

Events in April:

Communication Intensive (CI) General Education Courses and AI

April 8, 11:30 am to 12:30 pm, Teams.

Join Kim Lacey and the Writing Committee in a showcase of ways that faculty have adjusted their assignments in CI courses in response to AI-assisted writing technologies such as ChatGPT and Claude.

[Session Registration](#)

Field/Spicer Fellowship in Science & Engineering Lecture and Reception with Nita Farahany

April 9, 7:00 pm, Rhea Miller Recital Hall (Entrance in Groening Commons)

In her exciting new book *The Battle for Your Brain*, Nita Farahany offers a much-needed roadmap to navigate the fast-changing technological landscape of Artificial Intelligence and neuroscience. With the rapid advance of wearable neurotech and generative AI such as ChatGPT, we face important ethical questions about privacy, human rights, equity—and even what it means to be human. But these technologies, Farahany argues, are also an opportunity to transform how we learn, work, and live.

Nita Farahany is the Robinson O. Everett Distinguished Professor of Law & Philosophy and Founding Director of the Duke Initiative for Science & Society. Appointed by President Barack Obama to the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues, where she served for seven years, she currently serves on the National Advisory Council for the National Institute for Neurological Disease and Stroke. A widely-published scholar on the ethics of emerging technologies, she spearheads research on futurism, law, and ethical implications of emerging technologies for society.

A Reception/Book Signing will Follow the Lecture.

University Writing Awards

April 17, 4:00 pm, Gilbertson South 202

Creating a Supportive Online/Hybrid Course Environment

April 19, 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm, Curtiss Hall Executive Board Room.

Psychology professor and winner of the Excellence in Online Teaching award Ranjana Dutta shares methods to help students feel like part of a real community of learners in an online or hybrid environment.

[Session Registration](#)

Adjunct Faculty Banquet

April 26, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM, Seminar Rooms

Writing Accountability Groups

In the Acknowledgements section of his new book, *Unspooled: How the Cassette Made Music Shareable*, Rob Drew (Professor of Communication) writes that the "Fellow members of the SVSU Writing Accountability Group have made my writing routine a little more disciplined and lot less lonely." <https://svsu.infoready4.com/>

A Writing Accountability Group (WAG) is a group of faculty who meet weekly to support and encourage each other to meet their writing/scholarship goals through mutual accountability and shared progress updates. Typically, the members briefly report their progress, share their new goals, and spend the rest of the hour working individually. Outside of the WAG, the members create a regular writing routine that ensures they stay on track to meet their goals. Research indicates that WAG membership leads to measurable increases in productivity and creativity.

Rob Drew belongs to one of several WAGs on our campus. We've collected testimonies from three of those WAGs in the hopes that you may be inspired to form or join one.

Sherin Frances (English). "Nicola Imbrascio started this WAG with English faculty in 2012, and then we expanded to other departments later that semester. We don't have a leader, but Sher R. and I are the two original members. Our format is based on materials from Kerry Ann Rockquemore, author of *The Black Academic's Guide to Winning Tenure* and a speaker Mamie Thoms brought to campus a decade ago. The structure revolves around reporting weekly goals, addressing whether or not we met them and if not, what happened, and then setting new goals for the coming week. We also usually address work/life balance. We commit to treating our WAG as seriously as a meeting with our boss, so we don't cancel unless it's truly necessary, and we don't let ourselves go down the rabbit hole of talking about teaching or students or most service (unless it overlaps with research projects). The point is to carve out time for research so that it doesn't become eclipsed by other responsibilities that may seem more pressing.

We have a high-achieving group: there are six of us (one is on hiatus this semester), and four of us have published books, one wrote a book which for legal reasons wasn't published, and one member is working on one. This group ushered all-but-one of us successfully through the tenure process together and then from promotion to full (Rob was already full when he joined). Personally, I believe I would not have achieved even half of my publishing and grant/funding goals without this group.

Tangentially, I wrote an article about how I modified our WAG format to use with undergrads. It's a popular feature of the online classes I teach (and I use it in some face to face, too)." [CETL can provide a copy, if you're interested!]

Andrew Paulson (Chemistry) established a WAG with several colleagues he met in the 2023 New Faculty Summer Institute. Over the course of this academic year, the WAG has taken several forms, but the continuous thread has been to provide a regular meeting time for faculty to work on narrowly defined tasks. Paulson reports: "Our current Winter Research WAG meets only occasionally due to some last-minute scheduling changes at the beginning of the semester, but we will pick it up again in the summertime for a more routine Research-oriented WAG. The Fall semester PPC file WAG went much smoother because more people's schedules aligned, and having the PPC file as a unifying goal made the Fall PPC file WAG particularly effective. Most Fall PPC file WAG meetings had two to three people, and we maxed out at four. Because our schedules aligned well, Leticia Grutzmann and I also established our own Fall Research WAG to work on internal grant applications, and both ended up being funded. A regular sentiment from all of the WAGs is that individuals are surprised with how much they accomplish within an hour. Those who attended the Fall PPC file WAG also mentioned that it helped them get ahead and stay organized with their PPC file. Adrienne Galbraith adds that "The supportive group has been beneficial in fostering a sense of community and accountability in my new role."

Travis Pashak (Psychology) joined a WAG in 2017 and the next year started his own, which is still going strong. He reports that "I have found Writing Accountability Groups (WAGs) to be invaluable in my career journey thus far. They have helped connect me to peers with whom I share a love of research writing, they offer a sounding board for brainstorming ideas and getting feedback outside of one's own specialty area, and of course they help keep me accountable! The simple presence of other people can improve productivity for even the most focused person, and having this set aside as a weekly occurrence has been a nice structure. I am grateful to New Faculty Summer Institute for getting me hooked on WAGs in the first place! As faculty at a teaching-focused institution, it can be so easy to set aside other projects in order to prioritize grading, course prep, student mentorship, etc., but an important aspect of our work is scholarly creation and the WAGs have certainly supported me in those efforts."

If you'd like more information about starting or joining a WAG, **please reach out** to the CETL office. We'd be happy to help you get started, and we have a meeting space that you can reserve.

Grant Opportunities

CETL – Faculty Learning Community

The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation, in collaboration with CETL, will support two Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs) for the 2024-2025 academic year. The FLCs will focus on "Alternative Assessments" or "Digital Literacy/Digital Humanities" – each option is described in more detail below. FLC members meet twice monthly during the academic year, an option to meet July through December is also available. Each community member will create a pedagogical project that aligns with their group's thematic focus. FLC participation is open to all full-time faculty and is compensated. Please contact CETL's office if you have questions. Apply by April 15th, 4:30 p.m. via [InfoReady](#).

FLC Topic 1: Digital Literacy/Digital Humanities

This FLC will concentrate on enhancing "Digital Literacy/Digital Humanities" within our academic offerings. Digital Literacy involves teaching students in any discipline not only how to use technology (including Artificial Intelligence tools) effectively, but also how to critically understand, analyze, and create digital content. A central aim is to equip students with the competencies essential for thriving in environments characterized by pervasive digital communication, information exchange, and digital-centric work processes. Digital Humanities is the application of technological tools and computational methods to the study of culture, history, and/or literature. The goal is for students to use technology to explore interesting and complex humanistic problems and, at the same time, assess our technological society using humanistic methods of reading and analysis. Faculty members who opt for this FLC will investigate strategies to integrate the use and/or study of digital technologies into their course design, potentially fostering interdisciplinary collaborations that could lead to innovative teaching methodologies and research insights.

FLC Topic 2: Alternative Grading Methodologies

The second FLC will explore the development and implementation of alternative grading models. Participants will engage in a comprehensive review of non-traditional grading approaches, including but not limited to Mastery Grading, Specifications Grading, Standards-Based Grading, and Ungrading. This exploration is intended to challenge conventional assessment paradigms and encourage the adoption of grading strategies that promote a deeper level of student engagement and learning. FLC members will design and apply an alternative grading scheme tailored to their specific course objectives, thereby contributing to a more diverse and inclusive evaluative framework within the university's educational landscape.

Pathways for Rural Student Success at SVSU Faculty Learning Community Grant

This grant supports department-based faculty learning communities in the development and implementation of best practices related to a course revision or other pedagogical innovation that will enhance rural student access, retention, and success. Pedagogical changes could include, but are not limited to, adopting early and frequent low-stakes assessments across all sections, standardizing assessments, revising grading practices, developing active learning teaching methods, leveraging supplemental instruction, developing online sections of important courses, developing courses that could be taught out of rural high schools, or making courses more affordable through the incorporation of Open Educational Resources. Priority will be given to departments seeking to make changes to the classroom experience in a high-enrollment first-year course (or sequenced courses). For additional details, contact the CETL office. Apply by April 15th, 4:30 p.m. via [InfoReady](#).

Focus On Faculty

Rosina Hassoun, Mike Mosher, Joseph Ofori-Dankwa, and Dave Reszutek

Rosina Hassoun, Mike Mosher, Joseph Ofori-Dankwa, and Dave Reszutek are partnering with The Mustard Seed in Saginaw for this year's BATS Project. SVSU has done BATS since 2012. Their culminating event will take place April 25th in Ott Auditorium at 5:30 pm. The BATS program is an interdisciplinary biennial project that involves the departments of Business, Art, Theatre, and Sociology. The participating classes break into interdisciplinary groups and work on various topics that related to the project, which usually involves a partnership with a community organization. The topics are researched by Sociology students, murals are painted by ART 433 students based on the research, scenes are created and acted out by Theatre students, and the Vitto Global Scholars manage the various teams. This semester the plans are for the sociology students to conduct a survey and oral histories, as well as engage in volunteer and participatory observations at the Mustard Seed and produce a report and a PowerPoint presentation of their research. The de-identified data and composite oral histories will be provided to the theatre students to create a performance anthropology skit or skits, and we will be painting a mural in the gym area of the Mustard Seed. The business students will be organizing the transportation and logistics as they use their leadership skills.

The BATS program began in 2012. You can learn more about several previous BATS projects at <https://www.svsu.edu/care/muralprojects/>

Recommended Read/Listen

Wicked Problems for Wicked Students

"[Wicked Students](#)," (Nov. 10, 2021). Episode 213, Tea for Teaching podcast.

In this episode, Paul Hanstedt discusses the vital importance of preparing students for the complex, "wicked problems" they will face post-graduation, emphasizing the need for a more interdisciplinary and application-focused approach in higher education. This conversation is particularly pertinent (and perhaps provocative) for faculty at institutions contemplating general education curriculum overhauls and facing enrollment challenges. Hanstedt's insights offer innovative strategies for engaging students in a way that transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries, fostering a more vibrant and relevant learning environment that both attracts and retains students.

Prefer to read about wicked problems?

Hanstedt tackled the issue of general education and wicked problems in "[It's Time to Get Rid of Distribution Requirements](#)" a little over a month before the Covid emergency and shutdowns began (Feb. 9, 2020). In April, he applied his thoughts to covid, arguing that it was a compelling example of a wicked problem our curricula should be preparing students to grapple with in "[Might This Be the Beginning of Education?](#)" (April 27, 2020). [Both articles are from *Inside Higher Ed*]

Distraction Corner

Congratulations to Travis Pashak for winning the guess the AI poetry contest!

The poems written by humans were *Miami* and *Delve*.

Miami

From voodoo blue seas

A hurricane refrain breaks,

Disturbing the city's restless sleep.

Delve

Look further than your mere reflection of familiar skin,

past who you are today and what you were yesterday,

delve into the generations, and shape your creation

for they began the color and which of who you are now;

hold a finger on that pulse of history and never lose touch.

Congrats to Alicea Moll for guessing the name of Erik's seagull! The CETL seagull's name is Cecil.



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