

JANUARY 6, 2025

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FDC HAPPENINGS

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- Upcoming Events continued
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- Teaching Blog: Play in the Post-Secondary Classroom

Monday, January 27 @ 12:30 pm
109B Halle Library or [Zoom](#)

Click [here](#) to register

*Large room with rows of seats facing an empty front stage

Understanding Free Speech in the College Classroom

Join the FDC in a conversation about free speech with Lauren London, EMU General Counsel & Jeff Ammons, EMU Associate General Counsel. They will provide an engaging environment to discuss the rules concerning what professors can and cannot do in the realm of political advocacy and free speech in the classroom. We'll have a chance to discuss these complex issues through discussion of case studies in this area.

Jeff Ammons has been EMU's Associate General Counsel since 2018. He came to EMU after working at the Dickinson Wright law firm for eight years, where he spent most of his time serving higher education and K-12 clients.

Lauren London has been EMU's General Counsel since 2018, having served as Associate General Counsel at the University since 2013. She came to EMU after working as a litigator and appellate specialist at Dykema law firm.

Click [here](#) for more information.

CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

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From the Graduate School
and the Undergraduate
Symposium

2025 STUDENT RESEARCH PRESENTATION OPPORTUNITIES

Below, we feature two upcoming events where your students can present their research! Please encourage them to apply for these valuable opportunities.

THE GRADUATE RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY CONFERENCE (GRCAC)

This conference is held annually to showcase outstanding research and creative projects by EMU graduate students/recent graduates. Click [here](#) for more information or to submit an application.



**PROPOSALS ARE DUE:
JANUARY 31**



THE UNDERGRADUATE SYMPOSIUM

The Symposium is hosted by the College of Arts & Sciences, and showcases students' research and creative projects. Participation is open to all undergraduate students who have been nominated by a faculty mentor and recommended by their respective department/school. Click [here](#) for more information or to submit a proposal and abstract.



**PROPOSALS ARE DUE:
JANUARY 15**

upcoming EVENTS

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

TEACHING AND THE HIRING PROCESS

- Wednesday, January 8 @ 12:30 PM
- Open to Department Heads & Faculty
- Explore various means of assessing the teaching potential of a job candidate, including guest lecturing in classes, teaching mock classes, pedagogical colloquia, and others

[Read More](#)

RESEARCH WRITERS COLLABORATIVE

- Tuesdays @ 11 AM - 1 PM, starting January 14
- Open to Faculty & Lecturers
- Opportunity for EMU faculty to support each other while achieving realistic writing goals

[Read More](#)

INTERNAL RESEARCH AWARDS: FACULTY RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

- First Session: January 16 @ 2 PM
- Open to Full-Time Tenured or Tenure-Track Faculty
- Learn more about the FRF application process and receive feedback on application materials

[Read More](#)

2025 CONNECT CONFERENCE

- Friday, February 14. Proposals due January 17.
- Open to Department Heads, Faculty, Lecturers, Staff & Students
- We are accepting presentation proposals for our 2025 CONNECT Teaching Conference. Please consider attending or presenting!

[Read More](#)

MAKE RESEARCH COLLABORATION EASY: EXPLORING FORAGERONE

- Wednesday, January 22 @ 12 - 1:30 PM
- Open to Faculty, Lecturers & Department Heads
- Drop-in session for faculty who want to learn more about ForagerOne, or who would like assistance updating their research profiles

[Read More](#)

upcoming EVENTS

Scan the QR code
to access the links
in this issue



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FACULTY-LED TRAVEL PROGRAMS

- Wednesday, January 22 @ 3:30 PM
- Open to Department Heads, Faculty & Lecturers
- Learn strategies for creating a pedagogically valuable experience for students, building your travel course itinerary, and how to make the most of the learning experiences.

[Read More](#)

COMMUNITY BUILDING EVENT: COOKING WITH THE FDC, C2W & ENS

- Wednesday, January 29 @ 12:30 - 1:30 PM
- Open to Faculty, Staff, Lecturers & Department Heads
- Cooking class to learn how to cook chicken and chickpea curry with homemade naan bread, and to build community with other EMU educators

[Read More](#)

WRITING SPRINT

- Friday, January 24 @ 9 AM - 3:30 PM
- Open to Faculty, Lecturers, Staff & Department Heads
- Reconnect with your writing practice and finally finish that manuscript (or book proposal or grant application or...)

[Read More](#)

INCLUSIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES WORKSHOP

- Wednesday, February 19 @ 11 AM - 12:30 PM
- Open to Faculty, Lecturers, and any Instructional Staff
- Learn tips on how to integrate inclusive practices in easy and manageable ways

[Read More](#)

Spotlights



Dr. Lynne Shetron-Rama

Department of Health
Sciences

In this spotlight, Dr. Lynne Shetron-Rama shares her educational journey to becoming an academic, her favorite courses to teach, and her experience with utilizing active learning in her classroom. She also shares her advice to incoming professors, and the most rewarding parts of her work. Click [here](#) to read the full spotlight.

Play in the Post-Secondary Classroom

By AnnaBelle Favre

In the fall, I had the privilege of presenting at the Faculty Development Center's second annual Flipping the Script student-led teaching conference. I first learned about the conference through the Honors College's newsletter and was drawn to its unique opportunities. Inspired by my CTAR (Communication and Theatre Arts) 222 class, I reached out to Professor Jen Felts to see if she would be willing to mentor me. She agreed, and we got to work.

I wasn't sure about the exact focus of my presentation, but I wanted to emphasize the importance of fun, positivity, and play for everyone—not just children. After some discussions with Jen and reading up on the topic, we decided to focus on incorporating play into secondary classrooms. I submitted a proposal and was thrilled to be accepted to lead a workshop.

The Faculty Development Center (FDC) set us up for success by offering opportunities to brainstorm, meet with faculty mentors, and rehearse. Collaborating with Jeff, Trinity, Elena, and other student presenters provided invaluable feedback, ideas, and encouragement to enhance my presentation.

With the workshop format, I had time not only to present information but also to demonstrate play for adults. I focused on three main points, incorporating activities to foster play and creativity between each section of the presentation.

I began by introducing myself: a first-year student, an elementary education major, and a former children's librarian. I also shared more personal details, explaining that I'm a type-A personality, afraid of things I'm not good at, and have struggled with the concept of play because I thought it interfered with productivity. I emphasized that these are things I'm working on, and play has been key in helping me grow.

Next, I introduced Joanna Fortune's idea of "glimmers"—small moments of joy that we can notice and amplify to make our lives brighter. From there, we dove into play. For our first play break, I kept everyone seated and working independently to keep things comfortable. I set a timer, and every ten seconds, they switched crayon colors. The goal wasn't to create a masterpiece, but simply to get color on the page. This activity challenged many, and the room filled with laughter and comments about their art skills. By the end, people had interacted more and seemed to have a more positive attitude. We discussed how they felt before moving on to the main content.

We then explored Dr. Stewart Brown's types and characteristics of play to answer the question, "What is play?" I explained how play increases

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!

engagement, fosters creativity, and builds connections in the classroom. I also shared how educators can incorporate play into their own classrooms, starting with fun icebreakers and activities in the first week and continuing throughout the semester. I emphasized that it's okay to start slow and gradually move past the comfort zone. Finding that balance between comfort and discomfort, and pushing it little by little, is key.

For the next play break, we had a silly rock-paper-scissors tournament called Egg, Chicken, Dinosaur, Robot, Superhero. This quick game encouraged movement and lightheartedness in a relaxed environment. By the end, everyone was so loud with laughter that I had to use a microphone to regain their attention!

I then shared various ways to bring play into the classroom. Games are one way, but so are activities like trivia contests during reviews for finals, changing seating arrangements, improvisation, and creative projects. Understanding that these ideas might feel overwhelming, I empathized with the faculty in the room and acknowledged how uncomfortable it can be to step outside of our usual routines. I reassured them that nobody feels 100% confident in everything they do and that feeling a bit uncomfortable is a small price to pay for creating a positive environment for students. I encouraged them, and encourage you, to start small, try something new, and see the impact that play can have on their classroom culture.

Even if only a few moments of play are incorporated, it can make a big difference in fostering connection and creativity as well as productivity. The 75-minute classes don't have a lot of wiggle-room for play, especially in content-heavy subjects, but students are not able to focus that whole time either. If you incorporate a two-minute play break in the middle of class, you still have 73 minutes of instruction, and more attentive students for

the second half of the lesson. If you lead the way, students will follow—even if it takes time. I also emphasized that it's okay to try and fail! If you have sixteen play breaks throughout a semester, and only two of them don't work, you're still doing great.

For our next play break, I led a music-based activity. Everyone stayed seated with a cup, and we followed a complex percussion routine projected from a YouTube video. This break went over well, and I found myself enjoying the chance to relax while the video guided the group.

I wrapped up the presentation by discussing the importance of choosing joy in both life and the classroom and answering a few questions. Afterward, I was overwhelmed by the kind words and support from professors, family, and faculty members I had never met.

My experience at the Flipping the Script Conference was one I will always cherish. It gave me an opportunity to bring positivity into the world and make a positive impact at my school, and I was grateful for the wonderful audience. I look forward to working with the FDC again and participating in Flipping the Script next year!

About the Author



AnnaBelle Favre is an elementary education major at Eastern Michigan University hoping to work in the public school system. She is experienced in early childhood education and previously worked as a children's librarian. She spends her spare time writing for the school newspaper, The Eastern Echo.