

MARCH 17, 2025

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FDC HAPPENINGS

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*Group of people sitting at a table with their laptops

Faculty Fellow for Inclusion and Belonging

The Bruce K. Nelson Faculty Development Center and the Office of the Interim Associate Provost and Associate Vice President of Academic Programs and Initiatives are seeking applications for a quarter-time release Faculty Fellow to play a leading role in inclusion-focused programming for the FDC during the 2025-26 academic year. This work speaks directly to the university's [Strategic Plan](#) and its goal of helping Eastern Michigan University offer access and opportunity for excellence for all faculty, staff, and students.

The Fellow will receive one-quarter release per semester to perform these duties for the FDC. They will report directly to the Director of the Faculty Development Center and will also meet with the Interim Associate Provost and Associate Vice President of Academic Programs and Initiatives twice over the course of the academic year. The Fellow will have access to small amounts of funding to help support their programming.

To view the roles and responsibilities of the Faculty Fellow position, see examples of projects done by previous Fellows, and learn how to apply, visit our webpage [here](#). Please email Jeffrey Bernstein at jbernstei@emich.edu if you have any questions about this position, or about your application for it.

To read more or apply, [click here](#).
Applications are due April 9 @ 5 PM

CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

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From Enlighten U



ENLIGHTEN U
EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Discover your **BALANCE** in life

Live taping including a student audience!

This episode of EMU's award-winning podcast will feature a student audience, and focuses on self-care. Enlighten U encourages you to share this opportunity with your students!

Co-Hosted by:



LOLITA CUMMINGS



MELISSA THRASHER



AESHA MUSTAFA



JOSH LANDON

**Where: Sponberg Theatre,
Judy Sturgis Hill Building**
When: Thursday, March 20
@ 2:30 - 4 PM

LBC approved.
**Includes dancing,
food, and giveaways!**

upcoming EVENTS

CHECK OUT OUR UPCOMING
EVENTS WE ARE HOSTING AT
THE FDC! FOR MORE
INFORMATION OR TO
REGISTER, CLICK "READ
MORE".

RESEARCH WRITERS' COLLABORATIVE

- Tuesdays @ 11 AM - 1 PM on Zoom
- Open to Faculty, Lecturers, and Department Heads
- Opportunity for EMU faculty to support each other while achieving realistic writing goals

[Read More](#)

2025 MINI-GRANTS TO SUPPORT STUDENT WELLNESS APPLICATION

- Application due TODAY, March 17 @ 5 PM
- Open to Faculty, Lecturers, Students & Staff
- Submit a application for a \$250 grant to support wellness in your classroom!

[Read More](#)

SUMMER/FALL 2025 PROGRAM PROPOSALS

- Application due March 24 @ 5 PM
- Open to Faculty, Lecturers & Staff
- Submit a program funding proposal to host a learning community, workshops, etc., at the FDC

[Read More](#)

CALL FOR ONLINE TEACHING INTERVIEWS

- Responses due Tuesday, March 25
- Faculty Senate, working with the FDC, is seeking faculty to contribute to the creation of a series of short videos that highlight effective practices in online teaching. Have you demonstrated success in online teaching? Are you willing to engage in a brief Zoom interview that will be edited into a short video by FDC staff? If so, fill out the form below.

[Form Linked Here](#)

OPENING DAY CELEBRATION

- Thursday, March 27 @ 2:30 - 5 PM
- Open to Everyone! Bring a friend!
- Come to the FDC and celebrate baseball's Opening Day! We will bring the food and the baseball coverage, and secretly mock Jeff for his obsession with the Mets...

upcoming EVENTS

Scan the QR code
to access the links
in this issue



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THRIVING IN ACADEMIA: EMPOWERING FACULTY SUCCESS

- First Program: Wednesday, March 26 @ 2:30 - 3:45 PM
- Open to Faculty & Lecturers
- Series of programs about thriving in academia and supporting the faculty experience on our campus
- First Program: Congratulations, You Got Tenure! Now What?

[Read More](#)

AUTISM ACCEPTANCE AND ACCOMMODATIONS

- Monday, April 7th @ 3:30 - 4:45 PM
- Open to Faculty, Lecturers & Staff
- Learn more about autism spectrum disorder, and discuss the role that accommodations can play in supporting students with autism

[Read More](#)

(ANOTHER) COOKING SESSION WITH THE FDC

- Thursday, March 27 @ 11:30 AM
- Join us for a fun cooking class with the FDC, Office of Campus and Community Writing, and Eagle Nutrition Services! We will make a garden salad, pizza, tortellini, and a banana split -on a stick!- in honor of National Something on a Stick Day. Limited to 24 participants, so register early!

[Register Here](#)

FULBRIGHT FACULTY WORKSHOP

- Wednesday, April 30 @ 12 PM - 1:30 PM
- Open to Full-Time Faculty & Academic Administrators
- Learn about the Fulbright program from a national representative, and interact with past applicants and awardees about how they prepared for and navigated the application/grant processes

[Read More](#)

Spotlights



Dr. Becca Louick & Margot Moffa

College of
Education

In this partnership spotlight, Margot Moffa (L) and Dr. Becca Louick share their research partnership at Eastern Michigan University. They reflect on how their partnership has allowed them to learn from each other. Together, they are researching the ways people diagnosed with learning disabilities characterize their learning experiences at the high school and college level. Click [here](#) to read the full spotlight.

Creating Inclusive Classrooms: Cultivating Community and Belonging

By Uttara Manohar

As an educator, I believe meaningful learning happens in an environment where students feel seen, valued, and heard. In a recent presentation on Inclusive Teaching Practices at CONNECT 2025, I emphasized the importance of intentionality in creating such learning spaces. Here, I share key insights to help cultivate a stronger sense of community in our classrooms.

Start with Self-Reflection. Before we can create an inclusive space for our students, we must first turn inward. Who are we as educators? How do our identities shape our teaching practices? What implicit biases do we carry? A commitment to ongoing self-reflection allows us to recognize that none of us are perfect, and there is always room to improve.

Our privileges often prevent us from fully understanding the challenges our students face. If we have never experienced food insecurity, we may not recognize how hunger impacts concentration. If we have never been first-generation college students, we may not fully grasp the invisible hurdles they navigate. Acknowledging our limitations and striving for cultural humility—understanding that we don't know everything but are committed to learning—helps us create a more inclusive environment.

Equality vs. Equity: A Critical Distinction. A common misconception in education is that treating all students the same is fair. However, fairness is not about uniformity—it's about recognizing that different students have different needs and providing the support that allows each of them to succeed.

So, how do we practice equity? By actively listening to students, making intentional adjustments to our teaching, and removing barriers to learning. Equity starts from the moment we design our courses and

syllabi, continues in how we communicate in the classroom, and extends to our assessment practices. For instance, first-generation college students may not have the same familiarity with academic norms as students from families with a history of higher education. Providing additional guidance on assignments, office hours, and course expectations can significantly impact their ability to succeed.

Inclusive Course and Syllabus Design. Students need to see themselves reflected in course materials. An inclusive syllabus incorporates diverse perspectives and voices, ensuring that students from all backgrounds feel acknowledged and valued. Consider the following when designing an inclusive course:

- **Diversity of Perspectives:** Are the textbooks, articles, and media used in your course representative of a variety of voices?
- **Accessibility:** Are your materials accessible in terms of both format and cost?
- **Welcoming Tone:** Think of your syllabus as an invitation. Is your language welcoming and inclusive?
- **Allow student participation:** How do you allow student input in your course design?

Humanizing your syllabus can give students an insight into who you are and what your course will feel like. Ask students what they like, encourage them to suggest modifications, and collaborate with them in the first week of class to finalize a syllabus that represents a shared learning experience.

Empowering Students: Classroom Practices That Make a Difference. An inclusive classroom offers multiple ways for students to participate. Not every student feels comfortable speaking in large discussions, so offering varied participation methods - such as written reflections, small group activities, or digital forums—ensures that all voices are heard.

Beyond content, inclusive communication plays a critical role. A small but powerful practice is learning and correctly pronouncing students' names. Repeatedly mispronouncing a student's name can make them feel unseen. Small, intentional acts like this build trust and demonstrate that we value every individual in our classroom.

Another key practice is acknowledging real-world events that impact students. If we ignore major events that shape students' lives, we miss an opportunity to foster empathy and understanding. Recognizing these moments and providing space for discussion strengthens the sense of community in the classroom.

Assessment and Feedback: Identifying and Addressing Bias. Grading should be transparent, fair, and growth-oriented. However, unconscious bias can sometimes influence assessments. If we evaluate student work based on a "gut feeling" rather than clear criteria, we may unintentionally favor students whose backgrounds align with our own expectations.

To promote fairness, I encourage:

- **Using rubrics** to ensure consistency and clarity in grading. A well-structured rubric sets clear expectations and minimizes subjective evaluation.
- **Providing multiple forms of assessment** to accommodate diverse learning styles. Some students excel at traditional exams, while others may demonstrate their understanding more effectively through presentations, projects, or reflective writing.
- **Offering constructive feedback** that supports student growth. Instead of focusing solely on errors, provide guidance on how students can improve and acknowledge their strengths.

These small but significant changes create a more equitable learning experience, shifting the focus from performance to progress.

Beyond the Classroom: Institutional and Community Support. Creating inclusive classrooms is not solely an individual effort—it requires institutional commitment. Faculty and administrators must work together to evaluate policies, foster collaboration across departments, and engage with community partners to implement systemic change.

True inclusion happens when universities prioritize equity in policies and practices, ensuring that all students, regardless of

background, have access to the resources they need to succeed. Many times, teaching can feel isolating when we forget to connect with one another. However, connection is critical for both teaching and learning.

As bell hooks so powerfully stated, "*As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another's voices, in recognizing one another's presence.*"

The Power of Inclusive Teaching. Inclusive teaching is not just about best practices—it is about shaping an educational culture that values connection, community, and belonging. It is about seeing students for who they are, acknowledging their lived experiences, and actively working to create a space where every student can thrive.

I encourage my fellow educators to reflect: *What is one step I can take today to make my classroom more inclusive?* Whether it's adjusting course materials, rethinking assessment strategies, or simply learning a student's name correctly, every action contributes to a more equitable learning environment.

At the heart of education is not just knowledge—it is the relationships we build and the communities we create.

About the Author



Uttara Manohar is an Associate Professor in the School of Communication, Media & Theatre Arts. She teaches courses focused on interracial and intercultural communication. Her scholarship

examines communication processes that can convey prejudice and bias as well as practices that bridge differences and foster inclusion.