

MARCH 25, 2024

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# FDC HAPPENINGS



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\*A group of EMU instructors stand together holding a green and white banner.

## 2024 Thank-An-Eagle

The Faculty Development Center is excited to once again hold our annual Thank-an-Eagle event. Thank-an-Eagle allows EMU community members a chance to thank an instructor, staff member, coach, GA, student, or mentor who has helped them during their time here at EMU.

For many instructors and mentors, an unsolicited "thank you" from a student or colleague is a highlight of their semester's experience. The instructor or staff member you thank receives a formal Thank-An-Eagle letter of recognition from the Faculty Development Center that includes the student or colleague's remarks.

The Thank-An-Eagle program was created by Dr. Amy Johnson (Chemistry Department) and Dr. Katherine Ryker (Geology & Geography Department), and funded through an FDC Program Request Proposal process for 2016–17. This program was so successful that it has become an annual, much-anticipated event.

To submit a nomination, click [here](#).

Nominations are due Monday, April 1 at noon (12 PM).

This year, the Thank-An-Eagle celebration will be held on Thursday, April 18 at 3:30 PM in Room 310 A/B of the Student Center.

# CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

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From the Department of Special Education & Communication Sciences and Disorders and the Occupational Therapy Program

Consider attending a free screening of the prize-winning film *In a Different Key*, inspired by journalists Caren Zucker and Jon Donvan's Pulitzer Prize-nominated book of the same name. *In a Different Key* follows the first author's very personal experience as she navigates her own son's autism diagnosis. The documentary delves into the history of autism and portrays the stories of people with autism with honesty and compassion, exploring their needs and their gifts. It is an inspiring and candid portrayal of autism that sparks honest conversations and promotes understanding. At its heart, it is a story about the importance of community.

The screening will be followed by a panel discussion featuring young adults who identify as autistic or neurodiverse to explore autism and belonging.

## We want to thank the following for their work behind this event:

- Faculty and Students from the Department of Special Education & Communication Sciences and Disorders and the Occupational Therapy Program
- College Supports Program
- Washtenaw County Community Mental Health

### **Date/Time:**

Tuesday, April 2 at 6 PM

### **Location:**

Student Center Auditorium

Light refreshments will be provided.

### **Questions?**

Contact Leslie Blome  
(lblome@emich.edu)

# upcoming EVENTS

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## OPENING DAY

*Thursday, March 28th from 3-5 PM  
109 Halle Library*

Join us at the FDC to celebrate our most important national holiday, Opening Day of Baseball Season! Spend the early afternoon celebrating the 175th Birthday of EMU in the Student Center, and then join us from 2:30 - 5:00 PM at the FDC to watch some baseball, share some refreshments, and enjoy each other's company. If the Mets win, everyone who attends will get extra credit!

Our lives and jobs can be difficult- sometimes, we just need to kick back, watch baseball, and enjoy each other's company. Come join us to put life on hold for nine innings. #LetsGoMets #YaGottaBelieve #LGM

*Proposals are due April 1  
Click [here](#) to view the call for proposals.*

## ACTION RESEARCH NETWORK OF AMERICA CONFERENCE

Please join Rachel Radina as she hosts the Action Research Network of the Americas (ARNA) conference at EMU! Faculty, students, and community partners are invited to share their work at this conference. It is a hybrid conference, so you may present and/or attend virtually. University and K-12 students are encouraged to attend, with the conference rate for students being \$20 for the in-person conference and \$10 for attending the virtual conference. The conference will be held on June 7th and June 8th. Please contact Rachel Radina (rradina@emich.edu) if you have any questions!

## 2024-2025 DEI Faculty Fellow

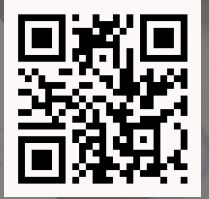
*Applications for this position are due by April 2nd at 5 PM  
Submit complete applications to Jeffrey Bernstein, FDC  
Director, at [jbernstei@emich.edu](mailto:jbernstei@emich.edu).*

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 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programming for the FDC during the 2024-25 academic year. Click [here](#) to view examples of work completed by our previous Faculty Fellows, Uttara Manohar and Audrey Farrugia. To read the call for applications, click [here](#). We'd love to hear your vision for this important position.

*April 4 from 3:45 - 5 PM  
Student Center Ballroom  
Click [here](#) to register*

## CAREERS AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY FAIR

Please consider attending the Careers and Cultural Diversity Fair, a campus-wide event that will gather professionals from Southeast Michigan from a variety of fields including business, healthcare, social sciences, and humanities. Students, faculty, administrators, and advisers are encouraged to attend! Invited guests will interact with participants and share with them their professional background, and their experiences and opportunities linked to working in a diverse workplace.



## FACULTY-STUDENT RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

**Proposals due April 12 @ 3 PM**  
**Click [here](#) to read the  
full Call for Proposals.**

The Faculty Development Center, with the generous support of GameAbove, is looking for proposals for our Faculty-Student Research Fellowships. Essentially, we are seeking partnerships to study partnerships! Fellowship proposals could concentrate on areas such as the value of faculty-student partnerships, overcoming barriers in forming them, the transformative potential of partnerships, or other such topics. We are pleased to offer up to four grants for projects to take place during the 2024-25 academic year. Each project team must have at least one faculty member or lecturer and at least one student member on it. We will award up to \$3,000 for each funded application, with continued funding possible for successful partnerships in the following year. Click [here](#) to visit the webpage for more information and the application.

**Click each event title for more info**

## SUPPORT FOR FACULTY WRITING

The end of the semester is a hectic time for us all, and our scholarship often gets pushed to the back burner. We tell ourselves, "I'll catch up on research over the summer." But family obligations, travel plans and summer teaching can make those precious weeks fly by. How can you advance your scholarly agenda over the summer while still taking that much-needed break? Join Sarah Walsh for "**Achieving Your Summer Writing Goals: A How-To Workshop.**" This event provides an hour to plan your scholarly agenda for the summer. We'll work together to set humane goals for ourselves and make a realistic plan for the next few months. This event will take place on Wednesday, April 17th at 10:00 AM in 109B Halle or on [Zoom](#). Click [here](#) to register.

Are you ready to kickstart your summer research agenda? Join us for "**Summer Research Writing Sprint,**" a two-day writing retreat on Wednesday, May 22nd, and Thursday, May 23rd. You bring your laptop and your works in progress. We'll bring the snacks and the supportive environment to keep you focused and productive. Take two days away from the usual distractions and demands on your time. Reconnect with your writing practice and finally finish that manuscript (or book proposal or grant application or...)! Click [here](#) to register.

## Partnership Spotlight

### **Dr. Christopher Robbins, Hannah Bollin & Jennifer Bennett**

**Department of  
Teacher Education**

In this partnership spotlight, Dr. Christopher Robbin's (R), Jennifer Bennett (C), and Hannah Bollin (L) share with us the story of their unique partnership on a service project, "The Workshop for Community+Collaboration," and how putting aside any pretenses has helped them succeed. Click [here](#) to read the full spotlight.



## ***The Impact of Syllabi Engagement and Student Belonging***

***By Reese McClelland***

Syllabi. Only the most exciting and entertaining handout (or these days, electronic document) from a professor. If you agreed with that statement, I applaud your enthusiasm. If you laughed at the thought of a sometimes 10-page document being exciting, I am here to say that your voice is part of the majority.

To many, the syllabus is a document used to outline laws, policies, assignments, and resources relevant to a student's experience at Eastern Michigan University. In my experience, professors sometimes do not even review it in class due to its length. It's a document sometimes not even utilized by students, so why talk about it, right? Wrong! There is so much potential for the syllabus (or at least the way it is presented to students) to truly be the heart and soul of the classroom. Syllabus delivery speaks so much to a professor's attitude towards students. It's important when considering syllabus delivery that we consider not only the intention, but primarily the outcome and effect it plays on students.

Consider this: it's my first day of class as a new freshman and the first thing I hear is, "This is a long document full of things I am required to give you, feel free to review it on your own time." As a student who is busy with other classes, activities, and jobs, I would struggle finding time to read through

the entire syllabus on my own. In addition, I would be much less likely to engage in this document when my professor isn't very enthusiastic about it either! Consider if the presentation of the syllabus sounded a little something more like, "This is the syllabus. It is too long for us to review in detail, but I do want to point out that there are many helpful academic and personal resources you should familiarize yourself with and utilize throughout our class. Please feel free to review it and I am here for any clarification or support I can provide." This small difference in presentation can make a big difference!

I do want to acknowledge that the syllabus often must be a lengthy, heavy document. There are quite a few legal/university policies that aren't the most entertaining topics to be covered in class. There isn't enough time for each and every handout in class to be reviewed in extensive detail, so the goal I want to propose is not that a professor should read the syllabus word for word in each class. How incredibly, mind-numbingly, boring that would be!

### **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!

Instead, the thought I want to provoke is that it's not what you say but how you say it. Both of the previous statements outline a time constraint and a document to be reviewed. Yet, doesn't the second one sound so much more inviting? As a student, aren't I much more willing to feel valued and cared for in a space that acknowledges that the resources provided are more than a requirement of professors but are intentionally there to help me?

While we all should abide by not judging a book by its first day of class, the first day can communicate to a student the kind of attitude they'll need for the rest of the semester. They'll be able to determine which professor is more understanding and willing to work with me through any trouble with an assignment, versus which lets me know that they are on their own.

As a faculty member, I encourage you to think of this as not being centered around the importance of talking about the syllabus itself. Rather, the effort of going slightly out of the way to make the class, and yourself, sound just a little more inviting is the effect that students will remember. I am not going to remember the words you used exactly or which few resources you were able to highlight, but I am going to remember that you took a few extra minutes to acknowledge that there are people to support me as a student and as a person.

As we are nearing the end of the semester and beginning to prepare for a new one (albeit not for a little while for most of us!), consider more than just how you are typing up the information. I encourage you to think about the greeting you choose to use before you begin talking about content. Consider the words, tone of voice, and body language you'll use and whether or not you'll invite students into the syllabus or if it will just be another document of under-utilized information. Lastly, consider how the student might be feeling in a new class, with new people, and brand new content. Maybe all a nervous kid needs on their first day is not a professor who values the class content over the students' success, but a professor on their team loud, proud, and willing to acknowledge that in this space, their wellbeing matters, too.

## About the Author



Reese McClelland is in her second year at EMU in a combined BA and MA Communication program with a minor in Management. On campus, she is one of the Recruitment, Training, and Development student coordinators for the Admissions Welcome Center, a Resident Advisor, and in the Honors College. She is passionate about creating enriching and effective communication between people, and hopes to pursue a career in Human Resources Organizational Development to continue supporting individuals and organizations to become their best selves.