CLTE Annual Conference Presentations Titles and Abstracts 2021

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

Title: *Designing Work + Learn programs to advance a life transformative education at Arizona State University*

Presenters:

Sukhwant Jhaj, Vice Provost for Academic Innovation and Student Achievement
Ryan Meuth, Lecturer Sr, School of Computing and Augmented Intelligence

Abstract:

Recognizing that 70% of ASU's undergraduate students work while pursuing their education, ASU recently created a Work + Learn unit to seamlessly integrate work and learning experiences. Work + Learn programs such as Work-integrated Learning, Work+, and the Experiential Learning network are designed to provide students with a life transformative education that develops their sense of identity, agency, and purpose. These projects are at different stages of development and will use storytelling as a foundational element. For students working at ASU, the Work+ program aims to redesign all student work. For those working outside ASU, it offers a pathway to assessing and understanding their work experiences through the lens of career competencies. ASU's Work-integrated Learning program partners faculty with employers, giving faculty the flexibility to embed employer-generated micro-projects into courses and providing students with tools to work as a team on real-world problems. Students design, develop, and construct hands-on solutions to a problem with a company or non-profit partner. This learning experience allows students to build upon their creative capacity while addressing industry challenges. Finally, the Experiential Learning Network will increase the awareness of hundreds of experiential learning opportunities offered at ASU and recommend a curated set of experiences based on student interests. We recognize the exceptional impact experiential learning opportunities have on student academic outcomes, growth in skillsets, and success in college and beyond. Through these programs, ASU will support learners to thrive in an integrated work and learning future.

BATES COLLEGE

Title: *Faculty Engagement and Purposeful Work at Bates College: Connecting the Classroom and the Laboratory to the World of Work*

Presenters:

Lori Banks, Assistant Professor of Biology
Alex Dauge-Roth, Professor of French and Francophone Studies
Allen Delong, Senior Associate Dean, Purposeful Work at Bates

Abstract:

At Bates College a Purposeful Work philosophy is intentionally woven into every aspect of the student experience, and has become a way of life and of thinking for Bates students. Aligning who you are with what you do is at the heart of the Bates Experience, and it is core to our mission as a liberal arts college to prepare students for a life of purposeful work, which is dependent upon that alignment. The Purposeful Work initiative began in 2014 as a way to address this obligation, and we feel ours is a unique approach to work and purpose. Today's presentation will focus on two ways faculty members engage with Purposeful Work.

Professor of French and Francophone Studies Alex Dauge-Roth will discuss how he constructs a **Purposeful Work Infusion Course,** designed to help students appreciate and articulate connections between what they're learning in class and career, purpose, and meaningful work. Focus will be on his course *Borders and Disorders in French and Francophone Literature and Film*.

Assistant Professor of Biology Lori Banks will discuss her engagement with the **Purposeful Work Internship Program**, through which students explore interests, deepen skills, and build networks during the summer. Specifically, Dr. Banks will highlight her work with a Bates student intern who analyzed samples from one of Maine's many craft breweries in her lab during Summer 2021, providing a hands-on opportunity to apply course content to the work of a local business.

BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY

Title: *Bucknell-on-Purpose*

Presenter:

Kurt D. Nelson, Director of Religious and Spiritual Life

Abstract:

In January 2020, Bucknell's CLTE grant team had big plans for mapping the "Ecosystem of Purpose" at Bucknell University (and - we hoped - beyond.). In March, the world changed.

Through the course of early-pandemic focus groups, instrument development, surveys, and student research, we feel we have learned much, as expressed directly by students themselves, about the answer(s) to the question: when have you felt connected to a sense of purpose during your college career?

In short: folks connect to a sense of purpose when they connect to their people.

We will share our process, instrument, feedback and design process. And - on the cusp of our prototype Bucknell-on-Purpose program to increase opportunities and reduce barriers for students to find a constructive sense of purpose in their lives - we will discuss what we've learned so far, and what we hope to learn in the months ahead.

EMBRY-RIDDLE AERONAUTICAL UNIVERSITY

Title: *CLIMBING: A Second-Year Experiential Learning Program*

Presenter:

Kadie Mullins, Executive Director of Administrative Assessment

Abstract:

CLIMBING: Second Year Experiential Learning Program is a multi-faceted experiential learning program for second-year students in which participants engage in high-impact activities related to their personal interests supported by faculty, staff, and peers. Towards the long-term goal of wellbeing and engagement, participants explore and enhance their sense of identity, agency, and purpose through faculty and peer mentorship, cohort team building, personal development workshops, experiential learning activities, and reflection.

OLIN COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Title: *Transformative Learning by doing – seeing a sea change*

Presenters:

Linda Vanasupa, Professor of Materials Engineering
Kenja McCray, Visiting Associate Professor of History (Georgia Tech)

Abstract:

Grounded in the assumption that humans have innate agency and sense of purpose, this project sought to recover these instinctual (but alienated) transformational learning identities in ourselves. Our plan was to bring together students and faculty from a diversity of institutions in a candid, face-to-face retreat around educational experiences. However, not only did events of Spring 2020 upend or plans, they revealed an egregious disparity across our community of learners--systemic racial violence and injustice, resource inequities and wide-scale prevalence of adverse childhood experiences. These revelations shifted our attention from individuals to understanding the sociopolitical and neuroscience dimensions of learning. In addition to a shift to virtual retreat, we conducted several small-scale interventions to foster holistic well-being. Some participants reported "transformational learning," and expanded engineering identities. Our preliminary findings point to the importance of accounting for our whole being as well as the systemic conditions. We tested practices that enable learners to manage their neurological state. The findings also suggest a need for faculty to critically examine and adjust the cultural dynamics of higher education that reify inequity.

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

Title: LTE@UConn: Culture, Connection, and Context

Presenters:

Michael Bradford, Vice Provost for Faculty, Staff, and Student Development
Jennifer Lease Butts, Assistant Vice Provost for Enrichment Programs, Director of the Honors Program
Sarah Croucher, Director of Academic Policy and Faculty Affairs

Abstract:

This conference presentation highlights our work on Life Transformative Education at UConn from November 2019 to present. We discuss our goal of solidifying the culture of UConn to reflect the UConn community's commitment to support the development of students' identity, agency, and purpose via supportive mentoring relationships and experiential learning in and out of the classroom. We begin by sharing our activities and events designed to encourage a grass-roots adoption of LTE principles, which are integral to our campus culture. We also discuss the importance of authentic learning environments and developing meaningful connections with students and the primacy of advising and mentoring relationships and the work we're collective doing to meet this objective given the size and scale of UConn. Our discussion includes the organizational structure we have established for achieving our objectives. Finally, we share opportunities within the current UConn context for organizational and strategic inclusion of LTE as well as our plans for this academic year.

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE

Title: *Across Four Years and Seven Universities: The Maine Difference*

Presenters:

John C. Volin, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
Brian J. Olsen, Associate Provost for Student Success and Strategic Initiatives

Abstract:

Life-Transformative Educational (LTE) practices will only reach their full potential once implementation occurs at all levels of the educational experience, from first-year students to seniors and from individual classrooms to university-wide policies. Larger scale implementation, however, will inevitably encounter new challenges that require new solutions. In Maine we are beginning a comprehensive, data-driven process to implement LTE practices across all four years of the undergraduate experience and across all seven public universities in the state university system. The seven universities represent a broad range of institutions, from the state's comprehensive research land grant university to small regional universities focused on undergraduate and professional-focused education. We will present our plan, our progress to date, and our assessment design for three areas of emphasis for the Maine Difference: 1. first-year course design and support ("Gateways to Success"), 2. authentic inquiry-based learning and cohort building that start in the first year ("Research Learning Experiences"), and 3. preparation for and placement in career-

relevant experiences with external partners ("Pathways to Careers"). During break-out groups in the second half of the session, we will discuss how lessons learned from other CLTE members might improve our approach, and we will brainstorm ways for the Maine Difference to test, pilot, or validate LTE practices with other Coalition members and to explore possible future partnerships.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-DEARBORN

Title: *More Than A Single Story: UM-Dearborn Speaks*

Presenters:

Maureen Linker, Associate Provost of Experiential Learning and Director
Christopher Spilker, Department Head, Library Research Center
Deirdras Jones, User Services Supervisor

Abstract:

Launching in Fall 2021 **More Than A Single Story: UM-Dearborn Speaks**, is a digital storytelling project offering student experience in media and other digital technologies that will allow them to explore their identities, purposes, and communities through self-reflective storytelling. Digital storytelling literacy can serve as an effective means for students to discover and articulate their values and make the connection between values and career readiness. Over the span of two academic years, the project will provide students with a chance to share their stories while challenging the myths about Dearborn, the Detroit Metropolitan area, regional commuter campuses, the surrounding Muslim-American community, the impact of COVID-19 on the region. Stories will be exhibited in the University Library before being stored permanently.

We will share the preparatory work for this project including the digital storyteller certification, our choice of an online video editing software, the invitation to student participants and interview questions. We map out the syllabus for the year and the central elements that distinguish digital storytelling from videos, tik toks, and oral and multimedia presentations. Much in the same way that a poem is not simply a paragraph of text, digital stories are not simply videos. They represent an evolution in storytelling from an oral to written to digital medium. Following a digital storytelling exhibit in Fall 2022, we will invite Henry Ford Community College and local high school students to participate in a digital storytelling event.

UNVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA – PROJECT #1

Title: *Training Engineering Students to Use Stories for Student Empowerment and Community-Building: The Re-Engineering Engineering Education Program at the USC Viterbi School of Engineering*

Presenters:

Brandi P. Jones, Professor of Research, USC Rossier School of Education
Helen Choi, Senior Lecturer, USC VIterbi Engineering Writing Program

Abstract:

Undergraduate engineering education has traditionally emphasized technical skills over communication skills and other human-centered disciplines. As a result, many engineering students often feel that they must ignore parts of themselves and their lives when they enter the engineering space. At the USC Viterbi School of Engineering, many students have expressed similar sentiments and have also experienced difficulties cultivating an authentic sense of belonging within the university's engineering community. As a large engineering school of 2,700 undergraduates within an even larger overall undergraduate population of about 20,000, the school has observed that some students feel disconnected and disempowered - especially if they are from underrepresented or marginalized backgrounds, far from home, or new to the college experience.

To address these areas of disconnect for students, USC Viterbi faculty and administrators developed a program called Re-Engineering Engineering Education (RE3) where undergraduate engineering students are hired and trained to share their personal stories and teach storytelling to fellow engineering students, engineering faculty, and other members of the engineering community. These engineering students, called "Student Trainers," are placed in the position of teachers, and storytelling skills and *story sharing* are presented as part of engineering educational experience. During the fall 2020 semester, Student Trainers reached over 300 first-year engineering students, who entered college online during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The conference presentation will discuss specific workings of the program, implementation, goals, challenges, and impact.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA – PROJECT #2

Title: *The USC Viterbi Ethos Project*

Presenters:

Gisele Ragusa, Professor and Chair of the USC STEM Consortium
Harly Ramsey, Associate Professor of Technical Communication Practice
Martha Townsend, Associate Professor of Technical Communication Practice

Abstract:

The Ethos Project, embedded in the University of Southern California's Viterbi School of Engineering's Division of Engineering and Society, intends to infuse humanitarian values and ethical practices in undergraduate engineering and computer science students. The project melds four discrete, yet interrelated, sub-projects based on guided experiential curricular and co-curricular learning. The first sub-project, the *Freshman Academy Renovation,* touches the lives of all first semester freshmen in the Viterbi School across engineering subdisciplines and in computer science. Guided by the principles of project-based learning and human-centered design, freshmen students work together with faculty leaders and near peer, upper division student mentors to design and create a protype of a potential solution to the

National Academy of Engineering's Grand Challenges. Sub-project 2: *Engineering Moment* helps students to recognize that they must be nimble in response to societal changes; and provides them with opportunities to practice agile of thinking and action via a culturally focused periodic podcasts. Sub-project 3: *Engineers Engaging Community* helps students understand that public engagement is integral to the practice of humanitarian engineering and that engineering does not exist in a vacuum, but instead is part of a larger community discourse. It engages students with public audiences, creating speaking opportunities for them in diverse community. Sub-project 4: *The Good Life* engages students with ethical considerations of the engineering and technology professions by holding a series of ethics-themed discussions between undergraduate and graduate students.

Each of these four sub-projects build upon one another beginning during the students' freshman year and extending to their senior year and ultimately their professional careers. They build students' individual and collective engineering identity and situate them personally and professionally with humanitarian foci with their future engineering and computer science practice.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Title: *Understanding Barriers and Supports for Building Sustainable, Relationship-Rich Academic Environments*

Presenters:

Dorothe Bach, Associate Director, Center for Teaching Excellence
Lynn Mandeltort, Assistant Director for Engineering Education

Abstract:

Our project is focused on understanding UVA's landscape of ever-proliferating initiatives aimed at strengthening student-faculty relationships in order to address persistent challenges such as a struggling advising system and failure to ensure that our marginalized students feel that they belong. Our qualitative study examines to what extent programs and individual faculty intentionally set out to develop students' identity, agency and purpose through activities identified by Felten and Lambert (2020) as central to building relationship-rich academic environments: a) communicating genuine welcome and care, b) inspiring academic engagement, c) assisting students in developing a web of significant relationships, and d) exploring questions related to meaning.

Our research questions included: What models already exist at UVA for prompting meaningful conversations between faculty and students? How intentional are they about fostering interactions that help students develop their identity, agency, and sense of purpose? What personal characteristics, skills and support do individual instructors need to support students' development? What are the structural supports and barriers to creating a culture in which everyone understands that supportive relationships are central to learning and students' personal growth?

During this session, participants are invited to consider the relevance of the study for their own initiatives and professional roles. We therefore request that you come prepared having read the [accompanying summary of our findings](). The goal is to begin a conversation about strategies for removing structural

barriers and providing creative support for building and sustaining relationship-rich academic environments in different institutional contexts.

WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY

Title: *Beyond mental health: Exploring the pandemic's impacts on student wellbeing, identity, agency, meaning, and purpose*

Presenter:

Nicole Brocato, Director of the Wellbeing Assessment

Abstract:

Higher education is currently facing a two-part challenge to student wellbeing: (a) a recent history of mental health deterioration among students, and (b) the coronavirus pandemic. These two factors have interacted with each other to create ever-more-precarious student wellbeing outcomes, including potential detriments to mental health, identity, agency, and purpose. While multiple studies have documented declines in mental health, little research has been done to understand the potential impact on identity, agency, meaning, and purpose. Our research seeks to answer the question: Has the pandemic impacted some components of wellbeing more than others, and if so, which ones? Using statistical modeling (ANOVAs), we briefly demonstrate that while most students' subjective wellbeing was negatively impacted during the pandemic, the pandemic's effects on identity, agency, meaning, and purpose were comparatively minor. We use another set of statistical models (SEM & path modeling) to demonstrate the importance of identity, agency, meaning, and purpose for both subjective wellbeing and academic outcomes. We finish by considering the possibility of using optimism as a universal programming point to support a wide variety of wellbeing and academic outcomes.

WELLESLEY COLLEGE

Title: *The January Project: Developing Identity, Agency, and Purpose in an Unusual Year*

Presenters:

Carol Bate, Associate Dean of Students
Erin Konkle, Civic Engagement Program Director

Abstract:

The January Project (January 2021) was designed to engage students in purposeful action that is grounded in interconnected communities (identity), leadership development (agency), and reflection (purpose). In a year of all-encompassing disruption and uncertainty, the January Project was a campus wide initiative at Wellesley College that engaged each class year in experiential learning specific to their own developmental stage while bringing the entire campus together around a set of common themes: changing climate, fight for racial justice, election, and Covid-19. This presentation will outline the structure, implementation, and results of the Wellesley College January Project.