

JANUARY 22, 2024

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# FDC HAPPENINGS



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\*A group of individuals sit at 3 tables with boxes and food on each table.

## 2024 CONNECT Conference

Amidst the cold days and gray skies of a Michigan winter, sometimes we just need to CONNECT with each other, learn from each other, and support each other. This is especially so in the teaching realm. While teaching is at some level a communal activity, the challenges we face can often breed isolation and loneliness. Join us at our CONNECT Conference to learn about what your colleagues are doing, to share your own insights on this work we share, and to think deeply about how we can be better at what we do when we do it together. Commensurate with this theme, we are especially excited to have Peter Felten join us to talk about the importance of relationships in higher education. (For more on what Peter Felten will be doing, please see page 4.)

The 2024 CONNECT Conference will take place on Friday, February 9th. Please consider attending! We look forward to CONNECTing with you at the conference!

Click [here](#) to register.

Click [here](#) to visit our webpage about this conference.

If you missed the chance to submit a proposal, please email us at [faculty\\_development@emich.edu](mailto:faculty_development@emich.edu) to talk about possibilities.

# CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

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From the Honors College

## Queer Talks: "Uniquely Queer, Uniquely You"

Nick Malendowski (Assistant Director of the Honors College) and colleagues invite you all to participate in this year's *Queer Talks* event!

This year's theme is Queer Talks: "Uniquely Queer, Uniquely You." With a focus on celebrating queer joy, advocating for those around us, and finding community, Queer Talks will be an event that encourages exploration, growth, and connection. With that being said, we are accepting 30-minute session proposals! Although the agenda is still being finalized, we are planning for three educational sessions between 4-9pm. Meals will be provided for all in attendance, as well as access to the entertainment we are bringing in!

**Presenters can be students, staff, faculty, and/or community members. The event will be taking place on Wednesday, March 6th in the Honors College (511 W. Forest Ave.) from 4-9:30 PM.**

If you have any questions, please reach out to Nick Malendowski, Assistant Director of the Honors College, at [nmalendo@emich.edu](mailto:nmalendo@emich.edu).

**We are excited to bring in a wide range of individuals to present on topics related to, but not limited to:**

- Queer Identities
- Queer Advocacy Efforts/Ways to Advocate
- Intersectionality
- Queerness in Academia
- Queerness as Art
- And More!

The session proposal form is due on **Monday, February 5th at 11:59 PM.**

Don't want to present but still want to attend? Click [here](#) to RVSP for this event!

**To access the session proposal form, [click here.](#)**

# upcoming EVENTS

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## Check Out Our New Web Resource

### TEACHING AND LEARNING TOGETHER (TALT) WEBPAGE

Click [here](#) to visit the new webpage.

We are excited to share a new web resource with all of you. In the summer of 2022, the FDC launched our Teaching and Learning Together (TaLT) initiative, which has grown to be a signature program at the FDC. Due to its expansion and ever-growing presence, we have created a webpage to compile information about our TaLT-related projects for you to easily access. Please visit this page to learn more about this exciting work, and [let us know](#) if you would like to get involved in TaLT!

Click [here](#) to participate.  
Group meets Wednesdays from 1-3 PM

### RESEARCH WRITERS COLLABORATIVE

Join Sarah Walsh to block out the time to set and achieve our writing goals, even given the other pressures we all face. The [Research Writers Collaborative](#) is an opportunity for faculty and full-time and part-time lecturers to support each other in setting and achieving realistic writing goals (i.e., developing a conference paper, drafting an article, revising a book chapter, etc.). The first of these workshops will kick off on Wednesday, January 24th.

### GENERATIVE AI SPEAKER SPOTLIGHTS

Program #2 : January 23 @ 11 AM  
109B Halle Library or [Zoom](#)

During the winter 2024 semester, the Faculty Development Center and the Office of Campus & Community Writing will host a series of four sessions related to generative AI. Click [here](#) to visit our webpage to learn more about each session. Program #2, facilitated by Rania Spantidi, will demystify the technology behind generative AI and provide real-world context for its applications. Click [here](#) to register if you plan to attend this or any of these programs.

Click [here](#) to register.  
February 19th @ 3-5 PM  
109B Halle or [Zoom](#)

### BUILDING A CARING CLASSROOM

Join Dr. Cirleen DeBlaere and Dr. Jesse Owen from The Steve Fund for their faculty workshop, hosted by Ron Flowers' "Building a Caring Classroom" series. The Steve Fund is the largest non-profit mental health organization focusing on the mental health of students of color. The Steve Fund prioritizes diversity and inclusion, ensuring that mental health support is sensitive to the experiences and needs of marginalized students.



# upcoming EVENTS

scan the QR code to  
access the links in  
this issue



Click [here](#) to submit a proposal.  
Due February 9th

## MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY SEMINAR

Please join us for this upcoming Seminar on Teaching Media & Information Literacy. Bringing together faculty both curious about M&IL as well as those already practicing innovative pedagogies, the event will include engaging activities. A poster session will showcase teaching strategies that faculty across the curriculum use to help students, whether in general education, academic majors, or at the graduate level. If you currently teach any aspect of media and information literacy, please consider sharing your pedagogy by making a poster for the event. The seminar will take place on March 8 from 10 AM to 3 PM in 300 Halle. Click [here](#) to register for the seminar.

## INTERNAL RESEARCH AWARDS

Click [here](#) to register.  
Click [here](#) to visit our website.

In the fall, we hosted a series of presentations about Internal Research Awards, focused on the Summer Research Awards. Our second round of presentations will focus on applying for Sabbaticals and Faculty Research Fellowships. The two feedback sessions will take place on Tuesday, January 23 and Monday, January 29, both at 3:30 PM. Bring your current draft of your application (no matter how complete it is!) to get expert feedback on your work at one or both of these workshops.

Click [here](#) to register.  
February 8 @ 4 PM  
Student Center Room 310 A/B

## RELATIONSHIP-RICH EDUCATION: A CAMPUS CONVERSATION

Consider attending this event, facilitated by 2024 CONNECT Keynote Speaker Peter Felten, that will be based around the ideas expressed in Peter Felten's co-authored book, entitled Connections Are Everything. You can read this book [here](#). This event will include a brief presentation and discussion about the importance of connections for students, faculty, and staff. Attendees will then participate in table discussions about what all of us can do to improve connections on campus. We hope to use this conversation to create a set of recommendations to help us make connections more central to the work we ALL do here at EMU. Click the link above to register for this event.

## Partnership Spotlight



### Professor Zuzana Tomas & Mars Ward

Department of  
World Languages

In this partnership spotlight, Professor Zuzana Tomas (L) and Mars Ward discuss their partnership work, which focuses on student well-being. They discuss the challenges and opportunities these partnerships offer to both students and faculty. Click [here](#) to read the full spotlight.

## By Ricki Kreps

“Facing racial bias in higher education has made me feel like I am one in a struggle to change the overall stereotype of Blacks in America's eyes.” - EMU student

This past December, I initiated a research project about the experiences of BIPOC (Black Indigenous Person of Color) students at Eastern. The testimony above is a piece of four interviews I had with BIPOC students. I learned that despite decades of progression, BIPOC students continue to feel failed by EMU in many aspects of their educational experience. My peers' anonymous stories, in combination with a look at systemic racism at EMU, were presented at 'Flipping the Script,' - a student-led conference hosted by the Faculty Development Center. Dr. Ann Rall, from the School of Social Work, provided mentorship for this experience for which I am especially grateful. Flipping the Script was an enriching, impactful experience that carried momentum beyond conference limitations. The success of Flipping the Script illustrates the power of student voices and one method of amplifying them.

### STUDENTS FEEL INVISIBLE

I do not speak for all BIPOC students when I discuss racial inequalities at Eastern. The experiences I share here were compiled from a small number of interviews that represent only four students' perspectives. My classmates' testimonies are meant as a reminder of where our focus should lie in anti-racist initiatives - the students - as opposed to an indication of

## **Flipping the Script: The Power of Student Voices in Anti-racist Progression**

all BIPOC students' academic experiences. With that said, a few themes emerged throughout the interview process, one of which was a feeling of invisibility at school.

In one of the first interviews, my classmate described the constant feeling of having to prove themselves and work twice as hard as their white peers to be recognized by instructors. They told me they sometimes feel ostracized in majority white classes and are often on alert to be singled out by professors. Another student expressed the weight of having to educate others, including instructors, about their own oppression. Rather than sharing isolated incidents, my classmates showed me that racism permeates numerous aspects of their academic experiences.

If my research was limited to data and statistics, I would be stuck repeating what we already know: racial inequality exists at EMU. Achieving social progress, to any degree, is not possible without first listening to why it is needed. No one knows inequality at Eastern better than the students who live with it every day.

### **Submit a blog post!**

We welcome blog posts from faculty, lecturers, staff, and students 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!

Student-teacher collaboration is imperative if we truly wish to achieve meaningful, enduring anti-racist progression.

### INSTRUCTORS MATTER

Individual growth is essential to anti-racist progression, but we should not stop there. One of the reasons it is so difficult to implement and maintain social progress at Eastern may be due to a focus on modifying individual attitudes rather than questioning why we have to do so in the first place. An individual approach neglects the broader systems of white supremacy, capitalism, and imperialism that cause individual biases. This ideological framework perpetuates the idea that racism starts and stops at the individual, and if every individual were to change, racism would cease to exist. But racism is not solely an ideological phenomenon. Racism is an expansive network of systems that are ingrained in every aspect of society. Racism is tangible, it is constant, and it is all around us.

I urge you to seriously consider your role as a faculty member in anti-racist action. As faculty members, you are in a position to make progress possible. Don't know where to start? Talk to BIPOC students. EMU has 42 social justice organizations eager for your involvement. The most powerful thing you can do as an individual is turn to people who know more and have different experiences than you do.

### FLIPPING THE SCRIPT

The Flipping the Script conference is an example of resistance. The Flipping the Script conference was created with the specific intention of amplifying student voices and fostering student-teacher

connection. Students advocated around a variety of topics - such as disabilities, neurodivergence, first-generation students, alternative classroom techniques, student-teacher dynamics, and racism - from a student perspective.

Flipping the Script should be recognized as an incredible success and a reminder of the astonishing power of connection. This conference pushed back on the power dynamic between students and instructors and begged those in attendance to question the status quo. It opened up a platform for meaningful, lasting connections that would not have been possible without it.

Faculty members are in a position to ensure Flipping the Script is not the only event of its kind. Talk to BIPOC leaders on campus, collaborate with student organizations, and resist the power dynamic between yourself and the students you interact with. Anti-racist progression demands substantial, unrelenting action from all of us. Action not from students and their teachers, but from people working together towards the same outcome: improving the academic experiences of BIPOC students at Eastern.

## About the Author



**Ricki Kreps** is a nineteen-year-old sophomore who was born and raised here in Ypsilanti. Ricki hopes to work with older adults in their future in Social Work. Ricki's goal is to use the privilege they've been granted in this life to amplify the voices of others.