2024-2025 Annual Report:
Center for Engaged Learning (CEL)

CEL MISSION

The Center for Engaged Learning (CEL) champions innovative teaching and learning environments, robust scholarship and creative work, and meaningful service. The CEL strives to support faculty in their professional learning throughout their academic careers, from orientation to career advancement and beyond, with a focus on well-being.

SUMMARY

The CEL champions academic excellence through experiences aimed at building exceptional teaching, enabling faculty to engage students in high-impact practices while fostering research and innovation. We actively promote student success and cultivate a diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus community through our many programs. We develop communities of practice, create asynchronous support materials, facilitate new partnerships, and diversify our communication approaches. During academic year 2024-25 we debuted the Tarot of Teaching Card series, continued impactful book group meetings, welcomed Incoming Faculty with an engaging Orientation (IFO), and a developed League of Learning 'leaderboard' competition. Our most recent successes include developing a Faculty Institute for Course-Based Undergraduate Research Experience (CURE), funded by a Title III Grant, which enhances research opportunities for both students and faculty; and the Engaged Design and Teaching Course, which provides KU incoming faculty with the skills and knowledge that helps positively impact their teaching and learning and empowers rigorous, meaningful learning experiences.

Looking forward, the Center for Engaged Learning (CEL) is committed to advancing programming priorities identified through our recent needs analysis. We will focus on increasing faculty job satisfaction to improve long-term retention by supporting effective pedagogy through the expansion of CEL Communities of Practice. Faculty consistently express a desire for connection, interaction, and support, particularly in response to burnout. Building on existing programming, this initiative will expand opportunities for meaningful faculty engagement by developing a suite of communities focused on pedagogy, faculty status, and professional growth, with varied topics and flexible meeting times to support diverse needs and interests.

In addition, we will establish regular, ongoing meetings for new faculty to continue the support initiated in Incoming Faculty Orientation (IFO). We will expand our existing asynchronous content and develop new resources to meet faculty needs. Finally, we will continue to support the tasks outlined in the Title III grant.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

The CEL directly supports these specific areas of the KU Strategic Plan:

Goal 1: Academic Excellence

Objective 1: Promote exceptional teaching, Objective 3: Ensure Students Engage in high impact practices and experiential learning, Objective 4: Enhance and encourage research, creativity and innovation.

Goal 2: Student Success

Objective 1: Improve academic success of all students

Goal 4: Caring Campus Community

Objective 1: Create a campus culture that is committed to a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible environment, and that champions the success of all members of its community, Objective 2: Expand DEI professional development programming for all employees.

By expanding professional development offerings, enhancing faculty support systems, and broadening overall engagement with CEL initiatives, we directly support Kutztown University's Strategic Plan, particularly Goal 1: Academic Excellence, by promoting exceptional teaching (Objective 1), fostering high-impact and experiential learning opportunities (Objective 3), and encouraging innovation and scholarly activity (Objective 4). Additionally, in alignment with Goal 2: Student Success, CEL programming is designed to improve academic outcomes for all students by enhancing faculty capacity to deliver student-centered instruction. Finally, our commitment to expanding professional development around diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility supports Goal 4: Caring Campus Community, addressing both Objective 1—cultivating an inclusive and supportive campus culture—and Objective 2—broadening DEI programming for faculty and staff.

CEL goals and outcomes analysis: 2024 – 2025 academic year

Goal	Outcome
Goal 1: Develop and implement specific programming to address needs identified in the "Need Analysis Survey"	Delivered six workshops tailored to faculty needs in student motivation, community building, and research support. Launched the "Hour of Power," a dedicated time block designed to help faculty schedule and protect time for scholarly work. Facilitated three new Communities of Practice and a continuing pedagogy book group, each focused on targeted teaching and learning topics. Developed ToT Cards and expanded KUexCEL posts to better serve faculty seeking flexible, asynchronous learning opportunities.

Goal 2: Support Title III grant needs	The 2024-25 CURE Course Development Institute, including recruitment and mentoring. Neurodiversity Book group D. Scott served as Interim Title III Coordinator at the end of the academic year.
Goal 3: Increase mentoring opportunities and programs	The shifted to a Mentoring Community of Practice (CoP) model.
Goal 4: Increase faculty participation to 20%	During 2024-25, 85 unique faculty attendees participated in CEL events. Based upon a final faculty headcount of 401 at the close of the academic year, that translates to 21% faculty participation.

General Overview

Staffing

- One part-time faculty with six credit course release, Erin Kraal, Faculty Director.
- One full-time staff, Douglas Scott, Director of Instructional Design; Interim Title III Coordinator.
- Supervised and supported by Dr. Karen Rauch, Associate Vice President for Accreditation, Assessment, and Curriculum.
- Additional administrative support from Kayline German.

Staff Professional Development

- E. Kraal regularly attends POD network events
  - Member of the Small Centers Pod (twice-month meetings)
  - Member of small group cohort discussion
  - Attended and presented at the 2025 CUR conference
- D. Scott
  - Member of CAST Center in Inclusive Technology & Education Systems (CITES) discussion cohort
  - Member of POD Network CONNECTS discussion group
  - Completed final of 7 courses in the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME) *Accessibility in OER* series

Staff Publications

- E. Kraal co-authored a presentation for the June 2025 CUR conference with faculty Dr. Lynn Kutch and Prof. Marlene Fares about research in FYS.

Synchronous Events

CEL hosted over 30 distinct events that were open to all faculty during Fall 2024 and Spring 2025, including 6 workshops, 18 Hour of Power sessions, and 6 Lunch Bunch gatherings. Additional offerings included a community of practice, a book group, one-on-one mentoring appointments, and Incoming Faculty Orientation (IFO) support."

Incoming Faculty Orientation (IFO) August 19-20, 2024

- Dedicated website including landing page with information about getting started, the schedule, and links to various support resources
- Structured, two-day symposium for incoming faculty. Programming included classroom management, pedagogical support, personal wellness, and comprehensive coverage of human resources items and contractual obligations.
- The 2024-25 IFO had 18 faculty participants.

Workshops

CEL provided 6 workshops (three each semester). The workshops focused on articulated faculty needs of supporting student motivation and engagement as well as support for their scholarship and growth. All workshops are offered at the T/Th meeting hour.

- Fall workshops - Setting your Research Agenda with Dr. Diana Elliot (3 faculty), Empathy Mapping (4 faculty), Playing the Motivation Game (7 faculty).
- Spring workshops – Begin at the End (1 faculty – partial snow day), Stuck in the Middle (3 faculty), and The Funding Game (2 faculty).
- In general, post surveys indicated that faculty found the workshops useful for the pedagogy/scholarship, increased their sense of community, and that they enjoyed them.

Bespoke Department Workshop

- Physical Sciences Standards based grading workshop, developed at the request of book group members as a means to share Standards-Based grading with their department colleagues. The workshop served 17 faculty members. The assessment survey fount that 88% of attendees agreed or strongly agreed with 'This event provided me with new ideas and approaches for my teaching/classes.' While 82% of faculty agreed or strongly agreed with 'This event was relevant to my professional growth.'

Hour of Power (HoP)

These are one hour writing retreats. They were offered through-out the semester at different times to meet faculty needs. The focus on supporting time management and research using a rotating schedule was in response to the faculty needs assessment.

- Twelve scheduled HoPs were offered over the course of the Fall and Spring semesters (6 per semester). During the final two weeks of the Spring semester, the HOP was offered twice per week. Total attendance was Fall: 3 attendees; Spring: 5 attendees. Of the 8 who attended, 5 were unique.
- The end of semester survey indicated that 100% of faculty responses (3) found that the HoP program was relevant to their personal growth, would that they attend one in the future. They also noted that their participation increased their sense of connection with peers.

Lunch Bunch

The Lunch Bunch is a collaborative, informal drop-in lunch on Fridays at noon. This programming was offered in response to the Needs Assessment request for programming at alternative times and more opportunities to build a sense of community.

- Lunch bunch was offered once a month and had a total of 9 attendees. The bulk of the attendance was in the fall.

Neurodiversity Book group (Spring 2025)

The Neurodiversity Learning Circle/Book Group read *We're Not Broken: Changing the Autism Conversation* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2021) by Eric Garcia. Facilitated by K. Rauch, the book group met four times throughout the Spring 2025 semester. There were 15 participants, all staff members. Discussion questions for each chapter were created and shared with the group via OneDrive. The culminating event was a distinguished lecture by the author, held on campus on April 10. Mr. Garcia was very gracious with his time, visiting a journalism class during the afternoon and participating in a pre-lecture discussion organized by the KU Commission on Human Diversity. The CEL further supported this initiative of the Title III grant by purchasing the book for each of the participants.

Communities of Practice (CoP), Spring 2025

The CEL developed three communities of practice pilot programs for the Spring.

- Research and Scholarship Support: 7 faculty met biweekly over the semester to discuss strategies for supporting their scholarship and research. This group was supported by Erin Kraal
- Classroom visits: 6 faculty participated in a group where they visited each other's classes to learn about different teaching methods and talk about pedagogy. This included a pre and post group meeting and a month-long period where faculty visited several of their colleagues' courses. This group was supported by Andy Arnold and Megan O'Bryne.
- Teaching and Learning with Digital Tools: leveraging technology to enable your teaching can be a challenge. Effective teaching is driven by sound pedagogical principles, not the tools used, and technology should support student learning outcomes, not define them. This community will focus on the equitable and impactful use of digital tools to support student learning. This community of practice was supported by Robson Martins de Araujo Junior, Elementary, Middle Level, Library & Technologies Education, and D. Scott, CEL, and had two faculty participants.

Innovative Pedagogy Book Group (Fall and Spring)

- Six faculty in a community of practice read Grading for Growth by Clark and Talbert.
- The group met bi-weekly for the entire year.

Overall, faculty responded positively to the COP's and Innovative Pedagogy Book group. End of year surveys found that 88% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the 'group provided me with new ideas and approaches' and 88% strongly agreed that it 'increased their sense of connection with peers' and that 'because of this group, I will make a change to my professional work.' Barriers included the ability to attend scheduled meetings.

Initiatives

Tarot of Teaching card deck

The Tarot of Teaching deck is a creative tool designed by E. Kraal and D. Scott to enrich and energize the structure of a class period. It divides the flow of a lesson into three key stages, each represented by a different category of cards: *Starting Our Journey* (beginning of class), *Along the Way* (middle of class), and *Reaching Our Destination* (end of class). Each card within these categories offers a unique teaching tip aligned with its intended time in the class period, making each session more engaging, organized, and impactful. Modeled after a Tarot card deck, the content in each card is based in best-practice and selected to be quickly and easily implemented, with little to no faculty preparation. The graphic design of the cards shows the student journey in a class period while the content is focused for quick implementation. Each card was hand-delivered to faculty concurrent with a calendar event (i.e. Halloween in Fall, Valentines Day in Spring). Blog posts shared through Daily Brief expanded on the pedagogical underpinning of each card. Specific cards were also integrated into workshops and events to support content and ideas. We plan to continue to expand the cards in the deck and ultimately plan share the format through publication and creative commons.

Inclusive Teaching Institute: UDL Course Redevelopment

Participants completed an asynchronous online course about the basics of UDL. They selected one future course in which they developed, implemented, and assessed an approach to teaching that incorporates the principles of UDL, with the expected outcome of cultivating students who are engaged through the deliberate design of a learning environment. This deliberate design also supports their growth and development as purposeful, motivated learners. Faculty participants

- This year, two faculty participants from two colleges participated, representing a diverse range of subjects (visual storytelling, social work).
- Both participants completed the asynchronous online course and participated in the mandatory follow-up discussions.
- The asynchronous online course was designed and developed with UDL in mind and utilizing best practices in course design.
- The participant outcome also includes producing a future blog post about their experiences for the CEL Faculty Journal, KUexCEL in 2025-2026.
- Participants assessed the institute as highly effective (100% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the experience "…enhanced my knowledge in the area of Universal Design for Learning." One participant noted that they "…enjoyed reflecting on the "why" aspect of UDL as a way to engage learners." Another going forward is "…interested in talking pedagogy with other faculty implementing UDL."

Faculty Course Design Institute – Course based Undergraduate Research (CURE)

To support the Title III outcomes, the CEL designed and implemented an institute for new faculty creating CURE projects within their courses. Seven faculty attended from three colleges. They were supported by four existing CURE faculty mentors.

- Recruited 9 faculty from three different colleges. Seven completed the course – the represented a diverse range of subjects (anthropology, art and design, elementary education, composition, sociology, criminal justice and communication).
- Overarching structure of the course deliberately modeled backwards design to support best-practice pedagogy.
- Introduction course provided an overview of CURE pedagogical structure. Delivered asynchronously, the short course established the core philosophy and practice of CURE's across multiple disciplines
- Created a KU specific faculty handbook for CURE course design. Interactive and structured for course deliverables, the handbook scaffolded backwards design including focusing on research disciplinary question and key student learning outcomes, authentic assessment, and effective scaffolding.
- Developed and ran a three day, in person workshop to support course development.
- Participant assessed the institute as highly effective (100% of participant strongly agreed that the experience "Increased my confidence in developing and teaching a CURE" and 100% would participate in future professional development). One participant said: "The workshop exceeded expectations and helped with some issues I didn't expect that are beyond CURE-specific (such as thinking around feedback & grading)…This is one of the most well-designed and useful workshops I've ever attended."

The participating faculty will continue their course development over the summer and participate in a community of practice during 2025-26.

Awards

The CEL also coordinates the following campus wide awards. This includes advertising for nominations and the selection process.

2024-2025 John P. Schellenberg Award for Excellence in Teaching and Learning: Diana Elliot, counseling
2024-2025 Carlson R. Chambliss Faculty Research Award: Feisal Murshed, Business Administration; and Christine Saidi, History

Services

Mentoring

- Created and published a mentoring handbook for year-long support
- Dr. Andy Arnold served as a co-coordinator for the mentoring programming, checking in with faculty during the semester
- To support more interaction, in Fall 2024, we piloted a classroom 'visitation' program and invited interested faculty to participate. Although this approach did not have the desired impact, we

identified some key opportunities for growth. As a result, the Mentoring Program transformed into a specific Community of Practice in Spring 2025 (see above *Classroom Visits*).

CEL Self-Evaluation of UDL course (Summer-2 2024 pilot)

- Those who completed the Basics of UDL course were eligible to participate in the Self-Evaluation of Universal Design for Learning course.
- The course's purpose was to provide faculty with the tools to analyze their existing courses through a UDL lens and make evidence-based improvements to reduce barriers and maximize student variability.
- Participants were guided through the course materials that provide some background information with which they are already familiar but also introduced to the concept of using guidelines and checkpoints to self-evaluate teaching and learning scenarios in the context of UDL.
- As they progressed through the modules, they participated in a peer evaluation exercise to analyze a sample teaching and learning scenario. They then utilized the same techniques to guide them through a self-evaluation.
- They worked through identifying and analyzing an example from their course offering(s) that moved beyond awareness and into evidence-based UDL transformation.
- By the end, they emerged with a customized UDL evaluation and implementation plan, along with increased confidence in their ability to proactively design inclusive learning experiences.

During this pilot program, three faculty participants from the College of Visual and Performing Arts (VPA) participated, representing two departments (Art Education and Art and Design).

- All participants completed the asynchronous online course and participated in the mandatory follow-up discussions.
- The asynchronous online course was designed and developed with UDL in mind and utilizing best practices in course design.
- Participants assessed the course as effective (100% of participants agreed). One participant noted that they …"think this is super important to how we need to reconsider education, and I think everyone should be doing this. I would continue to particpate in workshops and peer groups. I find the community side of this helpful in discussing and working through problems and confusions."
- There was a consensus that the coursework, particularly the UDL jargon, could be scaled-back and made more simplistic and easy to implement. Future offerings will consider reducing the requirements or perhaps splitting the course into three parts.

KUtztown exCEL: Faculty Journal of the CEL

Our online journal, KUtztown exCEL, is a place to learn more about how KU's faculty are advancing pedagogy by advocating for students and working together to enact an understanding of teaching and learning within a community of mutual respect.

- Articles published in this journal combine personal experience, current conversations in academia, and a theoretical foundation that presumes the value, strength, and independent thinking of all learners.
- In 2024-2025, the CEL published 13 articles, including 3 by faculty in support of their Inclusive Teaching Institute participation.
- Five entries focused on the continuing "Tarot of Teaching" series.

Instructional Design

- Developed eLearning modules utilizing a new web-based, responsive platform, Articulate Rise 360.
- The modules included the following:
  - An interactive ADA presentation for the Disability Services Office.
  - A "Basics of UDL" interactive module for use by various departments.
  - An interactive discussion guide to support the documentary "Pardon Me" used in the ARED_331_010 course. This last module was developed with Dra. Leslie Sotomayor, Heather Kuruvilla, and the film's director Shuja Moore. The guide aims to provide context and information for the film to support facilitators navigating complex topics of the U.S. incarceration system and the various intersections of oppression.
  - An APA guide for the Writing Center.
  - A redesign of FYSM_100_810 "Socially Just Hip-Hop" course content from static to interactive, dynamic modules.
  - A redesign of ARED_536_801 "Art Curriculum" course content from static to interactive, dynamic modules.
  - A redesign of GEG_20CD_810W "Cultural Geography" course content from static to interactive, dynamic modules.

Supporting Title III Grant

The CEL is providing significant support to the Title III grant, a goal of which is building a portfolio of transformational, high-impact practice experiences for increased accessibility for all students including our most vulnerable populations: historically underrepresented minorities, Pell eligible (low-income), first generation, and neurodivergent. Efforts involving the CEL include providing faculty development training on faculty-led research opportunities (such as CURE) and building awareness of strategies and tools for inclusivity of neurodiverse students through communities of practice. During academic year '23-'24, the CEL facilitated the *Basics of UDL* course (see above) for the tutoring staff of the Office of Student Success. Of the 88 student tutors who enrolled, 14 earned a digital badge and certificate of completion. In addition, 5 members of the Office of Student Success completed the course.

Goals for 2025-2026 Year

- Continue to expand diversity of communication and engagement opportunities
- Support Title III grant needs
- Increase the participation in Communities of Practice
- Disseminate CEL work beyond KU: CUREs, blog posts, conference presentations