

2019 Provost Teaching Innovation Prize

Descriptions for Awarded Proposals:

Face-to-face category

1st Place tie (\$1000) – **Amal Alhosban, Assistant Professor, Computer Science** for the project *Start Your Future Business Now* that aims to help students in CIS 200 better comprehend the overlap between computer science and business. The assignment enhances student understanding of the main concepts that represent the information system in any enterprise.

Dr. Alhosban identified differences in computer science and information systems: in computer science, the students write programs and get output based on their algorithm, but in information systems the students didn't engage with the market to see how it actually worked. She designed the project that would make the market applicable to them by designing/building a future business. By creating a business website, students can implement information system concepts with business concepts.

Not only did the students create beautiful professional business websites, but they performed better on other class activities and assignments. The students reported an increased interest in information systems, were proud of their final product and were more confident about their learning.

1st Place tie (\$1000) – **Kazuko Hiramatsu and Erica Britt, Associate Professors of Linguistics, Aimi Moss, former CAS Special Advisor to the Dean, and Todd Womack, Advisor, Social Work** for the semester-long activity, *A Community Engagement Project with Civic Park in a First year Experience Course*. The project takes place within the context of UNV 100 "I am UM-Flint" where students are given the opportunity to support a community event.

Several factors went into the design of the community engagement project, including the students' skill sets, dovetailing the engagement with ongoing social work student activities at the Urban Renaissance Center, instilling "ubuntu" philosophy in the students' engagement (Ubuntu = "I am because we are"; students are walking alongside the Civic Park community, not saving them). The engagement activities included a Trunk-or-Treat event in fall and an Easter Egg Hunt in the winter semester and UNV 100 students work in groups to design activities for the neighborhood children. A celebration where students share what they learned with their community partners occurs at the end of the semester. The entire course and assignments/activities are designed around the community engagement project and include readings/discussion of Flint history, guided tours and guest speakers. Students keep track of their own learning through weekly reflections where they make connections between activities (and preconceptions) that occur within and outside of the course. The instructors administered a Civic Attitudes and Skills Questionnaire pre- and post-test to students. The results indicate that students feel more knowledgeable about global issues and understand the relevance of

public policy; they have demonstrated learning outcomes such as critical consciousness of self and community among others.

2nd Place (\$750) – **Leslie Smith and Suzanne Trojanowski, Assistant Professors of Physical Therapy** for the program *HEROS: Helping Each Other Remember Our Stuff* in PTP 481. The goal of the program is to help students better understand how to care for patients in the acute care environment.

Drs. Smith and Trojanowski developed the HEROS program to strengthen students' acute care physical therapy skills. The program combines simulation with direct observation to improve student learning in acute care. Patient profiles and patient scripts were created and students served as HEROS: reviewing patient chart, presenting the case to their peers, then performing an examination of the patient while their peers observed and indicated on a checklist what they learned from their HEROS. Instructors completed rubrics for each and debriefed after the examination. Students completed documentation paperwork and a written reflection after the de-brief. The HEROS program has been utilized for the past three years and has contributed to student learning and success in their clinical education.

Online Category

1st Place (\$1000) – **Zhaochu (Russell) Li, Assistant Professor of Accounting** for the project *Using Kaltura to Make Lecture Videos for Online Courses*. The videos include lectures, opportunities for practice, and a review of the practice activities for ACC 420 and ACC 550 – all of which help his online classes receive nearly the same instruction as his face-to-face courses.

Dr. Li created videos for all of his courses so that online students could experience what occurred in the face-to-face lectures. He then used Kaltura to capture both these lecture videos and Powerpoint slides which can be viewed in various formats. He set up a structure to the course so that students were instructed to watch these videos (lecture), then were given problems to solve (practice), and then “re-convened” over a review session of the problems to show both process and correct answers.

One student response sums up their appreciation of this instructional strategy: “Dr. Li did an excellent job of taking a complex subject and thoroughly teaching it in an online only format. His videos were incredibly thorough and well thought out. I appreciated how he broke them up in shorter segments so it made learning more convenient over several sessions. The assignments are challenging, but yet thoroughly represent what we've learned in the course...”

2nd Place (\$750) – **Marilyn Filter, Associate Professor and Marilyn McFarland, Professor of Nursing** for the use of *Regularly Scheduled Virtual Online Faculty Office Hours of Graduate Nursing Students in the Research Sequence of Classes*. The format of the office hours provides opportunity for students to better interact with each other and the faculty. The sessions are recorded so that students can revisit them later or have access if they were not available at the scheduled time.

Recognizing the challenge of online interactions and the difficulty in fostering a sense of community in these mostly asynchronous courses, Drs. Filter and McFarland developed synchronous evening office hours that promote real time interactions between master's and doctoral students and faculty. The sessions build rapport across learning levels as well as time zones (!). These sessions are not your typical office hours – they are more reminiscent of a journal club, or brainstorming sessions where everyone is expected to contribute and everyone benefits from the conversation. These sessions are also recorded as well so that they are available to those who couldn't attend or wish to review the session. The personalized communication between faculty and students has improved the online environment and engagement in all of the courses involved.

Hybrid Category

1st Place (\$1000) – **Matt Wyneken, Associate Professor and Mary Jo Finney, Professor of Education** for the *Interdisciplinary Project* that occurs across EDR 548, *Reading and Writing Across the Content Areas*, and EDS 530, *Teaching Numeracy Across the Curriculum*. The project requires students to design and teach a lesson that must integrate literacy and numeracy with the content of their field placement.

Dr. Wyneken and Dr. Finney “focus on mathematics as a sense-making endeavor and on reading as a language-thinking event. By addressing such elements as emergent literacy, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension in the teaching of reading, (they) draw parallels to these same features of numeracy so that teacher candidates discover the ways in which these apply to both disciplines.” The teacher candidates must design an hour-long lesson that facilitates learning across the two subjects. This is a semester-long project that includes:

- I. Data collection which includes observations of classroom dynamics,
- II. Drafting the lesson design where candidates address where in their content area they can specifically address literacy and numeracy,
- III. Teaching and recording the lesson which requires careful planning and sharing their video securely with faculty,
- IV. Post-Teaching Written Reflection that includes reflection on all previous phases of the project including what went according to plan, what was a surprise, and what would you change?
- V. In-class Oral Presentations where candidates guide their fellow candidates and faculty through the phases of their project and is intended to simulate presentation for a school board teacher interview.

Examples of student lessons were included: Caloric and water needs of characters in *The Lord of the Flies*, Literacy, Ecology, and Numeracy of Photosynthesis and Respiration. Students commented that the daily reflections were appreciated and contributed to their finding their teacher identity.

2nd Place (\$750) – **Halil Bisgin, Assistant Professor, Computer Science** for *Slack Chat*, using a digital platform to enhance student engagement, collaboration, and learning.

Dr. Bisgin began using *Slack* in his Data Mining course in 2016 and now uses it in all of his courses. *Slack* is a communication platform that is especially useful for collaboration. The benefits of *Slack* in computer programming courses are numerous, but specifically the ability to share code through the *Slack* platform has improved student learning. Utilizing the collaborative platform allows the instructor and students to exchange codes and spot code errors in an engaging environment. It has also been useful in trouble-shooting software problems etc. that would be onerous activities via email or discussion boards. *Slack* has facilitated both faculty/student and peer/peer interactions that would have been a frustrating back-and-forth via email and provides solutions much quicker than using the LMS for communication.

The use of *Slack* in the cyber classroom has its own special benefit of including the distance learners in the *Slack* collaborative space and, not only have they performed better with this technology, they also indicate that they have a better sense of academic belonging with both in-class students and other distance learners.