

FDC HAPPENINGS

October 31, 2022



A woman points to a piece of poster paper on a wall which includes writing and diagrams in multiple colors, possibly the result of a brainstorming session.

Call for Proposals: Program Funding

Applications Due:
Monday, November 21st at Noon

The Faculty Development Center is looking for program proposals to fund for the Winter 2023 semester. This can include significant initiatives like learning communities, workshops, etc. Proposals have the opportunity to be awarded up to \$5000, which can include: an honorarium for a facilitator or speaker, honoraria for participants, supplies, travel expenses, etc. All faculty, lecturers, and staff are eligible to submit a Program Request Form. The beneficiaries of the program must be primarily faculty and/or lecturers. Applications must be submitted by Monday, November 21st at noon, using [InfoReady](#). Please do not hesitate to [contact us](#) if you have an idea you'd like to kick around; we're happy to help you create a great proposal. Click [here](#) to learn more.

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Mini-Grant Recipients

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Several weeks ago, we debuted our wellness initiatives for this semester, including the launching of our Mini-Grants for Supporting Students Wellness. After looking through all 22 of the compelling applications we received, 8 recipients have been chosen by our committee (Jeff Bernstein, Sean Woolf, Meg Phelps, Hannah Bollin, and Trinity Perkins) as our inaugural awardees. Congratulations to all our recipients!

From the FDC and the Dean of Students Office

Recipients

- **Ann Blakeslee, Hollie Hills, Bill Teepan, Carissa Mares, David Boeving, and Melissa Brooks-Yip**
 - Writing Toward Wellness
 - **John Palladino**
 - A Doggone Good Idea: A Paws-ative Wellness Intervention for the College Classroom
 - **Zuzana Tomaš**
 - Guiding Teacher Candidates to integrate Academics and Wellness (Coursework and Service-learning with English Learners)
 - **Kelly Grossmann Getz, Sarah Fabian, Kathie Mason**
 - Reading for the Fun of It
 - **Lolita Cummings**
 - Addressing Student Mental Health Through Random Acts of Kindness and Self-Care.
 - **Debra Gombert and Laura Pawuk**
 - Present in my Music
 - **Audrey Farrugia**
 - CSD Snapshots: The Intersection of My Culture and Profession
 - **Julia Burkhardt and Jodi Schumacher**
 - Be Mindful of Burnout: Raising Awareness and Promoting Prevention
- Thank you to everyone who submitted an application and to Sean Woolf, Dean of Students Office, for all your work and collaboration on this initiative.

Please contact the Faculty Development Center's Director, Jeffrey L. Bernstein, if you would like to talk more about possible ideas for future applications - we intend to offer another round of funding next semester.



UPCOMING EVENTS

READING IN
PRINT?
scan the QR code to
access the links in
this issue



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The eFellows program supports faculty and full-time lecturers in piloting innovative technology-based projects that enhance student-focused instruction in courses and curriculum. Two virtual, drop-in workshop sessions are being offered pre-submission for proposal writing support. Learn more [here](#).

eFellows Grant Proposal Writing Workshops

*November 2, 1:00pm and
November 3, 9:00am
via [Zoom](#)
Applications due November 21*

The Impact of Racial Microaggressions

*November 9
2:00 pm
109 Halle and [Zoom](#)*

The second session of this workshop will assess common racial microaggression examples experienced by BIPOC instructors in the classroom. There will also be a discussion on the impact of microaggressions and effective ways that we can help BIPOC instructors in coping with microaggressions. We will also come up with strategies for allies to effectively support their BIPOC colleagues in higher education. Click [here](#) to learn more.

In 2018, the Michigan Department of Education announced their updated "students-first" teacher certification system. Since then, faculty across EMU's colleges have taken this opportunity to revitalize our teacher preparation program to incorporate the new professional standards and state requirements. Join us for our next session on November 11 when we do Anchor Activity Planning. Faculty and lecturers will receive an honorarium for participation in each session.

Secondary Teacher Preparation Program

*November 11, 18 &
December 9
109 Halle
(See [website](#) for times)*

Hy-Flex Classrooms

*November 16
3:30pm-4:45pm
217 Pray Harrold*

EMU has invested in creating hy-flex classrooms, enabling instructors to integrate students who are both in the classroom and remote. Please join this session with Ashley Johnson Bavery, Ron Flowers, and Alankrita Pandey, instructors who have done exciting things with the hy-flex classroom. They will offer guidance on how to maximize the possibilities available in this setup. Learn more [here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

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Let's take an hour or so to think about what our winter semester writing plans will be, and set ourselves up to achieve our goals. Join Sarah Walsh, the facilitator of this year's Research Writers Collaborative, to find effective ways to set and achieve our writing goals, even with the pressures we all face. Click [here](#) to learn more.

Planning Your Scholarly Agenda for the Winter Semester

December 8, 3:30pm-4:45pm
109 Halle or [Zoom](#)

Faculty Support Group

Every Monday, 11:00am
Via [Zoom](#)
Next meetings are October 31st
and November 14th

Research Writer's Collaborative

Every Thursday, 1:30pm
Via [Zoom](#)
Come join us to "Shut Up and Write" in a supportive group.

SPOTLIGHTS

This week's book spotlight is *The Pact*, written by Dr. Sampson Davis, Dr. George Jenkins, and Dr. Rameck Hunt. In this book, they talk about the power of friendship and the power of the promises. The Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Planning Committee and the Chief Diversity Office is hosting a three-part book discussion on *The Pact*, which is free and open to students, faculty, staff, and community members. Click [here](#) to learn more about this event. And, click [here](#) to read the full spotlight or to check out this book, or others, from our library.



This week we are spotlighting Dr. Caren Putzu. In her teaching spotlight, Dr. Putzu

talked about her growth as a teacher over the course of her time at EMU and her love for teaching social work classes and working with her students to make them more confident in their skills. To read the full spotlight, click [here](#).

Dr. Caren Putzu
Associate Professor
Social Work

TEACHING BLOG: COLLEGE TEXTBOOKS: AN INCREASINGLY COMPLICATED LANDSCAPE

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Current trends in commercial textbook publishing can have negative effects on students, instructors and enrollment. There are ways to improve outcomes, particularly for faculty who are aware of these trends and can act accordingly.

Trend 1. Rapidly rising textbook costs

From 2006-2016 textbook prices rose 88%, while tuition and fees rose 63%. Overall text price increases were still higher than tuition increases from 2011 to 2021.

A large 2022 survey of college students in Virginia found that due to the cost of required course materials:

- 38% of students took fewer courses
- 34% earned a poor grade
- 16% failed a course
- 16% chose their major in part on text costs

One simple strategy is to submit text orders early, so the bookstore can acquire more used texts. Better yet, consider affordable alternatives beyond those offered by the dominant text publishers.

Trend 2. More frequent editions, and very expensive older print editions

Textbook rentals and online markets for used texts decrease new commercial text sales. Publishers respond with more frequent editions. In some disciplines, faculty notice little difference in new editions and continue to assign older editions, so they needn't adjust courses for minor text changes and students can buy used texts. However, low stock of older editions can cause pricing algorithms to create cases where an older edition costs significantly more than a new edition.

Although assigning an old edition might still help students, it's best to first check prices and the number of copies available on Amazon to gauge whether the bookstore will be able to provide enough reasonably-priced copies. If feasible, it may work better to provide students with a range of editions that will work for the course. Better yet, if you are tired of having to redesign your course for new editions that aren't necessa-

By Kate Pittsley-Sousa

ry, take a look at open textbook options with Creative Commons Licenses that allow you to upload the entire text to Canvas and often also allow you to make your own updates to the text as needed. Open texts eliminate cost barriers for students and decrease inequality, since high text prices have a disproportionate effect on Pell Grantees, first generation students, non-white students, students with disabilities, and other vulnerable student groups.

Trend 3. The disappearing print text and rise of online rentals

Large textbook publishers have signaled their intention to eliminate print texts and move entirely to digital rentals. Most students prefer print texts, but choose digital texts when they can't afford the print. Print options impact faculty adoptions, so publishers use a subtle strategy: Print small runs of books, pricing them so high that most students can realistically only choose the digital rental or skip buying the text. Numerous smaller publishers offer high quality texts with more reasonable prices, and many will also sell a library ebook version. Adopting one of these texts means that more students will be able to obtain a print text and those who still can't afford the text might be able to rely on a li-

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!

brary ebook. When EMU instructors had a library ebook for their course, 75% thought more students completed the readings.

Trend 4: Custom texts

Sales representatives encourage instructors to save students money by designing a custom text with select chapters from a comprehensive text. However, the net effect for students is often higher cost, since used copies of the custom text may be scarce and students usually can't identify the comprehensive text to also find a used version. Also, custom texts often have little to no resale value.

For greater freedom to customize readings without increasing costs, consider using a mix of chapters from library ebooks, articles in the library collection, and Open Educational Resources (OER).

Trend 5: Access codes, "inclusive" access

Access codes, especially homework codes, often give students no option to rely on a used text, library ebook, or print copy on reserves at the library. Expensive codes can cause students to avoid enrolling in a particular course. So-called "inclusive" access programs automatically bill students for online course materials. Legally they must provide students with an opt-out, but if the code is required to submit homework, the only real opt-out is dropping the course. Adoptions are encouraged by touting the benefits of access to course materials on the first day of cla-

ss. However, use of OER and linked library resources also provides immediate access without charging students.

The Virginia survey included comments from students who dropped courses because of access code costs. Considering that students in vulnerable groups were found more likely to drop a course due to materials cost, the name "inclusive access" is a cynical marketing ploy—a more accurate term reflects the corporate objective: "every student pays." The Virginia researchers also described how code charges caused some students to distrust the institution.

Corporations might initially offer access codes and inclusive access at reasonable prices to encourage adoption, but might also significantly raise costs in subsequent years. They understand that faculty are unlikely to quickly switch to different course materials. There are 100-level courses at EMU that list \$200 access codes at the bookstore. Do you know what codes in your department cost?

You'll note that I've switched terminology from publisher to corporation. Pearson's investor communications state they are the "global leader in education" and boast of "taking over" degree programs. The same platform used for inclusive access and access code materials is used to offer for-profit online degrees.

Please consider whether access code material is highly beneficial to students and necessary. If you do use codes, monitor costs and question increases. Open homework systems are available, Canvas has useful capabilities, and you might find open access interactive materials.

Library Faculty Consultations on Alternatives

Searching for alternatives can be complex. EMU Library Faculty use multiple strategies to find affordable course materials and provide a list of options to consider. Consultations are increasing, most result in success, and we have many repeat customers. For a consultation, contact your subject librarian.

If you have questions on the EMU Library Textbook Affordability Initiative, please see this FAQ or contact Kate Pittsley-Sousa at kpittsle@emich.edu. The Library Faculty is happy to partner with faculty to find affordable course materials.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kate Pittsley-Sousa is a Professor on the Library faculty, Subject Librarian for the College of Education,

and Coordinator of the EMU Library Textbook Affordability Initiative. She researches problems related to expensive course materials in higher education and possible solutions to lower text cost barriers for students.