In this issue, you will find the last in a series of three articles devoted to profiling a few of the University's faculty members who were asked to address the topic, *"Innovative Methods of Teaching."*

Beyond PowerPoint: Capturing my Fulbright Experiences with Prezi

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Prezi—an innovative online presentation tool that is free to use—provided an ideal platform for sharing my experiences as a Fulbright research scholar last year.

During the 2012-13 academic year, I had the opportunity to conduct educational research at the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), located in the center of the Irish capital city. I was testing and studying outcomes of various hands-on pedagogies used to teach engineering and design (including Problem-Based Learning, Student-Centered Learning, and Group-Based Learning and Teaching strategies). I even taught a Master's level course in Problem-Based Learning for DIT faculty. The Fulbright Core Scholars program (http://www.cies.org/program/core-fulbright-us-scholar-program) helped me achieve my life-long goal of working abroad and building expertise in research. Since 2003, I'd had my sights set on working in Ireland. The Fulbright Scholar Catalog of Awards (http://catalog.cies.org) helped find the right position for me.

Because I was serving as a cultural ambassador of sorts, reaching out to many different types of audiences was a crucial part of my work. My sponsors (DIT, the Fulbright Commission of Ireland, and the US Department of State) encouraged me to discuss my research activities openly and to disseminate my findings as widely as possible.

As a result, I found myself speaking to high school and college students as well as engineers, architects, professors, and researchers. I presented a vast array of topics: pedagogies for experiential learning, team-based approaches to teaching and design, architecture and urbanism, research paradigms, robot-building as a way of attracting STEM majors, and Hampton University and the mission of HBCUs.

I travelled throughout Ireland, Portugal, and Belgium during the year, delivering lectures at nearly a dozen different universities. I made conference presentations in France and Greece and I served as a Scholar in Residence, in Rome, for a week.

Prezi was there, in the cloud, supporting my work through it all.

While Prezi did make my presentations stand out from the crowd, I wasn't alone. More than 35 million individuals are registered with *prezi.com* and 80% of all Fortune 500 companies are already using this 'zooming presentation tool' in their work today.

For me, Prezi lived up to its promises. It helped captivate my audience by providing visual motion… or 'zoom!' It helped convey excitement and connect ideas visually.Prezi let me embed images, PDF posters, and video clips so that I could share pertinent information in its original form—zooming in to show details with much higher resolution than PowerPoint allows. In this way, Prezi helped me show audiences how the 'parts' of my talk fit together into a larger 'whole.' I simply zoomed back and forth between details and the big, overall picture. Each new topic or idea easily fell into place.

With Prezi, my presentation files were always at my fingertips.

I created my presentation files on the Web and stored them in the Cloud. I kept backup copies loaded on my laptop, iPad, and iPhone—so I could present with or without access to the Internet and so I could make changes to my files on the fly. I can now auto-synch files across all my devices, ensuring that I always have the most recent version on hand.

I really enjoy presenting from my iPad because I can use the touch screen to navigate around the entire field while I am talking. This allows me to tailor the presentation on site, while I am speaking. I can easily jump across the presentation screen, or zoom into details the audience wants to learn more about. I can also call up encore portions of the presentation—ones that didn't make the main stage presentation that day but that can help address topics that arise during Q&A.

Prezi presentations seem highly sophisticated, but the software is surprisingly easy to use. Getting started is very easy. Prezi has dozens of professionally designed templates available for public use. This is a helpful feature, but I prefer to use my own graphics.

Over the past couple of years, I've streamlined my presentation approach by creating my own template files in Prezi. I use the same background colors and fonts in Prezi as in my PowerPoint and page layout files. This allows me to easily import/export photos, slides, and PDF files from one platform to another without have to modify the colors/fonts/graphics each time. That way, I can focus on content. I spend the bulk of my prep time determining what images I want to feature in a given presentation, 'framing' them in Prezi, planning the sequence and setting it all in motion using the 'path' command.

Prezi lets me tailor my presentation files quickly and painlessly.

Although I have created my own content for use and reuse, I also use Prezi's free online library as a resource. And, while Prezi provides expert support 24/7, I have never needed to use it. The web is full of tutorial videos that I find helpful and surprisingly interesting.

I also appreciate using Prezi's 'share' button. The share feature allows me to email links to students and colleagues—so they can view and edit the files. I used this to prepare collaborative presentations for conferences. And, occasionally, I posted links on websites (such as my Fulbright blog at *www.shannonchance.net*) so the public could click to view my work.

I hope you'll take a moment to visit *prezi.com* or *www.iie.org/fulbright* to explore new possibilities. These programs have made a world of difference to me.

Shannon Chance leading a workshop for engineering educators and higher education administrators in Lisbon, Portugal.

Shannon Chance presenting research in Thessaloniki, Greece at a conference of the European Society of Engineering Educators (SEFI).

Announcements

11th Annual Sloan Consortium Blended Learning Conference and Workshop

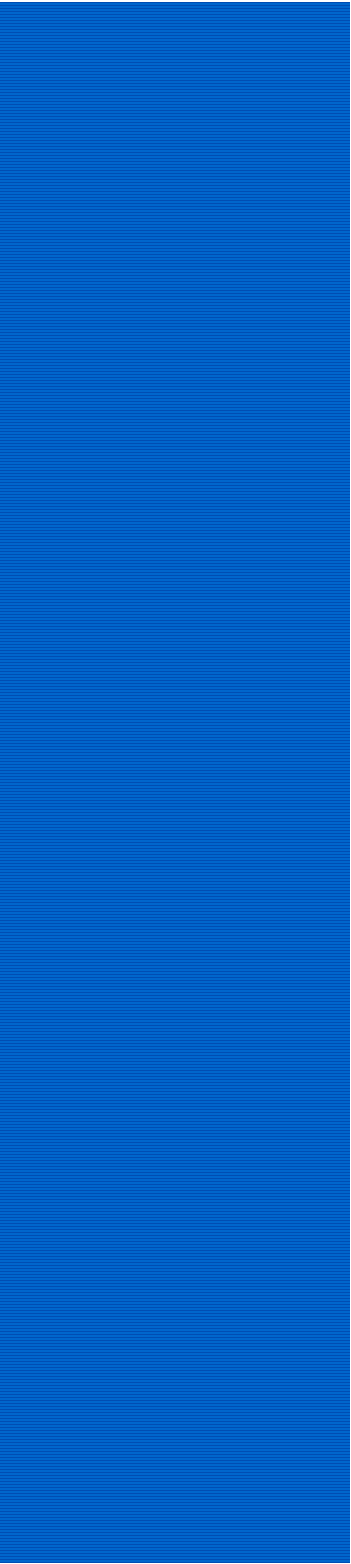**Blended Learning: Pathways to Student Success**

July 8-9, 2014

Sheraton Denver Downtown - Denver, Colorado

On behalf of the 11th Annual Sloan Consortium Blended Learning Conference and Workshop steering committee, we want to welcome you. We hope to see you at this year's Blended Learning Conference and Workshop! This year's conference theme is *Blended Learning: Pathways to Student Success*. The theme emphasizes the centrality of the learner in our blended learning designs. The primary reasons why there is a significant trend towards blended learning across the globe is because of its potential to increase learning effectiveness and flexibility for the learner.

There are many successful pathways to blended learning that institutions and instructors have explored. We hope you will come and share your knowledge and experience with us as well as network with other experts and novices who are venturing into world of blended learning.

The conference is organized into two days, with the first day starting with an array of interactive workshops, followed by an afternoon of information sessions, vendor showcases, and poster sessions, and highlighted by our keynote presentation on

analytics for student success. The final day of the conference will include an expert plenary presentation followed by information sessions and finish up with a half day of "Unconference" sessions that feature more informal open-ended, participant-driven discussion and networking around important blended learning issues.

We would love to meet you in person at the conference in Denver this year! Even better, we would love to learn from your experiences and expertise - so please submit a proposal for a workshop or information session! If you are unable to travel to Denver at the conference time, we would love to engage with you live online as virtual conference attendees. For more information, access the website at **http://sloanconsortium.org/conference/2014/blended/welcome.**