



# MUS TEACHING SCHOLARS

Montana University System Teaching Scholars  
Program Handbook, 2021-2022



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## MUS Teaching Scholars Overview

Each year, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education recognizes a select group of faculty at all stages of their careers who have made exemplary contributions to high-quality teaching and learning and who demonstrate commitment to making the transformative experiences of higher education accessible and achievable for a diverse student body.

The goals of the MUS Teaching Scholars program are to elevate excellent teaching and learning as the signature feature of an MUS education *and* to continuously advance the profound impact of high-quality teaching on individuals as they apply their talents and knowledge locally and globally.

As part of the MUS Teaching Scholars program, awarded faculty will design and lead faculty learning communities (FLC) around the annual MUS Teaching Scholars theme, contribute scholarship and reflections on teaching and learning, and participate in system-wide MUS Teaching Scholars activities such as a speaker series and a system-wide symposium on teaching and learning.

## Annual Themes

To focus the work of the program and build cohorts whose work will have cumulative impacts across the system, the MUS Teaching Scholars program focuses on an annual theme. Each year, the annual theme is developed in coordination with the MUS Teaching Scholars Advisory Council and is selected to support innovation in teaching, advance MUS strategic initiatives related to teaching and learning, and to respond to national conversations around teaching excellence in public higher education.

### 2021-2022 Annual Theme: Innovations in Teaching & Learning

Perhaps no buzzword is more ubiquitous in the higher education sphere in 2021 than “innovation,” and with good reason. Throughout the past year and a half, faculty members have completely rethought how course delivery impacts learning, discovered new ways to replicate or reimagine the embodied experience of learning, redesigned content and assignments for remote teaching, transformed how students engage with one another to learn, and implemented universal design practices as faculty and learners alike have operated in multiple modalities. At the same time, university faculty across the country have responded in force to a national reckoning with systemic racial and social inequities and injustices. Last year’s cohort of MUS Teaching Scholars were recognized for their exemplary commitment to addressing those inequities in the classroom through strategies like diversifying curriculum, centering marginalized students’ experiential knowledge, and implementing other equity-minded pedagogical practices. Even before the pandemic, faculty members across the MUS were advancing bold, new teaching practices such as high impact practices or transparent education, among many others.

What these transformational practices have in common is innovation—rethinking, imagining anew, creating, implementing, iterating, and assessing transformational

solutions to the most pressing challenges in teaching and learning. This year, the MUS Teaching Scholars program invites applications from faculty who are actively engaged in innovation in teaching and learning in the service of bettering student outcomes and achieving equitable outcomes for all students.

The MUS Teaching Scholars program seeks to award faculty members who are committed to building communities of practice around pedagogical innovations and whose innovations in teaching and learning share three principles:

- explicit focus on specific pedagogical or curricular strategies in response to an identified challenge;
- data-informed development, implementation, and assessment of strategies to drive iteration and adaptation; and
- pedagogical strategies or practices that drive positive and equitable student achievement outcomes.

#### 2020-2021: Equity-Minded Pedagogies

Like many across the nation, MUS campus communities are grappling with and responding to the consequences of deeply embedded racial, social, and other forms of injustice. In the sphere of higher education, these injustices often show up as inequities in academic achievement. For instance, by the marker of degree achievement alone, American Indian students and other racial minorities, low-income students, and first-generation students among other underserved populations have, on the whole, lower degree-completion rates. The MUS has made positive progress in narrowing achievement gaps, including the recent and ongoing system-wide initiative on High Impact Practices, the implementation of the American Indian and Minority Achievement (AIMA) Council and campus plans, as well as many other individual institutional efforts. But, this is monumental and necessary work that systems of higher education, institutions, and individuals must continually commit to.

As part of the MUS's ongoing effort to achieve more equitable educational outcomes, this year's MUS Teaching Scholars program will recognize and support faculty who are committed to addressing equity gaps through equity-minded teaching. We invite proposals that address equity in a broad-based manner as well as proposals that address more specifically the systemic racial and social injustices highlighted by the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and others. Throughout the year, MUS Teaching Scholars program will support faculty as they advance teaching and learning practices, curriculum, praxis, and the scholarship of teaching and learning specifically designed to address systemic inequities and injustices in the classroom. These could include but are not limited to course and curriculum design strategies such as decolonizing syllabi, high impact practices, Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT), social justice education pedagogies, among many others.

## 2019-2020: Activating General Education Through High Impact Practices (HIPs)

As higher education seeks innovative ways to make the college classroom relevant and transformational for students' intellectual pursuits, future careers, and civic lives, George Kuh's ten "High Impact Practices" continue to be useful pedagogical tools. To support innovative work in enhancing students' first experiences in college, the Montana University System is pleased to announce that this year's theme for the MUS Teaching Scholars program will focus on High Impact Practices (first year seminars; common intellectual experiences; learning communities; writing intensive courses; collaborative assignments; undergraduate research; global learning; ePortfolios; service learning; work-based learning; capstone projects) in general education and introductory coursework. The MUS Teaching Scholars program will recognize and support advancement of teaching and learning that use Kuh's ten 'High Impact Practices' to make early coursework, and general education in particular, exciting, engaging, relevant, and impactful for students.

### MUS Teaching Scholars Program Activities & Expectations

#### Faculty Learning Communities

MUS Teaching Scholars will design and facilitate faculty learning communities (FLCs). Faculty Learning Communities are small groups of faculty who build a community of practice and use the scholarship of teaching and learning to address issues related to teaching and learning. In this case, MUS Teaching Scholars will design and lead FLCs that address a teaching and learning issue, strategy, challenge, practice, theory, etc related to the program's annual theme.

FLCs should include enough members to create dynamic interaction but be small enough to have robust conversation. Most FLCs related to MUS Teaching Scholars have 6-10 faculty.

#### MUS Teaching Scholars Speakers

Each spring semester, OCHE hosts speakers on pedagogical topics related to the MUS Teaching Scholars theme and the goals of the program. Speakers are intended to give teaching scholars shared opportunities to engage with their cohort as well as with state and national experts actively engaged in the scholarship of teaching and learning. Teaching scholars are encouraged to invite members of their faculty learning communities to MUS Teaching Scholars speaking events. Details on speaker events will be shared throughout the spring semester.

#### Program Deliverables

As the culminating experience, MUS Teaching scholars are asked to submit a critical reflection essay to be shared through the MUS Teaching and Learning Commons, a digital community of practice set to launch in Fall 2022. Faculty are invited to contribute work that forwards the goals of the MUS Teaching Scholars program by engaging faculty from across the system in continually striving for excellence in teaching and learning. Contributions may include scholarship, lessons learned through FLCs, pedagogical strategies, reflections on the annual theme, and beyond.

Teaching Scholars are encouraged to integrate the final reflection into the design of their faculty learning community and to invite FLC participants to submit reflections as well or work together to submit a collaborative contribution.

### Award Information & Stipend Guidelines

As part of the recognition for being selected as an MUS Teaching Scholar, faculty receive an award of \$1,500. To facilitate distribution of award funds, OCHE will create an MOU with provost offices and funds will be disbursed through the campus provost offices. Faculty will receive the award through payroll in the spring term of the award year.

#### Stipend Guidelines

The MUS Teaching Scholars program will reimburse up to \$500 for expenses related to supporting the FLC work. Allowable expenses include materials, books, speakers, food, or other expenses related to FLCs. Please note that any expenses must follow campus purchasing policies including purchases for food. Expenses will be reimbursed at the end of the Spring 2021 term. Reimbursements will be sent directly to your department or as otherwise outlined in your MUS Teaching Scholars MOU.

Faculty must submit a single [reimbursement request form](#) that includes all expenses with complete supporting documentation to Crystine Miller ([crystine.miller@montana.edu](mailto:crystine.miller@montana.edu)) **no later than May 15**. Failure to submit may result in expenses not being reimbursed due to the fiscal year end. Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions.

#### Required Documentation

To ensure the appropriate use of funds and compliance with state and federal policies, reimbursement requests must include the following items for each expense:

- **Campus Policies:** Review your campus policy as it relates to purchases (meal policies, speaker/honorarium policies, materials policies, etc). Please provide a copy of any relevant policies (including food purchasing policies) along with reimbursement requests.
- **Receipts & Description of Expenses:** Please provide itemized receipts for any purchases including food, books/materials, etc. For food purchases, please ensure that the purchase follows your campus meal policy and include a description of food purchased. For books, materials, etc. include a description of how the book or material supports your FLC work
- **Meeting Agendas/Description:** For FLC meetings or activities for which there is a related reimbursable expense, documentation of the meeting is required and must the date and number of attendees. A copy of the agenda or a calendar invite with a list or number of attendees will suffice.

### *Additional Guidelines*

- **Payment for guest speaker:** Please follow campus policy for speakers and honoraria. Reimbursement information for speakers should include clear documentation of the purpose, agenda, formal invite to the guest speaker for their services, and how it ties into your FLC. Note, most campuses have a policy related to honorarium, if your campus does not, apply OCHE policy 506 – Honorarium for Non-OCHE Staff available online at <https://mus.edu/che/intranet/ochepolicy/index.html>.
- **Gift Cards:** Please note that gift cards are not an allowable expense and not eligible for reimbursement.

### Teaching & Learning Resources

Pedagogy, High Impact Practices & Inclusive Teaching

American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) “[High Impact Practices](#)”  
*Information, resources, and national professional development opportunities focused on high impact practices (HIPs.)*

Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) “[Inclusive Teaching Practices Toolkit](#)”  
*Strategies and pedagogical practices that create and sustain inclusive learning environments that support positive and more equitable outcomes for all students.*

Viji Sathy and Kelly A. Hogan, Chronicle of Higher Ed, “[How to Make Your Teaching More Inclusive](#)”  
*Principles of inclusive teaching, practical strategies for the classroom, ideas for inclusive course design, and assessment strategies.*

National Association of System Heads (NASH) “[High Impact Practices: An Educator’s Guide](#)”  
*NASH modules on HIPs geared to faculty. HIPs are a set of engaged teaching practices that research demonstrates benefit college students from all backgrounds and that produce more equitable outcomes.*

Faculty Learning Communities

Miami University Center for Teaching Excellence “[Faculty Learning Communities](#)”  
*Resources on developing, facilitating, and assessing impact of FLCs. Includes helpful notes on leadership roles, deliverables, defining goals and objectives, and 16 recommendations for FLCs.*

University System of Georgia “[A quick-start guide to your FLC](#)”  
*Brief guide on basic purpose, task and criteria for an effective Faculty Learning Community. Includes example reflections from FLC participants.*

University System of Georgia “[Faculty Learning Communities Overview](#)”

*Overview of nuts and bolts of FLCs, ideas for first and subsequent meetings, and lessons learned from UGS faculty on recruitment and facilitation.*

University System of Georgia “[Faculty Learning Community Facilitator Toolkit](#)”

*Toolkit with strategies for facilitating an effective FLC including recruitment, building community, facilitating meetings, and suggested learning outcomes and deliverables.*

MUS Centers for Teaching & Learning

Montana State University Center for Faculty Excellence

Dean Adams, Director

[www.montana.edu/facultyexcellence/](http://www.montana.edu/facultyexcellence/)

University of Montana Office of

Organizational Learning & Development

Amy Kinch, Director

[www.umt.edu/learning-development/](http://www.umt.edu/learning-development/)

MSU Billings Center for Teaching & Learning

Tyr Hawkaluk, Managing Director

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## MUS Teaching Scholars Program Information

Program Leads

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<https://www.mus.edu/che/arsa/mus-teaching-scholars/index.html>