

March 2026

CTE News You Can Use

Searching the CTE Site



The CTE website is searchable. A small magnifying glass icon appears at the top right-hand corner of every page. It allows users to enter a word or phrase to search for a topic of interest. For example, a search for the word **Collaboration** yields the following results:

- [Alternative Grading](#)
- [Best Practices for Inclusive Teaching](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [Group Projects and Formative Assessments: Authentic Learning in the AI Era](#)
- [First Generation Students](#)
- [Peer Review by Students](#)
- [Course Ground Rules](#)
- [Collaborative Learning](#)

Future Events



Grading for Competence in Online and On Ground Classrooms

By Dr. Rhoda Olkin and Dr. Cynthia Pancer

March 19, 2026, 12 :00 – 1:00 pm PT

CANCELED

GenAI in Practice: Real-World Integration by Alliant Faculty

April 16, 2026, 12:00 – 1:00pm PT

Dr. Jacob Westerberg, Adjunct, CSPP, PhD I/O Psych

Dr. Beth Kelly, SOE, PD for the MA ABA

Dr. Kristen Curry, Assistant Professor, CSPP, MACC, Fresno

Explore how Alliant faculty integrate Generative AI into courses and assignments. Gain insights from their successes and challenges, along with practical ideas to engage students and prepare them for future careers. Leave with clear, manageable strategies you can apply to begin integrating AI into your teaching practice.

Past Events Available On Demand

Chairing Dissertations: How to Successfully Guide Students through the Dissertation Process

By Dr. Rebecca Bokoch

February 13, 2026, 12:00 – 1:00 pm PT

[Recording](#)



This workshop will focus on how to guide students through the dissertation process and lead them to successful and prompt dissertation completion. The workshop will discuss approaches to different stages of the dissertation, as well as overall strategies. It will cover areas such as choosing dissertation topics, common roadblocks and challenges, dissertation assignments, supervisory approach, and use of timelines and rubrics, as well as other tools and tips. There will be time to ask questions and to share ideas to add to the list of effective dissertation chairing strategies.

Bytes of Brilliance: Real Faculty. Real Strategies. Real Impact.

Bytes of Brilliance is a video series hosted by Dr. Jeremy Bond, Director of Online Learning, featuring Alliant faculty sharing teaching strategies they use that make a real impact in their courses. Each short episode features an instructor sharing a real-world technique or tool that boosts student engagement and learning. **Expect episode three later this spring!**

- [Bytes of Brilliance Featuring Dr. Samantha Guber](#)
- [Bytes of Brilliance Featuring Dr. Donna Block](#)

Resources from the Online Teaching Team



Microsoft in Practice: Faculty-Focused Features

This three-part series highlights key tips for Microsoft Office tools, starting with Word, then PowerPoint and Excel. Each featured tip is regularly used by our team and aims to help you work more efficiently and consistently, while reducing common frustrations.

Microsoft in Practice: Word

We're starting by looking at Microsoft Word's features that can quickly improve your daily tasks. Word is essential for making course materials, editing documents, and working with others, but many helpful tools are easily missed. For example, our team recently lost a section of a document during revision, but rather than starting from scratch, we quickly restored the version we needed using Word's built-in recovery tool. Situations like this show why we depend on these features every day, and that's why we're sharing some of our favorites with you.

Version History (Melissa's Tip)

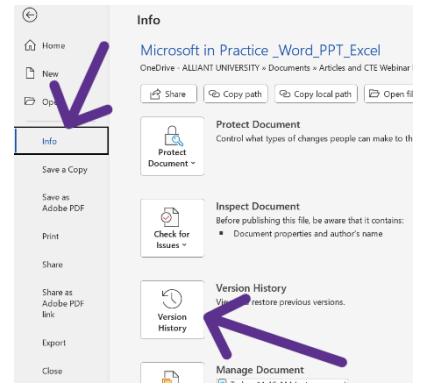
Version History gives you a built-in safety net when working in Word. Use this to return to earlier drafts (or find a section of a document that you thought was lost).

When this feature is most helpful

- Recover content that was deleted
- Compare different drafts

How to access it

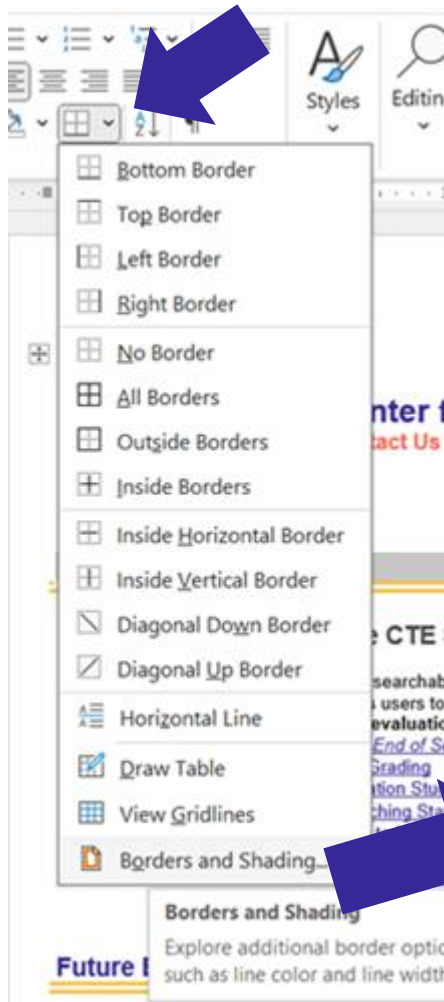
1. Make sure the document is saved in OneDrive or SharePoint. Version History only works for files stored in the cloud, not on your local computer.
2. In the document, go to **File**
3. Next, click on **Info**
4. Choose **Version History**.
5. Select a previous version to preview or restore.



Did you know?
If your document is stored in **Microsoft Teams**, Version History is already enabled.

Show Your Tables Who's Boss (Jeremy's Tip)

Formatting tables, especially when using borders or other effects, can quickly feel like a battle of wills between you and Microsoft Word; it doesn't have to be



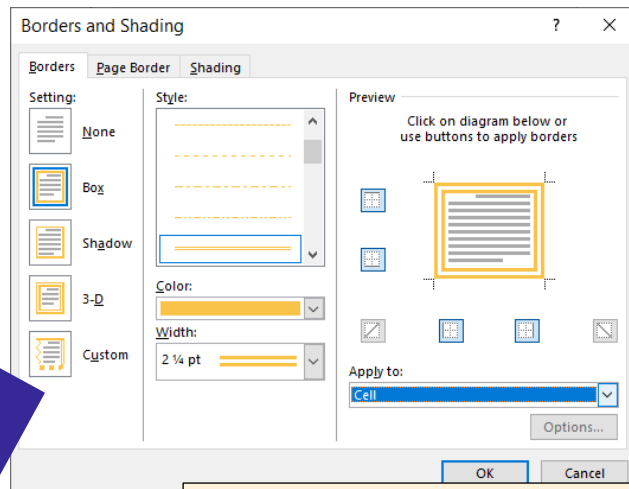
that way. The next time a table is giving you trouble, use this not-so-secret weapon. Select your table, or the portion of it you want to alter. Then browse to the 'Borders' button and click it. At the bottom of the menu that opens, click 'Borders and Shading...'

When this feature is most helpful

- To format a border on a single cell, an entire table, or a paragraph of text

How to access it

1. Select the area (or areas) that need fixing
2. Click the 'Borders' button
3. At the bottom of the menu, click "Borders and Shading"



Before making selections, pay careful attention to the 'Apply to' setting, choose the element to which the border should apply.

Teaching Tips



Mentoring Dissertations

The Center for Teaching Excellence provides a variety of resources regarding mentoring student dissertations. For example, the CTE has sponsored two webinars on the topic. Most recently, in February 2026, Dr. Rebecca Bokoch, associate professor in the clinical psychology PhD program at the LA campus, presented a webinar on guiding students through the dissertation process. Among the many resources she presented were a form for developing timelines with students and rubrics for proposals and dissertations. Access Dr. Bokoch's presentation and slides here:

[Charing Dissertations: How to Successfully Guide Students through the Dissertation Process Presentation Slides \(PDF\)](#)

In September 2022, Dr. Sharon Foster, distinguished professor emerita from the clinical psychology PhD program at the San Diego campus, also presented a webinar on mentoring student dissertations. Dr. Foster is the co-author of the widely used book, *Dissertations and Theses from Start to Finish*, and her presentation included information on research-based success factors as well as ideas about faculty and student challenges and solutions. Access Dr. Foster's presentation and slides here:

[A Practical Guide to Mentoring Student Dissertations and Doctoral Projects Presentation Slides \(PDF\)](#)

The CTE site provides additional information to support faculty working with dissertation students.

- [Mentoring Students](#)
Includes information on best practices in mentoring students as well as links to resources for mentors and mentees.
- [Role of Dissertation Committee Chairperson](#)
Includes a list of recommended activities related to both dissertation-specific advising and career advising.
- [Rubrics for Dissertations](#)
Includes a list of criteria for evaluating dissertations as well as links to rubrics for evaluating proposals, dissertations, and oral defenses.

The Alliant [Center for Student Excellence](#) also includes links to dissertation related services and resources, including the [Dissertation Tool Box](#).

Additionally, the Alliant library has a plethora of resources pertaining to dissertations. Here are some examples:

- [Dissertation & Doctoral Project Formatting & Clearance: Submitting to the Library](#) – main library information
- [What are the dissertation submission deadlines?](#) – regarding deadlines
- [Dissertations](#) - brief video tutorial about how to search for dissertations

Other Resources



What is Agentic AI

This article in the *University of Cincinnati News* cited Microsoft's definition of agentic AI as "an autonomous AI system that plans, reasons and acts to complete tasks with minimal human oversight." It differs from generative AI, which "completes tasks based on context clues" from generative AI tools, which produce results based on exact prompts. Thus, the five characteristics of agentic AI are
Top 5 agentic AI characteristics

1. **Autonomy:** Agentic AI can perform tasks beyond exactly what is assigned, requiring significantly less human oversight.
2. **Reasoning:** Through contextual clues and sophisticated forms of decision-making, AI agents select potential solutions on their own.
3. **Adaptable planning:** When conditions shift, agentic AI can alter its plans accordingly.
4. **Context understanding:** AI agents can comprehend human speech with ease.
5. **Action enabled:** Agentic AI delivers tangible solutions by acting whenever it deems itself capable of doing so.

The author provided four examples of agentic AI use.

- **Travel booking:** Let's say you're interested in going on vacation and have a set budget and trip preferences. Tell an AI agent about your interests and limitations, and it could suggest destinations, hotel and flight choices and stops on your itinerary. It could even book the trip for you, autonomously doing the work that you would've had to perform otherwise.
- **Customer support:** While AI has already been incorporated into this field, it'll become more helpful. Expect AI-powered customer support to diagnose issues independently, provide tailored solutions, craft tickets and escalate issues to humans when necessary.
- **Data analytics and reporting:** Rather than humans needing to read through huge datasets to produce reports, AI agents will be able to independently collect insights and compile them into presentations and graphics.
- **Supply chain management:** Agentic AI will be able to continuously monitor the market for supply chain disruptions, optimize inventory levels and logistics and predict when equipment will either give out or need maintenance."

Agentic AI: Introductory Considerations for Educators

In this slide deck, Anna Mills discussed the issues agentic AI raises for educators. Specifically, she (a) defined agentic AI and differentiated it from Chatbots; (b) explored whether its use by students to cheat can be detected or prevented; (c) discusses how it can be used by educators; (d) provided examples of institutional policies regarding faculty use; and (e) included an annotated list of the resources she used.

Shared Resources



Community Agreement: Make Space, Give Grace

In this video, part of a series called TeachingTalks, Columbia University faculty member, Dr. Isper Crissey, discussed a technique for developing and implementing a community agreement in a course. She explained that this is a strategy to create a safe and respectful learning environment in which all students feel free to speak up in class and gave a step-by-step description of the process she used. She emphasizes the importance of faculty members setting the tone and serving as role models in creating an inclusive class experience.

Faculty Well-Being and Success



Feeling Depleted? A Guide to Faculty Renewal

In this *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, Sarah Rose Cavanagh and Jennifer Herman sought to answer the question: How can faculty members and faculty leaders motivate and revitalize themselves and others? They articulated four “ingredients” of faculty renewal.

- Time away: Going on a retreat somewhere or doing something entirely new can be stimulating and rejuvenating.
- Reflection and goal setting: The aim should be to envision a future path, which can be achieved through a range of solitary or group activities,
- Community: Taking part in a group retreat provides more accountability and structure, especially when participants are striving toward a goal together.
- Clear next steps: the results should include
 - A plan of action for the next week, month, and six months.
 - A schedule to check on progress (on your own or with others).
 - A memento or takeaway to serve as a visual reminder of your “time away.”

They provided suggestions for how to make and implement plans for renewal experiences – alone or with a group and with few or ample resources.



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