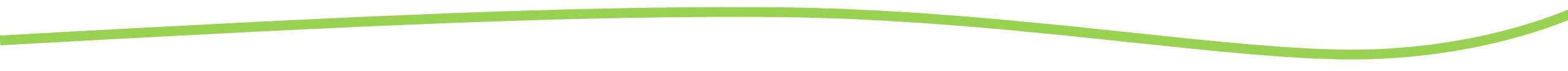# ChatGPT: New Semester, New Challenges

Jeffrey Bernstein, PhD, Professor of Political Science, Director of Faculty Development Center

Ann Blakeslee, PhD, Professor of Written Communication; Director of Campus & Community Writing, the UWC, & WAC; Associate Publisher for Books, The WAC Clearinghouse
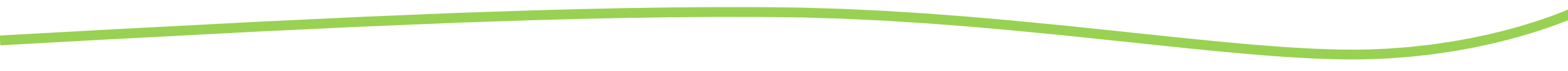
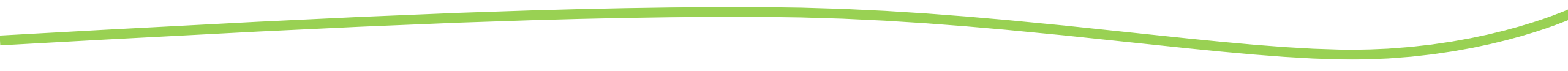**Beth Sabo**, MA, Associate Director of WAC & UWC Coordinator

Waterfall Inclusion

- What is a word or phrase that describes how you currently feel about AI (e.g., ChatGPT)?

- In the chat, type your response as well as your name and department or program, but do not hit enter until we tell you to.

Working Agreements

- Always assume positive intentions, in relation to both ourselves and especially our students

- Advocate for the voices of our students, especially those from marginalized or underrepresented groups not historically heard

- Accept that it's okay to feel uncomfortable; if/when you do, consider why

- Share authentically

Our Purposes

- Articulate questions about and consider advice for crafting writing assignments in this new era of AI.

- Consider advice and guidance for assessing students' writing and responding to potential misuses of AI.

- Consider ways to talk about AI in classes, and how to set classroom policies concerning its use.
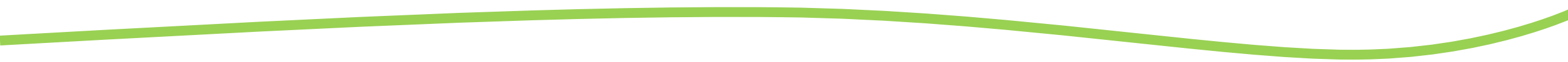
Starting Points

- "... we urge educators to respond out of a sense of our own strengths rather than operating out of fear."

- Also, "... when creating policy, institutional actors must prioritize both ethical conduct and the mission of higher education."

- "... we believe the primary work of educators is to support students' intellectual and social development and to foster exploration and creativity rather than to surveil, discipline, or punish students."

(MLA-CCCC Joint Task Force on Writing and AI, 2023, pp. 4, 10).
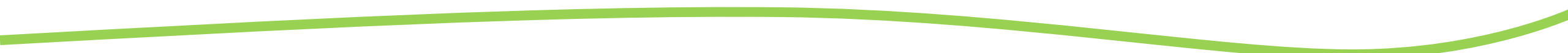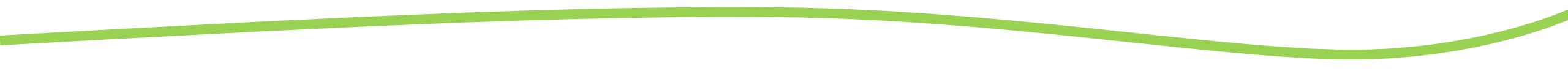
Free Write

Why do you ask/want students to write in your classes?

WAC Principles

- Writing supports learning and critical thinking.
- Writing is a way of communicating ideas and knowledge.
- Writing takes place in a context – personal, academic, civic, disciplinary. . .
    - Writing genres and conventions are framed by expectations formed within those contexts.
    - It is important to understand those expectations and how, and by whom, they are formed.

The Continued Importance of Writing

- "Writing practice continues to be intensely rewarding for students and central to intellectual growth in college" (Mills, 2023, p. 7).

- "As the models are refined, expand their language corpora, and draw on greater computational power, their outputs mimic the writing of sentient humans more convincingly. LLMs do not, however, 'think' in the way that we would define such an activity as it takes place in human cognition" (MLA-CCCC Joint Task Force on Writing and AI, 2023, p. 6).
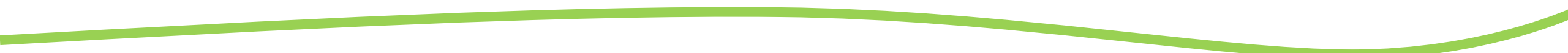
Advice from the Field of Writing

- Always be purposeful with the writing you assign. Also always communicate why you are asking your students to write and why you are asking them to write what you are assigning.

- Assign writing that is interesting and meaningful.

- Consider assigning alternative/a variety of genres.

- Integrate assignments into and throughout courses. Also have different and meaningful reasons for asking students to write.

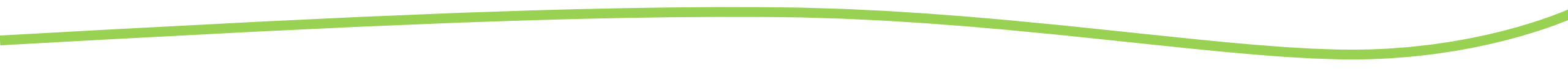(Mills, 2023)

Advice from the Field of Writing

- Communicate what makes the process of writing valuable, talk about the benefits of engaging in the process, and support the writing process (Mills, 2023).

- Focus on connecting and building relationships with students as a way to help them stay engaged (Mills, 2023).

- It's likely not beneficial to try to out-prompt it (Lang, 2023).

- See also, Benefits for Writing Instruction (MLA-CCCC Joint Task Force on Writing and AI, 2023, pp. 9-10).
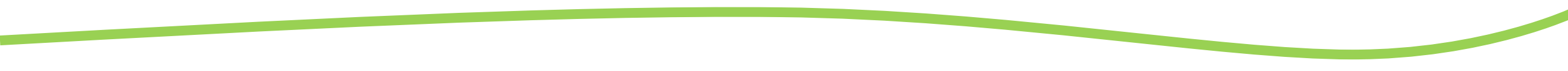
Advice from ChatGPT

[ChatGPT-generated advice for how college students could use it](#)

Questions to Ask Ourselves

- What are you trying/wanting to teach?
- What do you want your students to learn and be able to do?

Reflect and Respond

- How do you believe your writing assignments might change as a result of AI, and/or how might you like to change your writing assignments in response to AI?
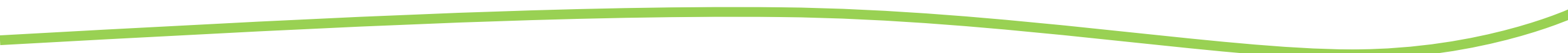
AI: The Next Revolution

Education has survived other disruptive forces before:

- The textbook
- Math class and the calculator
- The Interwebs (e.g., Wikipedia)
- Cell phones

This is new and disruptive. But, like the above disruptions, we will find our way through.
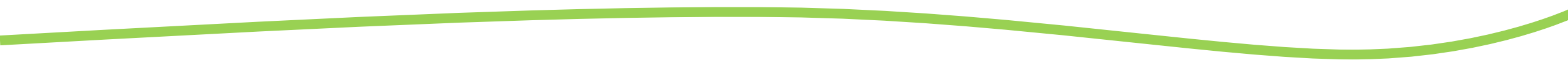
Setting Policies Regarding AI

- For now, there will be no "EMU Policy" on AI. Instructors can set their own policy, much as we do for absences, make-up exams, use of laptops in class, etc.

- As of now, you have latitude to craft policy as you wish, within generally accepted constraints. This can be be hard in a fast-changing setting. We recommend being flexible.

As You Approach the Fall Semester

Let's brainstorm a little bit:

- What message do you want to give your students about generative AI?
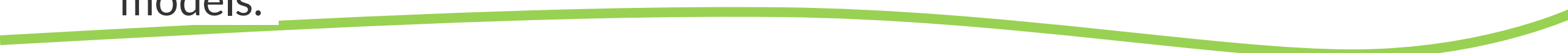- Try writing a few lines of your own classroom policy.

As You Approach the Fall Semester

Thinking about syllabus language

- [University of Minnesota Senate Committee on Education Policy](#) - three policies

- [Classroom Policies for AI Generative Tools](#) - an abundance of riches

- Ask ChatGPT to draft policies for you; work from what it produces
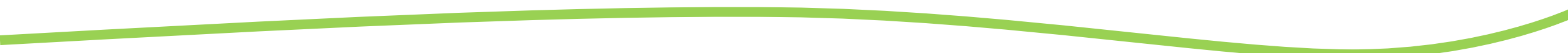
Minnesota Example #1 - Embrace

"Artificial intelligence (AI) language models, such as ChatGPT, may be used for any assignment with appropriate citation. Examples of citing AI language models are available at: libguides.umn.edu/chatgpt [or provide an alternative reference appropriate for your class]. You are responsible for fact checking statements composed by AI language models."

Minnesota Example #2 - Limited Use

"Artificial intelligence (AI) language models, such as ChatGPT, may be used for [assignment types A, B & C] with appropriate citation, but not for [assignment types D, E & F]. If you are in doubt as to whether you are using AI language models appropriately in this course, I encourage you to discuss your situation with me. Examples of citing AI language models are available at: libguides.umn.edu/chatgpt [or provide an alternative reference appropriate for your class]. You are responsible for fact checking statements composed by AI language models."

Minnesota Example #3 - Prohibition

"Artificial intelligence (AI) language models, such as ChatGPT, and online assignment help tools, such as Chegg®, are examples of online learning support platforms: they can not be used for course assignments except as explicitly authorized by the instructor. The following actions are prohibited in this course [remove bullets as necessary]:
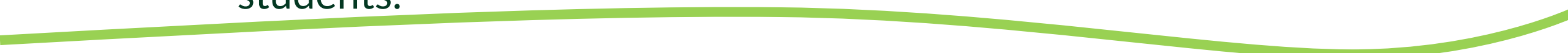
- Submitting all or any part of an assignment statement to an online learning support platform;
- Incorporating any part of an AI generated response in an assignment;
- Using AI to brainstorm, formulate arguments, or template ideas for assignments;
- Using AI to summarize or contextualize source materials;
- Submitting your own work for this class to an online learning support platform for iteration or improvement."

Note: this is just a small sample from the website

What You Say about AI in Class

- Communicate your policy as clearly as you can - perhaps consider acknowledging we may adjust as we go along

- Avoid being punitive right at the beginning - set a more positive tone

- Break down the fourth wall - why are you doing what you are doing?

- AI is here to stay - preparing students to live and work in that world

- Remember relationships - a true part of the value of a college education - AI cannot replace that

Things to Know/Keep in Mind

- These systems will continue getting better; however, they still have limitations – e.g., are often formulaic, make mistakes in reasoning and analysis, lack accuracy in citation, do not think (Lang, 2023; MLA-CCCC Joint Task Force on Writing and AI, 2023).

- Remember - what you put into AI becomes part of the learning model - privacy issues

- Detection software currently cannot give answers, only probabilities (Darby, 2023; Mills, 2023).

  - There are significant equity issues connected to detection software and plagiarism more generally.

  - Need for and importance of dialogue and conversations with students.

Academic Integrity & Detection Software

- "Focus on approaches to academic integrity that support students rather than punish them and that promote a collaborative rather than adversarial relationship between teachers and students."

- "We urge caution and reflection about the use of AI text detection tools. Any use of them should consider their flaws and possible effect of false accusations on students, including negative effects that may disproportionately affect marginalized groups."
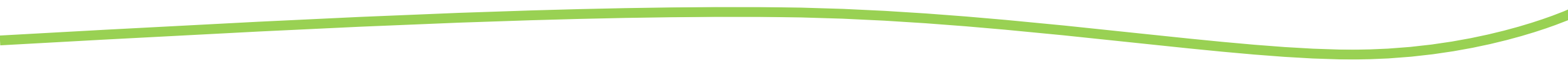
(MLA-CCCC Joint Task Force on Writing and AI, 2023, pp. 10-11)

Summary

- Learn about AI alongside your students; be curious with them; cultivate trust and engagement.

- Be transparent – Why are you assigning what you're assigning? Why is the writing process valuable? How are we approaching and learning about AI?

- Set examples of transparency, humility, and a willingness to learn.

- Talk about not using AI to cheat but as a tool to learn; stress integrity.

- Understand and speak knowledgeably about the tools with your students.
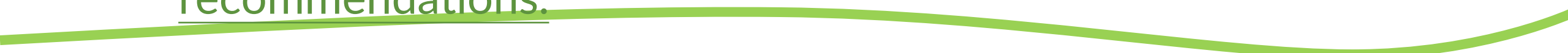
(Darby, 2023)

References

Darby, F. (2023, June 27). 4 steps to help you plan for ChatGPT in your classroom. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Lang, J. M. (2023, April 4). How to create compelling writing assignments in a ChatGPT age. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Mills, A. R. (2023, March 23). ChatGPT just got better. What does that mean for our writing assignments? *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

MLA-CCCC Joint Task Force on Writing and AI. (2023). Working paper: Overview of the issues, statement of principles, and recommendations.

Additional Resources

APA's guidance on citing ChatGPT

ChatGPT Syllabus Statements

Classroom Policies for AI Generative Tools

Meaningful Writing Project

Next Generation Genres: Teaching Writing for Civic and Academic Engagement

Quick Start Guide to AI and Writing