



# Teaching Matters

February 1, 2022

## Office of the Vice Provost for Instruction

### A note from the Vice Provost

Dear faculty and staff,

Teaching has formal structures and informal structures, predictable and random moments, likely places and unlikely spaces. I have come to believe that while a few of us might claim the title of teacher, or instructional faculty, or teaching assistant, we are all, in fact, teachers. When I have the pleasure of working with Ms. Heather Metress, our registrar, and with Jessica Cooley and Doug Blackburn, an important Information Technology team, to find instructional spaces for classes and laboratories, that work is part of the formalized process of teaching. And, what a process that is! That story I will save for another moment. However, what I would suggest is equally important to classroom instruction is the teaching that happens in our graduate laboratories where students are working at the elbow, in concert with, our funded investigators.



When I leave my office on the health sciences campus and walk across Laney Walker to some of those research spaces, I walk into teaching laboratory spaces that have learning outcomes, that are anchored in experiential and high impact practices, and that depends on thoughtful, reflective practice to bring meaning to experiences. If you are not familiar with the teaching that goes on in the [BioMeds Research Labs](#), I challenge you to observe remarkable teaching in action. In fact, I would be willing to take you there myself. The investigators take time to know the students, to outline processes and procedures, and to lead the graduate and undergraduate students to higher levels of understanding and action. It is both experiential and strategic instruction at its best.

If you do not have time to visit the labs, as an alternative let me invite you to visit the website [Three-minute Thesis Competition](#) where graduate students attempt to boil down an entire body of research into a three-minute moment, in a manner where a non-science listener could understand the work. Led by Professors [Darren Browning](#) and [Pamela Hayward](#) and supported mightily by the Dean of the Graduate School, [Jennifer Sullivan](#), and Vice Dean [Patricia Cameron](#), this work reflects teaching at various levels. Of course, these graduate students benefit from undergraduate experiences that situate them to learn at an advanced level. They also benefit from a faculty member at the graduate level who knows them well, who is committed to the work, and is a partner in the journey.

It is on this last point where I want to leave you. Teaching for me is about relationships. The learning that comes from teaching, both formal and informal, often comes in part from the relationship of the student to student, student to faculty, student to content. But what I am pretty clear about is that learning is difficult, maybe impossible for some, absent a significant and persistent relationship

along the learning journey. Putting it differently, when students believe they belong in the class and know that someone cares about their work, then they often embrace a mindset of possibility and potential. If they are uncertain that anyone knows they are in the learning space, that anyone really cares, then it is painfully simple for those same students to disappear.

Thank you for the teaching you do in the lab, in the classroom, at the market, in the home, at the shuttle stop. It is in those moments where we make connections, build bridges to understanding, and say to another, “You matter.” Teaching still matters, wherever it might occur. And your work at this University makes it a place, like no other.

Sincerely,

Zach Kelehear



## [Boundless Teaching Award Winners Announced](#)

Brett Rice, assistant professor for Clinical Laboratory Science, and Cynthia Epps, lecturer in the Department of Art and Design, are the recipients of the 2021 Boundless Teaching award, the Center for Instructional Innovation has announced. The award, created in 2020 by CII, recognizes and celebrates faculty members who positively impact students in physical or digital learning spaces through their enthusiasm, passion and excellence in teaching.



## [Mailchimp Co-Founder Brings Inspiration to AU Community](#)

Augusta university students, faculty, and staff had the opportunity to hear firsthand the inspiring story of Mailchimp co-founder and self-made billionaire Ben Chestnut, who is an Augusta native. In a fireside chat with Lynsey Steinberg, certified medical illustrator with the Center for Instructional Innovation, Chestnut spoke candidly about his pathway to success — from his upbringing in Augusta to his position as a CEO of a multibillion-dollar company.

## [Chinese and other Asian communities prepare to celebrate Lunar New Year](#)

As AU faculty, you may be interested in knowing that Augusta and AU have a large Chinese community and other Asian communities that celebrate the Lunar New Year. This year, the Lunar New Year falls on February 1st and ushers in the Year of the Tiger. In [this article](#) from a colleague at the American Immigration Lawyers Association, the author reflects on the meaning of the Lunar New Year and encourages us all to be more courageous and compassionate and fight injustice this year. Is this something worth sharing with your students?



## [Affordable Learning Georgia Grant Opportunity](#)

Affordable Learning Georgia has opened a call for grant proposals. This is an opportunity to transform your classes from a traditional textbook model, to a low-cost/no-cost alternative, which has been shown to improve student retention and persistence. If you should have any questions about applying for a grant or converting your class to affordable materials, feel free to contact any of Augusta University's ALG Champions: Melissa Johnson, ALG Library Champion, Clement Aubert, ALG Faculty Champion, or Stacy Kluge, ALG Design Champion.

## [View Previous Teaching Matters Issues](#)

Need to refer to a previous issue of the Office of the Vice Provost's Teaching Matters? Each monthly issue of Teaching Matters has also been preserved in Scholarly Commons. A note by the Vice Provost for Instruction, Dr. Zach Kelehear, introduces the issue each month. Table of Contents include information in the areas of Innovation Updates, Faculty and Staff Updates, and Student Updates. See the complete collection on the [Augusta University Open Repository](#)

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