



MUS TEACHING SCHOLARS

Montana University System Teaching Scholars
Program Handbook, 2024



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MUS Teaching Scholars Overview

Each year, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education recognizes a select group of faculty at all stages of their careers who have made exemplary contributions to high-quality teaching and learning and who demonstrate commitment to making the transformative experiences of higher education accessible and achievable for a diverse student body.

The goals of the MUS Teaching Scholars program are to elevate excellent teaching and learning as the signature feature of an MUS education *and* to continuously advance the profound impact of high-quality teaching on individuals as they apply their talents and knowledge locally and globally.

As part of the MUS Teaching Scholars program, awarded faculty will design and lead faculty learning communities (FLC) around the annual MUS Teaching Scholars theme, contribute scholarship and reflections on teaching and learning, and participate in system-wide MUS Teaching Scholars activities such as a speaker series and a system-wide symposium on teaching and learning.

Annual Themes

To focus the work of the program and build cohorts whose work will have cumulative impacts across the system, the MUS Teaching Scholars program focuses on an annual theme. Each year, the annual theme is developed in coordination with the MUS Teaching Scholars Advisory Council and is selected to support innovation in teaching, advance MUS strategic initiatives related to teaching and learning, and to respond to national conversations around teaching excellence in public higher education.

2024 Theme: Artificial Intelligence in the Classroom

The recent dramatic growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI), especially generative AI, has radically transformed our world. In higher education, AI has and will continue to change how students learn, how faculty teach, the workforce our students will develop careers in, and the world our students will engage in as they are tasked with solving society's most pressing challenges and pursuing its most promising opportunities. In other words, new and coming advances in AI usher in a radical sea-change for higher education, beyond simply concern about academic integrity. As these emerging technologies are beginning to impact us and as we think about the future of teaching and learning and anticipate the knowledge and skills that our students will need in a new world yet to emerge, this year's MUS Teaching Scholars program will support faculty who are early leaders in exploring:

- use cases of AI in the classroom;
- how AI will change teaching and learning;
- how faculty and administrators must rethink pedagogy and curriculum;
- how AI may support or undermine equity and inclusion imperatives;
- opportunities to use AI to support universal design for learning;
- mobilizing curriculum development to be responsive to rapid changes in skill and knowledge demands;
- preparing students for research in an AI-driven environment;
- Enhancing equitable learning and student outcomes through use of AI;

2021-2022: Innovations in Teaching & Learning

Perhaps no buzzword is more ubiquitous in the higher education sphere in 2021 than “innovation,” and with good reason. Throughout the past year and a half, faculty members have completely rethought how course delivery impacts learning, discovered new ways to replicate or reimagine the embodied experience of learning, redesigned content and assignments for remote teaching, transformed how students engage with one another to learn, and implemented universal design practices as faculty and learners alike have operated in multiple modalities. At the same time, university faculty across the country have responded in force to a national reckoning with systemic racial and social inequities and injustices. Last year’s cohort of MUS Teaching Scholars were recognized for their exemplary commitment to addressing those inequities in the classroom through strategies like diversifying curriculum, centering marginalized students’ experiential knowledge, and implementing other equity-minded pedagogical practices. Even before the pandemic, faculty members across the MUS were advancing bold, new teaching practices such as high impact practices or transparent education, among many others. What these transformational practices have in common is innovation—rethinking, imagining anew, creating, implementing, iterating, and assessing transformational solutions to the most pressing challenges in teaching and learning.

2020-2021: Equity-Minded Pedagogies

Like many across the nation, MUS campus communities are grappling with and responding to the consequences of deeply embedded racial, social, and other forms of injustice. In the sphere of higher education, these injustices often show up as inequities in academic achievement. For instance, by the marker of degree achievement alone, American Indian students and other racial minorities, low-income students, and first-generation students among other underserved populations have, on the whole, lower degree-completion rates. The MUS has made positive progress in narrowing achievement gaps, including the recent and ongoing system-wide initiative on High Impact Practices, the implementation of the American Indian and Minority Achievement (AIMA) Council and campus plans, as well as many other individual institutional efforts. But, this is monumental and necessary work that systems of higher education, institutions, and individuals must continually commit to.

As part of the MUS’s ongoing effort to achieve more equitable educational outcomes, this year’s MUS Teaching Scholars program will recognize and support faculty who are committed to addressing equity gaps through equity-minded teaching. We invite proposals that address equity in a broad-based manner as well as proposals that address more specifically the systemic racial and social injustices highlighted by the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and others. Throughout the year, MUS Teaching Scholars program will support faculty as they advance teaching and learning practices, curriculum, praxis, and the scholarship of teaching and learning specifically designed to address systemic inequities and injustices in the classroom. These could include but are not limited to course and curriculum design strategies such as decolonizing syllabi, high impact practices, Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT), social justice education pedagogies, among many others.

2019-2020: Activating General Education Through High Impact Practices (HIPs)

As higher education seeks innovative ways to make the college classroom relevant and transformational for students' intellectual pursuits, future careers, and civic lives, George Kuh's ten "High Impact Practices" continue to be useful pedagogical tools. To support innovative work in enhancing students' first experiences in college, the Montana University System is pleased to announce that this year's theme for the MUS Teaching Scholars program will focus on High Impact Practices (first year seminars; common intellectual experiences; learning communities; writing intensive courses; collaborative assignments; undergraduate research; global learning; ePortfolios; service learning; work-based learning; capstone projects) in general education and introductory coursework. The MUS Teaching Scholars program will recognize and support advancement of teaching and learning that use Kuh's ten 'High Impact Practices' to make early coursework, and general education in particular, exciting, engaging, relevant, and impactful for students.

MUS Teaching Scholars Program Activities & Expectations

Faculty Learning Communities

MUS Teaching Scholars will design and facilitate faculty learning communities (FLCs). Faculty Learning Communities are small groups of faculty who build a community of practice and use the scholarship of teaching and learning to address issues related to teaching and learning. In this case, MUS Teaching Scholars will design and lead FLCs that address a teaching and learning issue, strategy, challenge, practice, theory, etc related to the program's annual theme.

FLCs should include enough members to create dynamic interaction but be small enough to have robust conversation. Most FLCs related to MUS Teaching Scholars have 6-10 faculty.

MUS Teaching Scholars Speakers

Periodically, OCHE may host speakers on pedagogical topics related to the MUS Teaching Scholars theme and the goals of the program. Speakers are intended to give teaching scholars shared opportunities to engage with their cohort as well as with state and national experts actively engaged in the scholarship of teaching and learning. Teaching scholars are encouraged to invite members of their faculty learning communities to MUS Teaching Scholars speaking events. Details on speaker events will be shared throughout the spring semester.

Program Deliverables

MUS Teaching scholars are required to submit a critical reflection essay to be shared through the MUS Teaching and Learning Commons, a digital community of practice set to launch in Canvas in AY 24-25. Teaching Scholars will contribute a white paper with learnings from their FLC. White papers should follow the faculty's disciplinary expectations and should aim to share best practices, pedagogical strategies, lessons learned, research on teaching and learning, etc related to the year's theme. Teaching Scholars are encouraged to integrate the final white paper into

the design of their faculty learning community and to invite FLC participants to submit reflections as well or submit a collaborative contribution. Teaching Scholars may be invited to present findings at system-wide events supporting teaching and learning.

Award Information & Stipend Guidelines

Award

As part of the recognition for being selected as an MUS Teaching Scholar, faculty receive an award of \$1,500. To facilitate distribution of award funds, OCHE will create an MOU with provost offices and funds will be disbursed through the campus provost offices. Faculty will receive the award through payroll in the spring term of the award year. Please note that OCHE provides funds for payroll expenses but the actual paid out award may be slightly less than \$1,500 due to differences in payroll expenses for each individual.

Stipend Guidelines

The MUS Teaching Scholars program will reimburse up to \$500 for expenses related to supporting the FLC work. Allowable expenses include materials, books, speakers, food, or other expenses related to FLCs. Please note that any expenses must follow campus purchasing policies including purchases for food.

OCHE will disburse funds to each provost's office and Teaching Scholars will request reimbursement for expenses directly from the provost's office. Please follow campus processes for expenditures and reimbursements. For the 2024 MUS Teaching Scholars program, the deadline for all expenditures and reimbursement requests is December 31, 2024.

Please note that gift cards are not an allowable expense and not eligible for reimbursement.

Teaching & Learning Resources

Faculty Learning Communities

EveryLearner/Everywhere and Colorado State University. "[Guide to Building A Faculty Learning Community: The Role of Interdisciplinary Faculty Community of Practice to Facilitate the Adoption of Adaptive Courseware.](#)"

Guide to FLCs including specific suggestions for effectively using FLC meetings, topic/content ideas for FLC meetings, and a sample plan for meetings and goals. Some content is specific to CSU adaptive courseware project but nearly all information is valuable and relevant to any FLC.

Miami University Center for Teaching Excellence "[Faculty Learning Communities](#)"
Resources on developing, facilitating, and assessing impact of FLCs. Includes helpful notes on leadership roles, deliverables, defining goals and objectives, and 16 recommendations for FLCs.

University System of Georgia "[A quick-start guide to your FLC](#)"
Brief guide on basic purpose, task and criteria for an effective Faculty Learning Community. Includes example reflections from FLC participants. Pedagogy, High Impact Practices & Inclusive

University System of Georgia “[Faculty Learning Communities Overview](#)”
Overview of nuts and bolts of FLCs, ideas for first and subsequent meetings, and lessons learned from UGS faculty on recruitment and facilitation.

University System of Georgia “[Faculty Learning Community Facilitator Toolkit](#)” *Toolkit with strategies for facilitating an effective FLC including recruitment, building community, facilitating meetings, and suggested learning outcomes and deliverables.*

Teaching

American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) “[High Impact Practices](#)” *Information, resources, and national professional development opportunities focused on high impact practices.*

Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) “[Inclusive Teaching Practices Toolkit](#)” *Strategies and pedagogical practices that create and sustain inclusive learning environments that support positive and more equitable outcomes for all students.*

Viji Sathy and Kelly A. Hogan, Chronicle of Higher Ed, “[How to Make Your Teaching More Inclusive](#)” *Principles of inclusive teaching, practical strategies for the classroom, ideas for inclusive course design, and assessment strategies.*

National Association of System Heads (NASH) “[High Impact Practices: An Educator’s Guide](#)” *NASH modules on HIPs geared to faculty. HIPs are a set of engaged teaching practices that research demonstrates benefit college students from all backgrounds and produce equitable outcomes.*

MUS Teaching Scholars Program Information

Program Leads

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