



ST. CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING & LEARNING (CETL)

Newsletter, February 2024

When the heart is asked to hold more than it is able...so that teacher and students and subject can be woven into the fabric of community that learning, and living, require.”

Parker Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*

CETL – We're here for YOU!

How's your teaching going? If you have questions, need advice, or are looking for resources, email us for a consultation (CETL@stcloudstate.edu). If we don't have the answer, we will connect you with someone who does.

Upcoming Teaching & Learning Events

CETL Events & Deadlines

Mon, March 18 by 5 pm - [Miller Scholar Applications](#) due.

- *The Miller Scholars Program is an award to recognize and support faculty innovation, excellence, and leadership related to teaching and learning. The award was established by the generous donation of James W. and Marion Miller.*

Tues, April 16 SCSU Provost Summit (See email announcements for details)

Instructor Idea Swaps

See a brief demo and engage in discussion on the topic. All sessions are online: <https://minnstate.zoom.us/j/99148942611>

Thurs. March 21, 10-11 AM Mark Gill, AI Hacks to improve your work

Thurs. April 18, 10-11 am - TBD

See this [playlist for previous Instructor Idea Swap videos](#) (Thank you Aerial Ashlee for leading on Feb 1; Communicating Growth Mindset in Assignment Instructions & Clear Wise Feedback)

SCSU Write Nights (Graduate Studies; University Library; CETL)

Working on a thesis or other writing project? Join others in-person [or online](#) (passcode: Write) for dedicated writing time. Support available as needed.

Wed/Thurs Feb 28 and 29, MC – 218, 6 to 9 pm

Minnesota State Network for Educational Development (NED) Courses

The Educational Development team through the Minnesota State System Office sponsors many excellent online learning opportunities including webinars, short courses, or learning communities. Some cohort learning opportunities are compensated through MinnState. Subscribe to [ASA Newsletter](#) for details of ongoing events.

NED Excellence in Teaching 3-Part Series

Ruthanne Soohee Kim, Ph.D. SCSU Faculty Lead | CARE

February 15, 22, 29

Participants will collaboratively generate new approaches for well-being, contemplative immersion, and achieving what truly matters. Don't miss this transformative journey

NED Short Courses Spring 2024 (free to SCSU Faculty/Staff; Registration required)

Feb 12-Mar 3, [SoTL: From classroom reflection to classroom inquiry](#),

Feb 12-Mar 3, [Equity 101](#)

Feb 12-Mar 3 [Integrating Retrieval practice](#)

Mar 18-April 7, [Intro to antiracist pedagogy](#)

Antiracism Institute for Teaching and Research

Equity by Design Faculty Workshops Mon, March 18, 2-4:30 & Wed, March 20, 2-3:30 (online or in person). Training to empower SCSU faculty to assess student equity gaps using personal course data. [Registration required](#).

ARI Student Focus Groups. As part of Equity 2030, SCSU faculty are conducting focus groups on the experience of undergraduate domestic students of color or BIPOC students regarding their experiences in gateway courses (e.g. MATH/STATS 100-200 and 200-300, CHEM 200-300, PHIL 100-200, etc. courses). The aim to better understand the students' experiences, including any obstacles to academic success and how they overcame those barriers. **All student participants will receive a \$50 Amazon gift card as a research incentive. Students can sign up for the study at <https://scsu.mn/3TqfA6G>**

TEACHING IRL @ SCSU

Faculty as Guides in Student Career Development

Tammison Smith, Associate Director of Career Development and Outreach
Janet Tilstra, CETL Director

Numerous theories in vocational psychology explain why people choose specific careers. Person/environment-fit (P-E) theories, developed by Frank Parson in the early 1900s, and later expanded in John Holland's theory of vocational choice, recognize that matching a person's unique combination of traits with their work environment will ensure satisfaction. Regardless of specific characteristics that influence career choice, the process remains similar:

1. The individual invests time to explore, understand, and appreciate their unique, personal characteristics.
2. The individual gathers facts about the world of work including job characteristics, and realities of the labor market.

3. The individual uses all available information about the self and the world of work, including real-world experiences, to make an informed decision.

P-E theories stress that full engagement in the first two steps facilitates optimal, holistic development. The ideal outcome of step three is when an individual finds a work environment that complements their unique characteristics and allows them to thrive on multiple career and personal levels.

Faculty, as instructors and advisors, regularly encounter questions and conversations about students' current and future career plans. In class, faculty assignments can allow students to explore individual characteristics and values. (Check out how to allow for individual expression through [these resources](#) on [Universal Design](#)). Interests sparked in class can be followed-up with detailed exploration at the career center.

Faculty can support career exploration by providing information, support, and encouragement. Referring a student to the [Career Center](#) to take a self-assessment or gather market information can be a great place to start identifying characteristics or a job of interest. In addition, conversations with a trusted mentor (yes, you faculty!) can deepen self-reflection and help the student integrate information with self-concept. It's important for students to understand that career paths include not just vocational interests, but also consideration of their avocational and personal needs too.

TEACHERS ARE HUMAN

Working in an environment with tight budgets, massive layoffs, and dramatic organizational changes is taxing. Handling the aftermath of these changes, whether you are leaving or staying, can be emotionally and professionally challenging. There are no easy answers, but here are some common Q & As to get you thinking.

How do I support my colleagues who have been laid off or retrenched?

Here are some compassionate and practical ways:

Offer Emotional Support

4. Listen and Empathize: Let them express their feelings without judgment. Sometimes, a listening ear can make a significant difference.
5. Remind them of their value and resilience. Encourage self-care and stress management.
6. Thank them for their contributions - verbally, with a card, host a good-bye lunch, or something else. Even when we know retrenchment decisions are guided by seniority, it feels good to know you are valued and appreciated.

Offer Professional Support

1. Provide information about and introductions to others in your professional network.
2. Share job search resources, networking events, and workshops. Encourage them to explore opportunities beyond their previous roles.
3. Recommendations and Endorsements. If you've worked closely with them, consider writing a recommendation on professional platforms like LinkedIn. Endorse their skills and highlight their strengths.
4. Offer to be a reference for future applications. Be willing to provide feedback on CV, cover letters, etc.

Stay Connected

1. Keep in touch with laid-off colleagues. Reach out via phone, email, or social media. Regular check-ins show that you care and value their well-being.
2. Celebrate Small Wins:
 - o Acknowledge their progress, whether it's attending an interview, updating their LinkedIn profile, or learning a new skill.

Remember, your kindness and support can make a significant impact during this challenging transition.

I'm staying, but my workload is increasing AND my department is combining with others. How do I navigate THAT?

1. Acknowledge Your Feelings:
 - It's normal to feel a mix of emotions—survivor's guilt, anxiety, resentment. Allow yourself to process these feelings without judgment.
3. Self-Care Is Vital:
 - Prioritize your well-being. **Rest, exercise**, and aspire for healthy work-life integration. Remember that you're not alone in feeling overwhelmed.
4. Communicate Openly:
 - Reach out to colleagues. Share your concerns and listen to theirs. **Mutual support** can make a difference.
5. Set Boundaries:
 - As your workload increases, be clear about your limits. **Say no** when possible. Overcommitting won't benefit anyone.
6. Focus on Impactful Tasks:
 - Prioritize tasks that have the most significant impact.
6. Network Outside Your Organization:
 - Connect with professionals in your field beyond your institution. Attend virtual conferences or join online communities.
7. Remember Your Purpose:
 - Reconnect with why you chose academia. **Impactful teaching** and research matter, even during tough times.
 - You're not alone, and your contributions still matter. Take care of yourself, seek support, and keep moving forward.

The [State of Minnesota Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) is a no-cost-to-you resource that's part of your employee benefits.