Missouri S&T | Center for Advancing Faculty Excellence

The Center for Advancing Faculty Excellence is excited to release our next Office Newsletter to inform you of our summits, workshops, communities of practices, technology, and other services created to enhance your teaching excellence and professional growth.

Volume 1, Issue 6 (April 2025)

What's in this issue:

Upcoming Events

Early Career Faculty Forums

Early Career Faculty Forums are designed for faculty in their first three years at S&T, but all faculty are welcome to attend. All forums take place in the Faculty Innovation Studio, Room G-11 in Curtis Laws Wilson Library. Lunch is provided. Please Register to attend.

- April 9: Teaching effectively using KEEN resources
- April 15: Research ethics; Institutional Review Board (IRB); Compliance issues; Intellectual property

- April 22: Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL); Keeping up with pedagogy; publishing in SoTL
- May 7: Planning for a productive summer

Curators' Distinguished Teaching Professor Summit - Balancing Research and Teaching to Foster Professional Growth

- April 16, 2025, at 3:00-4:30 p.m. in the Ozark Room of the Havener Center
- [Registration](#)

Missouri Online Meet and Greet

- April 17, 2025, at 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. in Curtis Laws Wilson Library Room 202
- [Details](#)

Stay tuned for announcements to edumine and the [eConnection](#) for details.

ITLC 2025 – Recordings Available!

The fourth annual Innovation in Teaching and learning Conference, which was held on March 13 in Butler-Carlton Hall, was a success! The 100+ attendees from S&T and surrounding colleges and universities seemed to enjoy our keynote speaker and breakout sessions. Recordings from selected sessions are now available (see links below).

- KEYNOTE – [Impacts of High Structure Course Design on STEM Education](#)
  - Dr. Justin Shaffer - Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies and a Teaching Professor in Chemical and Biological Engineering and in Quantitative Biosciences and Engineering at the Colorado School of Mines
- CLOSING PANEL - [Effective Teaching Strategies to Support Student Learning: Award Winning Faculty Perspectives](#)
  - Dr. Irina Ivliyeva (Moderator) – Curators' Distinguished Teaching Professor of Russian; Chair of Arts, Languages, and Philosophy; Missouri S&T
  - Dr. Ryan Cheek – Assistant Professor of English & Technical Communication; Missouri S&T
  - Dr. Jason Furrer – Associate Teaching Professor in the School of Medicine Department of Molecular Microbiology and Immunology; University of Missouri-Columbia
  - Dr. Amber Henslee – Associate Professor of Psychological Science; Missouri S&T
  - Dr. Joshua Schlegel – Associate Professor of Nuclear Engineering & Radiation Science; Missouri S&T

- o   Dr. Jillian Schmidt – Associate Teaching Professor of Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering; Missouri S&T
- BREAKOUT SESSION: [Digital Accessibility: Get Ready for Updates to Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#)
  - o   Laura Foley – Instructional Designer III; Missouri Online
  - o   Manon Allard-Kropp – Instructional Designer III; Missouri Online
- BREAKOUT SESSION: [Empathy Mapping](#)
  - o   Kate Glass – Aspen University
  - o   Becky Rose – Aspen University

Call for Proposals – Focus on Teaching and Technology Conference

University of Missouri-St. Louis is calling for proposals for their annual Focus on Teaching and Technology Conference, scheduled for Thursday, October 23 and Friday, October 24. It will be an in-person event.

The deadline for submission is April 30, 2025. Visit the [FTTC website](#) for details and for the submission link.

Online Teaching Certification & Recertification Seminars

Online Teaching Certification Seminar: The next self-paced course is scheduled to begin on April 21 and will run until June 1, 2025. Please enroll through [Canvas Catalog.](#)

Online Teaching Re-Certification Seminar: For Re-certification, the next course is scheduled to begin on April 21 and will run until May 9, 2025. To determine your eligibility to participate in the Online Teaching Re-certification Course, please fill out [this survey](#) (University login required).

Any instructor who plans to teach an asynchronous online course must be certified.

Additional sessions will be available. Visit the [Online Teaching Certification](#) webpage for the full schedule.

Active Learning Corner *(Dr. Michelle Schwartze)*

The key to building an active learning environment in your classroom is to know your students and build a rapport with them where they feel safe. In 1943, [Abraham Maslow](#)

introduced the idea of a hierarchy of needs. The idea is that humans will not be able to reach self-esteem and self-actualization until they have their basic needs met, one of those being safety. In 1956, Benjamin Bloom came up with Bloom's Taxonomy, a classification system for different types of learning that students can attain. Something to remember as an educator is that we must - *Maslow before our students can Bloom*. So, we must help them meet their basic needs before we can expect them to reach higher levels of Bloom's.

One way to build rapport is to build connections within the classroom. This can be done with icebreaker activities at the beginning of the semester, class discussions during the lecture, encouraging study groups, and having group projects. One other way I challenge you to build rapport is by looking at where your students are sitting in your classroom. Are they mostly sitting in the very back? Do they spread out or are they sitting close to peers? Do more of them sit on the outside of the classroom rather than in the middle? Now, consider where you call on students the most. Is it where the majority of students are? Are you missing some students every time because they sit in a place you tend to not look at?

Some classrooms can be moved around and changed up, but sometimes you are stuck with the layout you get. That doesn't mean you have to keep students in their same seats, though. Try to incorporate some activity where they engage with a student who sits far away from them so they can learn from someone new. If you are able to move your seats around, consider different layouts to enhance the opportunity for student engagement. This research article *(The Room Itself Is Active: How Classroom Design Impacts Student Engagement),* explores how classroom design can impact that engagement. Also consider that until students feel safe in your classroom and have some of those basic needs met, they will not feel as comfortable engaging, so building rapport is key!

If you have any questions about active learning or want to discuss any of these ideas, please reach out to me either through email at schwartzem@mst.edu or through this link where you can set up a meeting time.

End-of-Semester Student Survey Timeline *(Beth Reardon)*

- Apr 7 – Apr 18
  - o **Instructor** access to add custom questions.
  - o **Instructor** check course assignments – notify chairs of any needed changes.
- Apr 10 – Apr 22
  - o **Chairs** make any needed changes to CourseLeaf.

- Apr 24
  - All changes to JoeSS instructor data must be complete.
  - **Data Freeze**
- Apr 27 – May 9
  - **Student access** to surveys
  - Instructors view survey Response Rates
- May 12 – May 16 – FINALS
- May 21
  - Instructor access to survey results
  - Chair access to survey statistics (no comments)
- May 21 – Jun 4 – Instructor review comments and submit requests for review.
  - [Instructor Evaluation Comment Review Request Form](#)
- Jun 11 – Deadline for CET committee review of requests
- Jun 16 – Chairs access to survey comments

TIPS FOR INCREASED RESPONSES:

Students can access their end of semester evaluations by clicking the ***Course Evaluations*** option in their Canvas courses or by using the link sent in their email. To increase your overall response rate for evaluations, CAFE recommends the following best practices:

- Briefly remind students in class how important these surveys are for improving the quality of instruction.
- Discuss ways in which the course has improved based on previous feedback.
- One of the most effective and simplest methods is to allow students time in class to complete the surveys. You can set aside about 5 minutes at the end of class and leave the room to give them privacy.
- Offer students a simple reward if the class meets or exceeds a percentage response rate. For example, one professor shared that he provides donuts for his students if the class hits an 80% response rate.

TidyUP Your Canvas Course! *(Malcolm Hays)*

A hazard of copying courses from semester to semester in Canvas is that Pages and Files may be duplicated across course shells, causing an accumulation of unnecessary content within a course. Syllabi in particular are prone to this; it's not uncommon for courses to have several semesters' worth of syllabi.

The TidyUP tool in Canvas is a way for instructors to review the content within a course and decide whether to delete it or not. Content items that are not linked to existing Canvas features like Modules, Assignments, and Pages are identified as being "orphaned" content. It only takes a couple clicks to delete them entirely. However, TidyUP strongly recommends DOWNLOADING the items before deleting them entirely from the course, so that you have a backup in case you need that file again later. TidyUP does not recognize files associated with question banks as being "in use."

Tidying up a Canvas course can save both you and your students frustration over time, as only the content you and your students NEED are contained within the course. Extraneous materials should live elsewhere, either on your local computer or in cloud storage (OneDrive / SharePoint / Dropbox, etc.).

I ran this on my course for Fall 2024 (English 1120-111) and discovered that I had 144 files that I was NOT using anywhere in my course. I also have four folders in the Files area that don't have any content. Now I have some Spring cleaning to do before Fall...

I urge you to try TidyUP on your course.

KEEN Community of Practice *(Nic Braegger)*

The College of Engineering and Computing, in partnership with the Kern Entrepreneurial Engineering Network (KEEN), is accepting applications for the educational mini-grant program to promote entrepreneurial thinking in undergraduate engineering students.

There are three tiers that range from $1000 to $5000 and range from implementing existing KEEN activities into a classroom (Tier 1) to creating new KEEN activities (Tier 2) or redesigning entire courses that align with the entrepreneurial mindset principles (Tier 3).

Applications are currently being accepted. The application period will end on May 1st with the winner announced on June 1st. For more information, download the Call for Proposals or email Nicolas Braegger at nbraegger@mst.edu.

Digital Accessibility and Screen Readers *(Dr. Susan Murray)*

As we have been sharing, under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act all public entities, including the University of Missouri System, must provide *fully accessible digital content by April 24, 2026*.

A screen reader is a technology that helps people who have difficulties seeing to access and interact with digital content, like websites or documents, via audio or touch. The main

users of screen readers are blind or have very limited vision. The technology reads out loud what is on the screen. It is important that PowerPoint slides, documents and webpages are designed with headings and other indicators that are used by screen readers to guide the user. When you use an accessibility checker you may receive an error if you haven't designed headings and such. Please watch a brief video (4:44) that demonstrates by example how a blind person uses a screen reader.

Expanding My Horizons with a Move *(Dr. Jeff Jennings)*

I have had the pleasure of working with a lot of great faculty over the years representing Education Technology and the Center for Advancing Faculty Excellence. I look forward to continuing working with departments and faculty as I transition to a new position with S&T's Online Learning and Educational Innovation department working with Dr. Debra Bourdeau, Vice Provost for Online Learning and Educational Innovation. We will work closely with CAFE to enhance effective teaching on campus. I see this endeavor as an opportunity to extend S&T's footprint in the online modality and continue to provide a great educational experience for our students on campus and beyond.

Respectfully,

Dr. Jeff Jennings, Assistant Director of Online Learning and Educational Innovation.

Have Any Questions?

- **CAFE Ask Us Anything hours** are 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. every Tuesday. This dedicated time is to answer any questions you may have relating to teaching and learning at S&T. For more information about the Ask Us Anything hours go to the CAFE website.
- **Or if you prefer, email us at cafe@mst.edu or call us at 573-341-6713.**