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WSU faculty receive Smith Teaching and Learning Grants to boost undergraduate education

PULLMAN, Wash.—Washington State University faculty members received funding for nine projects to enhance undergraduate teaching and learning, thanks to the Samuel H. and Patricia W. Smith Teaching and Learning Endowment. The faculty represent five colleges on three campuses.

Recipients and projects for 2018-19

Faculty who received the competitive grants and the names of their projects, by college and in Pullman unless otherwise noted, are:

College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences

Chanmi Hwang and Carol Salusso, of the Dept. of Apparel, Merchandising, Design, and Textiles, in “Innovative Learning Environment: Improving Oral, Written, and Visual Communication Skills in Design Disciplines,” focus on critique as a cornerstone of design education. They will develop innovative digital and multimedia teaching modules that target communication and critical thinking skills needed to produce a competent workforce for industry.

College of Arts and Sciences

Ashley Boyd, of the Dept. of English, in “Washington State Senate Bill 5433 and English Teacher Education: Redesigning Curriculum for Inclusive Education,” is developing a capstone experience for teacher candidates comprising content and pedagogies that address Indigenous history, culture and governmental relations. Partnerships with regional tribes and the Center for Digital Scholarship and Curation will support the creation of culturally responsive materials and approaches.

Ken Faunce, of the Dept. of History, responds to assessment data with “Engaging Students with Digital Active Learning Resources.” He is building assignments, activities and digital resources, including classroom response systems, Story Maps, Prezi and Google Slides among others, to enhance student engagement and learning.

Also responding to assessment data, Janet Peters and Dee Posey, of the Dept. of Psychology, focus on career preparation skills in “Teaching the Teachers: Developing the Instructional Practicum Course for Psychology.” They are preparing a suite of instructional materials around high-impact practices such as learning communities, experiential learning and capstone experiences to better prepare undergraduate teaching assistants for their roles.

Susan Ross, of the Dept. of English, will help students engage in difficult dialogues on sensitive subjects through her project “Dialogic and Multimodal Student Engagement with War Literatures,” which will include students’ creative multimodal projects on literatures and experiences of war.

Carson College of Business

Jane Cote and Claire Latham, accounting faculty at WSU Vancouver, are “Preparing Students to Respond Effectively to Ethical Challenges in the Workplace.” They are developing modules to develop students’ abilities to create effective strategies for dealing with stressful ethical dilemmas using the “Giving Voice to Values” framework.

College of Education

Based on strong preliminary data, Yuliya Ardasheva and Sarah Newcomer, of Teaching and Learning at WSU Tri-Cities, are “Infusing Teacher-Preparation Curriculum with Case-Based Instruction Focused on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy” to address the changing demographics of K-12 education through cases applied in a realistic classroom environment.

Voiland College of Engineering and Architecture

Dave Kim and John Lynch, of the School of Engineering and Computer Science at WSU Vancouver, address a key employer-sought skill in “Audience-Centered Writing Pedagogy for Lab Course Teaching Assistants to Foster Engineering Undergraduates’ Learning.” Approaching the lab report as an engineering literacy genre involving audience, purpose and context, the co-PIs will create diagnostic tools, training materials and assessment instruments that are transferable to other writing-intensive courses such as capstones.

Ali Mehrizi-Sani, of the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, tackles the challenge of high-failure-rate gateway courses with “PEARLS: Power Engineering Adaptive Reinforced Learning Via Scaffolding.” Further developing an online intelligent and adaptive tutoring program he created, Mehrizi-Sani will focus on formative feedback as a way to address conceptual difficulties and increase self-efficacy and motivation.

Fund’s far-reaching impact

The Smith fund was established in 2000 to honor retiring WSU President Smith and his wife. It has since funded dozens of faculty-initiated projects. They have directly and indirectly impacted the educations of thousands of WSU students, university pedagogy and industry knowledge and practices across the world.

Applications and nominations for the next round of Smith grants is expected to be announced in January 2019. Visit the <https://vpue.wsu.edu> website for information.