



Teaching Leaders CAIT Report

Provost's Teaching Academy Gathering June 7, 2021

Overview

CAITs (Communities Accelerating the Impact of Teaching) are topical innovator groups that develop teaching and curriculum-related recommendations, resources, experimental courses, and other contributions to the wider teaching community.

The **Teaching Leaders CAIT** met between November 2020 and June 2021. In response to the demands of pandemic-impacted teaching, fellows were asked to:

1. Help TEP understand urgent teaching needs and real teaching contexts in their schools and colleges;
2. Connect other instructors to available resources so that instructor time and wellbeing are respected;
3. As needed, help develop additional teaching resources to reflect emergent priorities.

Fellows participated in the larger All Hands meetings hosted since March 2020 by the Office of the Provost to more tightly connect around the policy, planning, pedagogy, and technology undergirding our teaching during the COVID pandemic, in addition to meeting several times a term as a cohort.

Membership

College of Education

- Bertranna Muruthi
- Alison Schmitke

Lundquist College of Business

- Leah Schneider
- Josh Skov

College of Design

- Maile Hutterer
- José W. Meléndez

School of Law

- Sarah Adams-Schoen
- Mohsen Manesh

School of Journalism and Communication

- Donnalyn Pompper
- Lori Shontz

CAS-Humanities

- Katy Brundan, Comparative Literature

CAS-Natural Sciences

- Tom Greenbowe, Chemistry
- Philip Matern, Human Physiology

Challenge

Faculty have faced intense and evolving demands of pandemic teaching—new policies, new technology resources, and acute student support needs and demands, including for engagement and community, active learning, and flexibility. And even as the need to communicate about teaching has been heightened, opportunities for informal connection and information sharing among faculty have been curtailed by remote work, leaving some faculty to report feeling isolated from communities of colleagues, or like they had to “invent the wheel” alone.

How can we strengthen a network of information sharing about teaching and ensure centrally created resources are most helpful to faculty’s real teaching needs?

Key findings:

1. For some, the pandemic was eye opening in making visible a preexisting dearth of opportunities for information-sharing about teaching policy, practice, and resources at the unit level. Faculty also appreciate cross-unit sharing.
2. Regular Teaching News emails from TEP and UO Online are helpful—especially when faculty know how to return to them on demand—but the **human dimension of regular, frank sharing and question-asking and answering** among faculty, the Provost’s office, student support offices, and teaching and technology support staff is highly valuable.
3. Efforts like the efficient, 30-minute, Zoom-based All Hands meetings established at the start of the pandemic should continue, along with “deeper dive” teaching discussion groups like a semi-regular Teaching Leaders CAIT.
4. Faculty who participate in these groups should have more **structured, recognized roles** so department and unit-level colleagues know who to turn to for what, and so that faculty who take on these roles feel fully enfranchised to convey information to their close colleagues and back to central groups.
5. Greater attention to **student and faculty wellbeing, multi-modal interactions and class engagement, and coordinating teaching teams** have been and will continue to be key issues for our teaching community moving forward.
6. In addition to these issues, we highlight that students will continue to want and expect **flexibility** in how they engage with their courses moving forward. Even in our small group we’ve seen considerable benefits to students of allowing flexible deadlines and modes of engagement in boosting learning, but also challenges understanding what’s reasonable in terms of extending flexibility without compromising standards, making choices individually outside of established norms, and feeling pressure from students and an undermining of faculty wellbeing in being too “flexible.” This is an area that deserves attention moving into fall.

Resources

Teaching to Support Student and Faculty Wellbeing

See the [Wellbeing Resources section of the Student Success Toolkit](#), which includes spotlights of several CAIT members’ practices, information about connecting to support resources, Counseling Services

resources, and more.

Engagement and Interactivity

See "[Bringing Remote Teaching Strategies forward to In-Person Classes](#)" for profiles of remote teaching innovations that CAIT members think have potential enhance and enliven in-person teaching in the future.

Coordinating Teaching Teams

This [draft working paper](#) seeks to prompt discussion on more fully accounting for and recognizing the important work of coordination of teaching teams—teams of **faculty and GEs** across lecture and labs/sections, and of **faculty who teach sections of the same courses**, and of **faculty across a unit that are working on shared student success and curricular innovation goals**. It makes recommendations and includes two profiles of how CAIT members approach this work.