



# 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 4 (February 2025)*

## **What's in this issue:**

ITLC REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

Online Teaching Certification & Recertification Seminars

Peer Evaluation of Teaching (PET): What is it? (Dr. Michelle Schwartze)

Mid-Semester Student Survey Timeline (Beth Reardon)

Addressing Student Motivation to Attend Class (Malcolm Hays)

KEEN Community of Practice? (Nic Braegger)

Is Digital Accessibility Still a "Thing"? (Dr. Susan Murray)

CAFE Faculty Fellow

Active Learning Corner (Dr. Michelle Schwartze)

Have Any Questions?

## **ITLC REGISTRATION IS OPEN!**

The Center for Advancing Faculty Excellence is pleased to announce that we are hosting our 4th Annual FREE Innovation in Teaching and Learning Conference on March 13, 2025.

Our keynote speaker is 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.

His presentation, *Impacts of High Structure Course Design on STEM Education*, will illustrate how a high-structure course design can increase performance, narrow or close performance gaps, and improve students' sense of belonging.

Visit the [ITLC website](#) to register for this in-person event.

## Online Teaching Certification & Recertification Seminars

**Online Teaching Certification Seminar:** The next self-paced course is scheduled to begin on March 3 and will run until April 11, 2025. Please enroll through [Canvas Catalog](#).

**Online Teaching Re-Certification Seminar:** For Re-certification, the next course is scheduled to begin on February 17 and will run until March 7, 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.

## Peer Evaluation of Teaching (PET): What is it? *(Dr. Michelle Schwartz)*

PET is S&T's Peer Evaluation of Teaching. We are a group of faculty members who have completed training in formatively evaluating teaching. We created a [rubric to use when observing faculty](#). Our goal is to provide formative feedback on pedagogical practices. These observations will be completed by two faculty members and include a pre- and post-meeting to discuss questions, concerns, and feedback. If you are interested in participating in a PET observation, please complete the [Peer Evaluation of Teaching form](#).

If you are more curious about the process and would like to speak to someone about it before signing up feel free to reach out to Dr. Devin Burns at [burnsde@mst.edu](mailto:burnsde@mst.edu) or Dr. Michelle Schwartz at [schwartzem@mst.edu](mailto:schwartzem@mst.edu).

## Mid-Semester Student Survey Timeline *(Beth Reardon)*

- Feb 17 – Feb 29 – **Instructor** access to opt-in add custom questions
- Mar 3 – Mar 12
  - **Student access** to surveys
  - Instructors view survey Response Rates
- Mar 13 – **Instructor access** to results (after mid-term grade submission)

**TIPS FOR INCREASED RESPONSES:**

Students can access their mid-semester evaluations by clicking the **Course Evaluations** option in their Canvas courses or by using the link sent in an email coming soon. 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.

## Addressing Student Motivation to Attend Class (*Malcolm Hays*)

Research shows that attendance is one of the key factors in students' course success. However, students may not attend for a variety of reasons - *Maybe the instructor is boring. Maybe the subject matter is presented in a boring manner. Maybe they feel they can watch the recorded lectures and get the full experience that way.* Whatever the reason, instructors can understand their students and potentially improve attendance. How? A brief, anonymous survey may provide insight and guide future course design.

100% attendance may not be possible but here are some strategies to improve attendance:

- **Explain the value of attending class** – Let students know the added benefits of attending your class. “Because they need to learn it” is not a sufficient answer for students. Go deeper and explore how attending class will benefit them throughout the semester.
- **Develop in-class activities.** Create activities where they can apply knowledge hands-on and cooperatively. This works for both small classes and large classes. Need help or idea? See Michelle Schwartz's Active Learning Corner or set up an appointment with her.
- **Provide small extrinsic rewards for attending class** – “Clicker points” are a very common strategy, especially for large classes. “Muddiest point” and “What did you learn today?” are also good ideas. You can give participation points for these. CAFE can help you create these.

Just the act of taking attendance can increase attendance rates, as students know they are expected to show up and participate. Davis, B.G. (2009). *Tools for Teaching* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)

## KEEN Community of Practice? (Nic Braegger)

We would like to thank everyone who joined us for our community of practice on January 29<sup>th</sup>. During this event, two speakers focused on what they have done with KEEN and the Entrepreneurial Mindset (EM) at S&T.

Dr. Alexander Douglas gave a presentation on his redesign of *Principle of Mining* which added a variety of learning activities including mine ventilation, mineral processing, and mine rescue.

Dr. Mario Buchely gave a presentation on how he incorporated the EM into MET-ENG 3125 (Mechanical Testing of Materials Laboratory), specifically in the lab. He highlighted the results by showing student-created videos and student surveys results.

If you would like to attend our next event on March 29<sup>th</sup>, please reach out to Nic at [nbraegger@mst.edu](mailto:nbraegger@mst.edu) for details.


## Is Digital Accessibility Still a “Thing”? (Dr. Susan Murray)

In a letter to faculty signed by Dr. Dave Westenberg and myself, we explained the upcoming digital accessibility requirement under Federal Title II that goes into effect in 2026. There has been a flurry of executive orders and speculation about changes coming from the federal government. You might be wondering what that means for digital accessibility. The short answer is it is not going anywhere, but it might be delayed. Just as we saw with Title IX, different administrations can approach the requirements differently, but an administration does not have the authority to eliminate them; that would require a different branch of the government.

We are still encouraging digital accessibility because 1) it is the law, 2) it is best practice, and 3) it will help many of our students. For example, red-green colorblindness affects, on average, 8% of males. I've talked about colorblindness in my *Human Factors* for over 30 years, and I have never had a class without at least one student who has this condition. They can see your slides or text, but they may have difficulty distinguishing different colors or struggle if the contrast is not strong enough. Dr. Jonathan Kimball (ECE Chair) has [written about his experience with colorblindness](#).

So, what can you do? Luckily, making sure your material is easy to read for all students is not that hard. In most software like PowerPoint, Word, and Canvas, there is an icon



towards the lower right that looks like  If you don't have a number, then your material is okay. If you have a number such as the 2 shown here, then the accessibility check has found a problem – actually 2 of them in this case. Click on the icon on your document for information and help fixing it.

What to know more – contact CAFE at [cafe@mst.edu](mailto:cafe@mst.edu)

## CAFE Faculty Fellow

We are excited to announce CAFE's Faculty Fellow this semester. Dr. Michelle Schwartz, Associate Teaching Professor in the Education department will focus on active learning and provide tips and tricks, learning strategies and best practices in the classroom, large or small. You can request her assistance or start a conversation by completing the [Active Learning Consultation Request](#) form. If you have thoughts for future faculty fellows reach out to Dr. Susan Murray ([murray@mst.edu](mailto:murray@mst.edu)).

## Active Learning Corner (*Dr. Michelle Schwartz*)

I am very excited to be named a Faculty Fellow with CAFE so I can share my knowledge of active learning and pedagogy! A quick background on me: my undergraduate degree was Elementary Education with a focus on middle school mathematics and I taught middle school for 13 years in Peoria, Illinois; my master's is in Curriculum and Instruction with a focus on reading; my doctorate is also in Curriculum and Instruction from Illinois State University. I have been at Missouri S&T in the Education department for eight years and love being able to prepare future teachers.

In the monthly newsletters, I will share resources I have found helpful and that hopefully you can use as well. The first resource I would like to share is [Edutopia](http://edutopia.org) (edutopia.org). This is part of the George Lucas Educational Foundation and there are great resources for active learning and education topics in general. One article I have found helpful is titled [How Breaking Up Lectures Can Improve Student Learning](#). As Malcolm mentions above, student motivation can sometimes be hard to attain. When lecture is a big part of your instruction then it can seem that student motivation even decreases. Yet we all need to lecture at some point, so how can we do it in a way that keeps students focused and motivated?

All people have a cognitive load capacity and once that cognitive load is too full students will be unable to fully comprehend new information. To help with this you can find ways to chunk the material into smaller sections, so students are not overloading their working memory. One idea mentioned in this article that can be an easy addition to any class is using frequent, low stakes pop quizzes. These can be short and even used in a game like Kahoot. With feedback to the students after these pop quizzes it can help ensure that they will be more successful on future assessments.

I look forward to working with faculty on campus to increase knowledge and resources about active learning! Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions through the link above or you can email me at [schwartzem@mst.edu](mailto:schwartzem@mst.edu).

## 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](mailto:cafe@mst.edu) or call us at 573-341-6713**