

October 5, 2022

Dear colleagues,

Our fall semester is off to a lively start, with our “students at the center” programming on full display: New Student Orientation led to SQUAWK?! (Skyhawk Question & Answer Week), which led to Fiesta on the Mesa, which led to a new Undergraduate Research FLC Speaker Series...and more! Homecoming Week (Oct 17-22) is up next. Clearly, it is great to be together—in person, unmasked, fully present, and completely committed to our students and each other.

What impresses me most is the deep thought behind our community-building events. This fall kicked off with retreats across campus—all of them focused on serving our students as they re-enter an educational journey disrupted by COVID. The theme of practicing a new type of care for our students has been central. For example, our Faculty Retreat emphasized “Pedagogies of Care” with insights on grading from guest speaker Dr. Jesse Stommel. Just this past Friday (Sept 30), we held a “Community of Care” series of workshops, bringing together Student Engagement and Academic Affairs to provide information on our basic needs resources, student referral process, and our academic supports.

We are creating a new campus infrastructure—a network of care that interweaves students, staff, and faculty. As we build our new model of care, we are truly building a new type of institution. Thank you for this inspirational work!

Best, Cheryl

STUDENT-CENTERED SUPPORT INITIATIVES

“Community of Care” Workshops

We are creating a Community of Care to support our students, especially those with wellness, academic, or basic needs. Last Friday’s workshops (noted above) were so successful that attendees stated they should be mandatory. Materials from the workshops will be distributed shortly. In the meantime, the opening PPT is available on the [“Provost’s Campus Conversations”](#) webpage.

- See the Community of Care PPT here:
- <https://www.fortlewis.edu/administrative-offices/academic-affairs/provosts-campus-conversations-open-forums/campus-conversations>

“Meaning Matters” Discussions and Data

As we work to ensure our students’ success at FLC, we must generate a more nuanced analysis of why they stay with us or leave us. As part of a new “Meaning Matters” initiative, we are generating new forms of qualitative data that capture students’ voices. This qualitative information will be connected to quantitative metrics (enrollment #s, grades). The initiative will ask students to explain the meaning they crave in their education and affirm that they matter in shaping their education.

- See our new [“Meaning Matters”](#) webpage:
- <https://www.fortlewis.edu/administrative-offices/academic-affairs/strategic-initiatives/meaning-matters-initiative>

Guidebook to Resources for Student Success and Support

We have developed a new student-facing guidebook that lists all of our student support offices and

programs. Hardcopies have been widely distributed. A PDF version is attached to this email and linked on the Academic Affairs homepage (faculty, upload it to your course Canvas shell!).

Enjoy these photos from the Community of Care workshops, held Sept 30th.



EQUITY-FOCUSED STUDENT SUCCESS PLANNING

Successful HLC (Higher Learning Commission) “Quality Initiative”: Retention Innovation

This summer, as part of our mandatory HLC accreditation cycle, we submitted a Quality Initiative proposal that details our strategic planning for retention—and it received a very positive review with no revisions. Our project focuses on integrating our innovative approaches to retention, such as our Academic Care Team. Our comprehensive Retention Innovation plan is attached.

- See our new “[Student Success](#)” webpage, which provides a short overview of the plan:
- <https://www.fortlewis.edu/administrative-offices/academic-affairs/strategic-initiatives/student-success-initiative>

Selection to AASCU Student Success Equity Intensive

We are thrilled that FLC has been selected to participate in a national initiative designed to close equity gaps in higher education completion for students of color and low-income students. Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) has designed a two-year Student Success Equity Intensive program. The Intensive focuses on collecting and analyzing student success data, sharing student success best practices, and working with each institution to design programs aimed at erasing equity gaps.

RENAMING of FLC “CENTERS”

At FLC, our student support offices are often referred to as “services” (such as Teaching & Learning Services). However, national higher ed practice is using the terminology of “centers.” In addition, our FLC students are acclimated to the centers phrasing used in the Student Union. As a result, our services offices have asked to be re-named as centers—please recognize and use these new titles.

Accessibility Resource Center

The Disability Services office is implementing its new name as our “Accessibility Resource Center.” The Accessibility Resource Center provides academic accommodations, modifications, and

adjustments, and assistive technologies. The Accessibility Resource Center has seen increasing numbers of students needing support, and plays a crucial role in our Community of Care. Now located in 071 Reed Library, it is aligned with the Academic Hub's emphasis on academic support.

Teaching & Learning Center

Teaching & Learning Services will update its name to our "Teaching & Learning Center." The Center provides faculty teaching development, learning design for accessibility, Canvas course support, and student success analytics. During COVID, the amazing Teaching & Learning team's inventive work to shift our teaching online ensured our success. They are now building on that success with new forms of distance education course development. This new name signals this exciting next phase.

Career & Life Design Center

Career Services has repositioned itself as a "Career & Life Design Center" in the Academic Hub. The Career & Life Design Center connects career planning to a larger focus on a student's life trajectory: what are their strengths, interests, dreams—and how can a career help them to achieve their life aspirations? Look forward to more information on the Career & Life Design Center's programs.

CIRCL: Center for Indigenous Research, Culture, and Language

We've created a new CIRCL space! This past spring, FLC was awarded two Mellon grants emphasizing social justice pedagogy—one focusing on expanding our Native American & Indigenous Studies Department and one focusing on creating a "All Our Nations Language Revitalization Hub." In addition, our Southwest Indigenous Language Development Institute (SILDI) has worked with the Southern Ute Tribe to offer an incredibly successful series of courses on the Ute Language. At the same time, our CSWS has worked with Curatorial Fellow Elise Boulanger to emphasize the importance of student-led exhibitions enacting our reconciliation work. All of this crucial work needs a physical space, allowing it to connect, grow, and thrive. We've dedicated the Jones 105/140 area to this work, giving it the CIRCL name. Look forward to a grand opening next month!

EXCEL: Experiential and Community Engaged Learning Center

Our Academic Hub will include a new EXCEL Center—this makes clear our commitment to hands-on active learning and our commitment to community-serving programming. As announced last week, Drs. Becky Clausen and Deb Powers will lead this donor-funded space. The EXCEL Center will support place-based and purpose-driven learning. As it develops, we will share EXCEL Center planning.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Homecoming Week

Get ready for an exciting week of full of Homecoming events, October 17-23. We are connecting Homecoming to the successful #FLCtogether events we held last year: an Academic Majors Fair, Puppy Love, Fresh Check Day, Chili Cook-off, Maker's Market and our First Year Launch Showcase—along with athletic events, of course.

- See our [Homecoming](https://www.fortlewis.edu/life-at-flc/news-events/homecoming/homecoming-home) webpage:
<https://www.fortlewis.edu/life-at-flc/news-events/homecoming/homecoming-home>

"GOOD NEWS" PROJECTS

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

Department of Energy Award for Undergraduate Energy Research

Under the leadership of Dr. Kenny Miller, Professor of Chemistry, FLC has received a \$190,000 subaward from the Department of Energy to fund research on clean energy technologies. This subaward is part of a collaboration of more than 20 scientists in labs across the country that was awarded \$10.6 million to establish an Energy Frontier Research Center and a “Ensembles of Photosynthetic Nanoreactors” project. This grant will fund summer research stipends for at least nine FLC undergraduate students to study new catalysts to produce clean hydrogen fuel from water and sunlight during the next four years. FLC will work closely with Prof. Justin Sambur at Colorado State University (CSU), and FLC students will travel to CSU each summer to see their catalysts in action. Funding for travel to national conferences, supplies and materials, and equipment is also included in the award. Congratulations, Dr. Miller!

- The official announcement/press release can be found here:
<https://www.energy.gov/articles/doe-announces-540-million-technologies-transform-energy-production-and-cut-emissions>

“PEDAGOGY CORNER”: TEACHING RESOURCES from the Teaching & Learning Center

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

- The Teaching & Learning Center organized Dr. Jesse Stommel’s day-long “Pedagogies of Care” workshop at our Faculty Retreat. The presentation and materials can be found here:
 - Recording of FLC presentation: <https://courses.fortlewis.edu/courses/21768/pages/flc-webinar-and-podcast-library>
 - Workshop slides and resources: bit.ly/ungrading

“HIGHER ED SPOTLIGHT”: TRENDS and CONTEXTS IN HIGHER ED

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

As we work to determine how nation-wide enrollment declines are impacting FLC, here is a set of articles that outline enrollment challenges:

- Chronicle of Higher Ed Special Report: “The Shrinking of Higher Ed: In the past, colleges grew their way out of enrollment crises. This time looks different.”
 - <https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-shrinking-of-higher-ed>
- Gates Foundation study: “Where Are the Students?: New Research into College Enrollment Declines”
 - <https://usprogram.gatesfoundation.org/news-and-insights/articles/gates-foundation-probes-college-enrollment-decline>
- Hechinger Report: “How higher education lost its shine: Americans are rejecting college in record numbers, but the reasons may not be what you think”
 - <https://hechingerreport.org/how-higher-education-lost-its-shine/>

And, as we seek positive ways to think about these national trends, many articles provide hope for innovative paths forward, such as:

- Chronicle of Higher Ed: “The Return of the College as a Common Good”
 - <https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-return-of-college-as-a-common-good>
- Inside Higher Ed: “Imagine We Are Starting a University Now”
 - <https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/blogs/online-trending-now/imagine-we-are-starting-university-now>