The Seagull

Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning Newsletter

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Events

"Paul Revere or Chicken Little? An Exploration of Tensions in Discussions About Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) Technology in the College Classroom"

Thursday, March 13, 2025

Location: Emeriti Room

Presentation starts at 5:30pm

For the FORUM presentation, we will focus on the tensions that emerge in many discussions about AI, particularly on College/University campuses. Additionally, we will discuss ways to work with(in) these tensions to learn how to "play" with A.I. (broadly) to find creative ways to assist us in the classroom and in other areas/aspects of our silos/responsibilities.

Dr. Brittany Collins, Assistant Professor of Communication

Design a Website Assignment for Students

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

11:30am-1:00pm in Z 223B

Learn how to create and assess website design projects that enhance students' digital literacy skills across various disciplines. No web design expertise is required—this workshop will provide practical guidance on incorporating website projects into your courses, regardless of your technical background. Empower students to engage with course content in new ways while building valuable digital communication skills. A light lunch will be served.

Jorge Paredes-Montero (Biology), jparedes@svsu.edu

Register Here!

Annual Adjunct Faculty Banquet

Friday, March 28, 2025

Curtiss Hall Seminar Rooms

Check your email for an invitation and please RSVP. Can't find an invitation? Contact our office at cetl@svsu.edu.

Lunch with the Library: Copyright & Electronic Reserves; Faculty Needs

Tuesday, April 1, 2025

11:00am-1:00pm in Z 223B

Engage with library staff to understand copyright rules governing electronic reserves and discuss how the library can better meet faculty needs. A light lunch will be served.

Presented by Anita Dey, Heather Fisher & Matt Buckley

Register Here!

Grant Opportunity

Call for Applications: 2025-26 Faculty Learning Communities

The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) invites full-time faculty to apply for the **2025-26 Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs)**, a unique professional development opportunity designed to foster innovative teaching practices and enhance student learning. This year, faculty can choose between two FLC topics:

1. Teaching and Well-Being FLC

This FLC focuses on transforming teaching practices while promoting well-being for both faculty and students. Participants will explore ways to reduce stress, improve work-life balance, and create engaging, low-stress course designs. The first half of the FLC introduces key frameworks on the relationship between well-being and effective pedagogy, while the second half guides participants in redesigning a course component—whether through improved assessments, syllabus revisions, or other strategies.

2. High-Impact Practices (HIPs) FLC

This FLC empowers faculty to integrate High-Impact Practices (HIPs)—such as collaborative assignments, service-learning, undergraduate research, and first-year experiences—into their courses. Based on research from the NSSE and AAC&U, HIPs have been shown to boost student engagement and success. Participants will first examine best practices for implementing HIPs, then apply their insights to redesign an existing course to incorporate at least one HIP strategy.

Faculty can choose between two scheduling options: July–December 2025 or September 2025–April 2026. Each FLC meets 14 times over its duration, and its members will develop and implement a course-related project and share it at CETL's 2026 Symposium or another event. Participants receive a $750 stipend, with additional compensation available for facilitators.

Applications are due by April 15, 2025. The application process is simple—just submit a brief statement of interest and your preferred timeframe at svsu.infoready4.com

For questions, contact Erik Trump at ekt@svsu.edu

AI News & Events

SVSU's Library is hosting an AI Literacy Week from March 24-28, 2025, to explore the impact of artificial intelligence on creativity, education, and ethics. ([AI Literacy Week - AI Literacy](#)) The event features several engaging activities:

1. **Film Screening**: A movie about Google DeepMind and the pursuit of artificial general intelligence (AGI) will be shown on Monday, March 24, from 1-3 PM and 4-7 PM in Z-111 on the 1st floor. Popcorn will be served.

2. **Expert Panel**: On Wednesday, March 26, from 1-2 PM, Librarian Kyle Bylin will lead a discussion with English Professor Dr. Kim Lacey and Philosophy Professor Dr. Peter Rose-Barry in the Roberta R. Allen Room on the 4th floor.

3. **Art Contest**: Students can use ChatGPT to design cardinal-themed artwork and submit it at the Zahnow Library Research Help Desk. The most creative entry will win a gift card.

4. **Book Display**: A collection of sci-fi fiction and nonfiction books exploring AI's impact will be available at the Circulation Desk on the 1st floor.

This event is part of a broader initiative to increase AI literacy at SVSU. The university has also hosted lectures on AI, such as Hajj Flemings' presentation on "The AI Revolution: Re-architecting the World" in October 2024.

SVSU's AI Literacy Week coincides with the National AI Literacy Day on March 28, 2025, which aims to explore the fundamental question "What is AI?" across the country. This alignment demonstrates SVSU's commitment to keeping students informed about the latest developments in AI and its implications for various fields. [Thank you to Perplexity.ai for the above promotional blurb, generated by the search "SVSU library AI literacy."]

"AI Brown Bag Conversations"

Drop by the CETL office (Z 231) every Thursday at 12:30 pm to join colleagues for open-ended conversations about artificial intelligence. Come with questions, ideas, problems, or just drop by to listen in or watch demonstrations.

New Library Guide: Copyright and Licensing Information for Library Resources

In an effort to better help facilitate the use of library electronic resources, such as articles from databases, the Library and CETL have teamed up to create the [Copyright and Licensing Information for SVSU Library Resources guide](#). This helpful guide discusses copyright in the classroom, fair use, and the ways different databases say their content can be used. The guide will be updated as licenses are renewed.

As always, if you have any questions, please reach out to Anne Huebel (akhuebel@svsu.edu) or Heather Fisher (hgfisher@svsu.edu) with any questions!

Workshop Recap

On February 24, 2025, faculty gathered for the workshop "Facilitating Discussions in Asynchronous Online Courses," where Professors Warren Fincher, Jennifer Ward, and Holly Long introduced innovative strategies to enhance student engagement in online discussions. The session addressed common frustrations with traditional discussion boards, including superficial participation, AI-generated responses, and the perception that these assignments are mere busy work. Fincher presented a solution in the form of video-recorded discussions, in which students collaborate in small groups to analyze course materials in real-time conversations. "I want something engaging, something genuine, something analytic—and this delivers," Fincher explained, noting that students reported feeling more connected to their classmates than in typical online courses.

Ward and Long introduced Digital Power-Ups, a structured approach that reinvigorates discussion forums by guiding students to engage with material using Bloom's Taxonomy-based prompts. This method ensures that students' responses go beyond rote summaries, encouraging creativity through analysis, application, and even artistic representations like infographics and poetry. "Students are actually thinking about their responses rather than just posting for the sake of fulfilling a requirement," Long noted. Faculty attendees left the workshop with practical, adaptable strategies for fostering deeper discussion and community in their online courses.

For a longer summary of key takeaways from the Workshop, plus the facilitators' presentations, please visit CETL's Canvas site.

Focus on Faculty

Jennifer Scott and **Mindy Fabbro** (Nursing) will present their SoTL research at the Sigma Theta Tau Conference in Ann Arbor on April 5. Their study examined the impact of specialized tutoring workshops for nursing students, a collaboration between Scott and the Center for Academic Achievement, supported by a Dow Professor Grant.

Their poster, "*Improving Student Learning in Undergraduate Pharmacology: A Collaboration Between Nursing and the Center for Academic Achievement*," highlights findings from an Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) workshop designed for first-year nursing students in a pharmacology course. Results show that the workshop strengthened students' understanding of ANS concepts, reinforced their knowledge base, and enhanced their study skills.

SVSU Biology Students Thrive with Rural Pathways Mosquito Research

A Faculty Learning Community (FLC) funded last year by a federal Rural Pathways grant has already made a remarkable impact on Biology students at SVSU, providing hands-on research experiences, supporting notable achievements, and enhancing their skills in public health and scientific communication. The project's primary goal is to develop curriculum and lab protocols that allow Biology students to conduct rigorous scientific research while maintaining autonomy in selecting specific research questions within structured guidelines. Students have actively participated in field collection and genetic analysis of mosquito populations, directly contributing to public health knowledge and mosquito control strategies in Mid-Michigan communities.

The FLC's work has already benefitted Biology student Abby Medler, who presented her research at the annual Michigan Mosquito Control Association meeting in Traverse City last month. Her excellent work earned her the Best Student Talk award, including a $1,000 prize—an impressive achievement highlighting the high-quality training and mentoring provided by professor **Ken Luzynski.** Ken also presented at the same conference and won a $500 grant for developing undergraduate Mosquito Monitoring curriculum.

In another significant accomplishment this past November, SVSU Biology students, guided by professor **Jorge Paredes-Montero**, contributed to research presented at the prestigious Entomological Society of America conference, which attracts over 3,600 global scientists annually. SVSU students notably secured second place in competition, a remarkable achievement as they placed just behind the renowned program from Texas A&M.

Congratulations to Ken, Jorge, and their Biology colleagues for their innovative, impactful contributions to science education at SVSU!

Read/Listen

Maha Bali, "Five questions to ask before adopting a new technology." LSE Higher Education Blog, Jan. 8, 2025.

We are bombarded with so much information about how wonderous new technologies are, how they will revolutionize our teaching, and how our students will benefit to a miraculous extent that deciding whether to use one of these magical things can be a difficult decision. Will it really deliver what it promises? Will it take more time? Will it actually help students learn? Which students will it help? Maha Bali offers guidance on how to make a rational decision about whether to integrate a new technology into our courses.

Distraction Corner

Celebrating 10 Years of SVSU's Cardinal Solutions

An interview with Professor J. Blake Johnson (Art), conducted by Claude and edited by Blake.

Cardinal Solutions is an interdisciplinary SVSU faculty/student team that works directly with local businesses and non-profits to develop marketing solutions. Students analyze an organization's goals, determine marketing needs, and with the input and approval of the business, develop effective solutions. Learn more at:
https://svsucardinalsolutions.org/index.html

1. What inspired the creation of Cardinal Solutions, and how has it evolved over the past decade?

The program's roots trace back to 2013 when then-provost Deb Huntley was leading SVSU's pursuit of Carnegie Community Engagement recognition. I began experimenting with community service projects in my graphic design courses, working with Emmaus House across three different classes to develop their branding, brochure, and website. While successful – they're still using a version of that logo today – this experience revealed the limitations of a single-discipline approach to community service.

We discovered that effective community projects required multiple skill sets: professional writing to refine client content, advanced coding beyond introductory web design capabilities, and business management expertise. This realization led to

writing a grant and inviting colleagues from other disciplines to participate. Today, having worked with over 90 community partners and students from all five SVSU colleges, we've exceeded our initial expectations and become a true consulting firm serving non-profit, for-profit, and municipal clients. Students normally earn a scholarship of around $600 dollars for their work, and over the past ten years, clients have provided over $100,000 in such support.

2. Can you share some stories of how Cardinal Solutions has transformed students' careers?

The impact of Cardinal Solutions is best illustrated through our alumni's success stories. Take Harun Tuncelli, an international graphic design major who approached us seeking an internship. The role demanded not just design skills, but leadership and project management abilities. Harun embraced these challenges, managing projects, collaborating with teams, and creating marketing materials for local businesses. His Cardinal Solutions experience helped him land a position at SPIETH America immediately after graduation, where he created signature lines for Olympic athletes. Today, as a U.S. citizen in California, he's a Senior Product Designer at Science 37, a medical research company.

Brian Raymond's story is equally compelling. After designing app interfaces for Musico Lessons and the Bay Community Health Clinic through Cardinal Solutions, he's now an Enterprise Design Art Director at General Motors, designing next-generation infotainment systems for Buick, Cadillac, Chevy, and GMC.

We've seen similar success with Khairiah Al faraj, who worked on educational math workbooks for Problem Solving Maps and is now a Social Media Specialist at Wathaqa, and Ka Vang, who designed the Marshall M. Fredericks Museum App interface. Ka has gone on to remarkable success as both the Creative Director at PGN Agency and owner of her own design firm, KVDSGNS, which she's been running since 2015. Ka's words particularly resonate: "I wish I had been in it (Cardinal Solutions) for even longer because it was the most beneficial course that I've ever taken."

These stories demonstrate how our approach to interdisciplinary, experiential learning doesn't just prepare students for careers – it launches them into leadership roles where they can make significant impact in their fields.

3. How did Cardinal Solutions develop its comprehensive range of services?

Our interdisciplinary approach emerged from those early lessons about the interconnected nature of real-world projects. Even though our first term working as an interdisciplinary team wasn't perfect – we faced communication challenges and unclear client expectations – something remarkable happened. Dr. Poonam Kumar from the Center for Academic Innovation and Online Learning observed that despite these initial hurdles, students reported it as their most valuable learning experience.

We realized this was because students had real, consequential responsibility. As the sole representative of their discipline on a project, if they didn't deliver, the entire project could fail. This level of accountability exceeds what most internships offer.

What's particularly exciting is how our range of services has evolved organically in response to client needs. When clients ask for additional services, we actively seek out those capabilities across campus, connecting with faculty and students who can bring new expertise to our team. From business analysis and technical writing to app design and social media campaigns, our service offerings continue to grow based on community demand. This responsive approach not only serves our clients better but creates rich learning opportunities that prepare students for the complex, collaborative nature of their future careers.

4. Cardinal Solutions places a strong emphasis on developing professional skills. How does your approach address the persistent "soft skills gap" in higher education?

This question touches on a long-standing challenge in higher education. Since 1956, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) has been evaluating how well universities prepare graduates for the workforce. Their annual assessment consistently shows the same pattern: while universities excel at teaching discipline-specific knowledge, graduates often lack crucial professional skills.

I think the term "soft skills" itself is part of the problem. There's nothing "soft" about abilities like problem-solving, critical thinking, teamwork, communication, leadership, and professionalism. These are fundamental workplace competencies that can make or break a career.

The traditional university structure may actually hinder the development of these skills. As students progress through their programs, they typically become more focused within their specific disciplines, spending less time interacting with students from other majors. This siloed approach doesn't reflect the collaborative nature of the modern workplace.

Cardinal Solutions directly addresses this gap by creating real-world scenarios that demand cross-disciplinary collaboration. When our students work on projects – whether it's developing web applications, creating classroom workbooks, producing video series, or writing grants – they quickly discover that no single discipline has all the answers. By bringing together majors from across campus and assigning roles specific to their expertise, we create an environment where these crucial professional skills develop naturally through practical application.

Our survey reports from past participants consistently show that this approach works. Students aren't just learning about teamwork and communication in theory – they're practicing these skills daily while solving real challenges for actual clients. When you're the only marketing student on a team working with computer science and graphic design majors, you have to develop effective communication skills. When your team faces an unexpected challenge with a client project, you have to engage in critical thinking and problem-solving.

5. The program has a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. How does this manifest in your work?

Our DEI commitment shapes everything we do, from the partners we choose to how we structure our teams. We actively work to promote minority populations in the Great Lakes Bay Region, particularly in Saginaw. This commitment enriches our students' academic experience while helping us better serve our diverse community partners.

6. Looking back at your extensive case studies, which project best exemplifies Cardinal Solutions' impact?

Our current work with the Hunger Solution Center expansion project perfectly demonstrates the scale of impact we can achieve. Under Jim Dwyer's energetic leadership, this project has pushed us to new heights, engaging our largest student team ever – ten members working collaboratively on an $8 million fundraising initiative.

The project's scope matches its importance. The Center currently serves 800 people daily and supplies food to nearly 200 nonprofits across three counties. By providing this essential service, they enable these organizations to focus on their core missions of education, training, and community improvement. The expansion will significantly increase their capacity through modern facilities, including a Drive-Up Meal Service Hub and Distribution Center, complete with enhanced cold storage, modernized loading docks, and dedicated spaces for food preparation and community wellness programs.

What makes this project particularly meaningful is how it combines ambitious goals with immediate community impact. Our students aren't just working on a theoretical exercise – they're contributing to a transformation that will directly address food insecurity in our region. It exemplifies everything Cardinal Solutions stands for: interdisciplinary collaboration, real-world impact, and meaningful community engagement.

7. How has the program's vision of becoming a "recognized higher education world leader in interdisciplinary community engagement" evolved over the decade?

While we've made significant progress working with over 90 community partners, we're still pushing toward our full potential. Our vision has become both more focused and more ambitious. We're not just preparing students for careers – we're demonstrating that hands-on, interdisciplinary community engagement is the future of higher education.

The evidence is clear: there's no better educational experience than practicing your discipline on real projects before graduation, especially with dedicated faculty oversight. But to fully realize this vision, we face two key challenges. First, we need to expand our reach – involving more students and serving more of our community while increasing scholarship support for these hardworking participants. Second, we need to address faculty incentives. Currently, faculty involvement in these intensive, year-long community projects isn't adequately recognized within traditional service requirements. Addressing this structural challenge is crucial for scaling our impact.

Despite these challenges, our decade of success has proven the transformative potential of this model for both education and community development. The next phase of our vision is about creating sustainable structures to expand this impact.

8. What standards do you maintain to ensure both educational value and professional quality?

Cardinal Solutions operates with rigorous professional standards because our students interact directly with clients. This isn't a typical classroom environment – it's a professional team where students' work directly impacts their peers and our community partners.

We expect excellence in three key areas. First, communication must be exemplary – students need to clearly articulate their ideas and honestly assess project progress with both team members and clients. Second, reliability is crucial – students must attend all weekly meetings and complete their work on schedule, as their teammates depend on their contributions. Third, we expect genuine collaboration – being part of Cardinal Solutions means being a team player who actively supports and cooperates with others.

These standards might seem demanding, but they reflect the real-world responsibilities our students will face in their careers. We've found that students rise to meet these expectations when given meaningful responsibilities and clear professional guidelines.

9. As you look toward the next decade, what do you wish for?

We're hoping for continued and new investments in our ability to bridge the gap between academic learning and community service. As we've shown through our work with over 90 community partners, Cardinal Solutions is a powerful demonstration of SVSU's commitment to community engagement. Expanding the infrastructure to match our impact would help us serve even more partners and provide even better experiences for our students.