

# FDC HAPPENINGS

August 23, 2022



*Photo of a group of people speaking to each other around a table, two people are shaking hands in agreement.*

## New Beginnings

**Thursday, August 25**

*In-person gathering held in Halle Library from  
8:30 AM - 12:45 PM;*

*Virtual gathering held from 3 PM - 5 PM.*

The start of the academic year is a time of hope and anticipation. We are particularly excited for this year, as we very much hope it represents some sort of “return to normalcy,” after a few years that were anything but normal. For the first time in a few years, we can dare to dream about semester goals that extend beyond mere survival.

The conference theme will reflect the notion of a new beginning, and will focus on encouraging participants to think about “Who Do You Want to Be?” during the 2022-23 academic year.

We invite you to join us for either the morning in-person sessions, the afternoon virtual sessions, or both! Click [here](#) to register or to learn more.

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# CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS: TEACHING AND LEARNING TOGETHER

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No matter our role at EMU - student, teacher, staff, or administrator - we are part of a single campus community. This community has historically prided itself on the rich opportunities

we've offered for students, as a school that is small enough where your professors will know your name but which can simultaneously provide the opportunities of a large research university. As a result of the turmoil that the world has undergone in recent years, our community has seen major changes and losses - and we fear that EMU is losing part of what makes it so special. Increasing and amplifying close student-faculty partnerships in the classroom is a vital part of bringing back the sense of belonging and community on campus that many of us know and miss.

The Faculty Development Center's Teaching and Learning Together (TaLT) initiative seeks to join a growing movement that highlights the importance of the student voice in building strong classroom and campus communities. We are driven by our own experiences here at Eastern Michigan University as well as by a body of research which focuses on how student-faculty partnerships can make students feel more connected to their education, and we aim to document exactly how these partnerships can benefit EMU in particular.

We are seeking students and educators to participate in the initial phase of the initiative, which will focus on building relationships between students and faculty and having conversations about how the University can move forward in a way that benefits our community. We invite you to apply to participate as a faculty or staff member, and we invite you to share the student application with your students as well. We're excited to begin this work and we hope you will be a part of this effort to enhance the connections on our campus.

*From the FDC*



*A group of people raising their hands to meet in the middle of a circle, showing their teamwork.*

# UPCOMING EVENTS

READING IN  
PRINT?

scan the QR code to  
access the links in  
this issue



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## Holman Success Center Open House

*August 31, 2022*  
11am-4pm, Eagle Study  
Tables - Halle Library

Join the Holman Success Center to learn about what they have to offer!

While you're there, enjoy complimentary coffee and donuts, enter a raffle to win Eagle Rewards prizes, check out the new and improved student planners, and get to know the Holman Success Center team! Open to all members of the EMU community. Learn more [here](#).

This learning community will focus on moving student-faculty partnerships forward on our campus. We invite you to read more about this community on page 4, or at our [website](#). We are seeking [faculty](#) and [student](#) fellows for the 22-23 school year. If you believe that students and faculty can benefit from closer partnerships, we invite you to apply now!

## Call for Applications: Teaching and Learning Together

*Applications due  
September 2*



*Photo of two people working together at a computer.*

## New Faculty Learning Community

*First meeting  
September 23*  
2pm-3:30pm in 109 Halle

In this learning community for first year faculty, we'll discuss how to lay the groundwork for a successful career, in terms of teaching, research, and service, and how you find the right balance. Together, we will support one another as we dive into an unknowable but exciting future. Learn more or register [here](#).



# UPCOMING EVENTS

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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 Dr. Paula Willoquet and Jenny Kindred. Learn more here.

## Meaningful Conversations: Facilitating Empathic Listening and Mindful Expression

September 30,  
9am-1pm, in 300 Halle

## General Education Professional Learning Communities

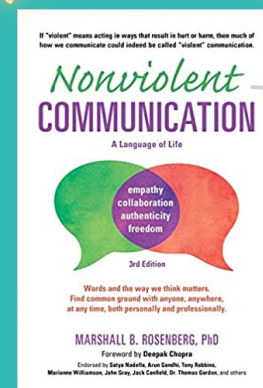
Applications due  
September 15

These learning communities will be persistent and are opportunities to share learning activities and enrich our GE teaching and learning practices at EMU. This semester we will focus on three new communities: Global Awareness, US Diversity, and Arts. Learn more or apply for the learning communities here.

# SPOTLIGHTS

This week's book spotlight features *Nonviolent Communication* by Dr. Michael B. Rosenberg. In this title, Dr. Rosenberg teaches the principles of nonviolent communication and how it benefits us. This book goes along with Jenny Kindred's blog post on pages 5 and 6, Reflecting on "Connection," as well as the program she is offering along with Paula Willoquet on September 30.

Click here to read the full spotlight or to check out this book, or others, from our library.



**Dr. Ashley Wilson**  
Professor  
Biology

In her teaching spotlight, Dr. Ashley Wilson talks about teaching courses in biology, evolution, ecology, and zoology to students of different backgrounds, and helping students find their own passion for the subjects. Click here to read the spotlight, and to learn more about Dr. Wilson's community projects and her recently earned teaching award!

# TEACHING BLOG:

## REFLECTIONS ON "CONNECTION"

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I've been teaching for over 25 years and in all that time my most enjoyable professional moments have been when I feel truly connected to my students and

colleagues. "What does that mean?" you might ask. Well, connection can be hard to define, but to me it's when a conversation has a sense of ease and flow, and when there is a sense of mutual understanding. I feel understood, and I believe that others do too. I think many of us would agree that with connection, "we know it when we feel it."

In the past several years, though, that strong sense of connection in and out of the classroom I so enjoyed feeling and cultivating seemed to diminish. Was it because I had done this job for so long that I was not as inspired? Was it related to the pandemic, and all the remote teaching and meetings we have all had to endure? Was it something else? Probably all of the above.

For me personally, the significant experience of going through a divorce five years ago motivated me to do some inner work. As a communication teacher and scholar, this led me to explore the ideas behind Nonviolent Communication (NVC). Through NVC, I learned ways of communicating that helped me to foster deeper and more meaningful connections in my personal life. And, in the last year or so, I have seen these methods make a significant impact on my professional life as well, both in and out of the classroom.

Nonviolent Communication is a "specific approach to communicating—both speaking and listening—that leads us to give from the heart, connecting us with ourselves and with

*By Jenny Kindred*

each other in a way that allows our natural compassion to flourish." Nonviolent Communication is based on the premise that we can speak and act in ways that are hurtful and harmful (such as judging, blaming, bullying, criticizing, etc.) and provides guidance for more authentic and "nonviolent" or "compassionate" ways of communicating. We communicate more compassionately when we practice listening and expressing with empathy. And, we practice empathy when we take the time to notice what is happening; become aware of our feelings and the needs behind those feelings; and work to understand the feelings and needs of others. With NVC, the act of connecting at the level of feelings and needs is a simple yet effective tool to move us toward meaningful conversations, even when those conversations are difficult. Ultimately, employing NVC in practice helps to facilitate true, authentic, connections with self and others.

### 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](mailto:faculty_development@emich.edu) with your blog post idea for the opportunity to be featured in future newsletters!*

I'm excited to help bring these important ideas and practices to the Faculty Development Center via the upcoming September

workshop, "Meaningful Conversations: Facilitating Empathic Listening and Mindful Expression" led by an expert and consultant in NVC, Dr. Paula Willoquet. As a former college professor herself, Paula is passionate about sharing with colleagues and students the significant and positive benefits of the practice of compassionate communication. In a recent blog post, Paula writes:

*In my experience over the years I've been practicing Nonviolent Communication (also known as Compassionate Communication), I've learned that receiving and giving empathy is an intentional practice of connecting to myself and to others through the universal language of feelings and needs.*

*When I feel those wonderful feelings I so enjoy (and want more of!), I ask myself "What needs have been met that bring me to feel such joy, or calm, or excitement, or gratitude, or peace?" Is it that my need for connection, or understanding, or support, or relaxation has been met? And when I feel those difficult and unpleasant feelings such as sadness, or worry, or fear, or anger, what needs have not been met? Maybe I was needing safety and comfort, or understanding and appreciation, or communication and consideration?*

*It is this experience of attuning to universal human feelings and needs that has cemented my trust in the transformative power of compassion.*

*Giving and receiving empathy (whether to myself or to others) distinctly changes how I feel in the moment.*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Jenny Kindred is a Professor of Communication within the School of Communication, Media, and Theatre Arts.

Join us for a program offered by Professor Kindred and Paula Willoquet on Nonviolent Communication on September 30th from 9am to 1pm. Learn more [here](#).

At this challenging time in higher education and the world, many of us are searching for ways to reinvigorate thoughtful and authentic connections with those around us. If anything in this blog post sparks your interest, please consider signing up for the workshop. You'll come away with the tools needed to apply NVC principles and practices to create an open and respectful classroom environment, address conflicts and support class discussion of difficult topics, and neutralize classroom power dynamics.

Paula is excited to share tools for how we all can engage in compassionate communication through the intentional practice of empathic listening and expressing. I hope to see you on September 30!