

CAE NEWS

The Center for Academic Excellence | Volume 11, Issue 1

Making Sense of It All

Okay. We admit it—as the *fourth* official pandemic season of 2020 makes itself a chilly possibility and a most unusual fall season recedes, it's a little bit difficult to figure out where we are in the universe. To use our figure at right, sometimes you're the cat, sometimes you're the squirrel, and sometimes—perhaps all too often—your psychic state may resemble the figure at bottom left, a once-lovely fall pumpkin worked over into its bits: halo of pulp, carved-open hole, and **maybe some promising seeds** trailing behind as 2020 made of you its forage.

Yet you have done nothing throughout this singular year but display **your curiosity, strength, and resiliency**—more brilliant than any fall color. Perhaps you've surprised yourself now and then with your own creativity (at the CAE you've continually inspired us).

We've seen you pull together with colleagues to come up with



Read on to learn about our liaisons, take our back-to-school survey, and explore new opportunities!



common assessment and curricular strategies, modify your courses to teach in tents, in re-formed spaces, and ever-always on Zoom. Indeed, you made a semester that seemed hard (if not impossible) to imagine into one that will **positively impact our students' lives** for many years to come.

Of course the work is not over. We'll need to keep adapting, and together, **we'll renew the cultivation of our research and service in addition to our teaching**, during times of continued challenge. We'll keep being called to develop new accommodations for our students and each other throughout this academic year. Sometimes we'll encounter unforeseen difficulties that require quick adjustments and re-adjustments. And revisiting. And reflection. But make no mistake. In our fall scenario, **you are the squirrel**. Most definitely!

*Carol Ann Davis, Jay Rozgonyi & Emily Smith
Directors, Center for Academic Excellence*

Sign up for Our Leadership Cohort

Faculty and staff who are new to leadership or a leadership position on campus are welcome to join our **Leadership Cohort** beginning January 2021. This group of new or newish leaders meets monthly to discuss topics of importance to new leaders—developing a vision, managing conflict, delegation, providing feedback, facilitating meetings, etc. The group also addresses questions and challenges that members bring to the group. Faculty interested in joining the leadership cohort should reach out to Emily Smith at esmith@fairfield.edu

Take Our Back-to-School Workshop Survey

As we approach the end of our strange fall semester, the CAE is thinking about the range of workshops and activities that can best serve your needs during our Back-to-School week in January. Please fill out this brief, [two-question survey](#) to share your thoughts and ideas!

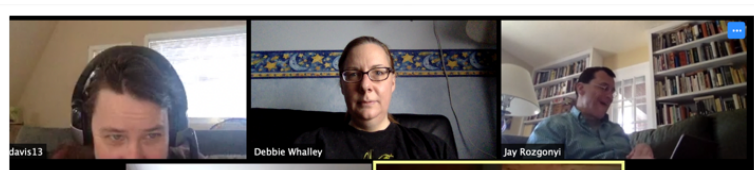
Save the Date!
FDEC Day will be held
virtually Monday,
December 14. Watch
faculty announcements for
more information.

Our Gratitude to Academic Computing!

We're sure you recognize the image at right because at some point in the last six months you asked

Academic Computing how to do breakout rooms or the relative merits of gallery versus speaker

view on Zoom, not to mention queries about how to open your gradebook on Blackboard, post your FlipGrid videos, and literally hundreds of other crucial and time-sensitive questions. The Center owes a huge debt of thanks to Manager of Academic Computing **Debbie Whalley**. She collaborated with us at the Center to provide fast-response triage help from 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. throughout March, April, and May, and was instrumental in the design and implementation of our summer offerings. In addition her incredible Academic Computing team of **Mary Kleps** and **Heather Ulrich** met the diverse technical and instructional needs of faculty in real time. There is no way we would have made it through the spring, summer and fall without their collective expertise and we thank them!



Pro Tip: Academic Computing can help with more than just your Zoom angles!

We are here to talk it through

Cohorts and consultation are not just for new faculty! If you are experiencing an immediate challenge in your classes or your professional duties, CAE directors are available for consultations throughout the year. Write to us at cae@fairfield.edu, and a director will get back to you promptly with a time to meet.

*Fall work at the Center:***Fall MATs**

This fall, **Mid-Semester Assessments of Teaching (MATs)** moved online! The shift to online and hybrid instruction for many courses pushed us to develop a process to administer our Fall MATs online via Zoom and an online student survey. Like many of our pedagogical shifts this Fall, we might keep online MATs if they provide a more efficient and effective way to obtain student feedback on our teaching. Not sure what a MAT is? Check out our informational document [here](#). If you missed the Fall MATs, keep your eye out in February 2021 for our next round of MATs, which will occur in March.

Writing Retreats & Lunchtime Chats

As we all adjust to a mostly-virtual academic community, CAE worked to sustain two crucial activities: writing together and lunching together. Join us November 13 or December 10 for our **Writing Retreats & Lunchtime Chats!**

New Faculty Cohort

Now in its 6th year, the **New Faculty Cohort** provides a cohort-based model of mentoring for new faculty who are visiting, tenure track and professors of the practice. Monthly gatherings focus on teaching and other faculty-related issues.

Center Summer Work Revisited**Developing a Flexible Planning Pedagogy**

This summer, alongside our faculty partners, the Center conceived of and launched a three-prong approach to **supporting faculty adjustment to fall teaching**. Later we collaborated with Academic Council to develop a memo from Academic Council developing recommendations for examples of Fall Student Learning Experiences. Our anchoring actions were:

Flexible approach to planning for fall: A five-hour zoom workshop that served **150 faculty**.

Faculty learning and collaboration groups: Specific, targeted sessions covering more specific disciplinary or pedagogical topics, including; Alternative Assessments; Online Labs and Hands-On Courses; Community-Engaged Learning; Off-Campus Placements and Clinicals; Accessibility and Universal Design for Learning; Online Engagement Practices; and Online Testing: What Works and What Doesn't.

Supporting the pivot to online instruction: We designed **self-paced modules** that assisted faculty in their pivot to online instruction, including our **Instructional Continuity Guide** for Fall 2020 and **Adapting Your Courses for Fall 2020**. Visit these live links!

Individual, program-wide and small-group

consultations: The above two initiatives led to individual and small-group consultations with more than **60 faculty**, including meetings with the entire undergraduate nursing faculty of the Egan School, the departments of MLL and VPA, and many additional individual consults.

Targeted tech workshops: Having engaged deeply with faculty on their challenges, we developed targeted tech workshops, each of which ran twice in late July, that assisted approximately **200 faculty** with preparations for various aspects of their teaching in the fall (including training in FlipGrid, Blackboard, Zoom, and Quip).

Our work to assist you is dynamic and emerging. We are grateful for your continued collaborations, and we are here to assist you with challenges as they arise. Email cae@fairfield.edu to consult or collaborate with us.



Support for Research Liaison Michael Andreychik

During the 2020-2021 academic year (September - May) CAE Faculty Liaison Michael Andreychik will again support faculty in the design and conduct of research projects. In the past Dr. Andreychik has worked with faculty both during the design phase of research projects as well as during data analysis and interpretation; assistance is available for any stage of the research process. He has also worked to support faculty both in the design and conduct of their own disciplinary research and in the evidence-based evaluation of their pedagogy. In the shift to remote interactions, Mike has been supporting faculty—where possible—to move their research online. Drawing on his experience with platforms such as Qualtrics, Mike is helping faculty to collect data online and to make other adjustments to circumvent lack of access to human subjects. Interested faculty should contact Dr. Andreychik directly at mandreychik@fairfield.edu

We at the Center thank our liaisons for their incredible creativity and vision!

Supporting faculty and professional staff since 2003

Introducing the Fall 2020 CAE Liaisons Peer Observation of Teaching

Fall 2020 CAE Liaison **Josh Elliot** is overseeing the Peer Observation of Teaching Initiative, which provides faculty formative feedback about their teaching in their online or hybrid courses. CAE-trained Peer Faculty Observers confer with instructors to develop a plan for “observing” one of four elements of the instructor’s hybrid or online course: Course Goal and Student Learning Objective Design; Student Engagement and Course Activities;



Integration of Technology and Tech Tools; or Online Assessments.

Back-to-School Workshops to Feature Liaisons

Fall 2020 Liaisons **Christine Rodriguez** (below) and **Sila Alan** (left) will work



with the CAE to provide **pedagogical workshops** during our January Back-to-School Workshops week. A central focus of these workshops will be on highlighting pedagogical “victories” from the fall—teaching adaptations we made for the Fall that worked so well we’re keeping them moving forward, including a demonstration by Christine of how students co-create study-guides live in Quip!

See a preview of Christine's work on page 6 of this newsletter.



Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion PLC

In the Spring 2020, the CAE launched a professional learning community (PLC) focused around the **opportunities, challenges, and necessity** of developing classrooms that practice equity, diversity and inclusion. Co-sponsored by the Magis Core and co-facilitated by Dr. Stephanie Storms and CAE Directors, the PLC began meeting monthly in February 2020 to discuss and problem-solve around examples of challenging moments in the classroom from both participants' own classrooms and case studies from practitioners engaged in equity-based teaching. After an interruption due to Covid-19, the PLC resumed meeting in September to continue this work to better equip ourselves to **strengthen our classroom practices**.

From the Faculty Resource Network

New York University's Faculty Resource Network (FRN) remains a resource for faculty development, both as regards research and teaching. In January, the FRN will hold a virtual **Teach Share**. A call for submissions invites 10-minute case-study proposals that share what you have learned about remote and hybrid/blended teaching and learning due to the impact of COVID-19. Deadline for submissions is December 7. Learn more at this [link](#).

New Faculty Development Network Membership!



National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity

How to Thrive in Academia

We focus on four key areas that help you achieve extraordinary writing and research productivity while maintaining a full and healthy life off campus.

1. Strategic Planning

Learn how to plan your academic year, your term, and your weekly schedule in a way that is aligned with your tenure and promotion criteria

2. Explosive Productivity

Learn the skills and strategies that will help you to publish more research, win more grants, and manage your internal resistance to writing

3. Healthy Relationships

Learn how to manage your professional relationships and build a thriving network of mentors, sponsors, and collaborators

4. Work-Life Balance

Learn how to reduce your stress, prioritize your self-care, and find balance in your personal and professional life



Fairfield University has joined the **National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity (NCFDD)** as an Institutional Member. The NCFDD is a nationally-recognized,

independent organization that offers online career development and mentoring resources for faculty and graduate students with particular attention to diversity. This membership represents the University's ongoing commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion as fundamental to the pursuit of academic excellence. The NCFDD provides **various programs and resources** that compliment those offered at Fairfield University while connecting members into a national professional network. To claim your free Institutional Membership, go to <http://www.facultydiversity.org/join>, or contact contact Prof. Jocelyn M. Boryczka, Associate Vice Provost for Scholarly, Creative, and Community Engagement at jboryczka@fairfield.edu.

Antiracist Practices in the Classroom PLC

After two highly successful workshops in August 2020 with faculty interested in mindfully integrating antiracist pedagogical practices into their teaching, the CAE collaborated with Prof. Rachele Brunn-Bevel, Faculty Chair for Inclusive Excellence, and Prof. Kris Sealey, Coordinator of the Social Justice Signature Element of the Magis Core, to offer August workshop participants a learning community space to begin or continue to explore the practice of **Antiracist Pedagogies**. If you'd like to join a future group of this type, please contact us.

Assessment Consults

Faculty or departments who would like to consult about designing online assessments or administering their end-of-semester assessments online can reach out to the CAE for an individual, program, or department consult at cae@fairfield.edu

Adaptive Teaching Spotlight: Facilitating Quip Co-Composition in Biology

In the fall of 2020 **Faculty Liaison Christine Rodriguez** found herself in need of a dynamic way to ensure that her BI1551 Elements of Microbiology students could, according to her, identify and summarize "some of the technical details of how cells copy their DNA and use it." But, in an online environment, she questioned how she could watch over many students simultaneously to gauge understanding of these technical details. So she came up with a novel approach: have students work together in Quip documents (during class time), co-composing a study guide that would illustrate their understanding. Meanwhile, provide live feedback as groups help to edit each other's work. As Professor Rodriguez explained to us, "My goal was to really nail down specifics before we moved to the next unit where we discussed how viruses such as the SARS CoV2 virus for COVID19 utilize our cell's machinery." See below for the dynamic process her students experienced; it's a great example of adaptive, engaged learning that provided her with the assessment data she needed to move forward in her

course. Come to her January workshop to hear more about her project, and access her helpful guide to co-composing and a video of this project and others like it at this [link](#).

COVID19 connections:

- We have discussed how we have machinery in our cells to do the following things:

Process	Technical name of process	Major Enzyme Responsible	Technical considerations: how does the enzyme specifically do its job?	Difference between prokaryote and eukaryote?
copy DNA				
read DNA to make RNA				
read RNA and make a protein from it				

- As we move into Module 5, we will learn about viral genomes and how they are copied and expressed to make viral proteins. Keep in mind that drug/therapeutic strategies will try to attack anything unique between viral gene replication and expression compared with our human cell version.

Figure 1: Empty document before students arrive in class

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[Spreadsheet](#)

Process	Technical name of process	Major Enzyme Responsible	Technical considerations: how does the enzyme specifically do its job?	Difference between prokaryote and eukaryote?
copy DNA	replication	DNA polymerase	DNA polymerase reads the template 3'→5' and then makes the new strand (polymerizes/synthesizes) 5'→3'	Eukaryotes - RNA primer le nucleotides, DNA polymerase, multiple number of origins - RNA primer length is 50 r. polymerase I, II, III, single r. origins... main idea: where sets of machinery, we can't particular group vs another human)
read DNA to make RNA	transcription	RNA polymerase	binds to a promotor sequence (the sequence in the DNA that tells RNA polymerase where to go and what gene to turn on) at beginning of a gene, uses one of the DNA template strands as a template to make a new complementary RNA molecule, and ends in termination; RNA polymerase builds an RNA strand in the 5' to 3' direction, adding each new nucleotide to the 3' end of the strand; selectively turns on one gene ONLY when it needs to be turned	there is no splicing of mRNA (organized by operons)

Resolve Comments Close

Christine Rodriguez · Oct 12
what direction does the RNA pol work?

Figure 3: Professor Rodriguez offers correction during class

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Figure 2: Students co-compose in class

On this page dedicated to innovative online teaching, we feel it's the proper place to congratulate our own Jay Rozgonyi on his induction as an honorary member of Alpha Sigma Nu. Jay was honored for his longtime development of online teaching pedagogies aligned with Jesuit values. Congratulations, Jay! We are all beneficiaries of your extraordinary vision and devotion.

Online CDIs Available to Interested Faculty

The CAE offers its Online Course Design Institutes regularly and encourages **any interested faculty** to watch for our periodic Faculty Announcements calling for applications. The five-week sessions are run as fully online and asynchronous "classes" in which faculty take on the roles of students as they work on the assignment of building out their own online course. While there is certainly material in the Online CDI that pertains to our current COVID/remote learning environment, the experience was developed with the **goal of helping faculty prepare fully online and asynchronous courses**.