

ITL to focus on research, assessment and service

By Dr. David B. Baker, interim associate provost for teaching learning and faculty development, interim director of the Institute for Teaching and Learning, director of the Archives of the History of American Psychology, and professor of psychology

Since my appointment to the ITL, I have had the pleasure of talking with many of you regarding the ITL and its programming. What I have taken from these conversations is a more complete sense of the importance of the task before me.

The institute, as I see it, has two areas of concentration: a service component and a research component. I want to talk about our plans in both areas.

Regarding services, we have set these goals for the academic year:

- To enhance our Web site so that it becomes an added resource for you in finding the newest theories, research, and best practices. Whether you need tips on teaching large lectures or the latest on learning and memory, our Web site aspires to be a place that is easily accessible and up-to-date.
- To offer consultative mentoring for those who request it. A cadre of senior faculty members will be available to get to know you and your teaching style and to work with you to gain new teaching skills and competencies.
- To continue our important interdisciplinary efforts to assess student learning. This includes the good work led by my predecessor, Dr. David McConnell, with the classroom performance systems, better known as the "clicker technology." A large cohort of 66 faculty, who will be using the technology this fall, are providing ample opportunity to further assess their merit.
- To provide programming that is timely, useful, and practical. Throughout the year we will sponsor a variety of speakers and workshops on teaching and learning. Program dates and times can be found on the [ITL Web site](#) and the [University calendar](#). As always, we welcome suggestions for programs that would be of interest to you.

In the area of research, the institute historically has served as a catalyst for scholarship of teaching and learning. We will fulfill that duty this year by concentrating on research in four subjects, chosen because of their correlation with the expertise of our faculty and because they dovetail into the work being done on the Academic Plan and the Academic Scorecard (formerly the Balanced Scorecard). The four areas are:

- service learning
- pedagogy
- inclusive excellence
- teaching and technology

In tomorrow's E-mail Digest, faculty members will be invited to join work groups to conduct research around each of these topics. The institute will provide the necessary support to foster an interdisciplinary and collaborative program that will support the generation of new knowledge through research, presentations, and publications.

I would be remiss not to call attention in this space to our T4 Speaker Series, which we are coordinating with University College. Throughout the fall, we are offering experts from the main campus and Wayne College who will speak on a variety of topics that will make you a more complete educator. The list of speakers and topics is [here](#).

I am delighted to have the opportunity to lead the institute on an interim basis this academic year. I welcome your involvement and input and invite you to stop by and meet us at an open house in the ITL library on Thursday, Sept. 29, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. If you see me walking on campus (something I do frequently with offices in Leigh and Polsky), please stop me to talk about your expectations for the institute and how we can make it even more relevant to your work.

Thank you.