

Center for Engaged Learning (CEL)

2023-2024 Annual Report

CEL MISSION

The Center for Engaged Learning (CEL) champions innovative teaching and learning environments, robust scholarship and creative work, and meaningful service. The CEL strives to support faculty in their professional learning throughout their academic careers, from orientation to career advancement and beyond, with a focus on well-being. (Updated March 2023)

SUMMARY

The CEL champions academic excellence through experiences aimed at building exceptional teaching, enabling faculty to engage students in high-impact practices, while fostering research and innovation. It actively promotes student success and cultivates a diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus community through its many programs. The CEL's recent successes include the Course-Based Undergraduate Research Experience (CURE) Faculty Development Institute, funded by a Title III Grant, which enhances research opportunities for both students and faculty; and the Engaged Teaching and Learning Sequence, which provides KU faculty with the skills and knowledge that helps positively impact their teaching and learning and empowers learners to engage in rigorous, meaningful learning experiences. The CEL has also made significant strides in organizational restructuring, maintaining dedicated staff, creating a comprehensive mentoring handbook, and hosting professional development events. These events include a summer-long inclusivity-focused sequence of online courses, impactful workshops, an engaging Incoming Faculty Orientation (IFO), themed "Cookie Chats," and the launch of an online faculty journal, *KUtown exCEL*. We also completed the first 'needs assessment' in May 2024, which was completed by ~15% of the faculty. Looking forward, the CEL is committed to addressing developing programming identified by the needs analysis, supporting the Title III grant requirements, increasing mentoring programming, and increasing our overall faculty reach to 20%.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

The CEL directly supports these specific areas of the KU Strategic Plan:

Goal 1: Academic Excellence

Objective 1: Promote exceptional teaching, Objective 3: Ensure Students Engage in high impact practices and experiential learning, Objective 4: Enhance and encourage research, creativity and innovation.

Goal 2: Student Success

Objective 1: Improve academic success of all students

Goal 4: Caring Campus Community

Objective 1: Create a campus culture that is committed to a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible environment, and that champions the success of all members of its community, Objective 2: Expand DEI professional development programming for all employees.

CEL goals and outcomes, 2023 – 2024 academic year

Goal	Outcome
Goal 1: Increase the diversity of materials and events, such as developing web-based content, asynchronous supports, and types of multimodal events	<p>We provided seven different formats of synchronous events;</p> <p>We published seven blog posts;</p> <p>We developed and published four handbooks to support programming.</p>
Goal 2: Increase attendance at CEL events, both in number and diversity of attendees	<p>Total attendance: 116 at synchronous events (77 unique attendees);</p> <p>Faculty attendance: 95 (59 unique attendees, accounting for 15% of the 404 total faculty, as per Institutional Research)</p>
Goal 3: Expand and formalize mentoring process	<p>Fourteen faculty involved in mentoring program; new Handbook developed and published.</p>
Goal 4: Increase collaborations with campus groups	<p>Collaborated with seven different offices on campus: DSO, Student Success, KU Foundation, FDI, Grants and Sponsored Projects, Counseling Services, and TRIO.</p>
Goal 5: Restructure the organization to meet the needs of the campus community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Advisory Board Committee underwent two semesters of strategic planning to determine effective structures • The Advisory Board voted to dissolve as a committee under the University Senate <i>Committee on Committees</i> • New process will utilize an annual Advisory Council • Structure approved by University Senate in May 2024

General Overview

Staffing

- One full time staff (Douglas Scott, Director of Instructional Design) and a part time faculty with six credit course release (Erin Kraal, Faculty Director)
- After three unsuccessful searches, Teaching and Learning Developer position is unfilled

Staff Professional Development

- E. Kraal attended the Professional and Organizational Development Conference (Nov 2023)

- E. Kraal trained with a short course for New Faculty Developers through the POD network (Nov 2023)
- E. Kraal attends the subgroup for small centers through the POD network, meetings twice monthly (Nov – ongoing)
- D. Scott attended CAST conference in support of UDL initiatives
 - D. Scott participated in the ISKME Accessible OER Academy *Syllabi to Textbooks - Accessibility in Open Educational Resources for Institutions of Higher Education*

Needs Assessment summary

Completed in April-May 2024. A total of 62 faculty completed the survey (accounting for roughly 15% of the 404 total faculty, as per Institutional Research).

The needs analysis identifies multiple participant preferences that may enhance or encourage attendance at future offerings:

- Preference for ‘workshops’ and ‘communities of practice or learning community’.
- Desire to connect with colleagues, and opportunities to share and collaborate.
- Faculty partnerships as guest presenters or co-hosts encouraged attendance.
- Content and approaches that address setting aside time to innovate (e.g. realistic, quick implementation, time for reflection, etc).

Topics of relevance:

- Motivating and engaging students (i.e. low attendance, not turning in work, not doing readings)
- DSO: student anxiety and differentiated instruction for increasing levels of student accommodations
- Effective and efficient feedback
- Any topics related to AI

Specific support needs:

- Support for ‘scholarly growth or scholarship’ above other needs, such as teaching and pedagogical support (or other areas)
 - A platform to voice concerns about burnout from increasing workloads like prep, overloads, and the changing student population, combined with concerns over scholarly growth

Other key takeaways:

- Time, task prioritization, and leadership training were identified as "in demand" topics, which could potentially improve attendance
- Preference for face-to-face events – but wide range of needs documented, so continue to provide multiple contact approaches

Synchronous Events

CEL held 11 separate events (workshops, ‘Cookie Chats,’ and a ‘Lunch and Learn’ workshop) during Fall 2023 and Spring 2024, typically at the 11am meeting hour. These meetings had 116 attendees (76 unique participants), including faculty, staff, and administrators. Of this, 95 of these were faculty member attendances, of which 60 were unique attendees. During these events we collaborated with several campus offices including DSO with the MyPlace Program, the KU Foundation, Counseling Services, as well as Office of Sponsored Projects, and in support of the Title III Grant.

Incoming Faculty Orientation (August 2023)

- Dedicated website including [landing page](#) with information about getting started, the schedule, and links to various support resources
- Structured, two-day symposium for incoming faculty. Programming included classroom management, pedagogical support, personal wellness, and comprehensive coverage of human resources items and contractual obligations.

Cookie Chats!

A casual opportunity for faculty to drop-in, enjoy some snacks, and talk to a presenter.

- Take Note!: Presenter Deb Sailsbery: 5 attendees (9/14)
- Effective Discussion Boards: Presenter Amber Pabon: 4 attendees (10/5)
- Our Anxious Students: Presenters Lynn Kutch and Cesar Velasquez: 14 attendees, including 4 students (10/31)
- Publish not Perfection: Presenter Albert Fu: 3 attendees (11/9)
- Establishing your Scholarship: Presenters Mauricia John and George Sirrakos: 15 attendees (11/30)
- Funding your Research: Presenters Jeff Werner and Susan Lushinsky: 2 attendees (rescheduled 2/22)
- Building Strong Alumni Connections: Presenters Gary Chao, Julie Palkendo, Tim Kast: 2 attendees (3/28)

Workshops

Experience-based events focused on faculty outcomes

- Connections at Play (co-presented with Stephen Walker) (2/1) – 17 attendees
- Advising Workshop, co-presented with LAS Assistant Dean Maddie Anthes: 4 attendees (2/27)
- 30 Minutes of Recess: Pedagogy of Play: 8 attendees, activities included engaging with the CEL-created workbook (4/11)

Lunch and Learn

Special event about meeting needs of DSO students utilizing case studies about relevant faculty experiences. Co-sponsored with DSO's MyPlace Program.

- 32 attendees at two seatings
- Case-study approach adapted for future implementation

Neurodiversity Book group (Spring 2024)

- Under the Title III grant, this book group read [Supporting Neurodiverse College Student Success](#) by Coghill and Coghill.

Learning Centered Teaching Book Group (all year)

- o Seven faculty in a community of practice read [Making Learning Centered Teaching Work](#) by Blumberg.
- o Twelve meetings over the course of two semesters

Finals Week open house (December 2023)

- Drop in for relaxation and snacks during finals week: 11 attendees

Faculty Development Institute – Course based Undergraduate Research

Ten faculty, including the CEL faculty director, from various disciplines attended the Course-Based Undergraduate Research Experience (CURE) Faculty Development Institute May 15-16, 2024. CURE-based courses are designed to offer students hands-on research experience and help faculty generate new information in their fields. Facilitated by CEL director Erin Kraal, the two-day event focused on building a community of practice by examining scaffolding, assessment, publishing and equity in CUREs. Participants identified areas for refinement, set related goals and outlined plans for their next course delivery. A follow-up workshop in August will allow faculty to present their action plans. The institute was funded by the Title III Grant, Strengthening Institutions Program.

- Created and facilitated a two-day workshop for the Title III grant to support faculty implement CURES. Including a published workbook. The format focused on the needs identified by the faculty – assessment, scaffolding, increasing equity/access, and scholarship.
- Ten faculty attended the two-day workshop and submitted action plans for the 2024-25 year to the Title III coordinator.

Services

Mentoring

- Created and published a mentoring handbook for year-long support
- 7 mentor-mentee pairs placed in 2023-2024

CEL Engaged Teaching and Learning Sequence 2023 (June - July 2023 and May – June 2024)

This professional learning opportunity provides KU faculty with the skills and knowledge that help positively impact their teaching and learning through a sequence of four facilitated online, self-paced, asynchronous courses. Together they provide a framework that empowers learners to engage in rigorous, meaningful learning experiences.

- Developed four facilitated, self-paced, and self-contained online courses:
 - o Basics of Universal Design for Learning (25 enrolled 2023; 11 enrolled 2024)
 - o Design and Align Learning Outcomes (16 enrolled 2023; 8 enrolled 2024)
 - o Inclusive Teaching (23 enrolled 2023; 13 enrolled 2024)
 - o Large Lecture Transformation (17 enrolled 2023; 8 enrolled 2024)
 - o Advertised, recruited faculty, and facilitated participation in the two-week/eight-week total course sequence.

Inclusive Teaching Institute - UDL Course Redevelopment (Winter 2024)

- The initiative provides faculty with the skills and knowledge that help facilitate the institutionalization of equity, inclusion, and diversity at KU through the application of the Principles of UDL. F
- Faculty participants completed an asynchronous online course (Basics of UDL).

- Participants could be awarded professional development funding by completing the online course, attending two synchronous cohort sessions, and contributing a UDL-focused article to be hosted in the online journal.

CEL Self-Evaluation of UDL course (Summer 2024 pilot)

- Those who complete the Basics of UDL course are eligible to participate in the Self-Evaluation of Universal Design for Learning course.
- The course's purpose is to provide faculty with the tools to analyze their existing courses through a UDL lens and make evidence-based improvements to reduce barriers and maximize student variability.
- Participants are guided through the course materials that provide some background information with which they are already familiar but also introduce them to the concept of using guidelines and checkpoints to self-evaluate teaching and learning scenarios in the context of UDL.
- As they progress through the modules, they participate in a peer evaluation exercise to analyze a sample teaching and learning scenario. They then utilize the same techniques to guide them through a self-evaluation.
- They work through identifying and analyzing an example from their course offering(s) that moves beyond awareness and into evidence-based UDL transformation.
- By the end, they will emerge with a customized UDL evaluation and implementation plan, along with increased confidence in their ability to proactively design inclusive learning experiences.

KUtown exCEL: Faculty Journal of the CEL (May-June 2023)

- Established online journal, [KUtown exCEL](#), as a place to learn more about how KU's faculty are advancing pedagogy by advocating for students and working together to enact an understanding of teaching and learning within a community of mutual respect.
- Articles published in this journal combine personal experience, current conversations in academia, and a theoretical foundation that presumes the value, strength, and independent thinking of all learners.

Instructional Design

- Developed eLearning modules utilizing a new web-based, responsive platform, Rise 360
- The modules included the following:
 - an interactive ADA presentation for the Disability Services Office;
 - a “Basics of UDL” module for use by various departments;
 - A discussion guide to support the documentary “Pardon Me” used in the ARED_331_010 course. This last module was developed with Dra. Leslie Sotomayor, Heather Kuruvilla, and the film’s director Shuja Moore. The guide aims to provide context and information for the film to support facilitators navigating complex topics of the U.S. incarceration system and the various intersections of oppression.

Awards

2023 John P. Schellenberg Award for Excellence in Teaching and Learning: Brooks Emerick, mathematics
2023 Chambliss Awards: Greg Setliff, biology; and Tony Wong, mathematics

Supporting Title III Grant

The CEL is providing significant support to the Title III grant, a goal of which is building a portfolio of transformational, high-impact practice experiences for increased accessibility for all students including our most vulnerable populations: historically underrepresented minorities, Pell eligible (low-income), first generation, and neurodivergent. Efforts involving the CEL include providing faculty development training on faculty-led research opportunities (such as CURE) and building awareness of strategies and tools for inclusivity of neurodiverse students through communities of practice. During academic year '23-'24, the CEL facilitated the *Basics of UDL* course (see above) for the tutoring staff of the Office of Student Success. Of the 88 student tutors who enrolled, 14 earned a digital badge and certificate of completion. In addition, 5 members of the Office of Student Success completed the course.

Goals for 2024-2025 Year:

- Develop and implement specific programming to address needs identified in the “Need Analysis Survey”
- Support Title III grant needs
- Increase mentoring opportunities and programs