

*CTL's Monthly Newsletter keeps you updated on research-informed teaching strategies, events, and support available to everyone in the UMSL teaching community.*



*Photo by August Jennewein*

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## Teaching in Times of Crisis: Supporting Students during Traumatic Events

Whether local, national, or international in scope, a crisis can have a significant impact on the college classroom. Students need not be personally involved in the crisis in order to experience anxiety or trauma. While proximity (a local event) may lead to a more obvious impact on students, other factors play a role as well. As Therese A. Huston and Michele DiPietro [explain](#), the effects of a crisis can be based on “the sheer *magnitude* and scale (national events with wide media coverage)” and “the degree to which students are likely to *identify* with the victim(s) of the tragedy and feel like ‘vicarious victims’” (12). In that sense, a communal crisis – like the unexpected death of a fellow student or teacher, the COVID-19 pandemic, or a school shooting – can impact everyone. The resulting anxieties that students (and teachers) bring into the classroom can interfere with teaching and learning.

How teachers help students navigate a crisis? Huston and DiPietro explain that “from the students’ perspective, it is best to do something” (13). Students report that “just about anything” is helpful, from having a moment of silence in class to incorporating the event into a lesson plan for the course. In other words, a lack of response would be problematic. Students just want the crisis to be acknowledged in a meaningful way.

In addition to having a moment of silence or weaving the crisis into a lesson plan, teachers can be mindful of cognitive overload. Since stress can impair a person’s ability to learn and remember concepts, teachers may want to be more lenient with due dates during a time of crisis. Teachers could hold off on introducing new content and spend more time reviewing old information. Teachers could also facilitate conversations in class about the crisis, giving the students space to share their thoughts and feelings. Teachers could invite students to do some journaling or reflective writing, which can help students cope as well. And teachers could refer students to various resources on campus, such as the [UMSL Counseling Services](#) or the [UMSL Care Team](#). Ultimately, students want to feel heard and supported during times of crisis, and faculty play a key role in making that happen.

For more information, see the CTL's “Teaching in Times of Crisis” website [here](#).

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Join a Spring 2023 Part-time Faculty Teaching Circle cohort! The purpose of this group is to enhance the teaching community specifically aimed at the needs of part-time faculty. Due to the time of day and the unique needs of part-time faculty, traditional campus offerings are not always ideal for participation, so we have created tailored options for our part-time faculty colleagues.

Join a Circle to:

- Connect with other UMSL part-time faculty across disciplines.
- Get focused updates specifically relevant to part-time faculty.
- Share teaching tips, resources, and advice across disciplines.

Cohort Dates and Times (please register below):

- Wednesday cohort - meets 11am-Noon CST In Person-MSc Nosh (2/8, 3/8, 4/12)
- Thursday cohort - meets 6:00-7:00pm CST via Zoom (2/9, 3/9, 4/13)
- Friday cohort - meets Noon-1pm CST via Zoom (2/10, 3/10, 4/14)
- Game Night - Thursday, May 11 6:00 - 7:00PM CST via Zoom

This Teaching Circle is guided by an Advisory Group of part-time faculty and supported by the UMSL Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). Cohort options include both Zoom and In-person meetings. Current topics and questions will be addressed at each meeting as well as time for an open Q&A session, sharing ideas and challenges in the classroom. This learning collaboration cohort model is utilized to help build connections on campus with other part-time faculty colleagues interested in similar topics. Select the cohorts or individual meetings you would like to join.

Please email CTL Assistant Director Jen McKanry [mckanryj@umsl.edu](mailto:mckanryj@umsl.edu) with any questions.

**Register for the Part-Time Teaching Circle**

# Learn More about the Teaching Effectiveness Taskforce's Work on Student Feedback Surveys

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of our [UMSL Teaching Effectiveness Taskforce](#) and a [very successful pilot](#), the use of the new [common question set](#) for End-of-Course Student Feedback Surveys (formerly called course evaluations) will be transitioning soon to full implementation. This Summer will be the final pilot phase and will allow us to test the process for adding departmental questions. Opportunities are available now for all departments to choose up to 4 questions [from a pool](#) to add to the common question set currently on student surveys. The pool of questions to select from has been vetted by members of the Taskforce to assure alignment with the [research-informed guiding principles](#), a requirement for any question to be included on the course student feedback surveys.

Curious or want to learn more? Join the faculty on the student feedback working group on the Teaching Effectiveness Taskforce at one of our upcoming information sessions.

[Sign up form](#) for one of the upcoming informational sessions.

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## Meet New Colleagues

### Jason Vasser-Elong, Pierre-Laclede Honors College



Jason Vasser-Elong [Vassir--Eh-long] is an Assistant Teaching Professor in the Pierre-Laclede Honors College and a doctoral candidate in the College of Education at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, where he earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in creative writing and studied cultural anthropology and African Diaspora studies. He is the author of *Shrimp* (2Leaf Press, 2018), a collection of poetry that analyzes identity in a post-colonial context. He is featured in many poetry anthologies and has academic publications in the *Canadian Journal of Netherlandic Studies* (CAANS) and was a General Anthropology Division travel award

recipient for the 2021 American Anthropological Association's annual meeting in Baltimore, MD, where he presented "Treading the Atlantic" that was published in CAANS in 2016. Speaking of writing, he enjoys writing poetry and was recently featured in the documentary, Poetry in Motion: St. Louis Poets Take the Mic, which was screened at the St. Louis International Film Fest and the Whitaker Film Festival at Washington University in St. Louis. Jason served as poet-in-residence for [Sapiens Magazine](#) in 2022, an editorially independent anthropology magazine of the Wenner-Gren Foundation & University of Chicago Press. When he is not teaching or writing, he enjoys spending time with his family and a good cup of coffee.

## **Kristine Stewart-Perkins, College of Nursing**



Kris is a new full-time faculty member, but she is not new to UMSL. For the last five years she has taught as adjunct for our College of Nursing. Plus, she is an UMSL alum and was a Rivermen, the first original UMSL mascot. She received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from UMSL and her Masters in the Science of Nursing with an emphasis in Education from University of Missouri – Columbia (MSN – Ed). Prior to joining the College of Nursing, Kris taught for three years at St. Charles Community College. Preceding teaching, Kris had a successful career in bedside nursing. Her expertise is in critical care, both adult health and pediatrics. She has worked as a staff nurse, charge nurse, nurse educator and nurse manager. Education is her favorite role. Her goal as a nurse educator is to help better support underserved nursing students and to improve the success rate for high-risk

undergraduates. As a first-generation college student and a first generation American on her mother's side, she understands the struggles of navigating college without the proper support system. Currently Kris teaches N3020 Fundamental Concepts of Nursing Care. In this class, she helps develop the student's foundational knowledge needed to start their nursing career. She also teaches high-fidelity simulation, clinicals, and labs.

When not teaching, you can find Kris enjoying the "empty nester" phase of life. Her and her husband has been married for thirty years. They met at UMSL; he is also an UMSL graduate. Together they have two daughters. Currently living with Kris and her husband is their dog Sophie and cat Elvis. Both are rescue animals. Kris loves traveling, spending time with her family, volunteering in the community and celebrating life. She is working on her DNP with an emphasis in nursing education and is anticipating graduating in 2026.

## **Lukasz Szatkowski, Department of Chemistry**



Dr. Szatkowski received his M.Sc. in Computational Chemistry and Molecular Modeling (2007) and Ph.D. in Physical and Computational Chemistry (2012) from the Lodz University of Technology in Lodz, Poland. Following his Ph.D., Dr. Szatkowski was a Postdoctoral Researcher at Texas A&M University (2013 – 2015) and the University of Arizona (2015 – 2017). He has experience in teaching General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, Physical Chemistry, and Computational Chemistry. His higher education teaching

experience includes faculty appointments at University of Cincinnati and University of South Carolina-Sumter. Dr. Szatkowski joined the UMSL Chemistry and Biochemistry faculty in 2022 as Assistant Teaching Professor and faculty advisor for the Chemistry Club.

Dr. Szatkowski's research interest includes the use of a wide range of computational chemistry methods, from quantum chemistry to coarse-grained molecular dynamics to understand the mechanism of important chemical reactions, properties, and reactivity of transition metal complexes, the interaction of polymers with proteins, and their reactivity, and the dynamics properties of biologically important large protein systems. Dr. Szatkowski works have been published in journals such as *The Journal of Physical Chemistry B*, *Environmental Science & Technology*, *Inorganic Chemistry*, *Dalton Transactions*, *Bulletin of the American Physical Society*, *ACS omega*, and *Biophysical Journal*.

In his free time, Dr. Szatkowski likes to shoot photos with his camera, work on graphic design projects, garden, cook, and chill out with his wife. Dr. Szatkowski actively volunteers for the Humane Society of Missouri as well.

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## **Testing Center - Temporary Location on South Campus and Policy Reminders**

As part of the renovation of the JC Penney Conference Center, the UMSL Testing Center has relocated to a temporary location starting January 2023: South Campus Computer Building (SCB) Room 200A. The physical address for the new location is 2961 South Dr. if your students are

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using a GPS to find the new location. The Testing Center new location is behind Marillac Hall and behind Provincial House near the former Child Development Center. We expect this temporary location to be the Testing Center home for at least the full Spring 2023 semester.

### Testing Center Policy Reminders

- **24 Hour Requirement for Faculty to Send Test Instructions.** Faculty are responsible for providing the Testing Center with test administration directions for each test that a student is scheduled to take in the Center at least 24 hours in advance of the scheduled appointment.
- **Testing is by appointment only.** All students are **required** to schedule a testing appointment a minimum of 24 hours in advance of the desired date and time. Walk-ins are not accepted.
- **Tests administered by the Testing Center must be a minimum of 30 minutes in length.** This policy reduces disruptions and foot traffic in testing areas and reduces strain on the Testing Center's limited resources and staffing.
- **No whole-class testing.** The Testing Center does not have the capacity to support whole-class testing or large groups of students from the same class. Testing Center services are intended for individual students who have a disability accommodation or miss tests given during class time due to illness, university-sanctioned event, or other unforeseen circumstance that prevents the test from being proctored in the classroom or with SmarterProctoring online proctoring. The Center does not have the facilities or resources to handle testing for a whole class. Please schedule class time for exams.
- [Review more online for additional policies and procedures](#) for using this campus resource.

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## Summer 2023 Opportunity

### Culturally Responsive Teaching Certification

### CASEPS Workshop

[Register Now](#)

June 13-14, 2023: 8:30AM - 4:00PM

Cost: \$695/attendee

*Culture and diversity influence educational, social, psychological, and social experiences. To that end, the [Council for At-risk Student Education and Professional Standards \(CASEPS\)](#) provides professional development and accreditation for institutions and individual materials that apply a cultural lens approach (CLA).*

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The UMSL community looks forward to a unique opportunity to attend the culturally responsive teaching certification program through the Council for At Risk Student Education and Professional Standards (CASEPS). These standards are used in accreditation for course materials (e.g., syllabi), courses, programs, and departments. Post-session support will support you throughout this process, which will also be facilitated by a premiere scholar of leadership and education, [Dr. Courtney Plotts, National Chair](#).

## Outcomes | What you will achieve

This certification is being designed to address the following institutional outcomes:

- Increased cultural competence and responsiveness of faculty and staff
- Evidence of cultural competence and cultural responsiveness in course design and teaching

These outcomes will be achieved upon completion of the following:

- **Certification** in Culturally Responsive Teaching
- **National Accreditation** of course materials by submitting evidence for 13 standard domains

Questions? Contact Keeta Holmes [holmeskm@umsystem.edu](mailto:holmeskm@umsystem.edu) or Erin Witteck [erin.l.witteck@umsystem.edu](mailto:erin.l.witteck@umsystem.edu)

[Register for the Culturally Responsive Teaching Certification CASEPS Workshop](#)

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## About the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), a division of the Office of Academic Affairs, supports the professional development of those who teach and learn at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Our goals - to promote engagement in courses, on campus, and in the community - enhance the University as we align our activities, services, and

consultations with the campus goals to promote excellence in teaching, research, and service.

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