



## **Editorial: Learning About SoTL From a Familiar Source**

*by Nicole Adrian*

Before reading the articles and gathering information for this issue of *Higher Education Brief*, I didn't know too much about scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL)—and specifically as it relates to graduate school—and what exactly it meant. I did some Google searching, and one of the first sites that popped up was my alma mater's—the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (UWL). I just knew the website would help me understand.

And it did. UWL's website on SoTL gives easy-to-understand information about what SoTL is exactly. The website states, "Like other forms of scholarship, the scholarship of teaching is work that is public and work that is open to peer review, and work that can be built upon. Moreover, it is work that focuses directly on student learning and development."<sup>1</sup> In a nutshell, SoTL starts with questions of student learning, requires systematic and disciplined inquiry, and results in products that can be shared with others.

This issue contains articles by authors deeply involved in graduate and doctoral education that are ultimately linked to SoTL. The articles describe teaching and learning in a cohort setting, preventing plagiarism, using flowcharts to describe the doctoral process and reviewing a doctorate program.

In one article, Marianne DiPierro—this issue's guest advising editor—writes about process flowcharts being used at Western Michigan University to explore doctoral retention initiatives and ensure timely graduation. She writes, "The use of doctoral process flowcharts illuminates pathways to the doctorate and ensures opportunities for successful degree completion via quality interventions and process improvement."

In another article, a professor and former provost describes his experience teaching a cohort of doctorate students. He describes how well the situation worked for the professors and students and the benefits both parties get from it.

Each of these topics is very different from the others, but the end goal is the same: to find ways to improve student learning and share it with others.

Additionally, I'd like to thank Cindy Veenstra, *Higher Education Brief* advising editor since October 2008, for her work and dedication to the newsletter. Starting in July, Cindy will be chair of the ASQ Education Division. She is handing over the advising editor's role to Marianne, who starts as advising editor with the August issue. I'd like to thank Cindy for her continuing support of the newsletter and her always thoughtful and insightful information on quality in education. Congratulations, Cindy!

### **Reference**

1. Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, [www.uwlax.edu/sotl](http://www.uwlax.edu/sotl).