

# ANNUAL UPDATE, 2020-2021

Amid a challenging year, the Center for Innovative Teaching (CIT) was thrilled to build on the work that several groups had already started to promote faculty-led initiatives focused on student learning. The Center focused on some targeted activities and brought together a diverse collection of faculty and staff to promote teaching and learning through the pandemic.

Our first major speaker came from the University of Colorado-Boulder, Dr. Jenny Knight, who presented on *Improving Student Learning through Understanding Reasoning and Problem-Solving Practices*. As we resume regular operations, we will host additional quarterly speakers on teaching excellence.

## Faculty Training Opportunities

Throughout the transition to remote learning, the Center offered critical training sessions via Zoom for faculty. These included the *Tuesday and Two* series—featuring a few invited short talks—and then a longer segment of audience participation.

Topics included:

- Classroom practices for remote and hybrid learning
- Assessment practices
- Fostering classroom discussions
- Student engagement in hyflex classrooms
- Returning to campus: the teacher's perspective
- How are faculty preparing for the fall 2021 students

Through these sessions, faculty participated in short sharing presentations and many NSM faculty attended to hear and discuss ideas. Overall, there were over 75 faculty participants at these events.

## Rethinking Faculty Policies

One of our key activities was to write and propose significant revisions to the *NSM Policy on Appointment, Reappointment, and Promotion in the Teaching and Professional Professorial Series*. The changes focused on better descriptions of “evidence of excellence in teaching” and means of documenting “professional development.” These proposed revisions have been forwarded to the Department Chairs. An updated version is expected to be under consideration by the NSM Faculty Committee in the upcoming school year. The Center anticipates providing resources on effective teaching practices and recommendations for the hiring process and the work of the departmental promotion committees.

## About the Center for Innovative Teaching

**Mission:** To be a catalyst for the implementation for innovative and effective teaching practices in the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, and to promote professional development in teaching for the members of the mathematics and science community at the University of Denver.

**Vision:** The vision of the center is to foster a climate of openness and excellence by sharing, promoting, and celebrating faculty expertise in teaching.

**Goals:**

- Partner with faculty to support improved teaching initiatives
- Support collaborations and conversations that promote transformation
- Lead initiatives that promote faculty development related to teaching that will support improved student learning
- Foster an appreciation of teaching as an area of scholarship and professional development

**Special thanks to our 2020-2021 Governing Board:**

Steven Iona, Physics and Astronomy, Director

Alvaro Arias, Mathematics

Emily Barter, Chemistry and Biochemistry

Helen Hazen, Geography and the Environment

Nancy Sasaki, Biological Sciences

Nicholas Ormes, Associate Dean, ex officio