DePeters Family Center for Innovation and Teaching Excellence

A Year of New Faces

This academic year brought a few new team members into the Center. In January 2025, Katie Bush was hired and began her role as instructional designer working with faculty teaching online and hybrid courses and programs offered through our FisherNext platform. In March 2025, Chris Plantone joined the team as educational technologist supporting faculty with Brightspace, as well as a list of other tools, and is point person for the training on the use of iPads. Both Chris and Katie have already become vital members of our team, providing exceptional support to our campus community.

Katie Bush, Instructional Designer

Chris Plantone, Educational Technologist

In addition to our new staff, we've had some new faculty fellows join the team. In January 2025, Drs. Kimberly McClure Brenchley and Kristen Driskill joined the Center as inaugural Inclusive Teaching Faculty Fellows. In this role, they work as a team to support our campus community by offering the Inclusive Teaching Academy, one of the Center's signature professional development offerings, as well as a number of other workshops and 1-1 consultations.

Dr. Zach Murphy also joined the team, taking over for Dr. Emily Dane-Staples on May 1, 2025 as Active Learning Faculty Fellow. Zach has extensive experience in active learning strategies and has implemented many within the Biology courses he teaches. Dr. Kaitlin Bonner also began another year as an OER Faculty Fellow with the Center this summer, after being awarded a second New England Board of Higher Education grant to support the use of OER, low cost, and no cost course materials across our campus. Dr. Maylin Harter and Stephen West have also taken on new faculty fellow roles and for these two roles specifically, the DePeters Family Center and the School of Arts & Sciences have partnered to bring their support to campus. Maylin works as the Core Director in her fellow role and Stephen is the Writing Faculty Fellow.

For a full list of staff and faculty fellows, please view the last page of this report. The contributions of these individuals have substantially enhanced the impact of the DePeters Family Center on our campus. We extend our sincere gratitude to each of them for their unwavering dedication to our mission of supporting faculty so they can create the best educational experiences for our students.

Teaching Excellence Program

This year we saw our first cohort of **18** new full-time faculty continue their journey in our new Teaching Excellence Program. This program offers a series of in-depth professional development courses that equip faculty with evidence-based skills and knowledge essential for creating high-quality learning environments that positively impact student outcomes. Faculty participated the first two required courses in the program, Teaching for Student Learning and Inclusive Teaching Academy. In addition to these two courses, faculty are asked to complete four other signature events of their choosing in a timeframe that works best for them. Eleven faculty have completed at least one signature event beyond the two required experiences, with three faculty completed four of more of these events in their first year. Each signature event involves approximately 20 hours of work on the part of the faculty, so participating in these experiences calls for dedication and commitment. Upon completion, which requires the completion of six signature events in total, participants will be recognized for their commitment to teaching excellence through public acknowledgment and a customized growth trophy (example shown to the right). We are excited to welcome our second cohort of **14** new full-time faculty into the program this year!
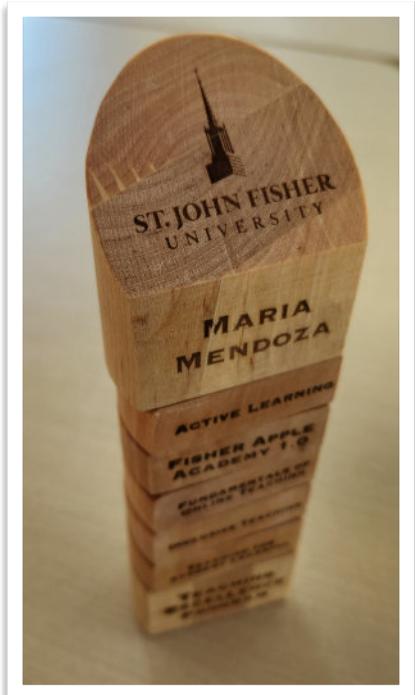
Use the QR code to watch a short video about the program and hear from participants.

Teaching & Learning Library

Next time you're in the Center, don't miss our lending library. Center staff populate the shelves with their favorite teaching and learning books, or books from some of our own Fisher faculty scholars. If you have suggestions for books to add to the collection, let us know at cite@sjf.edu. We are always adding more, so check back often!

Educational Technology & Pedagogical Support

96

WORKSHOPS

on a variety of topics such as Brightspace, Zoom, and Fundamentals of Online Teaching

1600+

ATTENDEES

including faculty, staff, and students who participated in the events offered by the Center

332

1-ON-1 CONSULTATIONS

with Center staff and fellows on topics such as active learning or technology questions

Workshop Feedback

Below shows the percentage of workshop attendees that rate us as **Excellent** in the following categories:

93%

Presenter was well prepared.

92%

Presenter's knowledge of the subject matter.

90%

Presenter's ability to respond appropriately to questions.

Brightspace

Fisher's course management system is an essential component of the educational technology ecosystem of the University. We have now completed two full academic years on the system since our transition to it in the summer of 2023. Below are stats on how it is being used across campus:

- **91%** of courses on Brightspace use the **Grades** feature.

- **87%** of courses use Brightspace to post **Content** for students to access.

- **82%** of courses use Brightspace to collect student work via **Assignments**.

The Rise of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The pace of rapid development has not slowed down for generative AI tools and features, and its impact across campus has expanded. This year, the AI Advisory Board, which includes faculty, staff, and students from across campus, continued their work to spread AI awareness through professional development, revise policy as needed, and evaluate and test potential tools. Some highlights from this year include:

- Updated **AI Toolkit** with student, faculty, and staff resources

- **Generative AI Basics Module** for student support in Brightspace

- AI Tools available for campus use, including **Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini, Zoom AI Companion, NotebookLM from Google, Brightspace Lumi AI, and Poll Everywhere AI**

- Over **20** professional development sessions were offered this year by DePeters staff on a variety of AI topics, including:

  - Generative AI: Campus Updates
  - AI Detectors & AI Resilient Assessment
  - Harnessing AI for Effective Course Design
  - Gemini in Action: Mastering Prompts with Practice
  - Copilot and the CREATE Framework
  - AI at Work: Revolutionizing Your Daily Operations
  - Using AI in Brightspace
  - Generative AI for Tutoring
  - Using AI for Research
  - AI & the Future of Work

Explore Fisher's AI Toolkit

AI Professional Development Day

On May 20, 2025, over 150+ faculty and staff from across campus gathered to learn about AI and its implications for teaching and learning in higher education from José Bowen, co-author of *Teaching with AI: A Practical Guide to a New Era of Human Learning.* The day was packed with information and hands-on activities. The feedback from the day was extremely positive and **78%** of survey respondents stated they intended to make changes to their daily work based on what they learned during this event.
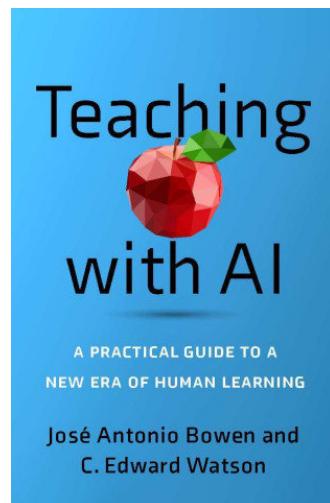

Gen-AI Community of Practice

During the summer of 2025, DePeters Family Center staff facilitated a community of practice for **25** interested faculty and staff looking to learn more about AI tools and best practices with the goal of creating AI-required assignments that could be used with students in the upcoming academic year. Seven sessions were held during the summer and the group explored a variety of AI platforms, how to incorporate AI into the writing process, how to create custom chat-bots and role-playing simulations to be used with students.

Innovative Learning Spaces

Four classrooms in three separate buildings were updated this year as we continue to enhance the learning spaces across campus. Room 102 in the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. School of Education was updated to support active learning for both Education and Arts & Sciences courses that use that space. Wegmans School of Nursing room 100 was renovated to enhance the large classroom with tiered seating and moveable furniture that can transition the space quickly for lower seating needs. This project was made possible thanks to the Kilian J. and Caroline F. Schmitt Foundation, with matching funds from the Wegmans Family Charitable Trust. Room 210 in the Basil Hall was also updated to update the previously dated space into a modern learning environment. And last, room 216 in Basil Hall was renovated to transition the previous tiered lecture room into a high-tech, group learning environment. The upgrades to the Basil classrooms were made possible with funds from the DePeters Center for Innovation and Teaching Excellence Endowment established by the DePeters family. To learn more, please visit sjf.edu/centers/cite/learning-spaces.


Ralph Wilson 102

Wegmans School of Nursing 100

Basil 210

Basil 216
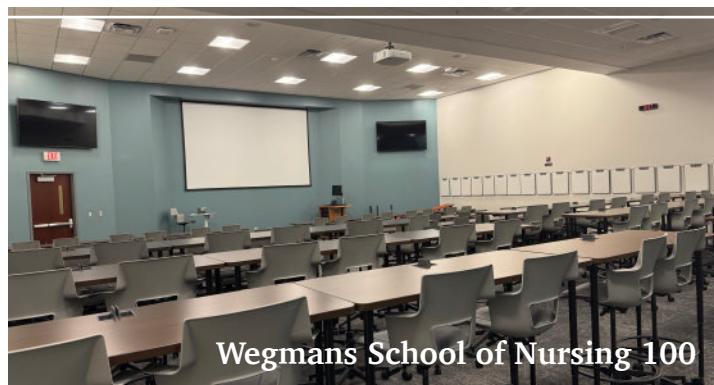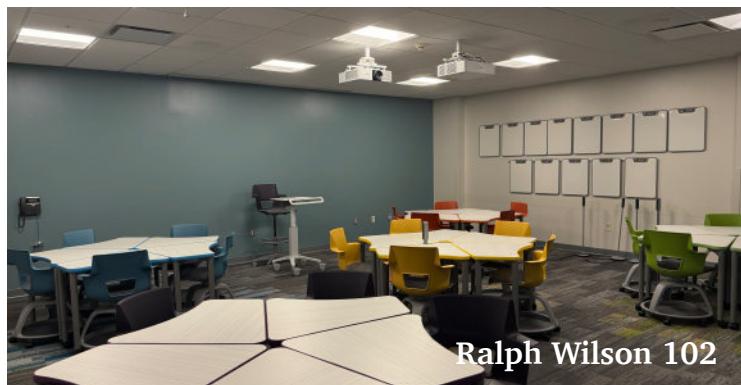
Active Learning Professional Development

Providing faculty professional development to fully utilize our classroom spaces has been a key objective since the initial creation of the Center. Our Active Learning Faculty Fellow helps to lead these efforts at Fisher by offering both full-day and multi-day Active Learning Institutes and a series of workshops throughout the academic year. So far:

48 faculty have completed the highest level of active learning training

5 department specific workshops offered

140 faculty attended at least one active learning workshop

Fundamentals of Online Teaching

The DePeters Family Center staff offer an in-depth training experience for faculty new to teaching online or hybrid courses. Taking place over a four-week period, the Fundamentals course exposes faculty to effective online teaching methods by first putting them in the shoes of a student learning online. This training, offered multiple times per year since 2011, is required for faculty planning to teach in these modalities at Fisher. Faculty find this training extremely valuable as they begin to develop their first online or hybrid course. In addition to the formal training experience, DePeters Family Center staff often work with faculty 1-1 as they prepare their courses for delivery in an alternative format. This includes a thorough course review process evaluating the course against a set of established best practices for online delivery.

iFisher: Next Generation Learning Initiative

The initiative, which provides students, faculty, and staff with an Apple iPad and accessories, connects the campus community to each other and to the world through a dynamic mobile environment. Now in the fifth year of the program, iPads have become a vital component of the educational experience at Fisher. All classrooms on campus are equipped with Apple TVs to allow for easy sharing of materials from both instructors and students alike. A growing number of classrooms include multiple displays, each with their own Apple TV connection, which enables many presenters to share their work simultaneously. The iFisher initiative creates a common learning platform for our campus, ensuring everyone has access to the same hardware and software capabilities, and elevates the level of engaging course work that can take place across disciplines.

Fisher Next

Fisher Next offers access to high-quality learning experiences produced by Fisher's expert faculty and staff to learners seeking to advance their skills. Fisher Next learning experiences include continuing education and professional development opportunities for learners from a variety of fields and industries. DePeters Family Center staff supported the AP Summer Institute, which included 84 high school AP teachers in a four-day training experience in July of 2025. This year also saw substantial growth in the number of learners from healthcare fields accessing the system because of the expansion of content for these audiences created by the Office of Continuing Professional Education in the Wegmans School of Pharmacy and the Golisano Institute for Developmental Disability Nursing. This year also brought new offerings through the Center for Non-Profit Leadership in partnership with the Institute of Civic and Community Engagement. We look forward to continued growth on the Fisher Next platform in the coming year.

389
Fundamentals of Online Teaching Completions

439
1.0 Completions

128
2.0 Completions

282
Apple Certified Teachers

122
Programs offered this year

686
Unique learners this year

Meet the Staff

Katie Sabourin, Assistant Vice President for Digital Learning

Katie oversees the Center operations and project planning with a special emphasis on the generative AI and learning space renovation.

Chris Plantone, Educational Technologist

Chris provides training and support on Brightspace, among other tools. He is also a point person for the use of iPads in the classroom.

Robin Schmid, Senior Training Support Specialist

Robin is a technology expert and provides training to faculty, staff, and students on a number of tools used across campus.

Katie Bush, Instructional Designer

Katie offers pedagogical workshops, supports faculty teaching online and hybrid courses, and develops content for Fisher Next programs.

Meet the Faculty Fellows

Dan Brown
Apple Faculty Fellow

Zach Murphy
Active Learning Faculty Fellow

Kaitlin Bonner
OER Faculty Fellow

Kimberly McClure Brenchley
Inclusive Teaching Faculty Fellow

Kristen Driskill
Inclusive Teaching Faculty Fellow

Stephen West
Writing Faculty Fellow

Maylin Harter
Fisher Core Faculty Fellow

This document was created entirely in Pages using both a Mac and iPad.