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Ideas for closing out the semester

As faculty, we are accustomed to ending the semester academically. We summarize and assess what students learned, tie their new knowledge to their professional goals, and assign them a final grade. For many of us, closing out the semester is also very emotional because we value and cultivate relationships in the classroom, and it is very difficult to say good-bye after growing and learning together. Pandemic or not, I always thank students for their time, effort, and participation in the course. I also offer them my contact information and tell them they can always reach out to me, and in fact I would love to hear from them any time. I have heard from many of my former students since the pandemic started because they know that I care, and that the community we created permeates the walls of our former classroom. Josh Eyler, the Director of the Center for Excellence and Teaching at the University of Mississippi, always [writes a note of thanks to students on the final exam](#). Under normal circumstances it is important to close the loop on the semester, but how are you doing so during these extraordinary times? How will you show your students that you value their effort? Will you offer them an opportunity for connection beyond the semester? Below are some ideas from faculty on how to close the loop on a semester we will not soon forget.

Ideas for Community - How can you provide community beyond the semester?

- Share a Google Doc where everyone can leave messages for each other (Dr. Alison Flynn, Chemistry, University of Ottawa).

- Give the students the option of receiving a FERPA compliant postcard. Students could also have the option to receive a postcard from you over the summer, provide the postage, and ask them for one back later in the summer. (Dr. Kathy Kloepper, Chemistry, Mercer University).
- Other ideas: [Graffiti wall using Padlet](#) or a social media group to keep in touch.

Reflecting on the Journey - How can you acknowledge the unique situation that you have experienced together as a class?

- Write and record a song for students (Lou Charkoudain, Chemistry, Haverford College).
- A video that walks students through what the class has achieved together (Alison Flynn, Chemistry, University of Ottawa).
- Other ideas: Google doc with students contributing a 6-word memoir, co-created end of year newsletter, co-created emblem for the achievement of completing the semester together, discussion board with notes of gratitude, reflection about a new way students look at the world, something they have learned about themselves, or a way they have changed.

Looking to the Future - How can you help to ground students despite the uncertainty?

- Formulate a plan to get together again as a group on campus again in the future (Dr. Anne Winkler, Economics, UMSL).
- Have students write a letter of advice to students that will take the class in the following year (Dr. Elizabeth Tinsley Johnson, Biology, Michigan State University).
- Other ideas: Co-created time capsule, or students can create their own time capsule.

Please contact the featured faculty for more details about their end of semester activities. The successful implementation of these strategies depends on your personality, class size, and the atmosphere you have created in your classroom. How did you close out the semester? Please submit your stories to Erin Witteck at elwbcf@umsl.edu.



Shout-Outs: Giving Thanks

We at the CTL were happy that so many faculty, staff, and students nominated others for shout-outs. The recipients received a postcard in their e-mail, and are featured below. We are [accepting shout-outs for next month](#). We are all experiencing this challenging time in unique ways, it is very encouraging to acknowledge those around you that are going above and beyond.

Jason Johnson Manager of the University Tutoring Center

Constantly positive and creative in finding ways to deliver quality tutoring online! - Beth Eckelkamp

Dr. Dan Gerth Associate Dean and Associate Teaching Professor in the Pierre Laclède Honors College

Dan has always been great, but lately he is going beyond even his normal levels of awesomeness. For example, he created a zoom lunch for students to just check-in and talk about life and he hosted his own March Madness for alumni/employees to follow and laugh at. - Jen Richardson

Kora Baker undergraduate student

Kora gave me some feedback on my teaching. Right now, when I do not have much communication with my students except for answering their questions, I am grateful to Kora to let me know how I am doing with my lectures. - Sanjiv Bhatia

Dr. D'Andre Braddix Associate Vice Provost of Student Affairs from the

Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards

D'Andre has been a consistent, encouraging, and dedicated advocate for our division. All his time, energy, expertise, and direction has been greatly appreciated and has not gone unnoticed. - Anonymous

Tricia Keyes Graduate Student in Special Education

Thank you for all the care packages you put together and dropped off at your students' doorsteps. You brought hope to your students and our class

Tricia. <https://cutt.ly/rtKA2vV> - Fatemeh Mardi

Jackie Warren Director of Residential Life and Housing

I cannot say enough about how amazing Jackie has been throughout this whole ordeal - from the very beginning she was adamant that UMSL Res Life was going to have a plan that took into consideration all of the nuances that come with serving a diverse student population. While other institutions reacted to COVID19 with immediate expulsions from dorms with little consideration to how this would impact students, Jackie acted with compassion and foresight, rolling out a detailed plan with clear contingencies and refund plans. - Anonymous

Jason Marquart Senior Assistant Director Student Support Services from UMSL Global

Jason and his International Student and Scholar Support team already deserved a shout-out for working tirelessly to on board our new immigration software while still providing stellar support to our international students and scholars. With the onset of COVID19, Jason and his team have had to cope with a rapidly evolving regulatory environment, supporting students/scholars facing COVID19 concerns in the US and their home countries, and advising students on contingencies - all of which has been handled brilliantly. - International Admissions

Megan Green Simonds Director of New Student Programs

I am grateful for Megan Green Simonds as my supervisor, colleague, and friend for her continuous understanding, transparency, and commitment to her staff and office. I appreciate how we can laugh, brainstorm, talk, and encourage each other throughout the years. #ThankYou - Erin Sullivan

We invite all faculty and other instructors teaching in the Spring 2020 semester to complete a short 5-minute survey about their experiences teaching remotely. We fully understand that the changes from our face-to-face classes to remote delivery in response to COVID-19 have been challenging to faculty, staff, and students alike. We're sending this survey to learn more about your experiences during the necessary pivot to remote teaching and whether you have suggestions for how we can support you this summer and fall.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you may stop taking the survey at any time or choose to skip particular questions. The survey is short and should take about 5 minutes. All of your responses are anonymous.

Link to Survey: https://umsl.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8hMpJLNRnkayP3f

If you have questions about this survey, please contact Academic Affairs at acadaff@umsl.edu.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN COURSE DESIGN

DESIGNING BLENDED COURSES

Offered by UMSL's Center
for Teaching and Learning

Resilient Course Design Program

June 1 – August 2

[Register Here by May 20](#)

Audience: Faculty who need
to adapt a face-to-face
course for blended delivery
this fall.

DESIGNING 100% ONLINE COURSES

Offered by UM-System's Office of
eLearning

Start Here: Online Course Design Basics (4-Week course)

Multiple cohorts throughout the
summer

[Register Here](#)

[For more information about this
resource course, click here.](#)

Audience: Faculty who need to quickly
develop a fully online course for the
summer or fall.

Online in 9 (9-week program)

May 19 – July 31

[Register Here](#)

[For more information about this
program, click here.](#)

Audience: Invited faculty who are
developing an online course
contributing to one of the chosen
Office of eLearning scaled programs.



Co-creating an effective honor code with your class

Academic integrity has been a hot topic on our campus and across the nation during the move to remote teaching. Although it is hard to say whether cheating has increased during this unique time, it is true that [many faculty are using alternative assessments](#) to the ones traditionally used in their on ground classrooms. One option to help remind students of the culture of trust and community created in your on ground classroom is to co-create an honor code. In collaboration with a colleague at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison), we crafted a sample announcement to introduce the honor code activity to students. The sample honor code provided is modeled after an option in a [manuscript by Gurung and colleagues](#). That honor code was chosen because of its language centered on community, but feel free to craft one as a starting point that fits your class. The honor code activity can prime a discussion about academic integrity in your course. The co-created honor code can be used as the first question on your final assessment or however you and your students see fit.

Suggested statement for an announcement to students about the honor code activity: Because of the rapid shift to remote instruction, it's important to talk about making sure that your studying, hard work, and mindful effort that will go into our final exam will be respected and rewarded. I'll post the following statement into our discussion forum in Canvas; I'd like to hear your thoughts about how you are studying for the exam, as well as what you would like all of your classmates to do in order to ensure everyone has the same opportunity to show your skills.

Honor Code: I acknowledge that the University is an academic community devoted to the pursuit of knowledge. Fundamental to this pursuit is academic

integrity. In joining the University community I accept the [University's Statement of Academic Integrity](#) and pledge to uphold the principles embodied in it. I will conduct myself in accordance with ideals of truth and honesty and I will oppose actions which would violate these ideals.

Dr. Thomas Tobin (UW-Madison) shares insight into what makes an honor code effective:

1. **Community expectations:** If the honor code is co-created by students there will be a collective investment in the process, and community peer pressure to comply.
2. **Reinforcement:** Ideally the honor code is created at the beginning of the term and revisited many times throughout the semester.
3. **Temporal immediacy:** The honor code should appear when students might feel the greatest pressure to act otherwise, either as question 1 on an exam or in the instructions for submitted work.

Once again honor codes are only effective if they are built on a culture of trust and community. Many of us are used to building that trust in the physical classroom but how do you continue to build that trust online? Please read our upcoming newsletters for tips on how to build trust in an online environment.



New Faces in the Center for Teaching and Learning



Mary Angelica Painter has spent the last five years highly involved in the learning community, UMSL, and earning her PhD in political science. During graduate school, she was involved with community organizations and worked as a teaching assistant, an adjunct instructor, a project manager, and a graduate assistant in the CTL. Painter now serves as the Learning Analytics Coordinator, who is responsible for planning, developing and supporting course evaluations, course and program-level data analysis, and mid-semester assessment tools.



Daphne Rivers is our new business support specialist in the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). Previously, Daphne worked as a creative writing instructor and administrative support for a local college. She graduated from the University of Missouri -St. Louis with degrees in Political Science and Professional Writing.” Fun facts about me: “I once spent a summer teaching in Guangzhou, China where I climbed a mountain for the first time. I met and shook hands with President Obama in 2008 when I interned for his campaign.”



Zoom Reminders and Updates

I never imagined that my morning routine would involve my 8 year old daughter, and 4 year old son asking me how many Zoom calls they have that day. Our own Dr. Adriano Udani from the Department of Political Science [coined the term Zoomed out](#), and I think many of us have been feeling that way. Numerous articles have since [outlined the reasons for Zoom fatigue](#). Regardless, it has offered us connection during this challenging time. Below please find a few very important updates about our new favorite platform.

1. **All Zoom UMSL accounts will be converted to UM System Zoom accounts on May 15th.**

What does this mean for you? All UMSL Zoom links must be updated to UM System within Canvas, e-mail signatures, web pages, or wherever they appear.

2. **UMSL themed Virtual Zoom Backgrounds have been developed by [Marketing and Communications and can be downloaded from their website](#).**

3. **A message from the Registrar Theresa Keuss about Zoom and FERPA:**

While tools such as Zoom allow us to stay connected and interact with students in a virtual setting it is important to remember the potential FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) violations that can arise when utilizing Zoom for class sessions. By following some simple guidelines faculty can create an engaging learning environment for their students while also making sure to respect student privacy.

One of the most important things to remember is that a recorded class session can be considered an educational record and should not be shared. If a class is recorded, participants in the session are not to be identified and faculty should turn off the display of participants and focus on recording themselves.

A best practice and the recommended option for FERPA compliance would be to record and post the instruction in Canvas without discussion and then host a live zoom discussion – unrecorded. Since Canvas is only accessible within the classroom, this would meet FERPA regulations and protect student privacy.

In addition to the practice mentioned above, faculty need to also make sure they let students know if they plan to record the Zoom session and should remind students at the beginning of the class (either orally or using a slide) if the automated notification is not on. According to FERPA, students have the right to ask if the lecture is being recorded and can decline to be known in the lecture if it is recorded.

We hope this helps answer some basic questions regarding the use of Zoom for class sessions, but please refer to the Registrar's website for the [UM System Best Practices for Zoom Recordings](#).

SAVE THE DATE:
September 24-25, 2020

FOCUS
— on —
TEACHING & TECHNOLOGY
a St. Louis regional conference

Calling all great ideas!

The [Focus on Teaching and Technology Conference](#) Planning Committee is now [accepting proposals for the 2020 conference](#) to be held virtually. Proposals are due by June 1. Proposal authors will hear from the committee in the beginning of July.

If you are interested in submitting a proposal or you would like to brainstorm ideas, Center for Teaching and Learning staff are able to assist.

Email mckanryj@umsl.edu to arrange a consultation. We would love to see a strong contingent from UMSL sharing all the amazing things you do with our regional partners!



[5 Low-Tech, Time-Saving Ways to Teach Online During COVID-19](#)

- These 5-tips are [low-bandwidth](#) ways of maximizing your impact as an instructor during remote teaching.

[Remote Teaching While Introverted](#)

- If you are an introvert you should read this lighthearted article by Jessamnyn Neuhaus, the author of Geeky Pedagogy. She assures us that teaching during this time is not in fact an introvert's dream come true.