

November 9, 2022

Dear colleagues,

As we move into November, our mountains are clothed in white—and our students are clothed in hats and mittens, with more outdoor gear to come. We can't wait for more snow to arrive!

In this newsletter, we have updates coming in from several of our centers, offices, and grants that are developing campus-focused projects. Many of these initiatives are garnering state and national attention, such as FLC being accepted as a partner in the Reisher Scholars Program, which will bring new scholarship funding to our students, and the CSWS receiving an Outstanding Project Award from the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums. Also note the exciting events ahead. For example, we are reviving our "Featured Scholar Reception" on November 16th, celebrating this year's recipient, Dr. Liz Cartier, Assistant Professor of Management—congrats, Liz! And, in the spring, we will hold Skywords/Common Reading Experience events featuring Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Natalie Diaz and Robin Wall Kimmerer, author of *Braiding Sweetgrass*. See details below.

The "national trends" section of the newsletter provides new research on the issue of COVID-related learning disruption and loss. We start the newsletter by highlighting some of the strategies we are using to address this learning loss, particularly for our entering students. And, we end the newsletters with a preview of the results from our First-Year Student Survey: first-year students are giving their FLC experience an astounding 90% satisfaction rate. Obviously, FLC has built a strong foundation to address the most complex issues facing higher ed—we know it and our students know it!

Enjoy,
Cheryl

FIRST-YEAR STUDENT INITIATIVES

Skyhawk Station Advising

Advising is in full swing for the Spring 2023 semester! Skyhawk Advisors are implementing their high-touch advising model by holding required meetings with first-year students. This "first-year advising" push is achieving great results, as we've already served over 500 first-year students in preparing for their Spring registration which opens on Thursday. In addition, we continue to assist over 100 students a day with advising and registration questions. Advisors are ensuring that students discuss options for their majors, understand the liberal arts core, have degree audits in place, and, most importantly, have a warm and friendly point person in Skyhawk Station. This is the first registration season that has not been disrupted by COVID, with the full implementation of a case-management advising model centered in Skyhawk Station. We look forward to reporting out on more results!

Liberal Arts Core Innovation: Teagle/NEH Grant

Kaleidoscapes Learning Circle is a Liberal Arts Core Certificate program being developed and funded by a two-year, \$200,000 grant awarded to Fort Lewis College by the Teagle Foundation/NEH, whose mission focuses on "strengthening liberal arts education." The Kaleidoscapes name is an acknowledgment of the importance of landscape as a metaphor and guiding principle for our students' learning. Led by Grant PIs Caroline Kulesza and Candace Nadon, the Learning

Circle expands the LAC Lenses initiative to offer students of all majors the opportunity for interdisciplinary learning. And, through the Kaleidoscapes: Framing Learning course, an Arts and Humanities LAC Course, students have the opportunity to explore the kaleidoscopic nature of knowledge focused on the ways we understand place, community, and self through engaging with Transformative Texts—texts that transform perspective and deepen connections. Fort Lewis' Transformative Texts include texts by a wide variety of authors with a focus on Indigenous writers. Grant funding supports faculty development and student enrichment, with opportunities for faculty participation across campus.

First-Year Student Survey

Please scroll to the end of the newsletter to see preliminary results from our First-Year Student Survey, circulated to students via Launch in week 6 and 7 of the semester. Our students have given their first semester experience remarkably strong reviews with 90% saying they are satisfied with their FLC experience and 88% reporting they are satisfied with their FLC courses. These results are “up” from last year—a great trend in student engagement.

UPDATES FROM CENTERS and PROGRAMS

Center of Southwest Studies

The Center of Southwest Studies has been busy! In addition to embarking on a new strategic planning process, the Center has launched several initiatives designed to promote engagement with its collections and build new campus partnerships. These include the establishment of a Campus Advisory Committee and the development of a faculty guide that addresses object-based learning, which is a student-centered pedagogical approach that uses material objects such as artwork, archaeological and historical objects, and archival documents to promote learning. Likewise, the Center was recently awarded the 2022 International Guardians of Culture and Lifeways Outstanding Project Award by the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ATALM). This award was given in recognition of *PIVOT: Skateboard Deck Art*, an exhibition featuring 114 works of art on skateboard decks by Indigenous artists that was guest curated by Duane Koyawena (Hopi) and Landis Bahe (Diné), with exhibition manager Sam Honanie (Hopi/Diné).

SkyWords Common Reading Experience & Visiting Writers Series

SkyWords is excited to announce three 2023 events (with two McArthur Fellows!). On February 14, Poet Natalie Diaz will give a virtual workshop and reading focused on her collection *Postcolonial Love Poem* from 12:30-2:30 in the Vallecito Room. The workshop is open to our campus community. On April 13 at 1:00 in the Ballantine Media Center, poet and essayist Teow Lim Goh, whose work explores the intersections between people and place, will give a talk and reading from her new collection of essays, *Western Journeys*, which explores her own immigrant experience and the experiences of Chinese immigrants in the Western United States. Robin Wall Kimmerer, author of *Braiding Sweetgrass*, will visit FLC on April 20 to give two events, a 1:00 event open to our campus community and a 6:00 talk open to the public. Copies of *Braiding Sweetgrass* are available for faculty wishing to teach the book. Excerpts are also available. Stay tuned for more information on SkyWords events and follow skywords on Instagram.

Experiential and Community Engaged Learning

Deb Powers and Becky Clausen are leading a new donor-funded “experiential and community-engaged learning” center, located in the Academic Hub and tentatively called EXCEL. This center will support FLC’s signature strength of experiential learning, emphasizing our great hands-on, place-based, and community-engaged practices. Deb and Becky have just circulated a survey asking faculty to share ideas on experiential learning. They explain:

- All this input will allow us to more clearly define the unique approaches FLC faculty and staff are using in their courses, and create a baseline of what EXCELent efforts are currently taking place at FLC. From there we can look at supporting and expanding efforts moving forward. We'll be creating a canvas course module for the "how to" logistics of taking courses off campus. We need to create a process for folks to apply for funding for experiential opportunities in their courses. We are also in the process of reaching out across disciplines at FLC to recruit folks to become members of the experiential and community engaged learning advisory group.
- Please complete the faculty survey! When you complete the survey, you'll be entered into a raffle to win coffee and have your favorite breakfast brought to you at your office by Becky and Deb in December.
- An open sharing session with faculty across the disciplines is planned to be held in the EXCEL space (in Reed Library's Academic Hub) from 9am – 2pm on Friday, December 2nd. More details to come. Food will be provided and it will be a great way to nourish faculty as they share their course-based, experiential and community-engaged efforts with us!

Undergraduate Research

Undergraduate Research's Speaker Series has featured four amazing speakers so far this year—Al Wolfe, Pete McCormick, Paul DeBell, and Joslynn Lee (who spoke today). And there's more to come next term! These talks provide a way for members of our campus and wider community to connect with each other through research-related personal stories.

Undergraduate Research and the Career & Life Design Center co-hosted their first Grad Plus Fair last Friday and it was a huge success! Representatives from over 30 different programs came to our campus to tell students about paid summer and after-graduation experiential learning opportunities. We are building strong undergraduate research partnerships and pathways into graduate school. [Enjoy these photos from the Grad Plus Fair, held last Friday, November 4th.](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS

What exciting events are on the horizon, offering us opportunities to come together as an FLC community?

Featured Scholar Reception

Get ready for to resurrect our "Featured Scholar" event, which was put on hiatus for two years due to COVID. This years' award winner is Dr. Liz Cartier, Assistant Professor of Management—congrats,

Liz! We will also take time to recognize Dr. Laura Scull and Dr. Bill Collins, recipients from the past two years. It will be great to be back in person, celebrating the importance of faculty research together.



"GOOD NEWS" PROJECTS

What impressive initiatives are faculty and staff engaged in, ranging from conference presentations to classroom innovations to student projects?

Reisher Scholars Program, The Denver Foundation

Our great Advancement, Admission, and Financial Aid teams have secured FLC's new "Partner Institution" membership in the Reisher Scholar Program. This program provides merit and need-based scholarship funding for students who show leadership potential but have limited economic means. This program will bring crucial support to our students. Congratulations, team!

- The Reisher Scholar Program description can be found here:
 - <https://denverfoundation.org/scholarships/reisher-scholars-program/>

"HIGHER ED SPOTLIGHT": TRENDS and CONTEXTS IN HIGHER ED

How does the work we engage in at FLC align with trends in higher education?

We've been spending time discussing "learning loss" due to COVID and the ramifications on our teaching in Chairs' and department meetings. As we define these issues, we will continue to work together to share the strategies that are proving successful with our students. To put our work in a national context, please see this Harvard/Stanford study of K-12 math and reading loss; this is the first comprehensive national student of math and reading test scores.

See the overview: [New Research Provides the First Clear Picture of Learning Loss at the Local Level](#)

- Then turn to the study: The [Education Recovery Scorecard](#)
 - You can scroll down to the maps/graphs: note that some CO scores were reported, including Durango, which saw drops in both mathematics and reading

- You can also see national findings: students lost about 52% of a "year's worth of achievement growth" in math and 23% in reading; losses are higher in high poverty districts, urban districts, and where students spent more time learning remotely.
- See the overview of the [Colorado scorecard](#) here.

"PEDAGOGY CORNER": TEACHING RESOURCES from the Center for Teaching & Learning

What does the Teaching & Learning Center recommend as a pedagogy resource that provides insight and inspiration?

The Center for Teaching & Learning has been emphasizing innovative pedagogies that can counter this learning loss. CTL shares some related pieces that have been under discussion on campus:

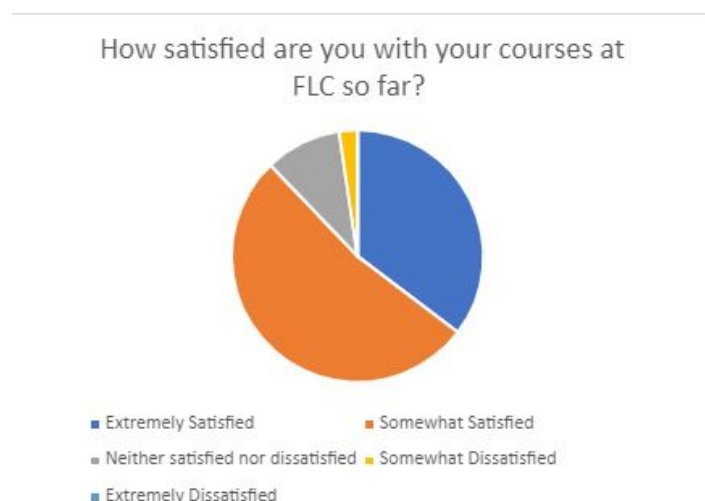
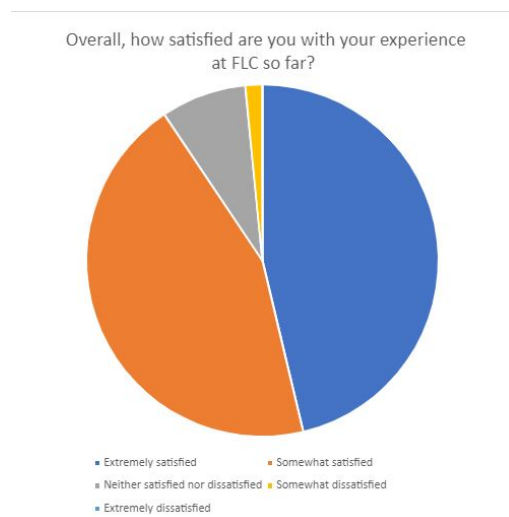
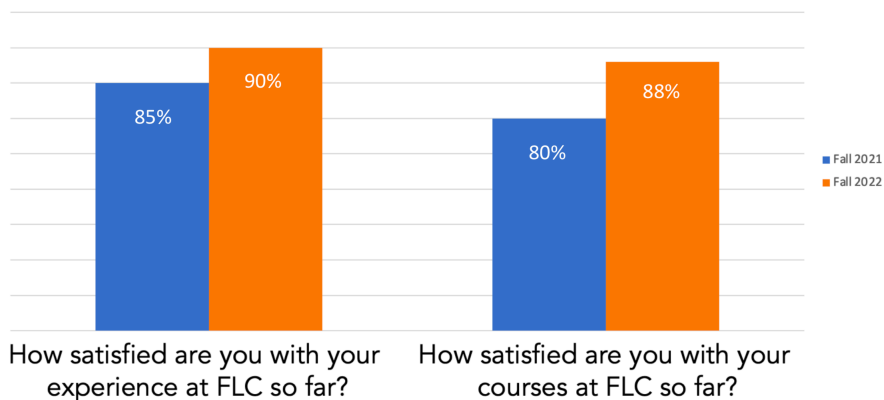
- Jesse Stommel: [Compassionate Grading Policies](#)
- Travis Thurston, Kacy Lundstrom, and Christopher Gonzalez: [Resilient Pedagogy](#)

FIRST-YEAR STUDENT SURVEY

Preliminary results from our First-year Student Survey are in! The graphs below capture first-year students' positive response to the fall semester. Note that in Fall 2022, we had 255 respondents (30%, 850 FYs); in Fall 2021, we had 280 respondents (29%, 960 FYs).

STUDENT WELL-BEING

SATISFACTION



Sample survey question: **“Are you concerned about any of the following”?** Answers in order:

- Keeping up with coursework
- Paying for college or other expenses
- Writing college papers
- Making friends
- Your math class
- Living on your own/being away from family
- Talking with professors
- Managing your technology

A full report on the First-Year Student Survey to come!