



Conversations on Teaching 2012 - 2013

April 3

How do we draw the line between guiding and coddling our students?

One of Centre's mottos is 'Personal Education, Extraordinary Success.' But how 'personal' should 'Personal Education' actually be? In the classroom today, professors are expected to create opportunities and learning environments for active and engaged learning. We welcome students to our offices and work with them on assignments. Could our students become too dependent on their professors, however? Are some students becoming more independent or less so? On one side, this age group has shown some tendency to be dependent upon authority figures. On the other side, a teaching-first institution like Centre may pressure faculty to help students as much as possible. When these two sides meet, it can create a situation that might culminate in greater dependence of students on faculty. While this is not a universal situation for all professors, these questions should be asked: how much of a student's work is the professor doing? Can a professor's helpfulness create a passive student? During this event, we will discuss how our help is consistent with, or detrimental to, student learning. Facilitators Lee Jefferson and Chris Paskewich will present informational studies from our peer institutions and gauge the degree to which pressures to please students are felt on Centre's campus.

December 6

Integrating Sustainability across the Curriculum

John Roush has often stated that teaching students about sustainability is "one of the single most important things we do" at Centre. But what is sustainability and what does it mean for Centre and our students? Are we already teaching students about sustainability or is there more we could or should be doing? How can discussions about sustainability be integrated into courses in all three academic divisions? We will discuss these questions and announce the availability of faculty stipends (made possible by Centre's EPA grant and the Dean's office) for those interested in developing course modules related to sustainability, pollution, waste, nutrient cycles, and/or composting.