotlights on SoTL to make public research done on active learning. Each semester we have 4 workshops on different facets of active learning and 4 Spotlights on SoTL. Average attendance at these events is 30 people. Each year we hold a conference in fall featuring a national leader in SoTL. Last fall we had Brian Coppala, a Carnegie Scholar, who delivered plenary on SoTL and conducted workshops on Scholarship of Teaching & Learning: Balancing Acts. In the spring we host a conference on Active Learning. Last spring we had Chuck Bonwell who delivered programs on Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom and How to Teach Critical Thinking Using Active Learning. We had approximately 100 people at each of these events. These events stimulate awareness and build interest.

The Teaching, Learning, and Technology Center funds \$50,000 annually for Faculty Incentive Grants. The grants are awarded to faculty to conduct SoTL research projects. The grants focus on various forms of active learning. Recipients present their work in the next academic year and are encouraged to publish their findings.

TTU has a tradition of placing heavy emphasis on research. Thus, the question was, would SoTL research count as much as discipline based research. We used conference speakers and workshops to emphasize the importance of this type of research. Individual faculty members who work in this area were able to partner with top researchers (Horn professors) at the university to spark their interest in this type of work. We then recruited the Horn professor to present their work at our spotlights. At the same time, there is top level (Chancellor, President and Provost) for this type of work. The President even wrote two editorials in the local paper on these topics (one on service learning and one on SoTL).

Finally, the university participated in the Carnegie Cluster program to advance further and to add credibility to the work.

Questions:

☐ Would these strategies work on your campus?