



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING



ANNUAL REPORT

*Center for Teaching
and Learning*

2023

ANNUAL REPORT CONTENTS

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Our People



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FY23 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Maroon Academy for Teaching Excellence

The Maroon Academy for Teaching Excellence program began with a cohort of 30 on May 31st of 2023. This new program is our most comprehensive and ambitious attempt to empower MSU teachers with evidence-based practices for teaching. The program includes 4 asynchronous online courses: **1.** Intentional Course Design and Assessment, **2.** Active Learning for Student Engagement, **3.** Inclusive Teaching to Welcome All Learners, and **4.** Supporting Students in the Classroom and Online. Teachers take the first two courses the first summer and the following two in the subsequent summer to earn the Maroon Academy for Teaching Excellence certificate.

The content of all four courses is designed to provide evidence-based best practices in teaching and learning for implementation. The discussion boards in the courses provide peer engagement opportunities, as well as feedback on questions and ideas of the participants. The final assignment in each course is explaining the implementation of the practices into the participants' courses; thus promoting reflection and continual improvement.

Planning this program and creating the online courses began in the fall of 2022 and will be ongoing with the 2nd two courses to be built over the upcoming academic year. Below are a few highlights of the program and course development:

Intentional Course Design and Assessment:

Dr. Stephanie King was hired to teach this first course in the Academy four-part series. Various faculty members from around campus participated in panel discussions filmed by the University Television Center and moderated by Faculty Associate Melody Fisher. The course includes modules focusing on Designing Course Outcomes and Learning Objectives, Aligning Outcomes and Assessments, Creating Equitable and Effective Assessments, Grading Efficiently and Effectively, and Creating Effective Units and Lessons. Each course also has a pre-course, mid-course, and post-course survey. A few comments taken from participants' post-survey responses include:

- *"...organized in a way that put a 'method to the madness' I was trying to make happen in my classes."*
- *"...it was really helpful to see it presented in a ways with actionable steps and suggestions."*
- *"The content in this course helped me think critically about [course outcomes/objectives], probably for the first time in my career."*

Active Learning for Student Engagement

Dr. Nicole Miller was hired to teach the second course in Active Learning for Student Engagement. This course is scheduled for August, so we do not have feedback yet, but the content to be covered includes: Mastering Effective Presentation Practices, Unlocking Active Learning: Techniques for Engaged Students (2 Parts), Elevating Class Interactions, and Exploring Emerging Topics in Active Learning. This course also includes

various classroom footage from faculty across campus practicing the active learning strategies in the modules. These, too, were filmed by the University Television Center.

Inclusive Teaching to Welcome All Learners and Supporting Student Learning In-Class and Online are the final two in the four-part Maroon Academy for Teaching Excellence series to be taught in the summer of 2024.

Practical Teaching Community of Practice

This innovative, online community of practice was held in both the fall and spring semesters. It was an attempt to address the needs of faculty for professional development while respecting the time commitment necessary to meet all their obligations. This community of practice was designed to take “just 15 minutes per week.” Each of the 15 modules included a topic with a video interview with a faculty expert, short written guidance, and a subsequent discussion board assignment. To complete the weekly discussion, participants were asked to share ways they could implement a skill from the weekly topic. The discussions were lively and full of useful take-aways. Topics included assisting students with note-taking, low-stakes assessment, accessibility, and active learning strategies. Faculty seemed to enjoy the Community and the discussions indicated it helped many in their classroom practices, so we plan to continue a version of this Community again next year. Below are a few of the comments from the course survey question “What worked well in the Practical Teaching Community of Practice?”:

- *“The discussion boards were most helpful. I think because so many faculty had great ideas!”*
- *“Information was applicable, videos were clear and concise, class layout was not overly taxing”*
- *“The ‘bite-sized’ weekly assignments—extended over the 15 weeks—were PERFECT. I’m adopting this approach in my own work.”*
- *“I think the intentional focus to make it easy, small pieces that can be completed with limited time during a busy week was helpful. The videos were quite useful.”*
- *“I enjoyed hearing tips from professors in a variety of disciplines via videos.”*

Writing to Learn Luncheon Series

This series was coordinated with LaToya Bogard and Ashley Leonard, the MSU Writing Coordinators. It was a three-part series: “Benefits and Pitfalls of Writing to Learn,” “Designing Effective Low Stakes Writing Assignments in Your Class,” and “Almost Hassle-Free Responding to and Grading Student Writing.” It introduced participants to using low-stakes writing across disciplines and low-stakes writing strategies, like think-pair-share, to faculty looking for ways to use writing in their classrooms without being weighed down by grading.

Ongoing Programs

The 4-week, *Online Teaching 101* certification course was offered 7 times this year and completed by 59 teachers. Participants learn best practices for online instruction while completing practical assignments that can be used in their courses.

The *Teaching Portfolio Workshop* was offered in both Maymester and Winter Session this year. This 3-week asynchronous online course fosters peer-to-peer discussion and provides participants with feedback on their submissions. The course is for those looking to prepare for promotion and tenure application, those looking to apply for faculty jobs, and for those applying for teaching awards. In addition, the workshop provides many opportunities to review and assess award-winning teaching portfolios, thereby also informing participants about best practices in instruction.

New Faculty Teaching Academy

First, we changed the formatting of the Canvas portion of the New Faculty Teaching Academy (NFTA) course after participating in the ACUE professional development courses. We also made some changes to this year’s course to provide more practical first day (and beyond) tips and strategies. Our Faculty Associates and some award-winning faculty from across campus made videos on Active Learning, Guided Discussion, Effective Lecture, Effective Communication and Inclusion Practices, and General Course and Lesson Design Basics. We also included assignments to prepare new faculty for their classes, such as a First Day Agenda and the Syllabus Checklist. We provided links to University Resources, as well as Self-Evaluation and Canvas resources to make course preparation more efficient and effective.



Preparing Future Faculty Program

This program for graduate students runs through both Fall and Spring semesters. We coordinate with the Graduate School and invite several other centers, offices, and faculty members to participate to provide the candidates with information and resources across campus. This year, we changed the format in Canvas to reflect best practices we learned in ACUE professional development courses. We also added a short (20 minute) video interview with faculty from around campus in each module to provide different perspectives on the module content. This also allowed for more small group and class discussion in the face-to-face sessions. Feedback on the post-course survey in response to “What works well in this program?” suggests these changes were positive ones:

- *“The conversations that were facilitated through this program were stellar.”*
- *“The resources that we get to keep, the videos, and the conversations/discussions were very helpful.”*
- *“The group discussions made me think, talk, and listen, which helped me understand each module.”*
- *“I believe having the recorded sessions was very insightful along with key points that were given in the program.”*

For next year’s program, we plan to build the Canvas material to include more Additional Resources and continue to improve the formatting. We are also working to improve the website information.

Continued Focus on Relationship Building and Recognizing Professional Development

The second annual Teacher Appreciation Luncheon was again a huge success. This event celebrates teachers, recognize significant professional development accomplishments and helps to build relationships among teachers and support staff. We plan to continue this event annually.

We again organized a series of Classroom Observation visits where faculty opened their classroom in the Spring semester for others to observe their teaching. This included a flier with an explanation of the various opportunities available. Besides the PFF candidates’ participation, several faculty from across campus took this opportunity to observe award-winning faculty in their classrooms. This is an event we also plan to repeat annually.

We have also made a concerted effort to be more present at meetings and on committees where we can help keep faculty informed of pedagogical trends and best practices:

- Michael and Kris presented to the College of Computer Engineering on Peer Evaluation.
- Kris presented to the College of Education – Meridian on Canvas Course Templates and Design Best Practices.

“The content in this course helped me think critically about [course outcomes/objectives], probably for the first time in my career.”



- Kris presented to the college of Food Science, Nutrition, and Health Promotion on objectives and course design best practices.
- Kris had reoccurring bi-weekly meetings with Dr. Ksenia Zhbanova (Meridian – College of Education) on Course design.
- Michael and Kris presented to the School of Architecture on May 3rd 2023 on learning outcomes and objectives.
- Michael presented to the College of Education new faculty about the programs and services of the Center as well as at the New Faculty Orientation.
- Kris presented at the annual SITE (Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education) conference hosted by the Association for Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE) in March 2023. The presentation and publication discussed instructional design, student & instructor preferences in course delivery, and features of using an Integrated Learning System in undergraduate computer literacy courses.

Professional Development:

- Kris completed the Quality Matters Rubric Update (7th Edition) recertification. This course was hosted in Canvas and introduced the changes to the standards used by Quality Matters for online & hybrid courses.
- Michael completed:
 - Certificate in Effective Instruction of the Association of College and University Educators, 2023. *(This certificate signifies my completion of a 25-module course in effective teaching practices requiring the implementation of evidence-based instructional approaches. The credential is co-issued by the American Council on Education and distinguishes faculty for their commitment to educational excellence and student success.)*
 - Practical Solutions for Faculty: Planning and Designing a Course, Magna Publications, 2023.

Maintained Services

We completed 11 Classroom Observations of faculty; each observation includes a pre-observation meeting, a classroom visit, a survey of students and a detailed written report with recommendations.

We completed 11 Informal Canvas Course Reviews; these reviews include a video capture of the course with recommendations for specific ways to improve student experience.

We received and coordinated review of applications for the Ottillie Schillig Special Teaching Project grants and awarded \$30,500 for innovative teaching projects.



LOOKING AHEAD TO FY24

Maroon Academy for Teaching Excellence

Inclusive Teaching to Welcome All Learners and Supporting Student Learning in Class and Online are the final two in the four-part Maroon Academy for Teaching Excellence series to be taught in the summer of 2024. We will spend this fall and spring preparing the canvas content; securing teachers, faculty to interview, and resources; recording interviews and classrooms; and reviewing surveys from our current courses to evaluate our current practices for the future courses.

Generative AI Series and Support

We are currently updating a resources page, collaborating with MSU Data Science professor Jonathan Barlow and the Office of the Dean of Students, and creating content for faculty to review in preparation for the fall semester. We expect this to be an on-going process. We also have two Panel Discussions planned for the fall semester to help faculty best approach Generative AI in their classrooms and own practices.

New Faculty Teaching Academy

The changes to this year's format and content have been discussed above, but we are looking ahead to next year's NFTA. We are preparing for a more extensive course and moving to a hybrid version, as we hope to have all new faculty on campus prior to the beginning of the semester for the Academy. This is proving to be a large undertaking as we reevaluate the Canvas materials, our resources, participating faculty, our own personnel, and envision how to accommodate a much larger cohort.

Other Programming

As discussed above, many of our programs such as Online Teaching 101, Preparing Future Faculty, Teaching Portfolio Workshop, Classroom Evaluations, Classroom Observations, and Practical Teaching will be repeated with changes this year. We have also started to plan another online professional development community of practice devoted to simpler, yet highly effective, strategies as the semester progresses; we have begun to plan a type of Quest for Quality Teaching Community of Practice to this end.



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