Grand Valley State University

Robert and Mary Pew
Faculty Teaching and Learning Center

2003-2004
FTLC
Annual Report

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This year marked a continued broadening of Pew FTLC activities, made possible largely through a new half-time Assistant Director and quarter-time Graduate Assistant.

- **Claiming a Liberal Education: Aligning Expectations and Enhancing Student Engagement.** This initiative, co-sponsored by the Office of the Provost, CUII, CLAS, and Student Services, is an effort to make concrete the goals embodied in the University’s new Mission, Vision, and Values statements. Release time for a faculty researcher has made possible research which is taking the pulse of the climate for learning at Grand Valley. Specific responses will be formulated after a series of discussions among students, staff, and faculty this fall. The initiative is being co-directed by the Associate Dean of Students and the Director of the Pew FTLC.

- **Half-time Assistant Director.** This position means that part-time faculty are receiving assistance with teaching and learning issues as they never have before. There has also been a new level of integration reached with Educational Technology, and, beginning in the fall, faculty will now be able to apply online for non-competitive grants.

The addition of an assistant director, along with a quarter-time graduate assistant, has resulted in a 52% increase in individual consultations.

- **Increased Participation in Programming.** In the last few years, about half the faculty have participated in Pew FTLC events. This year, 61% did so.

- **Emphasis on Broadening the Basis for Evaluating Teaching.** An outside speaker presented a workshop on the strengths and limitations of student ratings of faculty, two pre-tenure faculty in Arts and Humanities were evaluated under a pilot program, and the Pew FTLC offered two workshops on teaching portfolios, which were fully subscribed.

- **Increase in Number of Competitive Grants Awarded.** Although the dollar amount awarded this year was lower than last year, there were 50% more competitive grants awarded than in the previous year (23 vs. 15).
Last year’s annual report described 2002-2003 as a transition year for the Pew FTLC, one in which it was intentionally expanding its role from being primarily a program-centered office to one that continued and expanded its programming emphasis while also working more broadly for institutional change. A new half-time Assistant Director’s position and a quarter-time Graduate Assistant position were key to making these changes possible. This year’s report documents ways in which these changes are well underway.

Making a Difference Across the University

1. Claiming a Liberal Education: Aligning Expectations and Enhancing Student Engagement. This project began fifteen months ago as informal discussions between the Vice Provost for Student Services and the Director of the Pew FTLC. Now, it is an initiative co-sponsored by the Office of the Provost, CUII, CLAS, and Student Services. With the new Mission, Vision, and Values statements in place and broadly accepted, and with reorganization being implemented, this initiative could be the catalyst which enables the University community to move toward the goals it has set for itself.

Last fall, with funding from the Provost’s Office, the co-directors of the initiative (the Pew FTLC Director and Associate Dean of Students) hired a half-time faculty researcher, Donna Henderson-King, Associate Professor of Psychology, whose charge, this first year, was to take the pulse of the learning climate at Grand Valley. Through focus groups and surveys of both faculty and students, she and others investigated questions relating to student/faculty expectations in the context of a liberal education.

The findings, to be presented to faculty at the 2004 Fall Conference on Teaching and Learning, demonstrate there are strengths on which to build as well areas in which change is warranted. Faculty endorse the centrality of a liberal education, but students are unable to articulate what it is. Students value skills necessary for a liberal education—critical thinking, verbal and written communication skills, learning about their own and other cultures—although not as highly as do faculty. Faculty say their courses are challenging, an evaluation with which students disagree noticeably. Both faculty and students agree that good student-faculty relationships are important, but they are looking for different qualities in these relationships.

A seven-member team, comprised of faculty, staff, and a student, spent four days in June at an AAC&U Greater Expectations Institute to reflect on these findings and identify next steps. In addition to studying the findings, the team realized it had to keep two other concerns in sharp focus: 1) the project would not be effective without integrating the curricular and co-curricular and 2) issues of diversity need to be acknowledged at every step (e.g., What is meant by “inclusive excellence”? What intercultural competencies should all students, staff, and faculty possess if this initiative is to benefit the entire University community?)
Fall 2004 will be spent broadening the discussion of the results of this past spring’s research and possible responses. About 150 students, faculty, and Student Services staff will meet in structured discussion groups (intergroup dialogues), each group to meet three times over the semester. At the same time, the faculty researcher will be preparing a national grant so that the project can be continued on an appropriate scale and will be coordinating the administration of national surveys to students and faculty: the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE). Recommendations and plans for action will emerge from these discussions and the survey results.

Successfully implementing this initiative will require changes in institutional policies. Student evaluations can not be the primary way in which teaching is evaluated if faculty are encouraged to expect more from students. The Pilot Plan for Evaluating Teaching, developed last year with Arts and Humanities faculty and used in two faculty evaluations, may be one model for a broader way to evaluate teaching. A renewed emphasis on teaching and learning may also have implications for how faculty workload is calculated. The project directors expect to work closely with the leaders of Faculty Senate, the Provost, and the sponsoring deans to be sure that all interested parties are working in concert with one another.

2. **Half-time Assistant Director.** The most noticeable day-to-day change in the Pew FTLC in the past year was the presence of a half-time Assistant Director, Ronald W. Garrett, Professor of Engineering. He was hired to work specifically with adjunct faculty as well as to broaden the opportunities for improving teaching for faculty in general.

Ron has greatly improved communication with part-time faculty as well as provided more services for them. The August orientation is now designed specifically for new part-timers, with a separate Saturday program for returning part-timers, based on a successful Adjunct Academy offered last January, attended by 55 faculty.

Ron has also used his expertise in technology to make it possible for the Pew FTLC office to communicate with all faculty via email. Under his leadership, beginning this fall, faculty will be able to apply online for conference travel grants. Ron has also strengthened connections between Educational Technology and the Pew FTLC through joint programming, establishing the Teaching with Technology Award, continuing the Teaching and Technology Fair, and launching a Technology Teaching Circle, which met throughout the year.

3. **Graduate Assistant.** A ten-hour/week Graduate Assistant, Candace Roy, has enabled the Pew FTLC to offer more individualized services for faculty. She observes classes, conducts focus groups with students about their learning in a class, and then meets with faculty to discuss her observations. This year, she met with fourteen faculty, all of them at least twice, and some, three times. She also assisted in implementing the “Claiming a Liberal Education” project and developed a confidentiality policy for the Center.
4. New Home for the Center. As the Center has grown and become a more central part of the University, the need for a “front door” and integrated office space has become apparent. This need will be met when the Center moves to the new academic building in Fall 2005. Helping to plan the FTLC space and the building as a whole has had the regular attention of the Director and Assistant Director this past year.

**Faculty Participation and Programming**

1. Faculty participation in Pew FTLC events this year was impressive: 61% of full-time faculty attended at least one event, compared to 51% last year and 53% the previous year. More staff has meant more programming, and faculty have responded. Some of the increase is also due to the Pew FTLC’s co-sponsoring events with the new Center for Excellence in Science Education, whose programming has been very well received.

Individual consultations have also increased 52% over last year, when there was only one professional staff member. The Pew FTLC website averages 13 hits per day.

In Table 1, it is worth noting that only two schools had a participation rate lower than 50%. Professional schools hold their own well compared to the three divisions.

**Table 1: Full-time Faculty Participation by Division and School, 2001-2004**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division/School</th>
<th>% Attending 01-02</th>
<th>% Attending 02-03</th>
<th>% Attending 03-04</th>
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<td>69</td>
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<td>Nursing</td>
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<td>Science &amp; Math</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>57</td>
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</table>

2. Programming this year has reflected the Center’s perception of University priorities, as well as its desire to influence University policies related to teaching and learning. Foremost has been building the case for broadening the basis for evaluating teaching beyond student evaluations. In the fall, Barbara Walvoord of the University of Notre Dame presented a workshop on the strengths and limitations of student evaluations, along with what, ideally, should characterize the evaluation of teaching. Two faculty in Arts and Humanities were evaluated under a pilot program designed to be a broader evaluation of teaching, with an emphasis on teaching portfolios. The Pew FTLC director met with the Faculty Personnel Policy Committee to discuss alternatives to current practices in
evaluating teaching. Two workshops on teaching portfolios were fully subscribed this summer.

As noted earlier, **part-time faculty** now have their own programming, going beyond the brief orientations previously offered in the fall. Fifty-five part-time faculty attended a half-day Adjunct Academy one Saturday in January. The plan is to offer these twice each year. Part-time faculty also had their own Blackboard orientation.

This year also marked the Pew FTLC’s first effort to offer a year-long teaching seminar, **Essential Teaching Skills.** Over the year, eleven faculty from across the University worked on course design, taught for one another, and attended six sessions on aspects of teaching they said they wished to explore further. The response was very positive, along with helpful suggestions for changes. The series will not be offered in 2004-05 because both directors will be on sabbatical, but the intent is to resume the following year.

An ongoing concern of the Pew FTLC is to **recognize and encourage the place of diversity** at Grand Valley. This year, together with the Provost’s Office and the Office of Multicultural Affairs, it co-sponsored a six-part Leadership Roundtable for faculty and staff of color.

The theme of the **Fall Conference on Teaching and Learning** was “Connecting Liberal Education and the Cultures of the Classroom,” an effort to connect the realities of our classroom with the elusive goals of a liberal education. The keynote speaker was Lee Knefelkamp, Professor of Social and Organizational Psychology at Teachers College, Columbia University.

Other programming follows (Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of times a program was offered):

- Motivating Students (3)
- Classroom Incivilities
- Designing a Course to Maximize Learning (3)
- Teaching in America (2)
- Competitive Grant Writing (2)
- Nursing Faculty Orientation
- School of Education Orientation
- Science and Math Division Orientation
- Teaching with Technology for Engineering and Library Faculty
- Using TEACH Act
- Teaching with Technology Fair
- Teaching Life Retreat
Ongoing programming also continued:

- The **Faculty Associates** program involved about one-third of new faculty. In it a senior faculty member is matched with about six new faculty in other departments, for a series of informal meetings throughout the year. This year, for the first time, a group continued in its second year.
- Together with the Writing Center and the Provost’s Office, the Pew FTLC continues to offer **support for ABD faculty and staff**. There is a fall luncheon, at which those have completed degrees are honored, a series of weekend retreats, and a week-long retreat in the summer, all designed to keep writers writing.
- Based on this year’s experience, the **Open Classrooms** program will be discontinued. In it, selected faculty agreed to open their classrooms to anyone who wants to sit in. The program was never well utilized, and the attempt this year to utilize recipients of Pew Teaching Excellence Awards was not successful.

**Grants**

The Pew FTLC grants program continues to make possible significant teaching-related projects. A total of $176,212 was awarded during 2002-2003.

Table 2 is a summary of three categories of major grants awarded over the past three years. They cover projects ranging from $3000 to $15,000. It is especially gratifying to see the increase in activity from Arts and Humanities faculty. The total amount awarded to all faculty is lower than in the last two years, but the number of projects has increased. More individual faculty received grants, and there were fewer large projects. Perhaps the most obvious projects requiring more money have been addressed.

**Table 2: Major Grants (Presidential Teaching Initiative, Pew Scholar Teacher & Teaching Development and Renewal, Category B), 2001 – 2004**

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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
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<td><strong>$134,236</strong></td>
<td><strong>$122,282</strong></td>
<td><strong>$93,268</strong></td>
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Presidential Teaching Initiatives, for up to $15,000, were established to enable units to mount broad projects that will result in new or revised curricula and/or pedagogy. The 2003-2004 recipients are:

Chemistry, to develop a new concentration area in Chemistry for the M.Ed. Program, as well as prepare an NSF grant.

Movement Science, to integrate PDA and Tablet PC technology into Movement Science courses.

Pew Scholar Teacher Awards, for up to $7,500 each, support teaching innovation and renewal on a broad and imaginative scale. The 2003-2004 recipients are:

John Farris (Padnos School of Engineering) and Paul Lane (Seidman School of Business), to work with faculty from across the university to develop teaching modules for two new entrepreneurship courses, ENT 150 and ENT 151.

Jonathan Hodge (Mathematics), to develop a set of discovery-based materials to be used in MTH 330: The Mathematics of Voting and Elections.

Betty Pritchard (School of Communications), to study and research public relations in France and the United States.

Maureen Ryan (Kirkhof School of Nursing), to produce a CD-ROM for use in the graduate nursing program.

Teaching Development and Renewal Awards, Category B, for up to $3,000 each, make possible small to medium-sized teaching-related projects. The 2003-2004 recipients are:

David Alvarez (English), to participate in the Summer CIEE (Council for International Education and Exchange) Seminar in Cape Town and Pretoria, South Africa.

Karen Barnes (School of Education), to do a comparative study of preschool education practices in Finland.

Charlene Beckmann (Mathematics), to fund the conference, “Conversations Among Colleagues: Collaborating to Improve the Mathematics Education of Our Students.”

Lawrence Beery (School of Communications), to complete a survey of collegiate recipients of the Michigan Press Association Foundation Awards.

Bertrand Bickersteth and Amy Masko (English), to observe and analyze cross-cultural dynamics in the project “Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Its Effects on Pedagogy in an Ethnic Studies University Classroom.”
Teresa Castelão-Lawless (Philosophy) and Jing Chen (Psychology), to develop a new course in Philosophy and the Psychology of Aging.

William Dickinson and Marge Friar (Mathematics), to fund the “Math in Action” conference, “Data Analysis throughout the Mathematics Curriculum.”

Christine Drewel (Liberal Studies), to create and implement a LIB 100 Faculty Blackboard site.

Jill Eggers (Art and Design), to fund Crit-O-Rama, a four-day intensive art discourse and tutorial.

Mary Karpen (Chemistry), to convert existing animations to a web-delivered format.

David Leonard (Chemistry), develop a 6-7 week laboratory unit for CHM 462 based on the purification and characterization of bacterial β-lactamase.

Gisella Licari (Modern Languages and Literatures), to design materials for Italian courses using interactive technology.

Kin Ma, Roy Cole and Elena Lioubimsteva (Geography and Planning), to subsidize registration fees for student participants in the workshop, “Human Dimensions of Climate and Environmental Change in Central Asia.”

Jacque Melin and Maggie VandeVelde (School of Education), to present the workshop, “Best Teaching Practice—Wildly Exciting Education!”

James W. Penn, Jr. (Geography and Planning), to study systems of tropical agriculture, demographic changes, and development projects in Brazil and Peru.

David Stark (History), to attend an intensive seminar on Cuban Studies for US-based University and College Professors in Havana, Cuba.

Janet Vigna (Biology), to revise the BIO 103 Lab Manual and provide professional development and training for lab instructors.

**Pew Technology Grants** fund the purchase of materials to enhance new or existing courses. Under this program 17 grants were awarded to 12 departments for a total of $34,858.

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This next year, the Pew FTLC expects to encourage the funding of projects related to the “Claiming a Liberal Education” initiative and to teaching related needs that become apparent as reorganization is implemented.
Travel to Teaching-related Conferences and Workshops

Table 3 is a summary of the grant category which is used the most frequently. Both the number and amount of grants awarded were lower this year. Many requests for funds in the first four months signaled a need to reduce funding limits for the rest of the year. Unfortunately, funding levels were reduced too much. They will be higher again for next year.

Table 3: Teaching Development and Renewal Grants, Category A, 2001-2004

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Goals

1. 2003-2004 Goals

Each year, at the Pew FTLC planning retreat in May, goals are identified for the following academic year. Last year’s goals are identified below, with the ways in which they were met in italics.

- Continue to develop the student/faculty expectations project, primarily through gathering information via focus groups and surveys, and then developing a plan of action. *This project has now been formalized as “Claiming a Liberal Education (CLE).”*

- Continue to strengthen the process of evaluating teaching, most specifically in working with A & H’s pilot evaluation process. *Two faculty used this process. More importantly, the Faculty Personnel Policy Committee has modified some of its guidelines, and the Pew FTLC has offered support for change with its two workshops on preparing teaching portfolios. The need for change will become more apparent as the CLE project develops.*
• Develop even closer working relationship with Educational Technology for unified approaches to programming. The new Assistant Director works closely with ET in developing programming.

• Streamline the non-competitive grant application process by making it paperless. The online application process will be available at the beginning of Fall Semester.

• Identify and, if appropriate, connect with an initiative from the American Association of Colleges and Universities or the American Association of Higher Education to challenge the university community and broaden its perspectives. As part of the CLE project, a team of seven from Grand Valley attended an AAC&U institute, “Greater Expectations.” As the project develops, so will connections with AAC&U.

2. 2004-2005 Goals

The following goals have been identified for 2004-2005:

• Continue to lead in CLE initiative, assisting in developing national grant, developing programming in response to information from intergroup dialogues and NSSE and FSSE surveys.

• Strengthen mentoring for new and mid-career faculty, primarily through work with deans and unit heads.

• Broaden Pew FTLC programming through utilizing talents of Karen Libman, Associate Professor, School of Communications, who will be Interim Assistant Director, Winter 2005.

• Continue emphasis on strengthening the ways in which teaching is evaluated.

• Encourage grant-funded projects relating to CLE and teaching-related needs that arise from reorganization.

• Articulate clearer relationship with the new Center for Excellence in Science Education.