

# The V. James Renda Faculty Resource Center for Academic Excellence

"Committed to quality programs to enhance teaching and learning at N.C.C.C."

## FALL 2020 END OF SEMESTER NEWSLETTER

### Employee Spotlight

#### Ensuring Online Learning Quality: Perspectives from the State University of New York

By Kristyn Muller, Kim A. Scalzo, Alexandra M. Pickett, and Lawrence Dugan, SUNY System Administration; **Lisa Dubuc** and **Donna Simiele**, Niagara County Community College; Ryan McCabe, Finger Lakes Community College; and William Pelz, Herkimer College.



Lisa Dubuc



Donna Simiele

#### Abstract

As participation in online learning continues to expand, higher education institutions must implement policies and procedures to ensure quality at the course, program, and institution levels. In this paper, the authors describe a process that the State University of New York (SUNY) System implemented, utilizing the OLC Quality Scorecard, to help individual campuses examine the quality of their online offerings and develop strategies to support continuous improvement.

Muller, K., Scalzo, K.A., Pickett, A.M., Dubuc, L., Dugan, L., McCabe, R., Pelz, W., & Simiele, D. (2020). Ensuring online learning quality: Perspectives from the State University of New York. *Online Learning*, 24(2), 254-268. <https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v24i2.2004>.

### The Academic Center for Excellence - ACE

#### ACE Recap Report – Fall 2020

Thank you to all of the faculty members that have encouraged students to utilize tutoring services this semester!

As of 12/11/2020 we've had:

- 415 unique students walk into ACE
- 1,593 unique visits in ACE & 3,337 hours of center usage
- 90 unique courses covered in tutoring services
- 889 tutoring appointments
  - 609 online appointments
  - 280 in-person appointments

Our top four content areas for tutoring services were ENG, MAT, AAC, & BIO. Updated data for the entire Fall 2020 semester will be shared during PD days in January 2021. Have a wonderful winter break & holiday season!

### Assessment Practices

#### Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Reporting

To maintain and improve our standards of high quality instruction and assessment, I ask that each faculty member participate in our institutional practice of Student Learning Outcome (SLO) reporting by Monday, December 21.

*Please submit one new SLO from one of your courses, as well as one follow-up SLO from a previous semester.*

Submission of your data can be completed by using this link: <http://form.jotform.com/63434397814968>. You may also access this link by logging in to Blackboard Learn, and accessing the "NCCC Faculty Assessment Resource Center."

Once in this link, click "How to enter your assessment results in the Jotform." A direct link to Jotform can be found there as well as helpful information regarding assessment.

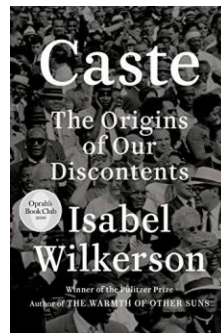
Thank you for your dedication in reporting your SLOs every semester! If you have any questions please contact Academic Affairs.

\*\*\*Important\*\*\* You do not need to have perfect results. The purpose of assessment is to find areas that need improvement and then to find ways to improve those areas. In *some* cases, poor results are direct correlation to a poor assessment (i.e. directions, wordy test items, etc.). We begin to really know what works and how to do a better job when we embrace a culture of assessment.

### Reading Matters

The Reading Matters Group has chosen the next book for discussion during the January 2021 Professional Development Days Workshop Sessions

*Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*  
By Isabel Wilkerson



Hosted by Dr. Suzanne Buffamanti, Professor of English

The Pulitzer Prize-winning, bestselling author of *The Warmth of Other Suns* examines the unspoken caste system that has shaped America and shows how our lives today are still defined by a hierarchy of human divisions.

# Online Teaching Academy Faculty Recognition

On behalf of the Online Learning Department, we would like to thank all of the faculty who have participated in our Online Teaching Academy offerings since March. Not only have we been working tirelessly, but many of you have as well. We want to thank you for your commitment and dedication to learning new instructional methods and for learning how to create and deliver quality online, hybrid, and blended courses to support student success. For the first time, our Online Teaching Academy would like to give special recognition to the following faculty. We hope you all have a happy and safe holiday season and we look forward to working with you in 2021.

*~Online Learning*

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## Special Lifetime Achievement Award



The Office of Online Learning and Online Teaching and the Learning Advisory Council “OLTAC” would like to honor and recognize Robert “Bob” Morris, Professor of English, with this first ever and special Lifetime Achievement Award.

For the past 15 years, Bob has been a member of the Online Learning Advisory Council and has been dedicated to the advancement of online education. Bob has an insatiable thirst for knowledge as he has attended more training and professional development sessions than has any other faculty member on campus. With his years of experience, Bob utilizes the most interactive strategies to promote collaboration among students and demonstrates an extraordinary commitment to fostering academic growth. Bob always incorporates the most revolutionary and innovative online teaching practices. By constantly refreshing and revising his courses, he guarantees that each one of his students will receive the most effective online learning practices and pedagogy. His tireless dedication even extends outside of the classroom where he mentors and supports other online faculty. There is no one more committed to the quality of online teaching and learning than Professor Robert Morris.

# Online Teaching Academy Faculty Recognition



Professor Don Fisher receives this recognition for attending the most Online Teaching Academy training sessions, virtual open lab sessions, and individual consultations since March 2020. Even though Don is an experienced online educator, he took full advantage of the stay at

home and work order during our Covid pivot to improve upon his teaching and technology skills. He made numerous course improvements to his current online course and learned new tools and teaching techniques to create quality courses in our new Blended Instructional Mode.



Kimberly Nguyen understands the art of teaching through video. Her videos do not exceed eight minutes, employing the quick cuts that students are used to, and the videos are interactive, are visually exciting, are entertaining while informing, and have a professional quality

that elevates her online course by providing substance in style.



Brianne Lawton - As we moved to remote learning Brianne attended many training sessions in order to improve her technology skills. These new skills helped her build course content and support students in online modalities.

Brianne was instrumental in converting NUR 105 Medication Simulation to a Blended course. She converted all of the in person exams for that course (for 220 students no less) to online exams, no easy feat in that it is a medication calculation course, so she needed to add syringes and medication labels to these exams, keeping the content "as real life" as possible, and she did an excellent job. She was a champion in using her newly found skills for the entire Nursing program, and was willing to share her knowledge with her colleagues and help them whenever needed. Additionally, she became an expert at utilizing an Ipad as a white board in her NUR 105 class Zoom sessions to project math calculations to the students in her classes, increasing student engagement and understanding.



Michele Hamilton is being recognized for being the "Most Improved" in the area of technology and online pedagogy. Michele has worked very hard to move her face-to-face courses to Online and Hybrid during the pandemic. She has attended just about all

the training sessions we have offered in the last 9 months to help her prepare for this new modality. Michele has embraced this new venture and opened herself to learning new tools to help improve the student experience



Dr. Douglas Regan has embraced the medium in the last two years to make his courses much more dynamic for his students. When the pandemic hit and in-class elementary school classroom observations came to an abrupt halt, he pivoted to find video footage of elementary students in their classrooms for

his students to analyze so that the experiential learning could continue. He has mastered the art of narrated PowerPoints and teaches first-semester novices to international graduate students online.



Rich Harrington is being recognized for his commitment to moving his two criminal justice courses to the Online Instructional Mode in just one month. He worked tirelessly with the Online Learning Department to learn how to create quality online courses, how to effectively teach online,

and created courses that meet both the SUNY Online Quality Course Design Standards, ADA, and Middle States compliance requirements. His courses are now listed for all faculty to review in our courses for observation in our Online Teaching Academy training course.

# Transforming Our School Settings

Educator John Strong reflects on his journey with equity, diversity and inclusion



My formal experience with equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) goes back more than 10 years, but my personal connection to it spans a lifetime.

When I was in third grade, I moved into a new neighborhood. I went from a friend circle that included light and dark children, kids who spoke English as a second language, and a boy with cerebral palsy, to a new group that clearly reflected the neighborhood's homogeneity. At first, I had a hard time "breaking in."

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Many students don't feel comfortable or included in their physical education classes.

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Uncertain of myself, I was prone to getting into fights. But over time I started feeling more at ease on the playing fields. Tag, baseball, football, basketball, it didn't matter. That was where I felt comfortable and included.

Today as an educator, I know many students don't feel comfortable or included in their physical education classes — which is why it's so important to incorporate EDI into our schools and gymnasiums.

## EDI AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Equity refers to the practice of providing personalized supports to individuals

as they require them to be successful. (This differs from equality, which gives everyone the same thing regardless of whether they need it or not.)

Diversity refers to heterogeneity — differences in social dimensions such as ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, etc. rather than a great deal of sameness.

And inclusiveness is the straightforward practice of including others rather than excluding them and making them the "other."

Physical education provides a unique forum for formalizing EDI practices, primarily because students compete in almost every class. If educators can consistently frame these competitive episodes as opportunities to collaborate effectively, more students will realize how situations can be enhanced by seeking to bring people together rather than splitting them apart.

Physical education class is also a good setting to model the practice of gaining consensus from a group. When something doesn't go as expected, students can learn how to work together to gain consensus for change, then enact the change and proceed with the newly improved idea.

## INCORPORATING A MINDFULNESS LENS

According to Jon Kabat-Zin, founder of the Center for Mindfulness, "Mindfulness represents a new way of being in a relationship with yourself, one that's catalytic of a new way of ongoing learning and healing. The transformation comes with the understanding that you are not your thoughts about yourself. You are far, far bigger, more nuanced and multidimensional than who you think you are, the story of you."

**John Strong** is the chair of SHAPE America's Equity, Diversity & Inclusion task force and an associate professor at Niagara County Community College. He has been teaching in the Health, Physical Education and Recreation Department for 13 years. In addition, he explores inclusiveness in presentations related to K-14 physical education at local, state and national levels.

John believes physical education can lead the broader educational community toward large-scale normalizing of inclusiveness practices that will facilitate improved performances and outcomes for everyone. He can be reached at [jstrong@niagaracc.suny.edu](mailto:jstrong@niagaracc.suny.edu).

I see great possibility in that statement and believe that mindfulness can be transformative in our school settings if applied correctly. If our shared future is one where we believe it's possible to embrace our educational, professional and local communities with an equitable and inclusive lens, the widespread utility of mindfulness will be a key.

Viewing EDI with a mindfulness lens is like multiplying six-digit numbers with a calculator: You can do it without a calculator, but it takes longer, and you may not even be confident in your final answer.

The empathetic state you'll find yourself in as a result of mindfulness will make prejudice and exclusion seem like ridiculous choices!

## **Preparing Your Course Syllabus for the Semester**

As you prepare your syllabus/first day handouts, be sure to include the following items:

- Course contact information (modality, location, days, times, etc.)
- Course description (taken from the master syllabus or college catalog)
- Student Learning Outcomes. Check with the master syllabus on file for accuracy and the most current version. (Include the General Education student learning outcome if your course is designated for a General Education area.)
- Attendance policy
- Grading policy (point system, percentage, weights, assignments, etc.). Include how the course grades will be converted to letter grade.
- Instructor contact, office hours and location. (Full-time faculty are required to have at least 5 office hours per week)
- Required materials and texts.
- Course requirements and expectations
- Detailed description of assignments and activities counted toward course grade
- Information for students who may be eligible for accessibility services
- Information for the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE)
- Computer usage policy
- Course schedule, calendar or outline of topics
- Important dates

### **The following statements should be included:**

#### **Accessibility Services**

Accessibility Services supports pregnant students and those with documented disability by providing reasonable academic adjustments and accommodations to remove barriers to academic success. If you would like to speak to the Accessibility Services Coordinator to determine eligibility, please call (716) 614-6285 or go to Accessibility Services, room A-167, to make an appointment.

#### **Academic Center for Excellence (ACE)**

The Academic Center for Excellence is located on the Sanborn campus within the Henrietta G. Lewis Library (entrance on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Learning Commons). ACE provides in-person and online academic support services, such as academic coaching and student tutoring, free to all NCCC/NFCI students as well as computer and printing services. It is recommended to visit ACE for academic support services. Visit the ACE web page for more details and to access online tutoring services ([www.niagaracc.suny.edu/ace](http://www.niagaracc.suny.edu/ace)).

#### **Computer Usage**

NCCC courses may require students to use computers to access our campus wide Course Management System named Blackboard Learn and/or utilize course specific software. Computer use may be required at the discretion of the instructor to deliver course content, support assignments, administer tests, and enhance class communication. Students may use their home computers or the open access computers located in the Library. If a student requires support or training in the use of computers and/or the use of Blackboard Learn, please contact the instructor the first week of classes to obtain information regarding training sessions for students.

#### **Starfish**

NCCC is part of a student success project between our institution and Starfish Retention Solutions. If you currently take a course at NCCC, you will have a Starfish account. Throughout the term, you may receive emails from Starfish® regarding your course grades or academic performance. Please pay attention to these emails and consider taking the recommended actions. A Starfish® Success Coach may also call you regarding these concerns. Both methods of communication are sent to help you be successful! In Starfish® you can view your success network including your academic advisor and course instructors. Here you will also see their office locations, office hours, and the campus resources available to you. In addition, your instructor may (1) request that you schedule an appointment by going to Starfish (the link can be found in Blackboard) or (2) recommend that you contact a specific campus resource, such as Tutoring through the Academic Center for Excellence (D-201), or Student Development (A-144). You may also be contacted directly by one of these services.

#### **Academic Integrity Policy** (Cheating and Plagiarism)

Honest participation in academic endeavors fosters an environment in which optimal learning can take place and is consistent with the mission of NCCC. Academic misconduct is destructive to the spirit of an educational environment and, therefore, cannot be condoned. The following definitions will apply: (1) The term “cheating” includes, but is not limited to, use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests or examinations; dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems or carrying out other assignments; the acquisition without permission of tests or other academic materials belonging to a member of the college’s faculty. (2) The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the use by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials. (3) The term “academic misconduct” includes any or all forms of the above. Please refer to the “Student Code of Conduct” manual for additional information.

## **Blackboard (edit as necessary for your course)**

NCCC uses Blackboard Learn for our learning management system. For this course I will use Blackboard (Bb) to provide... (e.g., course materials, tests or assignments). Blackboard uses the same username and password as your T-Wolves email. You must first [activate your email](#) account before you can access Bb. If you need assistance with Blackboard, please contact [onlinelearning@niagaracc.suny.edu](mailto:onlinelearning@niagaracc.suny.edu) or call Open SUNY at [1-844-673-6786](tel:1-844-673-6786).

## **Health & Wellness**

NCCC policies and protocols for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic will be rooted in safety for our staff, safety for our faculty and students, and for the public with whom we interact.

**Face masks/Cloth Face Coverings:** Face masks or face coverings **must** be worn by all staff working on campus when in the presence of others and in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g. common work spaces, meeting rooms, classrooms, etc.). Appropriate use of face masks or coverings is critical in minimizing risks to others near you. You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick. The mask or cloth face covering is not a substitute for social distancing. For more information, see this link:

<https://www.niagaracc.suny.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/NCCC-Re-Opening-plan.pdf>  
The Wellness Center, located in C-122 is comprised of Health Services and Personal Counseling Services. The mission of the Wellness Center is to provide physical, intellectual, social, and emotional well-being that fosters academic and personal success within the context of a global and culturally diverse society.

## **Henrietta G. Lewis Library**

The entrance to the Lewis Library at NCCC is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Learning Commons. Through the library databases and catalog, you can access millions of scholarly sources for your research. You can search all the library resources here: <https://libguides.niagaracc.suny.edu/search>

Librarians offer research assistance anytime the Library is open, as well as through 24/7 virtual chat. The Library has 3 floors of study spaces, including computer stations and bookable study rooms. Visit our homepage (<https://libguides.niagaracc.suny.edu/welcome>) for more information.

## **FRCAE Contact**

FRCAE - D106 Suite  
Maureen Winters, Stenographer  
716-614-6790; [winters@niagaracc.suny.edu](mailto:winters@niagaracc.suny.edu)

Brad Wingert, Interim Coordinator, FRCAE/Interim Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs  
[bwingert@niagaracc.suny.edu](mailto:bwingert@niagaracc.suny.edu)

## **Assessment Practices**

“Assessment, Measurement, & Evaluation: Characteristics of a Good Assessment” is a 25 minute video presentation available on the FRCAE Blackboard page. In this presentation, you will learn about:

- The differences between assessment, measurement, and evaluation
- Reasons to assess
- Types of assessment for application in your classes (formative, summative, normative, ipsative)
- Objective scoring
- Subjective scoring
- Writing test items
- Benefits and disadvantages of test items
- Methods of estimating reliability (test/retest, parallel forms, internal consistency, and rater consistency)

## **Library**

### **Access to Thousands of Recreational Reading eBooks**

You may already access OverDrive eBooks through your local public library system, but did you know that as a New York State citizen you have free access to digital content from the New York Public Library? That includes thousands of popular eBook titles available via OverDrive. And you can also sign up for an eCard with the Brooklyn Public Library and Queens Public Library to have access to their eBook collections too. Once you sign up and get your new eCard number(s), you are ready to explore and read available titles. It is recommended that you get OverDrive's easy to use Libby App from the app store on your Apple and Android devices or use libbypp.com on other devices including computers and Kindle Fires.

Sign up for Free Library eCards

New York Public Library –

<https://www.nypl.org/library-card/new>

Brooklyn Public Library –

<https://disc.bklynlibrary.org/ecard/>

Queens Public Library –

<https://www.queenslibrary.org/get-a-card/eUser>

For more information or help using OverDrive and Libby, please contact Public Services Librarian Andy Aquino,

[aaquino@niagaracc.suny.edu](mailto:aaquino@niagaracc.suny.edu)

### **Feature Films**

Did you know the Library has access to a feature film database? Swank Motion Pictures licenses films from many different distributors including Warner Bros., Disney, Dreamworks, MGM, and Paramount. These films are for academic use and complement a variety of courses. Titles are individually selected and can be linked in Blackboard. If you are interested in adding a title and utilizing this resource for your classes, please contact Jean Linn at

[jlinn@niagaracc.suny.edu](mailto:jlinn@niagaracc.suny.edu)

Current titles include: *Life is Beautiful*, *Get Out*, *Food, Inc.*, *42*, *Wizard of Oz*, and many more. Log-in with your NCCC credentials and watch a new film over winter break:

<https://libguides.niagaracc.suny.edu/swank>.