

OCTOBER 28, 2024

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FDC HAPPENINGS

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Gannon

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Click [here](#) to apply.

Applications are due
October 30 @ 5pm

*Individuals are sitting at a table talking to an individual standing over them

Mini-Grants To Support Student Wellness

Many students at EMU face hardships that can make it difficult to succeed in the classroom. At the FDC, we believe that time spent supporting student wellness will build their strength and confidence, enabling us to be able to focus more on teaching course material. This will enable us to foster intellectual engagement and curiosity. Strong student-faculty partnerships are needed to help succeed in the classroom and produce meaningful engagement.

To this end, the Bruce K. Nelson Faculty Development Center and the Dean of Students Office, with support from the Department of Recreation and Intramurals (Rec/IM) and E|Dining, invites faculty and students to work together to implement a wellness practice into the classroom. Faculty who receive this funding will receive up to \$250 to introduce practices into their classroom during the winter 2025 term to support student wellness with a goal of sharing these innovations campus-wide.

Faculty, lecturers, and graduate teaching fellows may work by themselves or with a student for their implementation. Students who have ideas to support wellness may choose a faculty member on their own to work with, or can ask to be placed with a faculty member to work with on this initiative. Students who participate in this opportunity in partnership with a faculty member will be awarded a \$100 honorarium for their time and efforts as well. Click [here](#) to visit our website with more information, or to see examples of previously funded initiatives.

CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

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From the FDC and the Office
of Campus & Community
Writing

RADICAL HOPE

The Faculty Development Center and the Office of Campus & Community Writing invite you to join them for a book discussion focusing on Kevin M. Gannon's recent book, *Radical Hope: A Teaching Manifesto*.

In a world in which higher education finds itself under siege and faces significant threats and challenges, *Radical Hope* offers a vision of teaching as an emancipatory practice that spreads hope. Teaching, Gannon argues, can transform the world for our students; it can also help us to reshape institutional culture. Gannon's perspectives allow us to envision a better future for higher education, and for Eastern Michigan University, with teaching at the core.

We hope this book discussion will allow us to imagine what this better future might look like and to consider productive steps we might take to enact it. We invite you to join us to both imagine and to enact an agenda of radical hope for EMU.

109 HALLE
OR
ZOOM



We will meet on Tuesdays from
12:30 to 1:45 PM, on November 5,
November 19, and December 3.

For more information, visit our
[website](#).

Click [here](#) to register



upcoming

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FACULTY RESEARCH SHOWCASE

Tuesday, October 29 @ 3-5PM
Click [here](#) for more information.

The Faculty Development Center, the Office of Research Development and Administration (ORDA), and Graduate Studies and Research are excited to host the 2024 Faculty Scholarly and Creative Activity Showcase to celebrate scholarship and creative activities recently completed, or currently being pursued, by EMU faculty. This year, we are pleased to host student attendees interested in learning more about research possibilities. Please consider attending this event tomorrow to support your fellow faculty!

THE RESEARCH WRITERS' COLLABORATIVE

Click [here](#) for meeting information
Meetings held on Zoom

The Research Writers' Collaborative is an opportunity for EMU faculty to support each other while achieving their writing goals (e.g. developing a conference paper, drafting an article, revising a book chapter, etc.) by giving and getting helpful feedback. This program hopes to help faculty develop healthy writing habits, create realistic writing goals, boost writing productivity, and meet potential collaborators and colleagues. Meetings are held on Tuesdays from 11 to 1 pm. To learn more or to register, click [here](#).

INTERNAL RESEARCH AWARDS WORKSHOPS

Click [here](#) to register

During the fall 2023 semester, Alexis Braun Marks (University Library Department Head, University Archivist, and Associate Professor) and Natalie Dove (Associate Professor of Psychology and Interim Department Head of Psychology and Biology) will host three sessions for those interested in applying for a Summer Research Award. The purpose of these gatherings is to both inform attendees on the application process itself and to provide feedback on any materials you share. Please visit our website for information on the two workshops happening this week.

TEXTBOOK AFFORDABILITY WORKSHOP

Click [here](#) to register

This program, facilitated by EMU library faculty Kate Pittsley-Sousa and Julia Nims, is aimed at encouraging, assisting, and developing skills in EMU instructors related to the adoption of free or more affordable course materials. EMU instructors will be introduced to key concepts of open educational resources and will practice different methods of finding affordable reading materials. The goal of this program is for each participant to discover an alternative text that they would consider adopting. All sessions will be held virtually over Zoom. Attendees will receive a \$100 honorarium for participating in this series. To view session dates/times, click [here](#).

upcoming

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EVENTS

GACET/FDC FALL 2024 **LUNCH PRESENTATION SERIES**

Click [here](#) to register.

The GameAbove College of Engineering and Technology and the Faculty Development Center are hosting a lunch presentation series for faculty in the College. This series includes four different sessions. Our last session is “Using Your Syllabus to Welcome, Engage, and Support Your Students,” facilitated by Jeff Bernstein, and will take place on November 4 at 11:30 AM in 109 Sill. To view all other session information, click [here](#). We are grateful to the GameAbove Faculty First Fund for supporting this series.

Tuesday, November 12 @ 9:30 am
109B Halle Library or [Zoom](#)

GEN AI AND RESEARCH ETHICS

Many of us have been spending a great deal of time thinking about how Gen AI will affect our teaching. In addition to teaching, however, Gen AI will affect our research as well. This session will bring together faculty and other scholars on campus, along with the Office of Research Compliance, to consider benefits and drawbacks of using Gen AI in research, the ethical concerns this might raise, and how EMU can provide support to faculty looking to explore Gen AI as a research tool. This program will be valuable for faculty hoping to start using Gen AI in their research, or wishing to learn how to do it better.

BUILDING DEPARTMENT COMMUNITY **THROUGH STUDENT VOICE**

Applications Due: November 18

This learning community aims to help you and a student partner conceptualize how to change your department’s culture to one that sees students as valuable stakeholders and partners in their educational journey. Our efforts will focus on conceptualizing individualized plans for your department designed to meet the specific opportunities and challenges facing your department when it comes to changing its culture by incorporating student voice. Our learning community aims to recruit faculty-student partners from different departments across EMU’s five diverse colleges to participate in a TaLT learning community during the winter 2025 semester.

FLIPPING THE SCRIPT

Conference Date: November 22nd

We are happy to host our second annual Flipping the Script student-led teaching conference to empower the learners to become the teachers, and the teachers to become the learners. It offers all of us an opportunity to straddle both worlds, and to grow together. Why attend? As educators, you are the content experts, but your students bring invaluable insights into their own learning experiences. By attending this conference, you will have the chance to listen to and learn from your students, gaining fresh perspectives on effective teaching methods. Click [here](#) to visit our website for more information, to register to attend, or to contact us!

upcoming APPLICATIONS

scan the QR code to
access the links in
this issue



The FDC wants to draw your attention to two of our upcoming applications for funding. For more information about each application, click the hyperlinked title. Short descriptions of each application are below. For any questions, please contact us at faculty_development@emich.edu.

FDC PROGRAM FUNDING PROPOSALS

Application Due: November 11, 2024

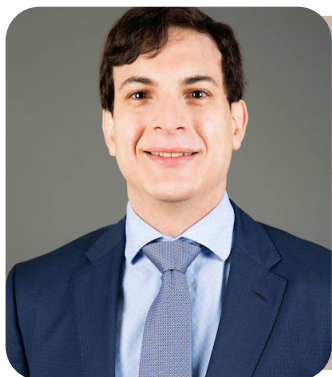
Each semester, we seek proposals for sustained learning communities or seminars, or for a more involved series of workshops, or for hosting a significant one-time event (such as bringing in a prominent speaker). We are able to fund a range of proposals that can make a difference in the teaching and learning environment at EMU. We award up to \$5000 per program, which can include an honorarium for a facilitator or speaker, honoraria for participants, supplies, travel expenses, etc. This funding can enable you to make a meaningful commitment of time and resources, enabling participants to learn together, develop new skills, collaborate, and innovate. We are currently seeking proposals for programs that will occur during the upcoming winter 2025 semester. Click [here](#) for more information or to apply.

eFELLOWS CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY GRANT

Application Due: November 25, 2024

The eFellows program supports faculty and full-time lecturers in obtaining the resources needed to successfully pilot innovative technology-based projects that enhance student-focused instruction in courses and curricula. The overall outcome of this program is to improve and enhance student learning and the scholarship of teaching through the integration of appropriate technology. To learn more about the Grant Application Process, view the [eFellows Proposal Instructions](#). If you have any questions about eFellows, please email [Michael McVey](#) (Professor of Teacher Education and Chair of eFellows Committee) or [Jeffrey Bernstein](#) (Director of the Bruce K. Nelson Faculty Development Center). If you wish to set up a meeting to speak more about your application, please email [Michael McVey](#).

Spotlights



Dr. Raed Jarrah

Department of Engineering

In this teaching spotlight, Dr. Raed Jarrah, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Engineering at EMU, shares his experience of teaching Construction Law and Civil Engineering coming from someone who was in the field for ten years. He also shares a crucial piece of advice that he has for incoming teachers at Eastern as well as why he finds teaching to be so rewarding for him. Click [here](#) to read the full spotlight.

By Ourania (Rania) Spantidi

Let's face it: Gen AI is here, and it is making waves in education. From ChatGPT crafting essays to AI models solving complex equations, our students have access to technology that can do in seconds what used to take hours. While this might seem daunting, especially when it comes to maintaining academic integrity, I believe it is an exciting opportunity for us as educators. Rather than shying away from or fearing Gen AI, we can embrace it, integrate it into our teaching, and prepare our students for a future where AI is an integral part of their professional lives.

First and foremost, it is essential that we acknowledge the existence of Gen AI. Ignoring it will not make it go away; in fact, it might exacerbate the challenges we face. Our students are already using these tools, and pretending otherwise does not serve anyone. By bringing Gen AI into the open, we can have honest conversations about its capabilities, limitations, and ethical use.

All these concerns are understandable, though. There is a fear that Gen AI could render traditional assignments obsolete or make it easier for students to cut corners. But here is the thing: technology has always evolved, and with each evolution, educators have adapted our teaching methods. Just as calculators did not eliminate the need to teach math, Gen AI does not eliminate the need for critical thinking, creativity, and understanding. Also... if a student wants to cut corners, they will cut corners no matter what.

Riding the Gen AI Wave

Allow me to share my own experience. I used to follow a traditional course format with weekly assignments. However, as Gen AI became more prevalent, I noticed that these assignments were not as effective in assessing students' understanding. Since these assignments were mostly coding-heavy, the code always seemed similar and suspiciously well-structured and documented. So, I decided to make a change. Instead of take-home assignments, I introduced interactive code-along sessions during class, where students code in real time alongside me. I show them a slide, it presents a problem, I ask them for their ideas on next steps, and then I show them a sample solution. It is a hands-on approach where I can see them typing the code themselves, troubleshoot issues on the spot, and engage them in discussions about why we are taking the steps we are taking. This way I can at least ensure that students are actively participating.

In lieu of traditional homework, I implemented weekly check-ins for semester-long projects. Each week, students must show their progress, discuss challenges they have faced, and plan their next steps.

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 with your blog post idea for the opportunity to be featured in future newsletters!

This continuous accountability requires them to recount their personal experience over the past week, which requires context that cannot be provided to a Gen AI tool (technically it can, but it would take a while to type an entire week's worth of tasks in a prompt). They also help students develop project management skills and encourage them to take ownership of their learning.

I know some of you might still have reservations. Here are a few common concerns and my thoughts on them:

- There is a worry that reliance on AI could diminish fundamental skills. However, by integrating AI thoughtfully, we can focus on higher-order thinking skills. Students can use AI for routine tasks while we challenge them with complex problems that require critical thinking.
- While AI can be used unethically, open dialogue about its use can mitigate this. Setting clear guidelines and incorporating AI into assignments can turn a potential pitfall into a learning opportunity. I would at least suggest incorporating a Gen AI policy in your syllabi. There are many resources that can support you in this endeavor, [including some from the Faculty Development Center.](#)
- Not all institutions have access to the latest technology. However, many Gen AI tools are accessible online for free or at a low cost. We can start small and scale up as needed.

By integrating Gen AI into our teaching, we are not just keeping up with the times; we are preparing our students for the future. In the professional world, upon graduation they will be expected to use technology like Gen AI to enhance their work. By exposing them to these tools now, we give them a head start.

Change can be intimidating, but we do not have to overhaul our entire teaching approach overnight. Start by incorporating small elements of Gen AI into your classes.

Perhaps it is a class discussion about an AI-generated article or an assignment where students critique AI outputs. Collaborate with colleagues to share ideas and resources. Together, we can develop best practices and support each other in this transition.

Gen AI is not just a buzzword but a transformative technology that is reshaping our world. By embracing it in our teaching, we can turn a potential challenge into a powerful tool for education. Let's lead by example and show our students that we are not afraid of the future; we are excited about it.

Instead of viewing Gen AI as a threat, let's see it as a tool, one that can enhance learning when used appropriately. I do not personally believe that it is mandatory to integrate Gen AI into our courses; I do, however, believe that it is mandatory to acknowledge that Gen AI is here, that it is rapidly evolving, and that we are ready to ride along.

About the Author



Ourania Spantidi received her Ph.D. in Computer Engineering from Southern Illinois University in May 2023 and joined Eastern Michigan University in Fall 2023 as an Assistant Professor in Computer Science. Her focus lies in AI, embedded systems, and

human-computer interaction. Her recent work involves using GPT for human-computer interaction projects and investigating the impact of approximate computing on neural network fairness. Teaching both graduate and introductory courses, she is passionate about bridging the gap between complex technology and practical application.