Happy New Year!

The CTL is looking forward to seeing you at our spring events. Joy, Eric, and I have put together a student belonging and wellbeing workshop series as well as a new opportunity for reflection and planning in all aspects of being a faculty member. Read more about these below and be sure to check out our events page on the [CTL website](https://ctlwebsite). Nick and Tyr are always ready to help with D2L questions or chat about course design, online teaching, or any other pedagogy topics. And Sierra can assist with any general CTL questions, so don’t hesitate to reach out!

2024 has been a slow start for my reading. You would think that’s all I would have done when it was -30 degrees! But I can recommend the last good mystery I read, which was Lisa Jewell’s *None of This Is True*. I feel like a summary would actually spoil it, so here’s some vague hints to get you intrigued. What if you met someone, learned some crazy stuff about her life, and then learned an opposite story? Which one should you believe? And what if there’s a third possibility in the mix? This book kept me guessing, even after I finished it.
Spring Workshop Series  
Student Belonging and Wellbeing

The Student Belonging and Wellbeing Workshop Series helps faculty implement equitable teaching practices and curriculum design that foster belonging and are responsive to diverse student backgrounds and lived experiences. The sessions are based on education research and evidence-based teaching practices while also inviting faculty to share their practices and experiences.

To RSVP, please click on the session title:

Session #1 – Fostering Community and Sense of Belonging in the Classroom (Roundtable)

Monday, January 29th at 3:30 pm in COE, Tech Building B001, and Webex

Session #2 – Trauma-Informed Teaching (Training)

Thursday, February 8th at 3:30 pm in COE 328 and Webex
Session #3 – Teaching Practices that Support Student Wellbeing (Panel)

Monday, March 11th at 3:30 pm in, Tech Building B001 and Webex

Session #4 - Creating an Inclusive Syllabus (Workshop)

Tuesday, April 9th at 3:30 pm in COE 328 and Webex

For session descriptions, Webex links, and more, please visit the CTL events page.

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Caring for Aging Family Discussion Group

MSUB Wellness Champions and the CTL are hosting a discussion group for colleagues who are caregivers or navigating how to support aging family members. It’s an opportunity to connect with others in similar situations and find support. The group meets monthly and is open to all faculty and staff. Please join us, even if you can only stay for a short time.

Discussions will be held on the following dates at noon in COE 328 or via Webex:

January 22nd | February 26th | March 25th | April 22nd
Join Our Faculty Reflective Practice Community

Pausing to reflect on your teaching and work is a helpful practice, but it’s challenging to find the time! The CTL invites faculty to join our new reflective practice community which offers the opportunity to reflect and connect. Here’s how it works – the group will meet every other week on Fridays at 11:30 am (available at both campuses and virtually) and spend 15 – 20 minutes on written reflection. Interested faculty are then invited to stay and discuss their reflections for another 15 – 20 minutes. The CTL designed a reflective practice journal for participants with different questions each session about teaching, scholarship (if applicable), professional duties, and life outside of work. So join us for reflection, or reflection and discussion!

Our first session is **Friday, January 26th at 11:30 am in COE 328 (University Campus), Tech Building B001 (City College) or via Webex.**

Please sign-up here!

If you can’t make our reflection sessions but would still like a copy of the reflective practice journal, please email [ctl@msubillings.edu](mailto:ctl@msubillings.edu)
Perhaps the most-helpful and most-underutilized tools in any student's "backpack" is going to office hours. Studies repeatedly show that office hours are beneficial in improving grades, a student's sense of belonging, and more. And yet, day after day, faculty find themselves sitting in empty offices, using that time to finish other tasks, because the students just aren't showing up.

So, what do we do?

Well, believe it or not, little changes can make a big impact. Things like "rebranding" office hours as "student hours" can be enough to get the students in the door. Offering a "menu" of options for students to pick from - either when scheduling visits or on your door when they show up - can help teach them what office hours are actually for (they might not know). If you're really willing to put in a few extra minutes, designing your office hours to fit with the schedules of your students (instead of posting your hours and expecting them to make it work) goes a long, long way into making those hours in your office feel more worthwhile.

Check out some additional resources below, complete with peer-reviewed research, or call Tyr at x5723 to chat about more ways to get your students to come to you.

| Benefits and improving virtual office hours |
| Generic guidelines for improving student usage of office hours |
| One type of "menu" option for Office hours |
Call for Applications – MUS Teaching Scholars (OCHE)

MUS Teaching Scholars recognizes a select group of faculty who demonstrate excellence in teaching and who are dedicated to advancing teaching practices that improve student learning and outcomes.

Selected faculty will receive an award and will design and facilitate a faculty learning community (FLC) that advances promising teaching and learning practices around this year's theme of "AI in the Classroom." Please find more information about the award and activities teaching scholars commit to in on the MUS Teaching Scholars website.

To apply, faculty must submit a letter of application that includes how the applicant engages with this year’s theme and that proposes a faculty learning community. Faculty must also submit a letter of recommendation from a department chair, dean, or provost. The deadline to apply is February 15. Faculty at all stages of their careers are encouraged to apply.