



# Alliant International University Center for Teaching and Excellence - Newsletter

June 13, 2022

The [Center for Teaching Excellence](#) monthly newsletter provides information about events sponsored by the CTL as well as around the university and beyond. We also highlight resources available to Alliant faculty on the CTE site and elsewhere. We encourage you to submit possible content of interest to faculty for an upcoming newsletter.

Dalia Ducker

## Center for Teaching Excellence Events

ON DEMAND



**The Benefits and Challenges of Facilitating Allyship Among Faculty**, a webinar presented by four CSPP/Alliant faculty members (Dr. Julli Green, Dr. Jennifer Staples, Dr. Tara Shuman, and Dr. Jan Estrellado). This workshop described allyship efforts among faculty, including ongoing commitment to create and maintain allyship relationships through action, self-reflection, and accountability. The presenters discussed their cross-racial and intersectional allyship development and impact on their professional roles, program faculty, and students, while highlighting collaboration and transparency and shared efforts toward social justice advocacy. Implications for admissions review, approach to BIPOC students, course content, clinical supervision, and teaching style were addressed, as well as suggestions for implementing allyship efforts among faculty while acknowledging the challenges of forming and maintaining these relationships.

[▶ Watch here](#)

## Other Events

ON DEMAND



### [Teaching for Inclusivity](#)

Inclusive teaching gives all students a voice and the opportunity to participate fully in class. In this webinar sponsored by the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, experts addressed how colleges encourage it. Traditional teaching practices can widen, not close, existing disparities in student performance. Four experts, speaking in three segments addressed the following topics: (a) closing equity gaps, (b) teaching to include across the digital divide, and (c) connecting to student success. In this 75 minute session, they examined

- How do administrators, faculty leaders, and heads of campus teaching-and-learning centers create an environment in which inclusive practices are encouraged?
- How do they expand instructors' awareness of inclusivity ideas, especially in disciplines like math and the sciences?
- How do campus leaders help their faculty members better understand why participation imbalances exist in the classroom — and how to overcome them?

## Resources on Center for Teaching Excellence site



## Consultations Request Form

If you are interested in a consultation, please fill out this form:



# Consultations Request Form

If you are interested in a consultation, please fill out the form below.

Hi,                      When you submit this form, the owner will see your name and email address.

\* Required

1. Name: \*

2. Email: \*

3. Status: \*

Core Faculty

Adjunct Faculty

Other

4. What would you like to discuss? \*

5. Other questions or comments:

Submit

[▶ Submit the request form](#)



### Creating a Positive Class Climate

Put most simply, class climate is the intellectual, social, and physical environment in which students learn. [Inclusive Teaching Principles](#)

Creating a positive climate is closely connected to practicing inclusive teaching in that both aim at creating a learning environment that maximizes learning by fosters students' sense of belonging and connection to the course and creating a community of learners. [Inclusive Teaching](#)

There is evidence that student learning is affected by class climate; therefore, one goal for instructors is to create a positive climate that encourages, supports, and sustains student motivation, engagement, and performance.

Instructors can influence class climate through the design of their course, including the content they include and the teaching strategies they employ. They can also focus on creating, and communicating classroom norms and expectations conducive to positive engagement and learning.

One the most effective ways instructors can of influence the class climate is through their communications and interactions with students. This includes the following techniques:

- Learn about the students (e.g., their names, the pronouns they use, what they hope to get out of the course, and what preparation and background knowledge they have).
- Provide information about own professional background (e.g., tell stories about own history and activities).
- Clearly communicate how to be successful in the course (e.g., let students know what is expected of them regarding preparation, attendance, and participation in class activities).
- Create a sense of community among students (e.g., assign shared projects, give students opportunities to work with different partners, encourage participation by all students).
- Give students regular constructive feedback on their progress, including suggestions on how to improve (e.g., provide specific comments on student work and encourage individual meetings). [Providing effective feedback](#)
- Make course materials inclusive (e.g., ensure variety of authors and sources, representing a range of experiences and perspectives). [Inclusive teaching](#)
- Clearly articulate what students need to do in order to fulfill class requirements (e.g., review all rubrics and clarify all changes that may occur). [Creating rubrics](#)
- Articulate or create ground rules for participation and discussion and address incivility if it occurs (e.g., learn to manage disruptive behavior). [Managing disruptive student behavior](#)
- Acknowledge and respond to controversial topics (e.g., learn to facilitate difficult dialogues and provide opportunity for everyone to talk about these topics). [Facilitating difficult dialogues](#)
- Be mindful of language (e.g., avoid language that is culturally specific that may not be familiar to all students; use appropriate language when speaking about a particular identity or community and admit uncertainty and ask for help if needed).
- Introduce a variety of learning activities that foster student engagement (e.g., incorporate active learning strategies that entail working in pairs or small groups). [Promoting active learning](#)
- Be approachable and accessible to students who have questions or seek help (e.g., invite them to attend office hours and respond to emails in a timely manner).
- Do an early-semester check-in by gathering feedback (e.g., give a survey and then summarizing your findings and explain what you can or cannot do in response to the feedback and why). [Midterm feedback](#)

Instructors also can influence class climate through the course syllabus. Thus, another way to create a positive class climate is to develop and disseminate a warm syllabus – one that provides course information in a positive, inviting, and friendly manner. The goal again is to build a sense of belonging and community and encourage students to feel welcome, comfortable, and excited about the course. Specifically, a Warm syllabus does the following:

- Focuses on what the students will learn and how they will learn it

- Expresses high expectations and confidence that students will succeed
- Uses language, including humor, that shows passion for teaching and the subject matter
- Includes self-disclosure through sharing relevant personal experiences
- Arouses students' curiosity and gets them excited about the course
- Provides rationale for policies and requirements
- Expresses compassion
- Provides rationale for assignments by relating them to learning objectives
- Sets tone by using inclusive friendly language
- Emphasizes positive over punitive language
- Creates invitations rather than commands
- Uses cooperative rather than authoritarian language

For more information on the CTE site see [Creating A Positive Class Climate](#)

Also see [How to Create a Syllabus](#) and [Creating an Inclusive Syllabus](#)

## Other Resources



### Articles

#### [Creating a Learning Community](#)

In this article in *Inside Higher Education*, the authors argue that when a class becomes a community, students change from being passive to being active learners. They offer suggestions for how to create a learning environment characterized by a sense of belonging, interdependence, mutual respect, and engagement, which they believe leads to more learning by students.

#### [Peer Review of Teaching](#)

The authors of this *Chronicle of Higher Education* article believe that current approaches to peer review of teaching are inadequate. They argue for “a system that supports an instructor’s pedagogical development and creates opportunities to talk through teaching successes and failures.” They advocate for a more “scholarly, comprehensive, inclusive, and effective” approach to evaluating teaching that would: (a) consider dimensions in addition to classroom performance; (b) include multiple measures; and (c) be based on peer review. They describe some crucial practices for peer review and give advice on how to use them effectively.

### Papers

[IDEA papers](#), from the IDEA Center of Kansas State University, provide useful ideas related to teaching and faculty evaluation. The goal is to improve learning, teaching, and leadership. Here is one recent example:

#### [Guiding Learning and Assessment Through Rubrics](#)

“Rubrics can serve as helpful tools for instructors in facilitating and even improving the evaluation process. More than that, they can also foster student understanding and improve student confidence and performance. The author offers an extensive overview of the literature to define and describe different types of rubrics, provides examples, and explores the multitude of benefits afforded by rubrics while also considering the potential challenges. She also outlines best practices for designing effective rubrics and offers suggestions for implementing them successfully in the classroom. Although rubrics require time and care to create, they can contribute significantly to the teaching and learning process.”

### Podcasts

#### [Teaching Matters](#)

This is a series of podcasts that are billed as conversations about “Teaching N’ Stuff.” An example is provided by the season 3, episode 3 description, “In this episode: assessment formats, multiple choice testing, with benefits and drawbacks, assessment choices depend on the course, where the person is in their career, grading artifacts, using rubrics...”

### Blogs

### [This is How I Teach](#)

This blog is sponsored by APA Division 2, Society for the Teaching of Psychology. This is how they describe it: “Teaching shouldn't be a private activity, but often it turns out that way. We don't get to see inside each other's classrooms, even though we'd probably benefit if only we could! In order to help Make Teaching Visible, we've introduced this blog, called 'This is How I Teach.' Psychology teachers will tell us about how they teach and what kinds of people they are -- both inside and outside the classroom.”

## Shared Resources



### Teaching Advice

The following resources are available from the Oregon State University Center for Teaching and Learning:

#### [Warm syllabi](#)

A warm-tone syllabus establishes a rapport between instructor and students, allowing communication of course expectations in a manner personalized to the instructor. It uses personal pronouns and inclusive language and avoids confrontational or condescending language while conveying the instructor's openness and availability to students. Warm syllabi are learner-centered and focus on the information and tools an instructor can provide to promote learning instead of just describing what the course will cover and listing due dates and policies. This brief hand out provides specific suggestions for creating a warm syllabus.

#### [Diversity statements](#)

Including a diversity statement in a syllabus can signal several important values to students and set the tone for a course. It can establish a supportive learning environment and set expectations for dialogue on difficult topics, depending on the kind of statement created and implemented in the class. However, communicating commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion is a nuanced endeavor that takes thought and careful consideration. This short paper provides specific guidance for creating diversity statements.

## Faculty Success and Well-Being



### Managing Work Life

#### [Writing a Book in 30 Days](#)

In this *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, the author describes how she wrote a book in 30 days. Her strategies include the following steps: (a) **Set a word goal.** Commit to writing a certain number of words per day. (b) **Create a writing schedule.** Make it fit your life but do whatever it takes to get words on the page on a schedule that is reasonable and achievable for you and stick to it. (c) **Make an outline.** This step is crucial, and you can count writing the outline as part of your daily goal. (d) **Realize that not everything will make it into the final draft.** Output, getting something down, is important. No time spent writing is wasted. (e) **Don't stop writing to do more research.** Filling gaps is easy. Use shortcuts to remind yourself to go back to update passages or fill in missing information. (f) **Try not to be overly ambitious.** You don't want to exhaust yourself; you need to maintain a consistent pace so you have the energy to complete a draft, no matter how rough. (g) **After you've met your writing goal for the day, reward yourself.** Take time to relax, do something fun. It is important to follow concerted effort with rest.

#### [The uneven burden of identity](#)

In this article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the author reports that in the past two years faculty members have been asked to support struggling students by providing accommodations, extensions, and flexibility, as well as help them cope with personal issues. The result has been extra work for instructors; however, that work has not been distributed evenly. According to the results of a recent survey of faculty at three colleges, faculty members who are white, cisgender men performed less emotional labor in the early part of pandemic teaching than did their colleagues. That uneven burden is driven by the different demands that students place on professors of different identities, according to the [paper](#) “Teaching College in the Time of Covid-19: Gender and Race Differences in Faculty Emotional Labor,” published in the journal *Sex Roles*.

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