

FDC HAPPENINGS

September 19, 2022



Three women sit next to each other at a table, looking at one another and talking. There are cups of coffee and cell phones on the table.

Save The Date

CONNECT Conference

February 9-10, 2023 ~ Halle Library

Save the date for our 2023 CONNECT Teaching Conference! We are excited to see everyone back this year. We are also thrilled to announce our keynote speaker, Alison Cook-Sather. Dr. Cook-Sather serves as the Director of the Teaching and Learning Institute at Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges. She is a nationally-recognized expert on student-faculty partnerships, and her work was influential in the creation of the FDC's Teaching and Learning Together (TaLT) initiative. You can read more about her work [here](#).

Look for more information about CONNECT in the coming months! If you have any questions about CONNECT, contact us at faculty_development@emich.edu.

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CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS: WELLNESS INITIATIVES

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If faculty and/or students are struggling with issues of wellness, less learning will take place, and life will simply be less pleasant. The two programs below aim to address the challenge of wellness on campus today - we hope you'll consider one or both of these!

From the FDC

SUPPORT GROUP

The Faculty Development Center is pleased to offer a faculty support group. This group will be open for faculty to seek support from peers on any stressors that may surround or affect the work we do as educators. Sometimes, we just need to talk to others to help ourselves address the challenges we face.

The group will meet every other Monday at 11:00am, starting on October 3, in the FDC's Collaboratory (109B Halle). The group will be facilitated by Dr. Quentin Hunter from the Department of Leadership and Counseling

We hope this will serve as a place to support one another in all of our roles! The content of all group meetings will be confidential.

Click [here](#) for more information, or email Quentin Hunter at qhunter1@emich.edu, or Jeffrey Bernstein at jbernstei@emich.edu.

WELLNESS MINI GRANTS

The Faculty Development Center and the Office of Wellness and Community Responsibility are looking for professors, lectures, and graduate teaching fellows to help us in our initiative to support student wellness. Recipients will receive up to \$250 to use during the Winter 2023 term to help students in their class. If you have a project or idea that you think might help your students, we want to help you put it to the test!

Applications are due Thursday, October 13th at 5:00PM and applicants will be informed of their status by Friday, October 28th.

If you have any questions or want to run an idea by us, contact us at faculty_development@emich.edu. Click [here](#) for more details about the mini-grants and to find the application.



A group of people sit around a table, talking to one another. It seems as if a person, whose back is facing the camera, is talking while the others look to them.

UPCOMING EVENTS

READING IN
PRINT?

scan the QR code to
access the links in
this issue



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Join Carla Damiano, DAAD Ambassador for 2022-2023, for an informational workshop to learn about the many funding programs available to scientists and academics interested in conducting research in Germany or initiating collaborative projects with German colleagues. Work funded through these programs is carried out in English. Learn more or register [here](#).

DAAD Informational Workshop

September 21,
1:00pm
109 Halle and [Zoom](#)

Meaningful Conversations: Facilitating Empathic Listening and Mindful Expression

September 30,
9:00am-1:00pm
300 Halle

Join us for this workshop to learn specific and practical communication tools based on Nonviolent Communication (NVC) in order to support an open, inclusive, and respectful classroom environment. This workshop will be led by Paula Willoquet and Jenny Kindred. Learn more [here](#).

Are grant proposal rejections getting you down? Eighty percent of faculty who come to these sessions receive the award, because they get up-to-date information on writing a successful proposal and get important feedback on how their proposals will be reviewed. Our first series of presentations focuses on the Summer Research Award (applications due October 31st), with the first session on October 6th. If interested in attending, you can learn more [here](#).

Internal Research Awards

October 6,
3:30pm
109 Halle and [Zoom](#),

UPCOMING EVENTS

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Inclusive STEM Teaching at EMU Learning Community

*Applications Due
September 30, 10:00am*

This learning community is based on an NSF-funded free 6-week asynchronous online class for college instructors, the Inclusive STEM Teaching Project (ISTP). It is designed to advance ability and awareness

for cultivating inclusive STEM learning environments. The EMU Learning Community dates are on each Friday from October 3- November 22 on Zoom. For more information, or to apply, visit [here](#).

The Writers' Collaborative is an opportunity for EMU faculty to support each other while achieving realistic writing goals (i.e. developing a conference paper, drafting an article, revising a book chapter, etc.). This community also provides an opportunity for participants to give and receive helpful feedback on their writing as well. Drop in and join us! For more information, visit [here](#).

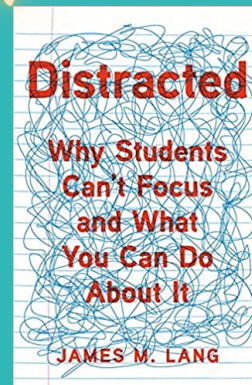
Research Writer's Collaborative

*Every Thursday,
1:30pm-3:30pm
via [Zoom](#)*

SPOTLIGHTS

This week's book spotlight features "Distracted: Why Students Can't Focus and What You Can Do About It" by James M. Lang, which discusses how educators can embrace distraction in their classroom, instead of trying to prevent it. This will help educators find the best ways to catch their students' attention and find new ways for their classroom to operate.

Click [here](#) to read the full spotlight or to check out this book, or others, from our library.



Dr. Harriet Lindsay

Professor
Chemistry

In her teaching spotlight, Dr. Harriet Lindsay talks about her love for teaching students here at Eastern because of the opportunities she gets to watch them grow, and because of how motivated our students are. To learn more about Dr. Lindsay and her teaching philosophies, read the full spotlight [here](#).

RETENTION OF UNDERREPRESENTED MINORITY STUDENTS IN STEM FIELDS AT EMU

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Recruiting BIPOC and women in STEM fields has always been a challenge. Pew Research estimates that Black and Hispanic people make up approximately 11% and 16% of the US

workforce, respectively, but only represent 7% and 6% of STEM workers holding a bachelor's degree or higher. This underrepresentation is particularly conspicuous in engineering.

The lack of representation of these groups in positions of power in STEM fields is not only a moral problem related to access but one that has real-life implications. Although the era of unethical research targeting Black and Latino people (e.g. syphilis studies in Tuskegee and Guatemala, contraception pill studies with Puerto Rican women) may be considered largely behind us, the lack of diversity in research and engineering decision-making teams still harms minority communities. It leads, for example, to biased software that does not recognize the faces of dark-skinned people well and to pulse oximeters that cannot correctly read their oxygen concentration. The best way to reduce the incidence of these poorly developed products is to increase the number of BIPOC in these STEM fields. Diverse teams, in which emotional safety is present, produce innovative products that can satisfy the needs of more customers. In other words, society as a whole would benefit from an increased representation of minority populations in STEM fields.

Unfortunately, when it comes to the underrepresentation of BIPOC in STEM fields, EMU is no exception. Currently, very few of our students graduate within 5 years. Although numbers are difficult to pinpoint, at the Game Above College of Engineering and Technology for example, using enrollment and graduation data, we estimate that Black students graduate at half the rate of White students.

By Vernaliz Carrasquillo

I still remember a female Black student I met 6 years ago. She worked and studied full-time. During an advising session, I had to tell her she needed to take College Algebra for a 3rd time because a C- would not be sufficient. I NEVER SAW HER AGAIN.

Two of the main factors that decrease the graduation rates of college students are: financial concerns and a lack of a sense of belonging. Even though EMU provides services intended to help students succeed, like the Holman Success Center and The Center of Race and Ethnicity, graduation rates are clearly still low and indicate that we need to invest more funding and resources for these programs to address our students' needs. **At this moment, for too many STEM students, where we aim to provide degrees, all we produce is debt.** They get student loans to attend our university but leave without a degree that would enable them to pay them back.

Some possible solutions can be found in programs instituted by other universities. For example, in 2014 at Florida Atlantic University, designated as a Hispanic-Serving Institution, fewer than 20% of the students were graduating within 4 years.

SUBMIT A BLOG POST

We welcome blog posts from faculty, lecturers, staff, and interested others on teaching and learning topics. Email us at faculty_development@emich.edu with your blog post idea for the opportunity to be featured in future newsletters!

They were additionally confronted with the nationwide trend of reduced enrollment. After instituting innovative programs such as doubling the number of on-campus student jobs and assigning each student a personal “success network”, among other changes, graduation rates improved by 50%.

While EMU has the personnel responsible for doing the tasks associated with this success network, proper advising is a major struggle for many of our students. Faculty can be assigned dozens of students to advise academically and general academic advisers can be booked for months, leaving students in limbo. In primarily white institutions, providing underrepresented students with a science identity, and allowing them to feel a sense of belonging, is equally important. At Rutgers, with a high Black student graduation rate, counselors set up “listening tables” at common gathering spots around campus. And at Old Dominion University, with a similar graduation rate between Black and White students, there are associations where Black and Latino students can interact directly with Black and Latino faculty and staff members for mentoring and advising that goes beyond academics.

In contrast, EMU has very few faculty members who belong to these underrepresented populations, particularly in the STEM fields. While these programs cost money upfront, there is a tangible return on investment by the number of students who remain enrolled. In an era of reduced student enrollment, ensuring that the students we do have graduate helps everyone.

While faculty alone can’t solve this issue, we can all contribute to this by making EMU a more welcoming place for students. Thankfully, we have departments that are actively working towards this end. For example, the biology department instituted curricular changes to enhance the retention of BIPOC students. Specifically, they added a BIO 101 course with a focus on increasing the scientific identity and sense of belonging, and strengthening the academic skills of their students. They also revised their DED to reflect the values of DEI, among others.

Another example comes from the math department. It created a Developing and Equitable Teaching Fellows program to support course revisions that use equitable teaching practices. These departments and others presented their work at the DEI in STEM workshop facilitated by the Faculty Senate Committee for Action on Intersectionality, Anti-Racism and Equity and by the FDC. Additionally, Drs. Dyann Logwood and Sadaf Ali developed a mentoring training seminar for faculty interested in becoming better mentors. In summary, there’s much to be done. Our students and society would greatly benefit from faculty and administration providing the services and mentoring necessary to help our underrepresented students succeed in STEM disciplines. The question remains: who is going to drive a change in our collective culture? We can’t rely only on BIPOC and female faculty to take on this; we are already overburdened with service. Every faculty member needs to act. And more importantly, we need the administration to provide the resources and compensation to achieve this.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Vernaliz Carrasquillo is an Associate Professor in the Product Design Engineering Technology program at EMU. Before becoming a faculty member at EMU, she earned a BS in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Puerto Rico. Upon graduation, she earned an MSE in mechanical engineering from the University of Michigan while working in the automotive industry as a product design engineer.