



Connect Collaborate Innovate

A Newsletter From The Provost's Office



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Fostering Community Online

There comes a time for each of us when we are challenged in sudden and unexpected ways. There is no choice but to confront our own vulnerabilities. The fight or flight instinct kicks in and we must decide if we are willing to accept the risk of failure in pursuit of opportunity; to forgo safety and comfort to support the greater good; to embrace stress because it will fuel the motivation you need to succeed. If you have

been there, you know it is downright scary. You take the leap anyways and trust that the outcome will have been worth it. With the right mindset, we recognize that regardless, we have an opportunity to learn and grow. **We are resilient.**

Rewind six months. I would venture to say that nearly all of us found ourselves in shock at the radical change taking place in our world.

Personally, I felt that vulnerability creeping to the surface as I accepted the reality of what that meant for eLearning. Would colleges really close? How could so many classes possibly move online? Would we be able to support all the faculty and students that needed us?

As I reflect on my experiences in the weeks that followed I can sum it up with one word: **chaos.**

Accepting the Chaos

Those that know me well would vouch that chaos is not my preferred state of being. I crave organization, plans, and structure. Well, that simply was not an option! I pushed the doubts aside and was determined to just do the best I could. Perfect would have to wait for another day.

It is true, the workload was unlike anything I've ever experienced before, but what I quickly realized was that I was not alone. Everyone I interacted with seemed to be feeling some level of trepidation, perhaps even outright panic. That was when it clicked. This was my opportunity to connect with my community.

My instinct was to just make sure my colleagues and my students knew we would solve any problems together, that mistakes were inevitable, and it

was okay to ask for help. **We were all vulnerable.**

What I couldn't yet see is that this shared experience created a space for us to foster our blossoming online community and begin "humanizing" the digital space we now inhabit.

A common critique of online teaching and learning is that both students and instructors feel disconnected from one another. This is an ever present challenge in online learning. If we do not design learning in a way that creates connection and fosters interaction with our students, how is it possible to meet our mission to **inspire learning; prepare a diverse population** for creative and responsible participation in a global society; and **serve as a leader** for intellectual, economic, and cultural awareness in the community? The short answer: it's not.

An ever growing body of evidence

links online student success and satisfaction to instructor presence and social learning. For many new online instructors, the realization that teaching in this modality requires much more than just posting content in Canvas really sinks in when the student emails start pouring in. Hang in there. **Growth might feel like chaos.**



My office door inspiration

Emerging from Chaos

I am ever grateful for the wisdom of my colleague Teri Wright, who taped these insightful words of Deepak Chopra to my office door:

"Every great change is preceded by chaos"

Lately this has felt more relevant than ever! It has greeted me on my way into the office for 2+ years, and though the edges are tattered and curled, it never fails to help me focus on the greatness to come.

And that it did.

This summer FSW faculty, staff and administrators exemplified collaboration at its best and engagement in college service and professional development surpassed

all expectations. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge all of the faculty that facilitated the Summer Institute workshops and Online Certifications. They embodied the characteristics of excellent online instructors and role modeled how instructor presence and social learning can build community and create meaningful learning experiences when we are separated by time and/or space.

Though we aren't yet through the pandemic, it is already clear how this crisis has been a driving force for innovation. Technology is no longer an optional teaching tool, for most classes it is now necessary to facilitate connection.

Living Our Vision

As we settle into the rhythms of Fall semester, it is exciting to watch the

cumulative efforts of summer come to fruition. **We continue to create a culture focused on inclusion and continuous improvement.**

Faculty Open Forums

Last week faculty and administrators connected to reflect on the challenges and successes of teaching in new and traditional modalities in the Open Forums, *Taking our Temperature: Teaching and Learning in Fall 2020*,

A few themes emerged:

- Students and faculty are excited to reconnect on campus and compliance issues are few
- Overall, Live Online and Live Flex have been positively received
- Clarification that faculty *can* require students to turn on video for Live Online

- Requests to adjust classroom technology to improve teaching
- Increased access to Zoom and Proctorio spaces are needed on campus to support student success
- Challenges with students reading course and college communications

Actions have already been taken as a result of these conversations. These opportunities for honest and open dialogue are a reflection of our community's commitment to continuous improvement.

Moving Online Mentors

This semester 91 faculty are teaching asynchronous online

courses for the first time! For those veteran online faculty, you may recall the mystery that surrounds teaching online. I had never taken an online class as a student, so I couldn't envision what active teaching and student engagement entailed when you never gathered as a group. Even in the best of scenarios, and with ample time to prepare, the learning curve can be steep.

It quickly became apparent that the support framework we had in place for new online faculty was not going to be adequate to meet the needs of 90+ new online instructors.

With the support of the Provost and the FSW Faculty Federation we have been able to create a network of faculty where experienced

Fall 2020 Online Faculty Mentors

Dr. Rona Axelrod
 Dr. Leslie Bartley
 Jane Charles
 Gayle Deane
 Dr. Sara Dustin
 Erik Fay
 Ihasha Horn

Dr. Theresa Honeycutt
 Dr. Jay Koepke
 Dawn Kulpanowski
 Dr. Myriam Mompoin
 Katharine O'Connor
 Heather Olson
 Laura Osgood

Dr. Joyce Rollins
 Dr. Anita Rose
 Dr. Michael Sauer
 Dr. Mary Ellen Schultz
 Jessica Slisher
 Thomas Smith

online instructors partner with newly certified faculty in their discipline to provide support through the first semester online. This Fall, thirteen Moving Online Mentors, in collaboration with the seven faculty facilitating Online Certifications, are paving the way for what I hope becomes a permanent part of our FSW Online culture.

Thank you to these faculty for your

commitment to student success and for creating a positive and welcoming environment for your colleagues!

Thriving After Chaos

A favorite pastime of mine is daydreaming about all that lies ahead. I am not sure yet what that may look like for online learning at FSW, but I am eager to foster the

exchanges that will lead us towards continued growth and success. Let us join forces to find creative ways to build relationships with our online students and with each other.

For me, it is those connections that give meaning and purpose to my life's work. Reach out, let's daydream together!



Dr. Rozalind Jester has a doctorate in Ocean Science and, like most UC Santa Cruz alumni, is a proud Banana Slug. She joined FSW as faculty in 2008, served as Director, eLearning 2017-2020 and recently joined the Provost's Office as AVP, Online Learning. In this role she looks forward to collaborating with faculty and staff to support innovative online teaching and learning at FSW. She has a mild obsession with jigsaw puzzles.

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