



News From the Core

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The Core Team: Core Curricular Innovation Fellow Interview



Core Curricular Innovation Fellow: Dr. Hillary Ash, Ph.D., Communications

Hillary Ash, Ph.D., joined SLU's Department of Communication in Fall 2022. Dr. Ash specializes in health care disparities and visual rhetoric and says she was attracted to working at SLU because of the tangible student support and the "ethics of care" built into our institutional infrastructure. Dr. Ash began her first semester at SLU working with the University Core by teaching COMM 1200, an Eloquentia Perfecta: Oral and Visual Communication course. During new faculty orientation, however, she learned about the Ignite Seminar and chose to develop her own: "Rhetoric and Human Rights." In this Ignite Seminar, Dr. Ash asks students to wrestle with the complex notion of human rights from historical and modern perspectives and teaches them to analyze and reflect on the ways in which their own life contexts and their experiences of human rights align with the stories and experiences of others.

This academic year, Dr. Ash is working more closely with the Core as a 2023-2024 Core Curricular Innovation Fellow. As a Core Fellow, she is developing a new Eloquentia Perfecta course centered on speaking for the health professions, which will challenge students to think about health literacy and effective communication between patients and healthcare professionals. Although she is an experienced teacher, Dr. Ash notes that, because of the Core and her work with the Reinert Center, she now intentionally incorporates context and reflection into all of her classes and seeks to give students agency to think critically about their own growth. Dr. Ash is pleased to see that SLU, as an entire institution, places value on oral and visual communication and believes that effective communication, in all of its forms, is an important component of what it means to be a SLU student and whole person.

In The Core Classroom: Mission to Mars



Mission to Mars: Ignite Seminar for Engineering Students

Several years ago, Drs. Mike Swartwout, Gary Bledsoe, Chris Carroll, and Dana Marmalejo from the School of Science and Engineering began discussing the idea of a first-year Engineering seminar that would bring together students from all six SLU engineering majors. Soon after, when the University passed a new Undergraduate Core that included a first-year Ignite Seminar, they decided to blend the essential elements of a first-year engineering course with the Ignite Seminar learning

outcomes. The end result was an Engineering Ignite Seminar focused on fundamental engineering skills that all students must know and comprehensive, interdisciplinary learning experience that spans all six Engineering majors.

One challenge these faculty members wrestled with as they designed an Ignite Seminar specifically for Engineering students was how to standardize content for instructors from distinct backgrounds to ensure that nearly 200 students would have a similar experience in their first-year course. According to Dr. Dana Marmolejo, this required "prioritizing effective communication between instructors and students, given the course's diverse didactic tools." Their solution? Focus all sections around a common theme: "Mission to Mars." To incorporate the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (IPP), this Mars-focused course emphasizes experience, reflection, and action, which, for Dr. Mike Swartwout, is nearly identical to the Engineering design process which helps understand that Engineering requires more than "just math." Professors teaching this course share students and rotate through classes to bring their own disciplinary focus to the Ignite Seminar. A teaching highlight for Dr. Gary Bledsoe is that, for the first time, he gets to meet students from all engineering disciplines. Dr. Dana Mamolejo echoed this sentiment, noting that "the collaborative environment fostered by the instructors has truly made this [Ignite] teaching experience remarkable."

Proposing an Ignite Seminar? Check out the Instructor Resources below.

Ignite Seminar Instructor Resources

Core Events: Core Assessment Portfolio Pilot



Core Assessment Portfolio Pilot (CAPP)--SLU-Madrid Initiative

The University Undergraduate Core is built on nine graduation-level Core Student Learning Outcomes, and one or two are assessed each year. At SLU-Madrid, Associate Director of the Core Hamish Binns is piloting a new way to holistically assess undergraduate student: the Core Assessment Portfolio Pilot or CAPP. CAPP has three components: yearly interviews with undergraduate students; an ePortfolio comprised of two student-selected artifacts from each of their SLU Core classes; and a final interview after graduation. The goal of CAPP is to help students reflect on their own growth and see that their Core courses are designed to meet learning outcomes.

This fall, fourteen SLU-Madrid students completed their first CAPP interview and shared their excitement about learning under the new Core. In their first semester at SLU, these students are finding that, through collaboration and self-reflection, they are "deeply learning while also having a lot of fun." Several students named the Core as an important reason they enrolled at SLU-Madrid. They noted that, through the Core, they are able to see how SLU cares about the mind, body, and soul of its students. Many of them also mentioned the connection they feel with other students through their Core classes. Freshman Miya Tali (deciding-International Relations) had this to say: "Both of the Core classes [Ignite an CP1] surprised me in many ways. It felt exciting and something new, and I wanted to learn. And it has been a while since I wanted to learn like this."

Core Events: Ignite Awards and Celebration

The University Core has launched an Inaugural Annual Ignite Seminar Awards Celebration to celebrate excellence in teaching first-year students. Nominations for Ignite Seminar Instructor of the Year were solicited from both Spring 23 and Fall 23 Ignite students, and over sixty nominations have already been received.

The nominations will be reviewed by the University Core Ignite subcommittee, and both a Spring and Fall Ignite instructor will be selected. Winners will be announced at the Ignite Seminar Awards Celebration on December 5th.

Upcoming Core Events and Deadlines

November 29	Ignite Faculty Brown Bag Lunch Drop-In, DuBourg 406
December 5	Ignite Celebration and Awards
December 11	Ignite Workshop #2
January 9	Ignite Workshop #3
February 5	Experimental Collaborative Inquiry Portal Closes

Collaborative Inquiry Experimental Portal



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