



## Adjunct Faculty Academic Calendar

### **March:**

- 2-8 Spring Break
- 9 Classes Resume
- 13 Last Day to Withdraw with a "W"
- 27 Last Day to Withdraw with "WP" or "WF" grade

### **Workshops**

(Register at:

[svsu.edu/workshops](http://svsu.edu/workshops))

### **March:**

- 12 Creating Your Course in Canvas: Gradebook and Communication  
Zahnow 111 9:00-11:00
- 12 Vet-Friendly Classrooms  
Curtiss 116 10:00-11:00
- 16 Creating Your Course in Canvas: Modules and Collaboration  
Zahnow 111 2:00-4:00
- 20 QPR: Question, Persuade, Refer-suicide warning signs  
Alumni Lounge  
10:00-11:00 or 1:30-3:00
- 27 Creating a Highly Engaged Classroom  
12:30-1:30 Science East 203

## Shake it up!

Are your students tired and dragging? Are they unmotivated? Try to shake it up and do some new and varied things in class. Some ideas for changing things up can include:

- Varying your instruction by using demonstrations, discussions, case studies, and group work.
- Making an effort to have 15-20 minute lecture cycles because we humans can't maintain our concentration for long periods of time.
- Setting up your classroom in a U-shape to encourage student discussion.
- Change the scenery. Have class in a different location.
- Create a treasure hunt exercise to have your students locate different information in their texts.
- Always plan for class...don't try to wing it.

It is amazing how, just by changing things up a little bit, students take notice and become more motivated!

## Adjunct Faculty Awards Banquet

This year's Awards Banquet is being held on April 17<sup>th</sup> beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the Curtiss Banquet Hall. This year, you will receive your invitation to the banquet through e-mail. It will be sent to your SVSU email account in mid-March and we would like for you to RSVP on or before April 3<sup>rd</sup>. This event is a great way to celebrate the wonderful work you have done during this academic year and to also celebrate the end of the semester! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at [adjunctfaculty@svsu.edu](mailto:adjunctfaculty@svsu.edu)

## CANVAS:

### Our New Learning Management System

VSpace is soon to become a thing of the past at SVSU. Taking its place will be Canvas. This system was selected after being vetted by faculty and staff and it is felt to be the LMS leader in higher education. Transition to Canvas started this semester and some faculty are already using it in their courses. Programming is currently in the works to allow faculty to seamlessly migrate any VSpace class to a new Canvas class. Training is currently scheduled to formally begin in March 12<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> ([www.svsu.edu/workshops](http://www.svsu.edu/workshops)). Additional training opportunities are available by accessing the many training videos available on Canvas itself. Access to Canvas is available in Quicklinks on the [svsu.edu](http://svsu.edu) homepage. As well, our office intends to develop an online tutorial for additional training. So stay tuned.

## The Importance of Student Engagement

Nationally, the student graduation rate has persisted at about fifty percent. Statistics also show that about fifty-six percent of students graduate within six years (Pew, 2014). Here, at SVSU, our 6 year rate is 40.38 percent.

Years ago, college students were a more homogenous group who tended to live on campus, concentrate on their studies, and participate in campus social and cultural activities. College students today are more diverse. Most commute to campus and hold jobs so their only contact with higher education often only occurs in the classroom. This means that the classroom learning environment and pedagogical practices are very important for student success. To affect this success, faculty need to create classroom environments where, "...strangers can learn how to listen critically and attentively, interact effectively with others and challenge and support one another to high levels of academic performance" (Kuh et al, 2007). If we are to increase persistence, it becomes essential that we take a look at our teaching practices and work to better engage our students.

The research by Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), indicates that institutions which employ best teaching practices have high levels of student engagement. These best practices are student-faculty contact, cooperation among students, active learning, prompt feedback, time on task, setting high expectations and understanding diverse learning styles (Chickering and Gamson, 1987). Further, Laird et al (2008) looked at institutions which had high persistence rates and found that for first year students there were four indicators of engagement and for faculty teaching lower division courses there were six indicators. The first year student indicators included using active and collaborative learning, course work that required higher-order thinking, frequent faculty to student interactions and a supportive campus environment. Those indicators that faculty were employing in their courses to affect engagement included emphasis on deep learning, active classroom practices, frequent faculty to student interactions, courses structured to emphasize intellectual skills and practical skills and teaching individual and social responsibility. In sum, their research demonstrated that faculty who tended more toward the social and collaborative aspects of learning created greater engagement which, therefore, promoted persistence. So what does this mean for you and your classroom? If you are a faculty member who teaches developmental courses and/or gateway courses it is important to consider how you can employ active learning, spend time talking to your students and offer ample feedback on their work. Structure your classes to have an emphasis on writing and speaking clearly and developing practical skills like speaking in front of a group, working with others, and an emphasis on real world problems. Help your students understand who they are and embed discussions of diversity whenever possible. If our next generation is going to be able to handle the complex world they are inheriting, earning a college education will become essential. So infusing such practices into your classroom can activate student engagement and help our students persist to graduation.

If you are interested in learning more about methods to create engaging classrooms, this month's workshop titled, *Creating a Highly Engaged Classroom*, is being offered on Friday, March 27 in SE203 at 12:30 p.m. A light lunch will be served and you will be compensated for your time.

### Works Cited:

- Chickering, A. & Gamson, Z. (1987, March). Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education. AAHE Bulletin, 39, pp. 3-7.
- Desilver, D. (2014, May 30). 5 facts about today's college graduates. Pew Research Center. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/05/30/5-facts-about-todays-college-graduates/>
- Laird, R., Chen D., & Kuh, G. (2008). Classroom Practices at Institutions with Higher-Than-Expected Persistence Rates: What Student Engagement Data Tell Us. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, No. 115. Wiley and Sons: Hoboken, N.J.
- Pascarella, E.T. & P.T. Terenzini. (2005). *How College Affects Students: Findings and Insights from Twenty-Years of Research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

