Oberlin CLEAR had a busy, successful spring semester and is looking forward to the 2013-14 academic year.

In May 2012, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) awarded Oberlin College a four-year $800,000 grant as part of an initiative to create more engaging science classes, bring real-world research experiences to students, and increase the diversity of students studying science. The co-directors of Oberlin’s grant are Associate Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry Jason Belitsky and Associate Professor of Biology Marta Laskowski. The aims of the grant include establishing a quantitative-skills center, supporting other student-learning programs, and supporting faculty and curriculum development.

Dr. Marcelo Vinces was appointed Director of CLEAR in March of 2013 and came to Oberlin from the National Science Foundation. In the past several months, he has met with representatives of campus departments and offices ranging from the Multicultural Resource Center to Technology in Music and the Related Arts, to help CLEAR provide support to the greater campus community.

Tabassum Haque is working with CLEAR as special projects researcher, managing collection and organization of assessment tools as well as data mining for information relevant to the center’s mission.

Emily Gazda (OC ’12) was hired as the administrative assistant for CLEAR and began her duties in March, 2013.

2 Spring 2013 Lab Crawl, HHMI Supplementary Grant, and Goodbye to Sean Decatur and Susan Morse
3 Faculty Workshops in January and May, OWLS
4 Oberlin Summer Research Institute, Quantitative Drop-In Center, and workshops about women and minorities in STEM fields
**HHMI Supplementary Award and Workshop**

Oberlin College, along with partners Bryn Mawr, Lewis and Clark, Macalester, Harvey Mudd, and St. Olaf colleges and the University of Minnesota, was awarded a $50,000 HHMI collaborative pilot grant to define the quantitative and computational skills of incoming science students.

Jason Belitsky, Tabassum Haque and Marcelo Vinces met with representatives from the partner institutions June 20-23, 2013 at a workshop in Portland, Oregon hosted by Lewis and Clark College.

**Goodbye to Sean Decatur and Susan Morse**

This summer we said adieu to two great champions of CLEAR. Sean Decatur, former Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, began as President of Kenyon College on July 1. Susan Morse, former Associate Director of Sponsored Programs at Oberlin, assumed her duties as Chief of Staff in the Office of the President at Kenyon College. Sean and Susan were both instrumental in the creation of CLEAR and worked tirelessly behind the scenes in support of the center. They will be greatly missed.

On Friday, May 3, 2013, CLEAR hosted the first Oberlin College Lab Crawl.

Students from Oberlin’s natural science departments volunteered as Lab Crawl ambassadors at stations throughout campus as part of a fun, open-house event showcasing student research and projects in the natural sciences. One goal of the event was to facilitate informal interactions among students and faculty, especially first years.

Lab Crawl participants collected stickers in their “passports” for each station visited. Stickers were redeemed for pizza and entries into a raffle drawing. The first annual Lab Crawl was a big success, with over 600 entries to the raffle submitted and the involvement of 29 faculty and staff and 80 students across 12 departments, programs and offices.

The Lab Crawl was covered in the Oberlin Review and The Oberlin News-Tribune, and it was advertised in Oberlin OnCampus prior to the event. Links to these articles are available on CLEAR’s website, oberlin.edu/clear.

**Moving Forward: Future Lab Crawls**

Based on a feedback survey sent to faculty who participated in the Lab Crawl, the most popular stations were in Biology and Neuroscience. (These stations were physically closest to the
Faculty Workshops

Oberlin Workshop Learning Sessions (OWLS)

CLEAR has begun running the OWLS peer-led supplemental instruction program. OWLS Leaders are students who attend professor-led sections of a course they have already taken, and they offer hands-on workshops in the evenings to help student understanding of the material. We will continue the best practices of the program as well as work to strengthen it further.

We have selected and trained 23 OWLS Leaders for fall 2013 and will be able to support for a similar number in the spring 2014. A total of 11 courses in 6 different departments will benefit from OWLS this fall.

The graph below shows the relationship between the number of OWLS sessions attended and student grades on the first exam in a 2012-13 biology class. We will carefully track and assess the impact of the OWLS program.

![Bar graph showing the relationship between exam grade and average number of workshops attended.]


e pizza station in the Love Lounge.) CLEAR is working to find ways to increase traffic to stations that are less centrally located, especially those outside the Science Center.

May is an extremely busy time at Oberlin, and in the future, we would like to schedule the Lab Crawl so that students can use it as an opportunity to investigate upcoming research opportunities.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the first annual Lab Crawl! We appreciate your support and feedback. We are planning for another Lab Crawl for the fall semester in October 2013.

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Faculty Workshops

January Workshop
The first CLEAR-sponsored workshop was held on January 16, 2013. Led by Nathan Grawe of Carleton College, the workshop, entitled “Teaching Quantitative Reasoning Across the Curriculum,” was attended by 19 faculty members representing 8 departments.

May Workshop
The second CLEAR-sponsored workshop was held May 22 and 23, 2013. Corrine Taylor of Wellesley College led the workshop, entitled “Taking Quantitative and Formal Reasoning (QFR) to the Next Step at Oberlin.” A total of 16 faculty members from 8 departments took part.

Corrine Taylor (pictured above) is Director of the Quantitative Reasoning Program at Wellesley College. She is also a member of the Economics Department and has worked extensively in coordinating the quantitative reasoning courses across the curriculum at Wellesley, as well as helping educators across the nation in developing quantitative courses and teaching approaches.
**Oberlin Summer Research Institute**

Working in partnership with Afia Ofori-Mensa, Clovis White, and Janene Brunson in the Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR), CLEAR supported the Oberlin Summer Research Institute (OSRI) through both professional development and social programming for the students undertaking collaborative research with faculty on campus during the summer. Activities included a welcome picnic, faculty panels, a young alumni panel, local field trips, and sessions on ethics, data presentation, and preparation of science posters. CLEAR and OUR are also collaborating on the Celebration of Undergraduate Research (September 20-21, 2013), which will feature student poster presentations, an alumni panel, and a speaker.

**Plans for the Fall Semester**

**Quantitative Drop-In Center**

The new Quantitative Drop-In Center will be located in the Science Library in group study room N176 and begin operations the week of September 9, 2013. Eleven students from 7 departments will staff the center in fall 2013. They will be trained the first week of classes and then be available most weekday evenings to work with students seeking assistance on quantitative problems or assignments. A schedule can be found at oberlin.edu/QFR.

We have been calling them Quantitative Drop-in Tutors, but just as the OWLS got their name from the students themselves, we will get student input in developing a name that sounds memorable and approachable to the Oberlin student body.

**Future Events**

CLEAR will host a series of events in the 2013-14 academic year on the natural sciences and society in partnership with other offices and programs on campus including the Multicultural Resource Center (MRC) and Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies (GSFS). The events will include an open forum for community discussion, “listening sessions” on topics such as women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), and workshops on effective practices for strengthening inclusion and diversity in the science classroom. A student symposium on computational modeling is also in planning for spring 2014. More information about these events will be posted on CLEAR’s website.

Please contact us if you have questions or suggestions for future programming.

**CLEAR**

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