



# THE UAGC CHRONICLE

Spring 2023 Issue



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
**GLOBAL CAMPUS**

<b>LETTER FROM THE EDITOR .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>THE PROVOST’S CORNER.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>UNIVERSITY, PROGRAM, AND CURRICULUM NEWS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
A WORD FROM PAUL PASTOREK .....	5
THE EVOLUTION OF GEN 101 .....	7
GUIDING OUR STUDENTS THROUGH A PATH TO SUCCESS: GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE INTERACTIVE MAP	10
REFLECTIONS ON GEN103 LIVE LEARNING & STUDENT RETENTION .....	13
A REFLECTIVE ESSAY ON THE 2022 TEACHING AND LEARNING KEYNOTE SESSION WITH CLINT SMITH.....	15
TLC 2022 HIGHLIGHTS.....	18
<b>CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT .....</b>	<b>20</b>
ADDRESSING CHALLENGES TO STUDENT RETENTION AT UAGC: A THREE-PRONGED APPROACH .....	20
<b>BUILDING ACADEMIC COMMUNITY .....</b>	<b>23</b>
RETAINING FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS THROUGH THE LIBRARY, WRITING, AND SUBJECT TUTORING SUPPORTS ..	25
INCREASING STUDENT RETENTION BY DEMONSTRATING CARE IN THE ONLINE CLASSROOM.....	28
FACULTY VOICES .....	31
NEW FACULTY .....	32
<b>EVENTS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEWS .....</b>	<b>40</b>
ED TALKS® 2023.....	40
<b>IN CASE YOU MISSED IT.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS.....</b>	<b>42</b>
.....	43
THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING CONTRIBUTORS OF THIS ISSUE .....	43

# THE UAGC CHRONICLE: A FACULTY–FOCUSED PUBLICATION

*The UAGC Chronicle* supports the entire academic community's contribution to the UAGC mission of providing a community of caring and guidance for adult online learners. Therefore, our publication promotes content that addresses the theoretical underpinnings and practical execution of this mission: academic research on instructional best practices, curricular innovation, and student support strategies; examples and resources that foster a community of practice; news of the progress of institutional student success initiatives; professional development opportunities; and – most importantly – the stories and successes of the people who shape our university. Please check the Call for Submissions section for more information on submitting an article for consideration.

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The UAGC Chronicle team is committed to showcasing the work you contribute to achieving the four critical institutional goals:

### UAGC | Student Critical Goals

1. **Retain** students during their first year of enrollment
2. Support the **completion** of programs and educational goals considering student-based timelines
3. Offer **high-value credentials** with marketable skills
4. Enhance students' **economic return**

In this issue, you will find several articles that address first-year student retention from different angles. Dr. Sarah Steinberg discusses in the Provost's Corner some of the operational steps UAGC is taking to engage and support students at the beginning of their educational journey. Additional contributions address academic and dispositional factors of student retention, such as the first-year or general education curriculum and support resources; the library's perspective on their approach to retaining first-year students through the library, writing, and tutoring support; and methods faculty can use to support students and maintain their energy and enthusiasm for teaching. Within this issue, you will learn more about resources, curriculum revisions, and the people undertaking this work to support UAGC students, both current and prospective, in earning their degree.

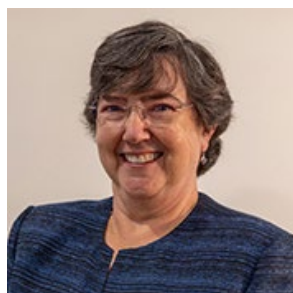
Finally, I want to share one of my favorite sections of the UAGC Chronicle, New Faculty Introductions. Please take a moment to meet the newest members of the UAGC faculty body. I encourage you to reach out and introduce yourself!

Many thanks to the incredibly hardworking UAGC Chronicle team for their time, effort, and talent in bringing this issue to press. We hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as we did creating it.

[Please use this link to share the Chronicle with your network!](#)

This publication aims to support and inform the diverse UAGC academic community. The UAGC Chronicle staff actively seeks contributions demonstrating engagement with and dedication to the UAGC mission and institutional goals. Learn more about contributing to The UAGC Chronicle. Please send your ideas, suggestions, and questions to [TheUAGCChronicle@uagc.edu](mailto:TheUAGCChronicle@uagc.edu).

## THE PROVOST'S CORNER



I hope you all had a peaceful winter break and have enjoyed a fresh start in the first few months of 2023! The new year is a time not only for resolutions and goals but also for reflecting on hard work and lessons learned. UAGC has remained focused on achieving our institutional goals, and we have already made progress. Thanks to dedicated UAGC faculty and staff, who are present for our students each day, the year-to-date retention rate for students who enrolled at UAGC in 2022 is trending higher than last year's.

### UAGC CRITICAL GOALS

1. **Retain** students during their first year of enrollment.
2. Support **completion** of programs and educational goals driven by student-based timelines.
3. Offer high-value credentials with **marketable skills**.
4. Enhance students' **economic return**.

As our work continues and as we prepare for a special visit from our accreditor, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Senior University and College Commission (WSCUC), I want to share insight on a key initiative UAGC has enacted to further our progress toward this critical goal of retaining students during their first year of enrollment – a strategic reduction to the number of annual course start dates the institution offers.

Historically, the university has offered a new general education program start date every week of the year (except during winter break). While this frequency supported flexible student scheduling, it created several challenges that negatively impact the student experience and potentially their propensity to persist through their first few courses. For example, the time between the application and the start of

the first course has been very short for many students. This results in students – who might have little college experience – needing to fulfill onboarding documentation requirements while acclimating to the online classroom at the same time. Students, faculty, and staff alike have reported that these circumstances can cause stress and confusion, and institutional data supports that observation. Reducing the frequency of course starts creates operational space between when a student applies to the university and begins their first course, which can help resolve this challenge. UAGC can use this space to build students' sense of belonging at the institution and their sense of self-efficacy with the learning environment and important support resources. The process of reducing course starts began in February and will continue over the coming months. Ultimately, UAGC will offer around 30 general education program start dates in 2023.

Importantly, this logistical work will be accompanied by deliberate student engagement efforts, including faculty-led work like the Meet the Majors events. This issue of *The UAGC Chronicle* outlines several other initiatives that complement this work of reducing course starts by engaging students in community-building and institutional resource discovery.

As I've encouraged before, please take advantage of *your* many outlets for community-building and resource discovery – including the bi-weekly Town Halls, Provost's Roundtable sessions, and Faculty Community of Practice sessions. [Learn more about these events via the UAGC event calendar](#). I look forward to joining with each of you as we pursue our student retention goal.

## UNIVERSITY, PROGRAM, AND CURRICULUM NEWS

### A WORD FROM PAUL PASTOREK

**Paul Pastorek, UAGC President and Chief Executive Officer**



Toward the end of 2022, I started meeting regularly with students, faculty, and staff in either roundtables or presidential confabs. The get-togethers have been both eye-opening and affirmative as to the many things we're doing right – and those issues that need improvement. I've listened with rapt attention to students who've shared deeply personal educational journeys, and to faculty and staff and their desire for bringing out the best in every UAGC student. The one theme that weaves through most all the meetings – whether a student or staff audience – is the passion and pride that exists for expanding knowledge and improving life circumstances for self and family. This passion and pride positions UAGC to successfully provide our students with affordable college credentials that can better prepare them for careers in a rapidly evolving global economy. Innovation is and will remain at the core of our approach, and a promise to our students. But we must never forget to elevate student success to the top of everything we do, no matter what external forces may be upon us.



As we forge ahead in this transformational year where we'll integrate fully into the University of Arizona, we have the opportunity more than ever to create an environment for our students that lives in the heart of our Culture of Care: where engaged, responsive teaching and learning join together with creativity; where an enterprising spirit and equity intersect; and where inclusivity is the passageway to innovative and outstanding student success. It's because of our mission – to make higher education accessible to anyone no matter their background or circumstance – that we created the new role of Director of Student Success, which is accountable for advancing student success work and has direct oversight of the UAGC four Critical Student Goals – with top priority on student retention and completion goals.

As we recently announced, Stephani Kilby, who joined our University in 2013 and most recently was Director of Student Services, is fulfilling this new role of Director of Student Success. During the interview process, she told us she connects with our mission in a personal way because, at one time, she was quite literally our student – a working mother of three who recognized that education was the path to a better life for her and her family. Stephani has talked about her excitement for taking on this new and challenging role that strives to empower, support, enrich, and graduate every student. She wants students to know that there is a place for them at UAGC...that they do belong, they can achieve their goals and take pride in what they accomplish, and that we're proud to have them as members of the UAGC community and are committed to their success. [You can learn more about Stephani Kilby and her role in this communication.](#)

I'd like to ask each of you to learn the four Critical Student Goals and keep them top of mind as they are the foundation for all we do here at UAGC. Of the four, Goal #1 for all of us – faculty and staff – is to retain students during their first year of enrollment. Our target goal is to retain at least 50% of students by 2025-2026. To learn more about the work we're doing to meet our retention goal, committee updates are posted on the [Initiatives page](#) on the [Office of the President intranet site](#). This site is here to help you stay engaged and will be continually updated and refined. It includes information on the following:

- Leadership
- Goals and Initiatives
- Engagement
- UAGC and UArizona Integration
- News and Events

We already know we have students who are struggling with external stressors, and understanding the importance of student retention is the start to developing strategies that keep students engaged at our university. We are studying why students leave UAGC and working on identifying at-risk students before they reach a breaking point and step away from their courses – and that will help us begin solving the problem. As educators, I know that each of you every single day do more than follow a syllabus. You are teaching hope to people who've had their fair share of challenges and may have thought a higher

education was out of reach. You teach hope about their future, but also how they can address complex issues in our society and affect change while building resiliency and engagement.

This is why we have a Culture of Care and why it's so important to weave it through all we do.

UAGC faculty and staff have made a difference in thousands of people's lives throughout the years. We have much to offer students and take pride in. We're working together to design ways to continue providing the best education possible to our students who are looking to us to help make their dreams come true. That's something at the end of every day to carry with you into the next to show UAGC students that we are here to guide them along their path to their successful destination.

## THE EVOLUTION OF GEN 101

**Teresa Leary Handy, Program Chair, Academic Engagement Center and Connie Lower, Faculty, Academic Engagement Center**



The evolution of GEN 101, the entry-point course for all UAGC students, is the result of an intentional decision made by the College of Arts and Sciences, Forbes School of Business and Technology, and the Academic Engagement Center to develop a joint General Education pathway that empowers students with tools for imagining new possibilities for their personal and professional lives. The

instructional design decisions were meant to support the institutional goal of increasing first-year student retention. As President Paul Pastorek has shared, the importance of student access to better learning experiences undergirds the intentional focus on student success and persistence at UAGC. Please explore President Pastorek's [comments](#) further.

### GEN 101 Represents Best Practices in UAGC Course Design

GEN 101 is unapologetically student-centric and represents the best of former entry-point courses ASH 101- Launchpad: Developing Skills and Strategies for Success and BUS 105- Business and Academic Success. Most importantly, the course is designed to ensure that students connect their academic journey to their real-world experiences. According to Kuh (2008), the highest quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students' intellectual and practical competencies.

Therefore, the four foci of UAGC course design are centered in GEN 101:

1. Love of learning- Students engage in learning opportunities that are intentionally designed to create a love of learning.
2. Critical thinking skills- The course incorporates learning activities that develop critical thinking skills using robust discussions and several revised and new assignments. There are interactives in four of

the five weeks with cognitive primers that introduces course content in a way that is engaging and relevant to the student experience.

3. A community of learners- The course creates a community of learners through live learning, peer-to-peer discussions, and even a Soft Skills Poll where students can see how their self-identified soft skill measures up with other GEN 101 students. The course also has student voices present with videos from current and former students and introduces students to Dr. Newton Miller, a Lead Faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences.
4. Real-world connections- Each week, there is an intentional connection to the workplace or everyday world so the student can use what they are learning academically and professionally.

### **The Why Behind the Instructional Design Decisions**

We know the UAGC student is predominately working, female, and represents a diverse demographic. For many, GEN 101 is the starting point of their college journey—the beginning step of a journey some thought they could never take due to personal circumstances. This means GEN 101 students enter the classroom with various emotions ranging from fearful to optimistic. Lakhal and Khechine (2021) assert that students are more likely to persist when they feel less anxious while using the online course system; however, additional factors around performance expectancy, attitude, effort expectancy, and social influence also matter to a student's persistence. It is an awareness of these factors that influenced the GEN 101 instructional design decisions to support student retention in their first year.

### **GEN 101 is a Unique Online Class Experience**

Careful attention was given to how the course was organized in a way that maintained a high level of rigor with scaffolded support as well as a high-touch approach from faculty. As we designed the course, we wanted to demonstrate that we understood who our students are and what their unique needs are in the online classroom. We wanted to make sure our students were able to increase their confidence in the course and their sense of belonging with UAGC by incorporating increased instructor engagement through second-tier discussion responses and substantive instructor feedback. We also made sure that the assignments, discussions, and learning activities represented the diverse real-life experiences of our students. We are proud to say that the course debuted on January 3, 2023, with seventeen course starts. The GEN 101 team is grateful and appreciative for all the support they have received to develop this course.

Some of the unique course experiences that we expect will give students confidence, engage them in the UAGC community, and prepare them to succeed are as follows:

**Live Learning-** An interactive and engaging live learning session that meets four times a week and affords students an opportunity to build their confidence and help them feel more successful in an online course. During the sessions over Zoom, an instructor leads the session while two additional instructors provide feedback and UAGC resources in the chat for students to access as needed. Students are required to attend once during their five-week course.



**Identifying Student Motivation-** Students are encouraged to identify their "why" and their motivation for college, which also helps to guide their SMART goal assignment. Students become a member of a community of learners as they learn from and encourage one another.

**Goal Setting and Overcoming Fixed Mindset-** Students write an academic and professional SMART goal and take the TypeFocus assessment. During the Live Learning session, students are encouraged to share their experiences with SMART goals, and they discuss strategies to overcome a fixed mindset. These confidence-building activities increase the students' adjustment to college. The peer-to-peer discussions on these topics also encourage a community of learners.

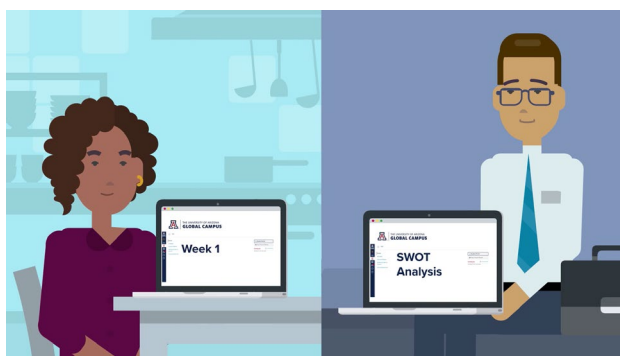
**Support Networks/Understanding of UAGC Resources-** Each week, students are exposed to and encouraged to use UAGC student resources to create their support network. The collaborative relationship with the enrollment advisors and academic advisors allows for increased communication on ways to support students transitioning to college.

**Rubrics/Templates-** New and updated templates help students stay organized in the course. The GEN 101 team worked hard to establish accountability measures through robust rubrics. For example, the discussions and assignments rubrics are directly aligned and connected to each prompt. Instructor feedback is vital to students who are not assessed as Proficient or Distinguished, and specific feedback is provided for the component not meeting requirements. Students have the option to revise and resubmit assignments for regrading.

**Course Cadence-** A different cadence of work in the first two weeks means students enter the classroom early and often to begin to develop the habit of incorporating college into their busy lives while also working on the ever-important time management skill of juggling work, school, and home.

**Use of Characters-** To help students along their journey, we created characters with whom the students could identify with in cognitive primer videos—we call them their "partners on the journey." These cognitive primers replace the typical instructor guidance in GEN 101 and share new course content each week with a storyline that students can identify with—a busy, working parent and a young professional trying to get a promotion in their company.

**Starter Kits-** The starter kits are also new in GEN 101. Kits contain the embedded student orientation tasks in a centralized place. Students learn about and practice the skills they need to be successful in GEN 101 and beyond.



## **GEN 101 in Action – Faculty Perspective**

The course runs smoothly because there are many interdepartmental connections and scaffolded resources. First, there is a strong enrollment connection from embedded announcements to a revamped enrollment assistance form. Next, there is an intentional connection to student resources such as CHAMPS (Collaborative, Holistic, Academic Mentoring for Peer Success) and Career Services. In addition, faculty can provide course developers with real-time feedback on the course via a Google form. Finally, the GEN 101 Faculty Community page provides faculty with required announcements, suggested announcements, discussion posts resources, and many other tools to support the GEN 101 student.

Culture of Care practices are woven throughout the course, including a high-touch approach, the use of Signalz, and course rigor wrapped in care. Differentiated feedback is provided to students with encouragement for revisions when needed. Accommodation is also offered for students encountering impactful life events.

### **Next Steps for GEN 101**

As is the case with any course revisions, the changes in the course were the result of a deep data dive, reflection of the course content that began eight months before the course revision was completed, and many discussions on how to incorporate the best of ASH 101 and BUS 105 to create a course that is engaging, rigorous, and student-centric. The GEN 101 team looks forward to using course and student evaluation data collected on GEN 101 in Power BI as the course progresses to guide faculty training and future course revisions.

### **References**

- Kuh, G. D. (2008). Excerpt from high-impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter. *Association of American Colleges and Universities*, 14(3), 28-29.
- Lakha.S. & Khechine, H. (2021). Technological factors of student's persistence in online courses in higher education: The moderating role of gender, age, and prior online course experience. *Education and Information Technologies*, 26(3). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-020-10407-w>

## **GUIDING OUR STUDENTS THROUGH A PATH TO SUCCESS: GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE INTERACTIVE MAP**

**Allison Rief, Department Chair, Academic Engagement Center**

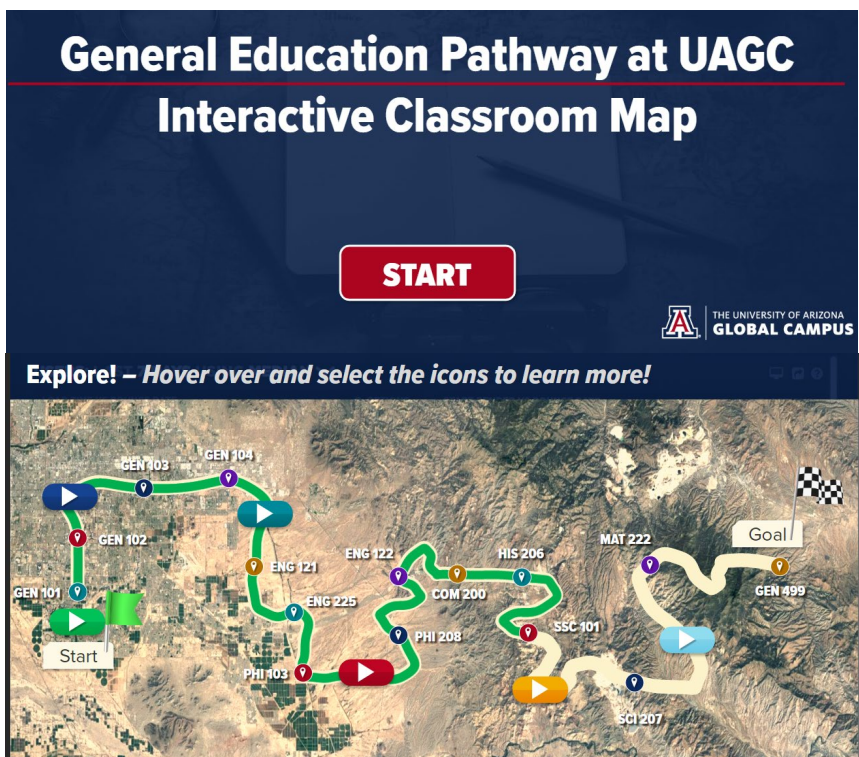
The General Education Interactive map was created as a tool to support two of the four critical goals at UAGC; retain students during their first year of enrollment and support the completion of programs and



educational goals driven by student-based timelines. To positively impact these goals, students need to see the value of their general education courses, which are developed to support students as they diversify their skills, garner new knowledge, and prepare them for future programmatic courses and careers. These identified needs were first in mind when the General Education Pathway Interactive Map was created. This interactive map addresses these needs by providing students with information about the skills that will be learned, reinforced, and transferred to students' lives and careers while providing critical just-in-time resources. The map encourages students to interact with the information by marking completed courses to display their course progression, as depicted by a green line along the pathway. The map is designed to highlight the competencies students achieve through completing each course in the general education sequence while orienting (a little map humor) students along their educational journey and keeping the final destination- GRADUATION- in sight. The last stop on the map offers excellent resources, including links to the [Student Support Center](#) (accessible to faculty and students via the lefthand navigation menu in your classroom), [UAGC Gen Ed YouTube Page](#), [student organizations](#), and a faculty contact list to help students contact a knowledgeable person if they are having any issues within a course.

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) provided valuable feedback encouraging UAGC to seek opportunities to incorporate more student voices in our resources and curriculum. As faculty members or advisors, we share our insight and experience and explain to our students what to expect from the process, but it doesn't come close to what it means to hear about school from the people, their fellow students, who are in it now. It is essential for students to see and hear the shared

experiences of people who look and sound like them. Based on the WASC feedback, a motivational element included in the map is a selection of students' stories shared via video. Current students shared thoughts intended to help fellow students starting their educational journey or progressing to their next course by responding to the following questions:



- What were your greatest worries prior to starting the course? Why?
- What helped you overcome your fears? How so?
- What resources provided by the university helped you be successful within the course?
- What skills did you learn that were most useful for your continued coursework and career? How will they be useful to you?
- What advice can you give other students? Why did you choose this piece of advice?

These videos, which can elicit a strong and positive emotional response, can be found in the interactive map on the "play icons" between the courses.

The interactive map was intentionally designed to have a multifaceted purpose, so it can be utilized by many members of the UAGC community, not just the students! UAGC enrollment advisors share it with potential students and show transfer students the general education course sequence, and the Business Education Services Team that works to create corporate tuition-sponsored opportunities can use it to network with affiliates and share a little bit about who UAGC is, as an institution.

This tool is designed to create connections with students, and it is our hope those connections will positively impact student retention and completion. We want students to see the pathway as attainable and achievable by learners just like them, taking on the mindset of "If they can do it, so can I." There is power in this message. The map is currently being embedded into the general education courses as they are being redeveloped for students to access whenever necessary. We also hope to add the interactive map to the Provost's website, the Student Support Center, and other high-visibility resource pages for students. We hope you are considering ways to use this resource and would love to help those ideas come to fruition!

#### Feedback or Questions?

We welcome your feedback and look forward to you traveling alongside our students through their journey! Please reach out to the Academic Engagement Center's Leadership Team:

- [Mingzhen Bao](#), Director
- [Jennifer Vogel](#), Associate Director
- [Allison Rief](#), Associate Director

Also, a very special shout out to Dan Eues, Sr. Educational Technology and Multimedia Designer, and Duane Eues, Sr. Creative, and Video Producer, for embracing and bringing our idea to life!

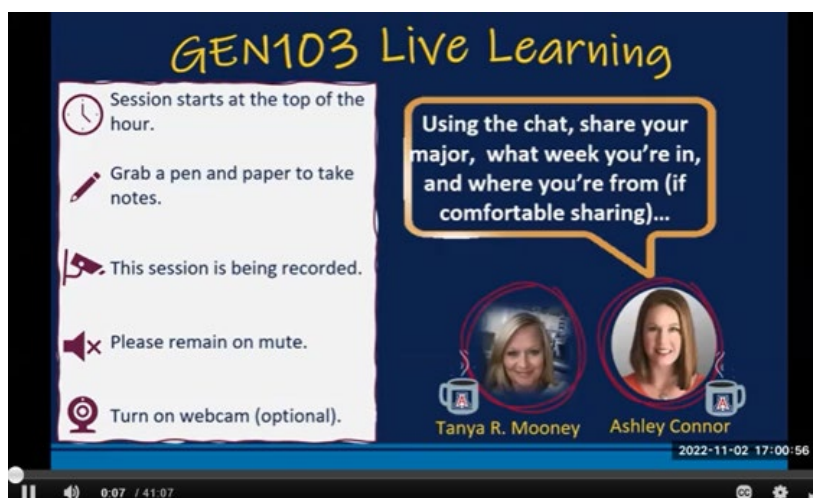
## REFLECTIONS ON GEN103 LIVE LEARNING & STUDENT RETENTION

Ashley Conner, Associate Faculty, Academic Engagement Center and Joel Tscherne, Associate Faculty, Academic Engagement Center



At the University of Arizona Global Campus (UAGC), Live Learning sessions are proving to be a promising tool for supporting student retention efforts. These sessions encourage student engagement, community, and live interaction using intentional research-based, high-impact practices. As associate faculty members, co-hosting these sessions in the GEN103: Information Literacy course is a highlight of our teaching experience at UAGC!

In 2021, GEN103 – Information Literacy, developed a weekly live 30-minute session as a requirement for the course. While live classes allow students to interact with each other and the instructor directly, online learning gives them the chance to attend college on their own schedules in all parts of the world. Through Live Learning, UAGC has developed a way to combine the two to assist students in the first courses they complete via these synchronous sessions. The design of Live Learning is rooted in Kuh's (2008) research regarding First-Year Experience High Impact Practices and the importance of first-year seminars. By bringing small groups of students together with faculty, we establish learning communities that target and nurture learning, and add a sense of student belonging, here at UAGC. These 30-45 minute live interactive sessions, which are facilitated by GEN 103 faculty aim to help students better understand easy-to-use library tools, searching techniques, how to access scholarly sources of information, and provide an overview of the UAGC Library, along with vital concepts in academic research with the intention of proactively addressing learners' need to understand how to find scholarly information. Developed by Dr. Jennifer Robinson in collaboration with Academic Engagement Center faculty, these sessions include a class assignment requirement, but also an alternate method for students to view the information if they are unable to fit the sessions into their schedules. Students are required to attend only one session (sessions are offered over multiple days and times) during the five weeks of the class. The material presented in the session is directly tied to coursework, so that students can better understand how to succeed in the course. GEN103 instructors and other presenters provide information and answer questions through the chat





*As an instructor, it is highly rewarding to engage with students in this authentic way and to hear their individual thoughts, questions, realizations, and reflections. The live format provides a unique space to connect in real-time, and the chat box allows for lively discussions and exchanges. (I especially love seeing the students' excited comments in the chat as they learn about the "cite" button in our UAGC library!) I love when a librarian stops by to answer a few questions, or a handful of instructors drop in to see their own students on the screen. - Ashley Conner, Associate*

function. In addition, the sessions include time for live questions at the end. This allows students to seek clarification of the presentation material along with other class issues. This supportive learning environment is positive, upbeat, and packed with useful tips intended to inform and motivate students to persist in their academic journey both in the GEN103 course and future courses, where similar learning tasks and library skills will be required.

Live Learning supports the UAGC Culture of Care initiatives, as engagement and authentic dialogue about the student's learning experiences, challenges, and wonderings are intentionally welcomed. As we

emphasize the importance of social presence in learning, these sessions provide an excellent platform for students to network and build social connections as they advance their education. Students often share that their experience in Live Learning was valuable and their takeaways are applicable and useful.

The current and ongoing UAGC research about Live Learning supports the benefits as well. The initial data regarding the effectiveness of Live Learning sessions lead us to generalize that students who attend at least one session will find greater success in their academic journeys. Students who attended Live Learning are more likely to persist, pass future courses, achieve a higher GPA, and navigate the online university and support resources more effectively!

Co-hosting Live Learning sessions for GEN103 has been a fulfilling experience for us as UAGC instructors and educators. We are honored to be a part of a team that creates a dynamic learning environment to benefit students and enrich the overall learning experiences of our first-year students. The recent growth and expansion of Live Learning in other courses provide an exciting opportunity to observe how these interactive sessions may boost student retention and academic performance at UAGC even further in the year ahead!

*One of the best aspects for me is the ability to know that the information and interactions are directly helping students succeed, particularly at an early part of their educational life. I have also seen how those who attend the session early in the class benefit directly from the having the material at the beginning. It also gives me the chance to experience the positive aspects of live teaching. UAGC is continuing to work with the live learning concept in other classes and the process will definitely help our students succeed, both in the classroom, as well as in their future careers. - Joel Tscherne, Associate Faculty, Academic Engagement Center*

## References

Kuh, G. (2008). High-impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter. Association of American Colleges and Universities.

## A REFLECTIVE ESSAY ON THE 2022 TEACHING AND LEARNING KEYNOTE SESSION WITH CLINT SMITH

Gail Tan, UAGC Student, Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration, Romona Banks,  
Associate Faculty, Department of Behavioral Sciences



It was my first time attending this year's Teaching and Learning Conference, and it was truly an eye-opener and a humbling experience for me. This year's theme of Culture and Care: Empathy, Advocacy, and Non-Traditional Student Success, geared specifically towards at-risk students, made me realize the myriad of deep-rooted issues within our society that created arduous environments for people of certain communities to succeed. Throughout the

conversation, (our Closing Keynote Presenter), Dr. Clint Smith expressed that incorporating culture, especially those inconspicuously effaced, would be conducive to how we reorientate our viewpoint of society and make a difference in areas where we can. I couldn't help but picture what the future would hold for our children and our children's children if we choose to remain idle instead of working towards building ladders for those with walls too high to climb--to keep chipping away at the block.

A few months ago, I came across Dr. Smith's poem, "What the Ocean Said to the Black Boy," and it left me in tears. The poem portrays an antagonistic ocean mocking and threatening to swallow the black boy. The ocean's haughty mockery using prejudiced misconceptions about the boy reveals society's perception and signifies an ocean of oppression that can swallow the black boy. I thought, how could "they" bully such an innocent child? How could "they" judge his character, and how is it that even though he was surrounded by the very thing that could save him, why could it not reach him? It was such an unexpected moment that the author of that poem would be on the same panel as me. I dared ask him what that black boy would reply to the ocean. He paused for a moment before articulating that the poem now belonged to us, the readers; he has also expressed his interest in what we think the boy would say if he could respond to the ocean.

Here's my poem in response to Dr. Smith's "What the Ocean Said to the Black Boy":

There were many things I didn't know  
That was until I was thrown overboard  
I thought I'd sink down below  
But oh, I can float!  
I hold no malice or bad intentions  
But the color of my skin stirs dissensions  
They used you to put me out

Again  
and again  
But I caused no fire  
I caused no grief  
I was just there  
In the wrong place, at the wrong time  
Yet, they point their pens at me  
labeled me something-  
dangerous, malicious, devious  
something they have already had enough of  
when I look at you, I see people like me bobbing along your surface  
Chipping away at the block that kept us, chained us, enslaved us-  
You say I'm just a drop of ink on this canvas  
but they can't paint a picture without me  
They call us brown, black, or blue  
because that's what they believe is true  
I don't understand how God works either  
or why there are boys at the bottom of the sea  
You see, there are many things I still don't know  
like why the ship persists to burn surrounded by your waters  
And after all your amorphous waves, still, I float  
So, dear Ocean, Sir, please do not gloat.

Gail, I completely agree with your perspective on the 2022 UAGC TLC! The closing keynote session was engaging, edifying, and reflective. The conference theme, A Culture of Care: Empathy, Advocacy and Non-Traditional Student Success, was highlighted throughout the discussion, specifically our call to action regarding the at-promise student. The conversation with Dr. Clint Smith was so engaging that, at times, I almost forgot I was a panelist; I found myself compelled to reflect on my responsibilities to my students as an associate faculty member. For example, our conversation regarding the curriculum and how it can be inclusive to African American history, culture, and memory to "redefine our understanding of legacy higher education structures, policies, approaches, languages, etc." were discussed at length. Dr. Carter G. Woodson's academic publication, *The Negro History Bulletin* (ASALH, 2022), has been

recommended for curriculum scholarship (National Park Service, n.d.), in addition to *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (Woodson, 1933). There is also an existing *Teaching Audre Lorde Sample Syllabus* (CUNY, 2022) that could be used as a template to integrate African American history, culture, and memory into the curriculum. Dr. Smith also provided a list of resources that could contribute to the curriculum, resources that assist in reshaping the learning experience for all students; they are as follows:

1. [Zinn Education Project, Teaching For Change](#)
2. [Learning For Justice](#)
3. [Zinn Ed Project](#)
4. [Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities](#)
5. [Dr. Clint Smith's Publications](#)

While visiting Dr. Smith's website, many of his works reflected that of a griot, "any of a class of musician-entertainers of western Africa whose performances include tribal histories and genealogies (Merriam-Webster, 2022, para 1)". I believe his works were saturated with the memory of culture, specifically African American culture. A culture that not only shares memories but one that is unapologetic and caring at the same time, a culture that strives to learn and understand, a culture that sees and believes through its tears and pain because of hope. As we continued our conversation, Dr. Smith was asked if he could share his poem "What the Ocean Said to the Boy". Gail, another panelist, asked a prolific question during our conversation, "If you were to write another poem in which the boy responds to the ocean, what would the boy say or be thinking? How would he challenge the ocean?" I found that question to be so profound and interesting. What would I say? I don't have anything original to share, I would like to borrow my response from Mr. Paul Laurence Dunbar (a poet that I consider to be our very first rapper/Master of Ceremonies- "MC"). I would like to share Mr. Paul Laurence Dunbar's poem, 'We Wear the Mask' (Poetry Foundation, 2022). I believe it to be a poem that is prolific and edifying, in that it shares the strife and trauma that the Black Community experienced but endured in silence due to their status. However, ironically, their trauma made them stronger, allowing them to overcome their adversities.

Dr. Smith's poem directly addresses the plight that Mr. Dunbar's poem covertly despises; yet expresses a need to persevere despite the pain and shame. Dr. Smith's poem questions the ability of the boy while Mr. Dunbar's poem shares competence that must be concealed due to potential backlash. Dr. Smith's poem provides an opportunity to have an uncomfortable conversation regarding society's perception of the Black Indigenous People of Color's (BIPOC's) incompetence, shiftlessness, and laziness. Mr. Dunbar's poem informs the ocean/society that the BIPOC are competent, focused, and motivated, however those factors must be masked due to the established socioeconomic and educational statuses that have been set. However, this does not need to be the narrative that we perceive of both poems. I believe the intention of both poets is to covertly stir a conversation of oppression, equality, and racism to gain clarity on how we can better understand each other so that we can move forward together in unity.

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## TLC 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

Special recognition goes to the following presenters whom attendees selected for conference awards.

**TLC Community Award** - recognizes the conference attendee who made the most of the Whova engagement tools, allowing us to network, learn, and enjoy each other's expertise.

- Dr. Yousef Awwad

**TLC Most Engaging Session** - recognizes the session that showed the most asynchronous activity in related discussion boards, meetups, etc.

- **Applying the DEI Rubric in General Education Courses** presented by James Meetze, Alaina Pascarella and Nathan Pritts
- Honorable mention: **Enter the Metaverse!** presented by Dan Tinianow, Marc Hnytka, Connie Lower, Michael Hayden, David Mendoza and Avisha Sadeghinejad

**TLC Vanguard Award** - recognizes the session that most effectively embraced the conference theme through either theoretical inquiry or practical application.

- **Caring is Sharing: Supporting Emerging Writers and Researchers** presented by Jennifer Dunn and Karin Mente



- Honorable mention: **Open Education as Empathy: A Case Study in Appreciation & History of Music** presented by Rich Freese

**TLC Teach Me More** - recognizes sessions TLC attendees would like to learn more about via an article-length piece for broader transmission.

- **Are You OK? Supporting Students Who Struggle with Mental Illness** presented by Cara Metz and Sarah Jarvie
- **Students Helping Students** presented by Maya Johnson, Lissette Lynch, Shaun Samuel Morgan, and Mackenzie Wise.
- **ED Talks at TLC Presents | The Power of One: A Student Perspective** presented by Lauren Gonzalez, Deborah Carpenter, Tony Farrell, Jackie Kyger, Ellen Beattie and Jessi Upshaw
- **Enter the Metaverse** presented by Dan Tinianow, Marc Hnytka, Connie Lower, Michael Hayden, David Mendoza and Avisha Sadeghinejad
- **Rubric Calibration in the Online Learning Environment** presented by Ann Marie Swing, Holly Lopez and Allison Rief



**2023 UAGC Teaching and Learning Conference**

**Save the Date!**  
**November 7-9, 2023**

Learn more about the UAGC Teaching and Learning Conference on the website [uagccetl.com/tlc](https://uagccetl.com/tlc)

## CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to revolutionize all facets of the field of education, from research to improving critical thinking and writing skills to assessing student work. This potential also creates complex challenges, especially as new digital tools emerge in our field. Consider the following content and reflect on ways AI may already be impacting your work as a higher education thought leader.

**Updates to University Resources | Artificial Intelligence** – [Learn more here!](#) The UAGC Library, Writing Center, and Academic Integrity team have produced new resources and guidance to better support faculty and our students in navigating conversations about artificial intelligence's impact on education, specifically the student's academic journey.

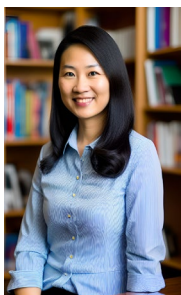
- [Consider posting this announcement in your classroom.](#)
- [Chat GPT Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- Turnitin released its new [AI writing detection feature](#), which provides a score that indicates how much of a paper has potentially been generated by AI, in addition to the traditional originality score.

**Using Turnitin's AI Detection Tool: Guidelines for UAGC Faculty** – [Recording available now!](#) This webinar provided university faculty with an overview of Turnitin's new AI detection tool and its capabilities. The UAGC Academic Integrity team discussed best practices for using the tool effectively and how to interpret the results to empower faculty to identify instances of AI-generated work and plagiarism and take appropriate action

*The following article was primarily written by an AI language model, ChatGPT, with some human editing and polishing. The author's name and headshot were also generated by AI! How might you use a piece of writing like this to conduct a learning activity in your classroom? How might you discuss with your students the educational and ethical challenges that are associated with AI-generated content?*

### ADDRESSING CHALLENGES TO STUDENT RETENTION AT UAGC: A THREE-PRONGED APPROACH

#### Dr. Samantha Chen



The University of Arizona Global Campus is a highly reputable institution that offers a wide range of online degree programs. However, like many other online universities, UAGC also faces challenges when it comes to student retention. Some of the key challenges include a lack of social interaction and engagement, technical difficulties and lack of support, and difficulty in providing personalized instruction. These challenges can make it harder for students to stay motivated and engaged in their studies, troubleshoot and resolve technical issues, and get the individualized support they need to succeed. To address these challenges, UAGC is exploring a variety of creative solutions, such as virtual student clubs and organizations, virtual social events and networking opportunities, hybrid learning models, robust technical support, incorporating technology training, alternative learning resources, personalized learning plans, one-on-one tutoring, and mentoring, and incorporating interactive and collaborative learning opportunities. By implementing these strategies, UAGC aims to create a more engaging and supportive learning environment for its online students and improve the overall student retention rate.

### **Three challenge areas for student retention at UAGC are:**

1. **Lack of social interaction and engagement:** Online universities often struggle to provide the same level of social interaction and engagement as traditional brick-and-mortar universities. This can lead to feelings of isolation among students and make it harder for them to stay motivated and engaged in their studies.
2. **Technical difficulties and lack of support:** Online universities may also face challenges related to technology, such as difficulty accessing course materials or problems with online tools and platforms. This can be frustrating for students and make it harder for them to succeed.
3. **Difficulty in providing personalized instruction:** Online universities may struggle to provide the same level of personalized instruction as traditional universities. This can make it harder for students to get the support they need to succeed and make it more difficult for online universities to retain students.

Given these three major challenges facing online universities in terms of student retention, it is important for institutions like UAGC to explore innovative solutions that can help overcome these obstacles and create a more engaging and supportive learning environment for students. In the following section, we will discuss some of the creative and realistic solutions that UAGC may wish to expand or consider addressing these challenges and improve student retention.

#### **Lack of social interaction and engagement:**

1. **Virtual student clubs and organizations:** Creating virtual student clubs and organizations can help provide students with the social interaction and engagement they would typically find on a traditional college campus. This could include virtual clubs for specific interests, such as a virtual book club or a virtual photography club.
2. **Virtual social events and networking opportunities:** Hosting virtual social events and networking opportunities can also help students connect with each other and build a sense of community. This could include virtual happy hours, game nights, or networking events where students can connect with each other and with professionals in their field of study.
3. **Hybrid learning model:** Instead of having all classes online, universities can implement hybrid learning where students are required to attend some classes on campus. This will help students build connections and engage with their peers and instructors in a traditional classroom setting.

#### **Technical difficulties and lack of support:**

1. **Providing robust technical support:** Providing robust technical support can help students troubleshoot and resolve technical issues as they arise. This could include offering live technical support, creating a detailed technical support FAQ, or providing video tutorials on common technical issues.

2. Incorporating technology training: Incorporating technology training can help students become more comfortable and proficient with the technology they will be using in their online classes. This could include training on the university's learning management system, video conferencing tools, or other software students will be using in their classes.
3. Using alternative learning resources: Universities can provide multiple options for students to access learning resources, such as providing PDF versions of the course materials, providing audio versions of lectures, or providing videos in different formats. This can help to accommodate students with different learning styles and technical abilities.

**Difficulty in providing personalized instruction:**

1. Personalized learning plans: Creating personalized learning plans can help online universities provide more individualized instruction and support to students. This could include assessing students' strengths and weaknesses and creating customized lesson plans or resources to help them succeed.
2. One-on-one tutoring and mentoring: Offering one-on-one tutoring and mentoring can help students get the individualized support they need to succeed. This could include virtual tutoring sessions or mentoring programs where students can connect with successful alumni or professionals in their field of study.
3. Incorporating interactive and collaborative learning opportunities: Incorporating interactive and collaborative learning opportunities can help students feel more connected to their peers and instructors and make it easier for them to get the support they need. This could include group projects, virtual group discussions, or interactive assignments.

In conclusion, online universities like UAGC face unique challenges in terms of student retention, including a lack of social interaction and engagement, technical difficulties and lack of support, and difficulty in providing personalized instruction. These challenges can make it harder for students to stay motivated and engaged in their studies, troubleshoot and resolve technical issues, and get the individualized support they need to succeed. However, by exploring creative solutions such as virtual student clubs and organizations, virtual social events and networking opportunities, hybrid learning models, robust technical support, incorporating technology training, alternative learning resources, personalized learning plans, one-on-one tutoring, and mentoring, and incorporating interactive and collaborative learning opportunities, universities can create a more engaging and supportive learning environment for their online students and improve student retention.

Join the conversation! [Contribute your thoughts in this discussion via the UAGC Faculty Community of Practice supported by MS Teams.](#)

Let's discuss:

- If a student submitted this content, how would you approach a conversation with that student to discuss the impact of using AI generated content on their learning?
- What are some ways that we can use AI to improve the classroom experience or curriculum design?
- Given how students utilize these tools, is it possible that instructors may find previous assessment practices challenging?
- How can using generative AI can be helpful in our work as educators and researchers
- Could you tell this article was AI generated? If so, what gave it away?

## BUILDING ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

### LEVERAGING OUR FORBES PARTNERSHIP

**Avisha Sadeghinejad, Program Chair, Department of Professional Studies, and Bill Davis, Program Chair, Department of Organizational Studies**



Since 2015, the Forbes brand has been an integral part of the Forbes School of Business & Technology (FSBT). While Forbes is perhaps best known for its lists and rankings, including the Forbes 400 list of the richest people in America and its Real-Time Billionaires rankings, Forbes also reaches more than 150 million people every month through its content solutions, showing professionals and students where the business has been, where it is going, and how they can thrive in today's—and tomorrow's—global environment (Forbes Media LLC, 2023). According to Steve Forbes, chairman and editor in chief of Forbes Media, "This collaboration [with FSBT] is a natural extension of what Forbes has been doing for nearly 100 years: providing people with information and insights to enable them to develop their own talent and become true entrepreneurs" (as cited in Daugherty, 2017).

In all markets, a consumer's perception of a brand is important. Brand names allow consumers to form attitudes and expectations about what the brand offers. With our first-year students specifically, the Forbes brand enables us to nurture a sense of belonging and ignite energy and excitement around being part of the business school at UAGC—check out our video. [We are The Forbes School of Business and Technology!](#) The Forbes brand also helps assure first-year FSBT students of UAGC's academic quality. Forbes is a trusted source, and its content is either created by or features experienced experts in various



fields. Forbes materials are known for their reliable and accurate information, diverse topics, and in-depth analysis and insights. Likewise, FSBT students can expect their experienced faculty to design and deliver relevant, rigorous, and real-world business curriculum.

The Forbes School of Business and Technology is highly committed and dedicated to furthering student success and first-year retention. This includes prioritizing teacher-student relationships, showing genuine and honest interest in their success, and providing gratifying and meaningful learning. Our Forbes partnership is one tool, and UAGC faculty can leverage Forbes to equip students in the following ways.

### **Use Thought Leader Summit Content**

In years past, FSBT has hosted its signature event, the Thought Leader Summit, where thought leaders, business advisers, C-suite executives, and other industry experts can come to discuss and analyze business trends from a cultural, economic, environmental, and technological perspective. The event typically features a keynote address and a 5-year economic forecast from Steve Forbes, as well as other keynote speakers, panel discussions, and networking opportunities that provide attendees with a platform to connect with peers, exchange ideas, and learn from some of the most influential leaders in their industries. Last year, more than 1,000 attended the Summit, and the panel presentations and discussions were posted on the [2022 Thought Leader Summit website](#). Students and faculty can locate session highlights; enhanced video recordings of each session, including transcripts and table of content links; and full biographies for all speakers and panelists.

Faculty can help students get the most out of the Summit. Remember to

1. Explore the [Thought Leader Summit website](#) and highlight relevant content you find beneficial for your students. Creating a supportive and caring environment can go a long way in student retention. Your voice matters!
2. Utilize Thought Leader Summit videos and panel discussions in designing learning activities and assignments.

### **Use Forbes Content in the Classroom and Beyond**

Each FSBT faculty and student receives a Forbes.com subscription, which includes unlimited access to news, analysis, and insights in business, technology, leadership, entrepreneurship, innovation, investment, and other areas. FSBT faculty already use Forbes articles and multimedia in their curriculum, learning activities, discussion forums, and even student clubs to further student learning, to stay current and relevant, and to foster a world-class business education. With that said, FSBT faculty can remember to

1. Post relevant Forbes articles and multimedia in your announcements and reply posts. Pointing out real-world applications and expert analysis will take your students' learning to higher levels and help students reevaluate their assumptions and think critically.
2. Draw attention to the Forbes subscription and remind students to visit Forbes.com frequently to read, research, and use in their assignments as a credible resource.

Our UAGC vision is to provide high-quality, accessible, affordable, innovative, and educational programs that meet the diverse needs of individuals pursuing advancement in their lives, professions, and communities. Our partnership with Forbes does just that, and it helps our students gain valuable insights, knowledge, and skills, and it equips them for future success.

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## RETAINING FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS THROUGH THE LIBRARY, WRITING, AND SUBJECT TUTORING SUPPORTS

**Karin Mente, Outreach Librarian, Academic Innovations and Operations**



Research and writing are essential skills for effective participation in the scholarly community. Yet many students are not explicitly taught these skills at the college level; they are presumed to already possess them. In reality, though, for an adult student who has, for example, been out of school for years, been working full-time in a career, or who is the first in their family to go to college, scholarly research and writing might be a new set of skills they need to quickly develop. This challenge can leave even the most determined student feeling overwhelmed and unsure, undermining their confidence and exacerbating the need for time management.

SupportU services are designed to bolster confidence and a sense of belonging in first-year students by normalizing the knowledge gap and teaching academic research and writing skills in efficient and relevant ways.

### What Is SupportU?

SupportU includes the UAGC Library, Writing Center, and Subject Tutoring. These departments' services give our first-year students a sense of belonging by creating an empathetic online community, bolstering confidence while filling information gaps, and saving precious time for students. The goal is to help students persist in their courses by fostering confidence and skill in research, writing, and understanding of course concepts in an empathetic and individualized way.

While faculty play the most essential part in student retention for the 5–6 weeks of instruction in a given course, SupportU is available for students throughout their entire time at UAGC. Faculty can increase their impact on student retention by encouraging students to use our support early and often.

## Supporting a Sense of Belonging

UAGC's Culture of Care framework points to a sense of belonging as a critical factor in student retention and completion. SupportU services nurture a sense of belonging for each student by providing individualized assistance that meets students with empathy and providing them with opportunities to build a community of support around the topics of writing and research.

SupportU ensures students are heard and have someone they can reach out to any time they need help. Talking with our in-house librarians and writing experts, as well as the 24/7 tutors, helps students understand that we have all been at the beginning of our academic journey. They are not alone in their unknowing, and they CAN achieve academic success. Our live events, such as [Facebook Live with the Writing Center & Library](#) and our [monthly Writing Workshops](#), allow students to come together to learn, speak out, and build their UAGC student community.

## Bolstering Confidence and Filling the Information Gap

SupportU builds students' confidence by helping first-year students to understand what academic research and writing are. We don't minimize the difficulties of the academic writing and research process for students. Instead, we are honest that these areas are challenging, these skills are not always explicitly taught in courses, and that we all experience frustration at some point with the research and writing process. We want students to know that it *will* take time and practice, but that we are here to provide the resources and support they need to grow as writers and researchers at UAGC, and in their careers beyond.

For example, we have resources that empower students to be self-directed learners of information literacy and writing skills, such as the [Academic Integrity Guide](#), the [How to Read a Scholarly Article](#) roadmap, [24/7 Tutoring Services](#), and [Paper Review](#). We have resources to help sharpen their problem-solving and critical thinking skills, an important NACE competency for career readiness, such as the [CRAAPO Guide to Evaluating Web Sources](#) and the [Writing Open-Ended Questions Guide](#).

## Saving Time for First-Year Students

First-year students may not have yet figured out how to incorporate schoolwork into their already busy lives, and SupportU has tools to help by connecting them to the resources they need and empowering them to succeed.

For example, our [QuickAnswers](#) can help students quickly find answers to frequently asked questions about research and writing. [Grammarly](#) provides suggestions while students type, advising them on grammar, spelling, tone, and style. The [Which Academic Support Should You Use](#) tool is an interactive form that allows students to quickly and easily identify what they need. The [Research Paper Project Management Plan](#) can empower students with a practical plan to help them manage their time while discovering the iterative process of writing and research.

## How to Promote SupportU to Your Students

Faculty are on the front lines in student retention, and your UAGC Librarians and Writing Experts want to make it as effortless as possible for instructors to connect students with our resources inside the Canvas classroom. We have a plethora of [pre-crafted HTML announcements](#) to direct first-year students to a variety of SupportU resources. For example:

- [Which Academic Support Should You Use](#) HTML Announcement
- [Getting Started with Library Research](#) HTML Announcement
- [Create a Folder in the UAGC Library](#) HTML Announcement
- [QuickAnswers FAQ](#) HTML Announcement
- [Save Time While Completing Your Papers](#) HTML Announcement
- [Grammarly](#) HTML Announcement
- [Writing Workshop](#) HTML Announcement

Sometimes, students just need a little push to use the available supports to help them persist in their courses, and when they know their instructor gives them that nudge, it can go a long way toward retention. [Signalz](#), the Canvas-based at-risk intervention tool that provides customizable templates for faculty, makes it quick and easy for faculty to refer students to our supports—just click on the Signalz link in the Canvas classroom to select from [SupportU templates](#) designed to connect students with 24/7 research, writing, or subject tutoring.

A faculty referral will be most successful if the faculty member can identify a personalized, specific problem with the student's writing or research that the student can then take to a tutor. For example: "I notice a lot of your resources are outdated and not from reliable websites. Work with a library tutor to help find credible sources to support your analysis" or "Work with a writing tutor to help you strengthen your thesis statement." Having a clear, actionable goal in mind sets the student up for a successful interaction with our tutors, and that is what will keep them using support when they need the extra help. The [How to Prepare for a Tutoring Session](#) is a great resource to help guide students toward a successful tutoring experience.

## Want to Learn More?

The Learning Support Team is working hard to provide consistent communication about our services and resources to all stakeholders across UAGC through our SupportU Roadshow, an institution-wide series that showcases Library, Writing Center, and Subject Tutoring supports available for students. If you would like us to present to your team or department, please email [karin.mente@bpiedu.com](mailto:karin.mente@bpiedu.com).

## INCREASING STUDENT RETENTION BY DEMONSTRATING CARE IN THE ONLINE CLASSROOM

Bill Davis, Program Chair, Department of Organizational Studies, Sarah Korpi, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Director, University of Wisconsin



It is the start of a new term. You prepared the best you could, oriented yourself to the material to be taught, posted a welcome message in the course, and talked through the syllabus. You've started regular instruction and are excited to guide a new group of students through the course content. Then, unexpectedly, as the drop deadline approaches, a few students disappear.

Throughout the term, a few others stop engaging in the class.

Some withdraw, others fall silent. But the majority of students

carry on with the coursework. Of these, a few seem distracted. There must be something going on for them that has their attention divided. A few frustrate you because although you know, they could do better if they put in more effort, they just don't seem motivated to do so. You focus on connecting with the students who are present, the ones that come to office hours and put in a lot of effort. And, just like every other term, you wonder if there is anything you can do to increase student retention in your online class.

The good news is that you CAN positively impact student retention in your classroom, and you can do so by utilizing skills you have been building your entire life: caring for others and taking an interest in the lives of those around you. This increases perceptions of awareness, importance, and dependence.

When we ask students why they enroll in courses, often there is a rational, academic reason for the choice. Maybe the course is how they will fulfill their general education requirements, or it is required for their major. Sometimes, the student is selecting an elective that they are especially interested in. Regardless of the specific reason, the majority of the students in our courses arrive with the intention of learning the course content and completing the course successfully. Unfortunately for some, something else gets in the way. This *something else* often isn't directly related to academic reasons - remember, most students enroll in courses for academic reasons. So, what might prevent them from completing the course?

If we are to effectively impact student retention rates in our courses, we need to better understand why students are disengaging, dropping, or withdrawing. These reasons are likely quite personal and individual, so how can we, as instructors, create a classroom environment in which students are willing to share their challenges with us so we can help them chart solutions?

Oftentimes, a barrier that a learner faces might seem insurmountable. But a conversation with a more experienced mentor can help them see that there are ways to overcome that imposing barrier. If the barrier is tied to a course of study, what better mentor could there be than the course instructor? A remaining issue is helping learners see their instructor as a caring individual, someone who is committed to the learner's success, not someone who is there to point out their shortcomings and failures. Building



trust is key to building a mentoring relationship, and much work has been done to highlight ways to establish environments in which learners are willing to take a risk and reach out for help. The Mattering theory offers some guidance on how to cultivate such an environment.

Building on 19<sup>th</sup> (James, 1890) and 20<sup>th</sup> (Eliot, 1934) century thought around the need to be important to others and to impact the lives of others, the phenomenon of mattering explains the experience of feeling noticed by, important to, and cared for by others (Rosenberg, 1985; Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981). Maslow suggests that the importance of mattering to others is a basic need, following safety needs and physiological needs Maslow, 1968). In the 1980s, Rosenberg (1985) and Rosenberg and McCullough (1981) asserted that being perceived as mattering to others, for others to take an interest in our thoughts, ideas, and feelings, is paramount to human development. Cha (2016) further identified three sources that characterize mattering: awareness (feeling interested and being noticed by others), importance (feeling that we are of concern for others), and dependence (feeling that others rely and depend on us).

In the classroom, if we can increase student perceptions of awareness, importance, and dependence, we will likely form the types of connections with learners that result in them reaching out to us when things get difficult. This isn't to say that we can solve our learners' problems, but that if learners are more willing to reach out to us when they are struggling, we are better able to strategize with them regarding potential solutions that could still have them on track for completing their course.

We can increase student perceptions of **awareness** by greeting them when they enter a virtual classroom. If our class is so large that it is impractical to greet each student individually, we might have a strategy of joining a breakout group and connecting with students in that way, publishing a general weekly update in a virtual course space, or sending an email to learners inviting them to share something about their week in the chat during our next synchronous meeting or in an asynchronous discussion board. Once we have established with our students that we are interested in them and that we notice them, we can push beyond the lower-order interpersonal interactions by expressing similar interests in their ideas. We can notice who is contributing to a conversation and who is not. We can thank the eager contributors and invite the quieter learners to contribute. We can allow for multiple different avenues of engagement, so the more silent learners can contribute in ways that are most comfortable to them. We can notice whose ideas are connected to other ideas expressed by students and which ideas are dissimilar. We can then highlight and call these connections and differences to demonstrate our interest in the academic ideas each learner brings to the classroom. In the online classroom, live class time, a chat, and a discussion board, as well as a weekly video summary of the discussion from the past week, are all ways to promote student perceptions of awareness.

We can increase student perceptions of **importance** simply by asking them how they are doing. We might ask them in a synchronous class through a chat, or in a discussion board to share something that was good about their week, a question they're struggling with in class, or share an image that represents how they're feeling in a specific moment. To push past the interpersonal level (which is a foundational level for higher-order importance), we can recruit learners to step into a teaching role for their peers.

We can rotate the assignment of weekly summaries among the learners and connect with learners responsible for the weekly summaries during office hours or over email to have an academic discussion about the weekly summary. We can call forward ways that students are thinking and interpreting things that help us to see the academic content in a new way. We can thank students for their insightful contributions, when those contributions are really insightful, and structure our class so that we are sharing academic power and responsibility with learners (e.g., assigning a chat or discussion board monitor for a day or week, assigning class presentations to explore and introduce new concepts to the larger class instead of the instructor doing those introductions).

**Dependence**, the feeling that we rely on them, might be one of the most challenging perceptions. We can use specific statements such as "I'm looking forward to seeing you on Monday" or "I'm looking forward to your discussion posts this Wednesday, I'll be sure to reply to them by the end of the day on Friday." If a student missed a class, we might reach out by email and say, "I missed you in class today. Is there something I can do to help you get caught up?" Or "You always have such great contributions to group discussions! I really missed seeing you." Adding interdependence is also a useful strategy. Instructors can do this by highlighting how learners expand the instructor's understanding of the academic topic. Perhaps there are research projects that students do that feed into the instructor's own research agenda. Perhaps the instructor is able to understand something in a new or expanded way as a result of student questions and contributions. When these expansions of understanding occur, call them out so the learners can see how their contributions strengthen your own academic understanding.

Belonging has been identified as a critical factor of success in college. It can impact a student's degree of academic, adjustment, achievement, aspiration, and persistence (Strayhorn, 2018). Belonging is a universal basic human need. It is related to the Mattering Theory and is impacted by an individual's identities. Belonging leads to positive outcomes and successes. Perceptions of belonging change with conditions and circumstances. It is, therefore, important that students feel that they belong not only in our institution but also in their field of study and in our classroom. Some of the ways that we as teachers can help our learners feel that they belong is to show them care and support. This can come across in the tone of our communication, in the words we use for communication, and through our offers of support. We have found it useful to make statements such as: "I am here to help." and "I am committed to your success in this course. Please feel free to reach out with questions at any point." As teachers, if we notice a student is struggling with an assessment, along with feedback, we can leave an offer of help and support. This conveys to students that they belong in the class and that we are committed to their success.

We also recommend leaving feedback in accordance with a three-topic system. In addition to the feedback sandwiching that we are sure many of us have heard of in the past, where we sandwich a growth comment between two affirmative comments, the three-topic system limits our comments to three actionable topics. Oftentimes students receive so much feedback that it is difficult for them to know where to start or how to improve. When teachers use the three-topic system, they do not provide feedback on every single item in an assessment that they could comment on. Instead, they asked themselves, "What are the three most important areas or pieces of feedback for this particular student

right now?" They then generalize the feedback in accordance with these three most important topics and provide actionable steps for students. These actionable steps might include an offer to connect with the student during office hours or at another time that is convenient to the learner.

If you employ all of the suggestions and recommendations in this article, will this ensure that your students will not stop out, drop out, withdraw, or disappear? No, of course not. Our learners are human beings and, as such, something other than academic concerns can always get in the way of them achieving their academic goals. However, by helping your learners understand that they matter and that they belong in your classroom, you are more likely to encourage student outreach when things get difficult. And when students reach out, you will have the opportunity to help more students complete your course successfully despite the non-academic concerns they may be facing.

You can get students to care about what you know. All you have to do is demonstrate to students that you care about them.

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## FACULTY VOICES

This section of the Chronicle is dedicated to recognizing our amazing faculty body's contributions to their fields! Please share your accomplishments via the [Faculty Recognition Form](#). In addition, please remember to enter your accomplishments in your profile on the [Faculty Portal](#).

### [Misty Resendez](#) | [Advanced Management Studies](#)

Received the Indiana Latino Educator of the Year Award. Latinos that hold Doctorate degrees are less than 1.2% of the population and Dr. Misty Resendez is extremely active in representing the Latino

population in various spaces. She is very dedicated to advancing and making DEIB come alive. She is very active with chairing dissertations that focus on creating equity within the Latino community. She has presented at multiple conferences and has been a keynote speaker.

#### **Teresa Leary Handy | Academic Engagement Center**

Published an article in the Journal of African American Women and Girls in Education, "A Group of Our Own: Strategies to Support the Black Female Student in the Private School Setting"

Dr. Handy published an article in the Journal of African American Women and Girls in Education on the schooling experience of Black girls in private schools. She wrote a composite narrative from her research of Black female graduates from private schools. The graduates were from all over the country, and they graduated between the 1970s-2000s. Dr. Handy created the Black Girl Success Model that helps private schools create a critically conscious school culture that can result in the development of positive learning experiences that produces confident students who feel seen in their school community. Dr. Handy continues her work with diverse families in Memphis with her online resource guide that supports parents in making schooling decisions.

#### **Felix Lao | Department of Professional Studies**

Guest of Honor and Keynote Speaker at the Community Pharmacists Association of the DSAP Installation Ceremony of the National Officers, Board of Directors, Committee Chairpersons and Coordinators. In addition to my role at UAGC, I am also a Medical Case Manager, working with HIV-positive individuals. I have been in the healthcare, and human services, field for 23 years.

I was formally introduced as a distinguished and esteemed faculty member of the very prestigious University of Arizona Global Campus and who is currently teaching online, Principles of Marketing.

After the 25 minutes Keynote Speech and several Photo Ops, they gave me the following token of Appreciation, a CROSS Ball Pen and a Certificate of Appreciation.

### **NEW FACULTY**

#### **Cynthia L. Wynn | Department of Technology Studies**

Hello. I am [Cynthia L. Wynn](#), and I am a new Associate Faculty in the Department of Technology Studies of the Forbes Business and Technology College at the University of Arizona Global Campus. I earned a Doctor of Computer Science with a concentration in Enterprise Systems from Colorado Technical University, a Master of Science in Computer Information Systems with a concentration in Networking, and a Bachelor's in Business Marketing from DePaul University. My passion is Information Technology. I have worked in the Information Technology field for twenty years. My professional background includes experience as an Information Technology (IT) Project Manager, Technology Manager, Technology Specialist, Training, and IT Sales and Marketing Representative. I have worked in various industries, including Local Government, Education, Oil and Gas, Shipping, Manufacturing, and



Consulting. I taught at the Elementary and Middle school level for a number of years. I also served in the United States Army Reserves for eight years.

Before joining the University of Arizona Global Campus, I mentored college students at a city college for several years and mentored 10 – 13 years old girls in an underserved neighborhood. In my spare time, I like to listen to music, watch movies, exercise, dance, travel, and spend time with my family.

I believe there is an opportunity for everyone to learn and grow. A person chooses their destiny for learning and growing. "An investment in knowledge pays the best interest" - Benjamin Franklin. Continue to choose your destiny and inspire others.

#### **April Larsen | Academic Engagement Center**



Greetings! My name is [April Larsen](#), and I am thrilled to be joining the Associate Faculty team at the College of Arts and Sciences. I completed my Bachelor of Science and Master of Arts in Education from Southern Utah University, and I will graduate in July of this year from the American College of Education with my Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction. I have taught secondary health, physical education, and science courses for 12 years in a variety of settings, including youth crisis centers, wilderness programs, Title I schools, and private schools. For the past five years, I have taught entirely online, which I have thoroughly enjoyed. I've been blessed to experience a wide spectrum of student backgrounds, needs, and preferences throughout my teaching career. This has opened my eyes to the importance of individualizing education and cultivating supportive relationships with students to truly foster academic achievement.

I worked with the Utah State Office of Education for four summers, where I created and taught courses and micro-credential pathway programs for Utah educators seeking endorsement in secondary health and physical education. I have enjoyed working with adult learners in this setting and relish the opportunity to continue to do so in my new role here at UAGC.

I live in southern Utah with my two children and our two dogs. We love the outdoors and feel fortunate to live in such a beautiful environment conducive to the activities we enjoy. I also love running, genealogical research, church service and activities, and reading historical nonfiction/biographies. I am honored and excited to be a member of the UAGC family, and I look forward to serving our students and working with my new colleagues for many years to come.

### Thomas Dyer | Academic Engagement Center

Greetings, I am [Thomas \(Tom\) Dyer](#), and I am a new Associate Faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences. I earned my Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education from Arizona State University, my Master of Education in Educational Administration, and Master of Psychology in General Psychology from Grand Canyon University, and a Ph.D. in Psychology with an Emphasis in Integrating Technology and Learning also from GCU.



Teaching has always been my first passion, but it has sort of been a second career. I have taught in youth ministry for many years as well as public instruction in Arizona. Prior to this, I spent ten years in private aviation as a manager and trainer, which fueled my love for teaching.

I have over 15 years of higher education experience. I have served as Manager in the Office of Field Experience in the College of Education at GCU. I have been teaching full-time online for the last 12 years. I have been married for nearly 24 years. My wife, Rebekah, is also a professor and teaches special education to pre-service teachers. We have two boys, 20 and 17. I am a first-generation college graduate. In fact, I am a first-generation high school graduate.

I am actively involved in the scholarship of teaching and learning and have published and presented research in social presence, online student and faculty motivation and engagement, gamification, and restorative thinking in the online classroom. Most recently, I added the role of editor-in-chief for the Journal of Scholarly Engagement, which focuses on the Boyer Model of scholarship, specifically, SoTL, Application, and Integration, with an emphasis in reflective practice.

My wife and I love to travel and attend concerts and sporting events. We enjoy hiking when it's not too unbearably hot in the Arizona summers. I am honored to be part of the UAGC family and look forward to continuing the culture of care of with my new students and colleagues.

### Audry Blinstrup | Academic Engagement Center



Hello! I am [Audry Blinstrup](#), and I am excited to join the UAGC team as an Associate Faculty member. I have served in various roles in education for 30 years. Those roles include being a Student Recruiter and Financial Aid Officer for Career Schools, High School Senior Class Team Lead and Senior Class English Literature and Writing Teacher, High School Assistant Principal, and Principal, and Regional Vice President for four Chicago High Schools. Currently, I serve as an Adjunct College Professor for several universities teaching English and Latina/o Literature

and English Composition courses in the Chicagoland area, along with providing seminar courses for student teachers.

I hold a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership and a Master of Education in Educational Leadership from the American College of Education. My Master of Arts in English Literature and my Bachelor of Arts in English and Secondary Education are from Chicago State University, where I currently serve on the Alumni Board of Directors. My additional credentials include Building-level Principal Certification and an Illinois Teaching Certification. I have been married for eight years to Brian Blinstrup,



with whom I share an interest in the fitness industry, and our 14-year-old Shih Tzu, Jake (short for Jacob). In my spare time, I enjoy reading with my book club (Literary Ladies), watching mystery movies and football games with my husband, and attending worship services.

#### **Chunita Vick | Academic Engagement Center**

Hello, I am [Chunita Vick](#), a new Associate Faculty member. After earning a Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, I went on to complete a Master of Science in Social Work at the University of Texas at Arlington. In 2019, I completed a Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership, with an emphasis in behavioral health, from Grand Canyon University. Currently, I am the President and Chief Executive Officer of See Believe Achieve through Life Coaching, LLC. I am also affiliated with the Army Wounded Warrior Program, where I serve as Lead Coordinator and Recovery Care Advocate. Prior to establishing my coaching firm, I honorably served in the United States Army, as an 88M truck driver.



Also, a bestselling author, my research has focused on the transition experience of veterans and families facing an unexpected medical retirement. I was coauthor of the book *Camouflaged Sisters*, "Behind the Rank Volume 4", and her best-known research article is "A Phenomenological Study of the Distress of the Army Medical Board Retirement: Applying Schlossberg's Transition Model." I also taught sociology as an Adjunct Professor at Spartan College of Aeronautics and Technology from 2019-2023. A native of Shreveport, Louisiana, today I call Liberty Hill, Texas home. I am committed to making a positive difference in others' lives, and I credit my success to focus, drive, and perseverance.

#### **Barry Humphrey | Department of Technology Studies**



Greetings, my name is [Barry Humphrey](#), and I am an Associate Faculty member with the Forbes School of Business and Technology. I am truly excited to be part of the UAGC family. I am a retired military officer with over 20 years of service between the U.S. Air Force (seven years in aircraft weapons systems maintenance) and the U.S. Army (seven as a Field Artillery Officer and eight as an Information Systems Officer). I have a multitude of experiences in all aspects of Information Technology and IT Management, Gaming and Simulation, and some areas of Cybersecurity. I received my Bachelor of Science in Biology from Auburn University, Montgomery, with a concentration in Molecular Biology, a dual Master of Arts in Information Technology Management and Business and Organizational Security Management from Webster University, and a Ph.D. in Information Systems and Communications from Robert Morris University. My dissertation focused on Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare, securing and safeguarding Patient Health Information (PHI) and Personal Identifiable Information. Outside of teaching, I work as a Program/Project Manager within my agency's Research and Development (R&D) department in Alexandria, Virginia, focusing on research and implementation of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, Blockchain, Quantum Computing, Edge Computing, Augmented Reality, and Data Analytics for

Supply Chain Risk Management and Supply Chain Security. I am married with five kids (four girls and a son), ages ranging from 18 to 6 months old. In my spare time, when I am not with my family, I enjoy reading science and technology journals, watching Ted Talk videos on technology, and cooking new recipes for my family. Fun facts about me, I like building Lego models for relaxation, and I still enjoy watching old cartoons from my childhood (GI Joe, Thundercats, and Silver Hawks), and old school Kung Fu movies.

#### **Pedro (Pete) Soto | Academic Engagement Center**

Hello, my name is **Pedro (Pete) Soto**. I obtained my Ph.D. in Psychology and MBA with an emphasis in Homeland Security from Northcentral University in San Diego, California. My Bachelor of Science is in Criminal Justice, and I also have three Associate of Science degrees in Criminal Justice, Fire Science, and Emergency Medical Services. After separating from the US Army, I spent the next 15 years in law enforcement. I took early retirement and started a career as Firefighter/Medic in Naples, FL. I retired in 2019 and started teaching higher education in person, hybrid, and online. I was also a mental health professional for a local Critical Incident Stress Management team, assisting First Responders who had responded to traumatic calls. I truly enjoy learning, but mostly I enjoy teaching and sharing knowledge with others to help them succeed in their goals.



I have taught Psychology, Business, and Criminal Justice courses for over 13 years. I am very excited to be part of UAGC and look forward to begin teaching classes. My hobbies include collecting comic books, building Lego sets, and traveling around the world. Recently I have spent time in South Korea teaching transitioning service members from all branches how to obtain employment in the civilian world through a Department of Labor Curriculum.

#### **Arisa Gaytan | Academic Engagement Center**



Hello! My name is **Arisa Gaytan**, and I am a new Associate Faculty member in the College of Arts and Sciences teaching the GEN499 course. I received a Doctor of Education degree in Educational Leadership from Lamar University, a Master of Education degree in student development and leadership in Higher Education from Angelo State University, and a Bachelor of Science degree in communication studies from The University of Texas at Austin.

I began my career serving as a College Advising Corps advisor at The University of Texas at Austin. I have nine years of experience in college admissions overseeing undergraduate recruitment at Texas Woman's University. While at Texas Women's University, I built partnerships across secondary and higher education institutions to increase educational access and support to first-generation, low-income, and marginalized students.

In addition to teaching at UAGC, I currently work with a national non-profit focused on increasing the number of low-income, first-generation college, and underrepresented high school students who enter

and complete higher education. I am based out of the Dallas/Ft. Worth area, and I enjoy sports, drinking coffee, and spending time with friends and family.

#### **Tina Thompson | Department of Advanced Management**

Hello, my name is [Tina Thompson](#), and I am a new faculty member at the Forbes School of Business and Technology. I am in the HR field, supporting small business owners. I have over 20 years of experience as a business leader, Organizational Development professional, educator, and coach. My professional background is founded in higher education, for-profit, non-profit, and government experiences. My academic areas of specialty include leadership, business management, organization development/administration, strategy, and innovation.



In addition, I am a collaborator and consultant using research, experience, & knowledge to produce client-specific results. My management and research areas of concentration include authentic leadership, organizational development, employee retention, organizational commitment, gratitude, and profitability. I have earned a Doctor of Business Administration in Leadership from Capella University and a Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership from Gonzaga University. I received my Bachelor of Science in Family Social Science from the University of Minnesota.

I am from the Twin Cities in MN and love to travel, spend time with family, read (mostly non-fiction), and enjoy each of our beautiful four seasons.

#### **Angel Peralta | Department of Technology Studies**



My name is [Angel Peralta](#), and I am a new Associate Faculty member in the Forbes School of Business and Technology. I live in Aurora, Colorado, with my wife, and two kids (3 years old and seven years old). I was born in Ecuador and raised in Queens, New York. In 2006, I joined the Air Force, where I specialized in Information Systems Technology. I currently work for the Space Force as a Cybersecurity specialist. I earned my Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice from the American Military University and my Master of Professional Studies in

Cybersecurity from the University of Fort Hays. I also have a few certifications in Cybersecurity, Project Management, and a few Space fundamentals courses from the National Security Space Institute (NSSI). I decided to embark on this new chapter with UAGC to be able to teach and pass on knowledge and experience to those who seek a career in Cybersecurity. I am excited to be part of UAGC and looking forward to being part of the UAGC family.

### Chavonne D. Stewart | Department of Advanced Management

Greetings, my name is [Chavonne D. Stewart](#), and I am excited about being a part of the associate faculty at UAGC. I believe I am in the company of people who are passionate about learning and inspiring adults to learn. I look forward to opportunities to connect and collaborate on projects/research. Over the last year, I have had the privilege of being the Director of Assessment and a faculty member in business and leadership at a Christian University. I have over ten years of experience in leadership, management, education, and administration. In addition to my educational pursuits, I am the CEO of Global Leadership Techniques, LLC. Our purpose is to train and develop authentic leaders who lead effectively so their organizations thrive. I am an accomplished self-published author of five books (three of the books are a children's series called The Adventures of Amilya Rose) and a contributor to three anthologies. I hold a Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership from Beulah Heights University, a Master of Science in Management from Troy University, a Bachelor of Arts in History from Kennesaw State University, and a life-coach certification through DreamReleaser Coaching, LLC. I am a Georgia native, but I have lived in North Carolina and Upstate New York (suburbs of Rochester). I am the oldest of three girls, and I am a proud big sister. I enjoy traveling, attending sporting events (Go Braves!), shopping, reading, and spending time with family. I love a variety of music and will attend an occasional concert or play. Fulfilling my bucket list is important. Ziplining was one of the items on my bucket list. I checked it off my list over the Christmas holiday 2022 when I went ziplining in Amber Cove. I will do it again.



### Richard Christensen | Department of Professional Studies



Hi, my name is [Rich Christensen](#), and I am a new Associate Faculty member at the Forbes School of Business and Technology. I have resided in the south suburban area of Minneapolis my entire life, where I currently reside with my wife. We have two grown children. I teach in the Bachelor of Arts in Business Information Systems (BABIS) program within FSBT. You'll find me teaching INF220, INF620, INF340, INF630, and INF336 courses. I graduated from the University of Minnesota (Minneapolis, MN) with a Bachelor of Science in Business and received an MBA from the University of St. Thomas (St. Paul, MN). I have over 40 years of experience in various roles in the information systems area, from Systems Analysis roles to supervisory roles of on-shore and off-shore IT contractors. Currently, I am in a Sr. Systems Analyst role involved with payroll system updates for a major governmental agency. I do have over 20 years of experience as an Adjunct Faculty, primarily online, and I enjoy imparting knowledge in the information systems field as well as bringing the 'real world' to the classroom. I understand the challenges of balancing family, friends, work, and college. In my leisure time, I enjoy hiking and spending time outdoors in the summer, but I primarily enjoy indoor activities in the long Minnesota winters.

### Aziza Arifkhanova | Department of Health Sciences

My name is [Aziza Arifkhanova](#), and I am thrilled to be a new associate faculty member at UAGC! I hold a Ph.D. in Policy Analysis from the Pardee RAND Graduate School as well as a Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in Economics from Florida State University. I have been working as a Health Economist at the CDC since 2020. I was a CDC Steven M. Teutsch Prevention Effectiveness Fellow assigned to the Denver Public Health (DPH) Department during 2017-2019. Prior to working with the DPH, I worked as an assistant policy analyst at the RAND Corporation for five years. I also taught Health Economics and Comparative Effectiveness and Cost Benefit Analysis in Health Policy at Mount Saint Mary's University. My areas of interest are Public Health, Labor Economics, and Health Economics.

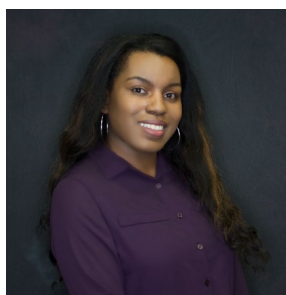


### Alex White | Academic Engagement Center

My name is [Alex White](#), and I am excited for this new opportunity to be an associate faculty member here at UAGC! I received my Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from North Dakota State University and my Master of Art in Organizational Management from the University of Arizona Global Campus. I have worked in Higher Education for the past eleven years and can provide examples of how to relate to real-world business practices to help prepare students to be successful in their career goals. I have lived in Denver, Colorado, for the last twelve years. I play ice hockey weekly and can oftentimes be found working on many home projects in the garage. When I am not playing hockey, I like to stay busy with my soon-to-be wife traveling. We enjoy staying active in the mountains with hikes and skiing. We have a dog, Stella, who gets a lot of time at the park playing fetch. I am a true believer that with hard work, determination, and the ability to self-manage one's time, a person can accomplish anything they set your mind to. I am thrilled to be working with students who are wanting to accomplish their goals and are committed to seeing success within their college program. Having the ability to work with these students early in their careers at UAGC will be impactful for their future courses.



### Tammara Whitaker | Academic Engagement Center



Hi all! My name is [Tammara Whitaker](#), and I am excited to join UAGC as a new associate faculty member. I have worked in higher education for 13 years, and 11 of those years were in a variety of roles in online education. I reside in Southern California with my family and two dogs. I received my Doctor of Education from the University of Southern California in Educational Leadership with a concentration in Educational Psychology. I recently published an article in a journal to share my research findings to provide recommendations to improve African American/Black students' experiences and achievement in asynchronous online community college courses. In addition to teaching, I am also an administrator at a community college



for the online education department. In my free time, I enjoy spending time with my family, traveling, dancing, and attending shows. I am passionate about student success and reducing equity gaps, and I look forward to growing with UAGC in alignment with the college's vision, mission, and goals.

## EVENTS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEWS

### ED TALKS® 2023

#### Cheri Ketchum, Faculty, Education and Liberal Arts



As part of the ongoing support of UAGC's effort to champion student success, UAGC faculty and staff have opportunities to engage in professional development opportunities offered across the university to build on high-impact instructional practices, while cultivating strong relationships with students early and often. Continued alignment of professional development to these key university goals gives faculty and staff the tools they need to support retention efforts for students in their first year and to continue to support those efforts through their walk across the commencement stage.

#### ED Talks® Presents / Sowing Seeds

One such opportunity has begun its 9<sup>th</sup> season at UAGC: The Department of Education and Liberal Arts' *ED Talks® Presents / Sowing Seeds*—not your everyday professional development series.

ED Talks® are fashioned after TED talks, the ever-popular way of sharing personal stories for only 18 minutes of a monolog. We do this because we want to spark and hear audience stories, and we can best do that by sharing our stories. Our goal is not necessarily to teach anyone anything new, as our audience members are already experts in their field. Our goal is to perhaps motivate them to try something new in the approach to helping students succeed.

Inspired by the work of Dr. Newton H. Miller II. (2018), ED Talks® 2023 introduces 'sowing and growing seeds' as a metaphor for better understanding the relationship between learner and educator, or 'Seed and Sower.' The idea is to create fertile ground for students, especially in their first year and early experiences at a university, by providing them with support and 'nutrients' in the form of positive feedback and careful direction to resources to help them thrive. Each ED Talks® session examines principles through this lens to develop the mindset aimed at maximizing potential and promoting growth and achievement for learners in the online higher education environment.





All full-time and part-time faculty, administrators, and student-facing professionals for online university programs are invited; we are particularly speaking to those who serve "at potential" (a term replacing "at-risk") student populations or students who may have additional barriers or needs.

### 2023 ED Talks® Calendar and Invitation Information

- MAR 09 Seeds, Sowers, and the Potential of a "Seed" with Dr. Jackie Kyger
- APR 13 Accept Only What You Expect with Dr. Lauren Gonzalez
- MAY 11 Don't Be Afraid to Use Fertilizer and Pesticides with Dr. Michelle Simecek
- JUN 08 Seedlings are Trying to Grow with Dr. Ishonté Allar
- NO ED TALK IN JULY - See you in August!
- AUG 10 Even the Planter Needs Cultivating with Dr. Ellen Beattie
- SEP 14 The Greatest Growth Happens Together with Dr. Tisha Shipley
- OCT 12 Rotate the Crops and Plan the Next Season with Dr. Newton H. Miller, II.

[Register here!](#) Join us as we learn from one another and sow the seeds of potential in our classrooms from the first course to the last. Please mark your calendars and register to join us on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of most months at 1 p.m./ 4 p.m. ET.

After registering, please consider clicking "Add to calendar" so you do not miss a single story!

For more information, to view archived sessions, and to access certificates of participation, visit the [ED Talks® Homepage](#) or contact [EDTalks@uagc.edu](mailto:EDTalks@uagc.edu).

We are confident these ED Talks® will be useful to all university faculty and staff, as the shared goal is to continually improve our self- and other awareness to ensure the best possible student experience to help cultivate their "growth" in the first year and beyond.

### References

Miller, N.H., II. (2018). *Why some seeds don't grow: 10 principles for educating, mentoring, and parenting urban youth*. newED products, Inc.

## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

In an effort to make your inboxes more manageable, the faculty communication digest is sent weekly with a synopsis of critical faculty-focused news and events linking to the complete content on the CETL website.

Instead of searching for individual emails, we hope you will use this targeted weekly summary to declutter your inbox and refocus your time.

Visit the [Faculty Communication Digest archive](#) to view all the latest news and events.

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

### We want to hear from you!

*The UAGC Chronicle* supports the entire academic community's contribution to the UAGC mission of providing a community of caring and guidance for adult online learners. Therefore, our publication promotes content that addresses the theoretical underpinnings and practical execution of this mission: academic research on instructional best practices, curricular innovation, and student support strategies; examples and resources that foster a community of practice; news of the progress of institutional student success initiatives; professional development opportunities; and – most importantly – the stories and successes of the people who shape our university.

To make this publication an authentic representation of our diverse faculty body, we encourage submissions from associate faculty and UAGC staff. Please consider the questions below as you craft your submission.

- What is your purpose in writing?
- What are you trying to accomplish?
- How does this information tie into university initiatives?
- Why should UAGC Constituents care about the information you are providing?
- What are the next steps, or what is your call to action?
- Who is your audience?
- How do you want to present your information? Would graphics or other visuals supplement your submission?

For more details and submission guidelines, [please visit the UAGC Chronicle page on the CETL website](#).

**Thank you for reading! We hope you enjoyed this issue.**

## THE UAGC CHRONICLE STAFF



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Editor



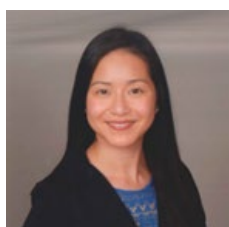
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