

## ***The Teagle Assessment Scholar Development Program – A Proposal to the Teagle Foundation***

### ***Summary***

In this proposal, we outline a series of activities that are designed to strengthen the Teagle Assessment Scholar program by creating permanent mechanisms for:

- adding 10 new Teagle Assessment Scholars each year to the program;
- continually developing the skills of the new and continuing Teagle Assessment Scholars; and
- strengthening the impact of the Teagle Assessment Scholar program by more formally connecting Scholars' work to assessment at their home institutions.

### ***Background***

The purpose of the Teagle Assessment Scholar program is to develop a group of faculty, staff, and administrators who have the broad set of skills necessary to help colleges and universities use evidence to improve student learning. With the support of the Teagle Foundation, the Center of Inquiry started the Teagle Assessment Scholar Program in 2006 with around 15 Scholars. The program has grown since then to its current roster of 57 Scholars. Teagle Assessment Scholars work in collaboration with Center of Inquiry staff to visit institutions, host workshops for faculty and staff, and provide any other kind of support that helps institutions use assessment evidence to improve the quality and impact of liberal education for their students.

Since the inception of the Teagle Assessment Scholar program, we've developed the skills of Teagle Scholars through "hands on" involvement in our work with colleges and universities—we emphasize learning by doing. While there are many fine books, articles, and workshops about assessment, we've taken this approach because the process of working with campus constituencies to identify and implement changes in response to evidence is a complex social process that is best understood *in situ*.

To date, we have invited people to join the Teagle Assessment Scholar program through the informal process of noting individuals travels who meet three criteria:

1. they express a strong interest in using evidence to improve student learning;
2. they are change agents whose interest in using evidence to improve student learning appears to exceed their interest in maintaining current structures at their own or other institutions; and
3. they have the social presence and interpersonal skills necessary to improvise and work productively in a variety of complicated academic environments.

These informal criteria have served us well to date for identifying good Teagle Scholars. Once we identified Teagle Scholars, we developed their skills by incorporating them in our work with institutions on site visits and during workshops at the Center of Inquiry, as well as in the evaluation and revision of the Teagle Assessment Scholar program. Our training amounts to helping Scholars learn by working side by side with us in a variety of different settings with the goal of helping colleges and universities improve student learning.

Moving from merely gathering evidence to gather *and* using evidence is, we believe, the biggest challenge in assessment. Working side-by-side with Teagle Assessment Scholars to meet this challenge has been at least as beneficial to us as it has the Scholars. The Center's role is not to teach Teagle Assessment Scholars, but to serve as an organizing entity that creates structured opportunities for smart, able people to reflect and act to solve a common problem.

Like a highly selective liberal arts college, the outstanding work of our first Teagle Assessment Scholars was based far more on what they brought to the program rather than what we have added. Teagle Scholars such as Paul Sotherland (Kalamazoo College), Frank Boyd (Illinois Wesleyan University), and David Schodt (St. Olaf College) came to the program with experience in assessment, and the most we can reasonably claim is that working with the Center has provided opportunities for them to develop their already considerable skills. Nonetheless, as assessment techniques change, national policies shift, and institutional know-how from the Teagle Assessment Scholar grows, it will be important to help our seasoned Scholars grow their skills and knowledge.

More recently, we have begun to invite people with less assessment experience to join the Teagle Assessment Scholar program. Some of these individuals, such as Mark Salisbury (University of Iowa), are graduate students. In Mark's case, his experience in the Teagle Assessment Scholar program changed his career arc from becoming a higher education faculty member towards taking a job as the director of institutional research and assessment at Augustana College. Other newer Scholars, such as Lori Dawson (Worcester State College), are established academics whose participation in the Teagle Assessment Scholar program is helping them to consider whether they want to shift their careers away from traditional academic work towards taking an official role in directing their institution's assessment efforts.

We believe that increasing the size and impact of the Teagle Assessment Scholar program calls on us to focus on identifying and developing Scholars like Mark Salisbury and Lori Dawson who have little or no assessment experience, rather than identifying more "old hands" like our first cohort of Teagle Scholars. We also believe that Teagle Scholars who have less experience with assessment would benefit from a more intentionally structured program to develop their background knowledge and their ability to work in complex institutional settings. Moreover, as new members to the assessment trade, they are more likely to benefit from joining a community of practice that considers the kinds of challenges that they address at their home institutions every day. Finally, our experience is that Teagle Scholars would be more likely to have impact at their home institutions if the leadership at their institutions had a greater stake in their development as Teagle Scholars.

Thus, our goals for the Teagle Assessment Scholar program over the next three years are to:

1. Create a process that more systematically develops the skills of Teagle Scholars so that all Scholars have familiarity with a wide range of assessment techniques and are informed about innovations in assessment.
2. Upgrade the current process by which we identify new Teagle Assessment Scholars so that the pool of Scholars:
  - a. grows at a steady rate;
  - b. has stronger bona fides as people who have successfully helped institutions make demonstrable improvements in student learning; and
  - c. includes a mix of background experiences, prior training, and specialty interests so that it will be an attractive resource to a broad range of institutions and institutional issues around student learning.

These changes would, in our view, make the Teagle Assessment Scholar program both more effective *and* more attractive to institutions and potential Scholars.

***Proposed activities, fall 2010 – summer 2013***

To accomplish the goals we outline above, we propose the following:

### *1. Teagle Assessment Scholar Development Workshops*

The Center will create a series of workshops to develop the skills and knowledge of new and established Teagle Assessment Scholars. There will be three workshops each year, two during the academic year and one during the summer. Each workshop will have a capacity of 20 participants and will be run by Center of Inquiry staff, Senior Teagle Assessment Scholars, and outside facilitators.<sup>1</sup>

We hosted two model development workshops for Teagle Scholars this spring on February 1-3 and May 3-5, 2010. The first focused on revisions to and new uses of the HERI surveys. Topics in the second workshop included CLA in the classroom and using rubrics to assess student learning. (See the calendar on our website at <http://www.liberalarts.wabash.edu/calendar/> for agendas and participant lists for these workshops.) Both workshops also included sessions dedicated to reflecting on and developing responses to evidence on the impact of the Teagle Assessment Scholar program.

Our goal is to create a series of topics through which we could cycle every two years. Depending on how the workshops are shaped, some of them may address multiple topics, and others might focus on a single topic. We would continue to include sessions for considering and acting on our ongoing assessment of the Teagle Scholar program as well.

The following is a list of topics we've considered to date for these workshops:

- a. Quantitative Surveys - Workshops on how to use NSSE, Noel Levitz, HERI, and other popular surveys.
- b. Using rubrics for assessing student work.
- c. Using standardized outcome measures such as the CLA, MAPP, or CAAP to improve student learning.
- d. Gauging the impact of student inputs on college development.
- e. Voluntary System of Accountability, U-CAN, and other national accountability issues.
- f. Best practices for integrating data from institutional information systems into assessment programs.
- g. How to connect different sources and types of evidence about student learning.
- h. Learning how to talk with and listen to students, faculty, and staff about student learning.
- i. The implications of recent findings in cognitive science and neuroscience for student learning and for assessing student learning.
- j. Institutional "Kung Fu" - Things to do and things to avoid in working collaboratively with faculty, staff, and students to use evidence to promote change.
- k. Learning how to talk to and work with faculty and staff from different disciplines on gathering and using assessment evidence.
- l. Shaping faculty development programs to respond formatively to institutional assessment evidence.

We would ask a group of Senior Teagle Scholars to meet with us once a year in the late summer to review feedback from the previous year and help us identify the topics, activities, and speakers for the upcoming year.

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<sup>1</sup> Currently, we have five Senior Teagle Assessment Scholars: Frank Boyd (Illinois Wesleyan University), Darnell Cole (University of Southern California), Michael Reder (Connecticut College), Paul Sotherland (Kalamazoo College), and Scott VanderStoep (Hope College).

Furthermore, we would ask one or two Senior Scholars each year to host a Teagle Scholar Development Workshop at her or his campus. We would also ask them to invite up to five campus representatives from institutions in their area who are not Teagle Scholars to attend the workshop. This will allow us to begin to identify potential Teagle Scholars and create a stronger regional identity for the Senior Teagle Assessment Scholars as assessment resources.

Finally, we should note that these development workshops are designed to supplement, not replace, the way that Teagle Scholars collaborate with the Center to support institutions. Teagle Assessment Scholars will continue to participate in site visits and workshops outside the training and development activities outlined in this proposal.

## *2. Training program for new Teagle Assessment Scholars*

Our goal in designing this training program is to create a more carefully and more developmentally structured process to help new Scholars learn how to use evidence to promote improvements in student learning. The cornerstone of this new program is that all incoming Teagle Scholars would design and implement a project to use assessment to improve student learning on their campuses.

Starting in the fall of 2010, the Center would begin advertising the opportunity for new Teagle Assessment Scholar positions via the web, meetings, the Center's blog, announcements of the new version of the Wabash National Study, presentations, and word of mouth. We will also place a short application form on the Center of Inquiry's website.

Applications would be vetted by Center of Inquiry staff and Senior Teagle Scholars. The Center staff and Senior Teagle Scholars would also coordinate to solicit targeted applications. Our goal is to identify 10 new Teagle Assessment Scholars each year.

New Teagle Scholars would be expected to make the following commitments:

1. Attend three Teagle Assessment Scholar Development Workshops during their first two years as Teagle Scholars.
2. Participate with Center staff and Teagle Scholars in two Center of Inquiry events during their first two years as Teagle Scholars. These events could include site visits to institutions or workshops for representatives from multiple institutions held at the Center or other locations.
3. Completing a three-year project in which they work, with support from the Center and other Teagle Assessment Scholars, to use assessment to improve student learning or student experiences at their campuses. Specifically:
  - a. New Teagle Scholars would identify a particular area for improvement at their institutions in their applications.
  - b. Institutional leaders would sign off on the goal of their projects and express support for the following activities:
    - i. A site visit team of Teagle Assessment Scholars would visit the new Scholar's campus to learn what assessment information that campus already possesses, get a sense of institutional governance, political, and cultural structures connected with using assessment evidence, and work with the new Teagle Assessment Scholar to develop an action plan, including a budget, for their project.
    - ii. When new Teagle Scholars attend Teagle Scholar Development Workshops, they will discuss their projects, including their findings, strategies, and approaches to overcoming obstacles, at special sessions. The goal is to

- make the Teagle Scholar Development Workshops a time when new Scholars can work with more experienced colleagues on their projects.
- iii. The new Scholars will also consult via conference calls with Center staff and select Teagle Assessment Scholars over the course of their projects.
  - iv. The new Teagle Assessment Scholars will submit short annual updates documenting progress on their projects, as well as a final summary report at the end of three years.
  - v. A Teagle Scholar will visit each new Scholar's campus at the end of the project to help her reflect on and evaluate the process, gauge improvements in student learning or experiences at her institution, and discuss lessons learned with the Scholar and the institution's administration.
- c. Institutional leaders would also commit to setting aside at least \$1,500 to support their Teagle Scholar's assessment project over the course of three years.

We expect that it will take around three years for new Teagle Scholars to complete this training program. As described above, new Scholars would complete a series of required activities during the first two years of the program. At the same time, Scholars will be working to design and implement their assessment projects at their institutions. We anticipate that it will take three years for most Scholars to complete these projects, but it is possible that some projects may require more or less time. Thus, a new Scholar will have completed the training program when she has participated in three Teagle Scholar Development Workshops; participated in two Center of Inquiry events, such as site visits or institutional workshops; and completed the assessment project at her institution.

Although we will certainly revise this process as we evaluate it, we see both the new series of Teagle Assessment Scholar Development Workshops and the training program for new Teagle Scholars as primary and permanent additions to the Center's work. If the process of connecting new Scholars with improvement efforts at their own institutions proves to be successful, we could expand it to include current Scholars who wish to systemically employ the Center's imprimatur and support to projects on their own campuses. Doing so, and charging for it as we discuss below, creates another opportunity to use the Teagle Assessment Scholar program to generate income.

We do not see a cap or upper limit on the number of Teagle Assessment Scholars that we could generate by this process, but we do believe that we have to grow the program slowly to both ensure the quality of the training and the institutional impact generated by the program.

Adding these workshops and the training program to the core of the Center's work has three long-term implications for the Center:

1. We need to continue, and formalize, the group of Senior Teagle Assessment Scholars that we experimented with this year. These Scholars would serve as an advisory board to the Teagle Assessment Scholar program and would help us structure the development workshops, identify potential Teagle Scholars and review applications, and collaborate with us in the ongoing evaluation of the Center's work. We will identify five Senior Scholars to serve on the advisory board beginning in fall 2010. Our goal is to have Senior Teagle Scholars serve three-year terms on the advisory board, but in the beginning we will need to vary the terms of service to create overlapping membership periods and ensure a degree of continuity for the board. Initially, we expect to ask one Senior Scholar to serve a one-year term, two Senior Scholars to serve two-year terms, and two Senior Scholars to serve three-year terms. We also need to continue to experiment with ways to task the Senior Teagle Scholars with taking up more assessment support work in their regions so that we can

expand the Center's institutional impact. Asking the Senior Teagle Scholars to host at least one Teagle Assessment Scholar Development Workshop is a step towards increasing their regional impact.

2. We need to integrate these new programs with the emerging area of the Center's work—the next version of the Wabash National Study (WNSLAE 2.0). WNSLAE 2.0 will focus on helping institutions use assessment evidence, especially evidence they already have, to improve student learning. Fifteen institutions will join WNSLAE 2.0 in the fall of 2010. Others may join in following years. Following our experiments at recruiting new Teagle Assessment Scholars from the 2008 round of Wabash Study institutions, we believe that it might be beneficial to have a representative from a number of WNSLAE 2.0 institutions become a Teagle Scholar and engage in the data-use project during the training program as an opportunity to build assessment capacity at WNSLAE 2.0 institutions. We will encourage first round WNSLAE 2.0 institutions to identify a potential Teagle Assessment Scholar for this new development program.
3. The Teagle Scholar training program needs to generate income for the Center beyond the end of the grant. By creating direct institutional benefit from the Teagle Assessment Scholar training program, we believe that as we prove the merits of the program, we will be able to charge institutions for the costs of training someone from their campus to usefully engage with assessment evidence. The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) charges \$3,750 tuition plus \$660 for lodging for its Assessment Leadership Academy (<http://www.wascsenior.org/ala/faq#Costs>) for a combination of face-to-face and online training. Although this is a well-designed program, we believe that the Teagle Scholar training program we've outlined here provides more support for new Scholars, a greater number of real-world training opportunities, and greater direct assessment benefit for the new Scholars' institutions. We believe that ultimately, we will be able to charge more than WASC given the training and the direct institutional consultation that's included in our proposed program. However, as we develop and refine our program over the next three years, we will gradually introduce institutional contributions for the program. Institutions that sponsor new Teagle Scholars for the first cohort of this training program (beginning in fall 2010) will not pay a fee to participate. We will ask institutions that sponsor a Teagle Scholar in the second cohort (beginning in fall 2011) to pay \$500 per year, and we will ask institutions that have a Teagle Scholar join in the third cohort (fall 2012) to pay \$1,000 per year, on average. In charging for our program, we also believe that it is critical that we create a sliding scale so that we can provide training and support for less prestigious and less wealthy institutions. This will be particularly important with the budgetary limitations that most institutions will face in the coming years. We will develop this sliding scale in collaboration with Senior Teagle Scholars.

The support we ask for in this proposal is, therefore, directed at helping the Center develop the first three new cohorts of Teagle Assessment Scholars and shifting costs for participating in the training program to the Teagle Scholars' institutions.

### *3. Senior Teagle Assessment Scholar regional work*

Our experiments this year working with Senior Teagle Scholars to take up some of the Center's work for colleges and universities in their regions have met with mixed success. It is clear, that given their extensive commitments at their home institutions, Senior Scholars do not have the time or institutional capacity to create "regional Centers" as we first hoped. However, two of the Senior Teagle Scholars have taken up the opportunity to work, as they refer to it, as "regional sales reps" of the Center. Michael Reder (Connecticut College) is working extensively with Lasell College in Massachusetts to use Wabash Study data and to develop a Teaching and Learning Center that can help Lasell respond to some of findings from the study. Frank Boyd (Illinois Wesleyan

University) is now working with Blackburn College in Illinois to find ways that the Center can help this struggling work college. In both cases, the efforts of these Scholars are coordinated out of the Center, but they are effectively extending the Center's reach by enabling site visits and consultations without Center staff.

We believe that this method of creating regional representatives who engage in short-term consultations in coordination with the Center is a good first-step towards increasing the Center's capacity to support institutions. We also believe that this program should be incentivized so that the Senior Scholars are paid (even the small stipends we offer) in proportion to the number of institutions they engage rather than working from a fixed annual stipend. Our goal is to continue to have five Senior Teagle Scholars on our advisory board each year, and we will ask them to each engage at least one institution per year in their region. We will also ask the Senior Scholars to host one of the three annual Teagle Assessment Scholar Development Workshops at one of their institutions. We believe that this combination of activities will help to not only extend the Center's reach, but also to establish the Senior Scholars as resources in their regions.

In years two and three of the grant, we also plan to extend this opportunity for short-term regional consultations to other Teagle Assessment Scholars who have demonstrated the ability to engage in this work for the Center on their own. Our goal is to support at least 15 regional visits by Teagle Assessment Scholars by the third year of the grant.

***Budget overview***

We are requesting \$299,632 to support this initiative as follows:

<b><u>Activity</u></b>	<b><u>Amount</u></b>
Annual curriculum meetings for Teagle Scholar Development Workshops	\$21,680
Teagle Scholar Development Workshops (3 per year)	\$156,452
Initial site visits for Teagle Scholar's institutional assessment projects	\$80,400
Concluding site visits for Teagle Scholar's institutional assessment projects	\$12,000
Local site visits for Senior Teagle Scholars and other experienced Scholars	\$16,100
Additional expenses:	
Statistical consulting/analysis – Initial data analysis support for new Teagle Scholar projects	\$7,500
Quantitative consulting/analysis – Initial interview and focus group support for new Teagle Scholar projects	\$7,500
Advertising for new Teagle Scholar Program	\$9,000
GoToMeeting subscription – to permit web-based conference calls and meetings with Advisory board and new Teagle Scholars	\$1,500
Supplies and miscellaneous	\$7,500
<i>Total budget over three years</i>	<i>\$319,632</i>
Less institutional contribution	(\$20,000)
<b>Total amount requested</b>	<b>\$299,632</b>

Please see the attached spreadsheets for more detail on the budget information above.