



The University of Kansas

Center for Teaching Excellence

AY 22-23 Annual Report





Attendees gather at the 2023 Celebration of Teaching held in May at the Kansas Union Ballroom. The Celebration of Teaching is an annual event where CTE program participants showcase changes made to courses and share outcomes of course changes.

On the cover: Nisha Fernando, associate professor of interior architecture, illustrates changes to be made to a course during the 2023 Course Design Institute.

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Reflections on AY 2022-2023



Dea Follmer
Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence

The 2022-2023 academic year was a momentous year for CTE for a couple of reasons. First, we celebrated our 25th anniversary. This milestone created a great occasion for the CTE community to celebrate the accomplishments of the center and reflect on the core qualities we seek to maintain into the future. Second, after 25 years functioning as a very lean operation, we undertook a significant expansion of our staff, doubling our numbers in the fall of 2022 with the addition of four new staff members. These included a half-time faculty associate director, a media and communications coordinator, and two individuals to bolster our work on assessment and learning analytics, along with the elevation of our existing assessment position into an associate director role overseeing the “assessment team.” As should be evident in this annual report, the

expanded CTE team has enabled us to broaden our reach in multiple areas, with particularly significant increases in capacity for assessment and analytics work. Much of this work has been designed to support the campus in meeting the requirements of the university’s external accreditor, the Higher Learning Commission. Our goal is to help departments meet those requirements while enhancing the work’s internal value, in terms of creating more impactful and equitable learning experiences, and fostering community and a shared responsibility for student learning within units.

The data provided in this report highlight engagement and outcome metrics related to the major programs offered by the CTE team this year. I am particularly proud of our redesigned Course Design Institute (formerly known as the Best Practices Institute), which attracted three times the typical number of faculty members, including tenure/tenure-track faculty and teaching-track faculty spread across all ranks and a wide range of disciplines.

We have also continued to leverage external partnerships and grant funds to catalyze and support teaching improvement efforts at KU. Our newest collaboration is our HHMI-funded Inclusive Excellence project, in which we are working with the natural science and math departments to advance growth-minded teaching practices and culture through cross-program inquiry, alignment and innovation. Our NSF-funded TEval project to improve teaching evaluation using the Benchmarks for Teaching Effectiveness Framework ended in July 2023, and we have transitioned into working with new departments on a rolling basis. Our current TEval efforts center on creating new models for annual review of teaching and

developing department-level case studies to serve as exemplars for new units. We have also been working with campus partners (i.e., the Office of DEIB) and partners in the Bay View Alliance to develop a new project that aims to dismantle systemic inequity in undergraduate education through a department-centered intervention framework that meaningfully engages and empowers both faculty and students as partners in the change process. We are actively seeking funding through external grants for this project this academic year.

To reflect on the 2022-2023 year and develop a shared vision for the coming year, the CTE team had an all-day retreat in June 2023. We identified the following priorities, which have shaped AY 23-24 activities:

1. Center and protect student learning
2. Foster widespread data-informed educational decision-making and improvement
3. Help faculty and academic programs create distinctive and high-impact educational experiences
4. Propagate educational practices that produce equity in student outcomes
5. Humanize education for faculty and students through agency and engagement
6. Be reflective as an organization

Overall, we want to remain committed to the core principle that brought about the founding and growth of CTE: that making teaching and student learning visible, and the subject of intellectual exchange among faculty, sparks innovation and community building among faculty, with many benefits to the student learning experience.

CTE Goals and Vision



Shannon O'Lear (back left), professor in the department of geography & atmospheric science and environmental studies with students Riley Osterberg (left), Stephen Schmidt (back right), and Emma Jones (right), from her *Geographic Adventures in Climate Change* class.

CTE strives to foster an intellectual community of instructors dedicated to improving teaching practices and increasing student learning.

The primary purpose of the Center for Teaching Excellence is to build community among faculty members and to help instructors make student learning visible.

We convene seminars, working groups and workshops to help faculty find time-efficient and effective ways to improve student learning, assist faculty with representing the intellectual work they perform as teachers, and meet individually with faculty and instructional staff who want to discuss any facet of teaching and student learning.

One of our main goals at CTE is to foster intellectual exchange and create community around teaching and learning at KU. Regardless of discipline, we want

to help instructors find new ways to innovate and experiment in their classes, and to make their work visible to colleagues.

Another goal is to provide programming and leadership that advances KU’s strategic goals and priorities related to undergraduate and graduate education, including improvements in retention, progression, inclusion, and equity. Our strategic work to support educational initiatives is informed by research in institutional and educational change and, often, partnerships with other universities and colleges. Many of our programs engage teams of faculty or whole departments in rethinking their curriculum, educational practices, or goals for student learning.

AY 22-23 CTE Staff

Our organization comprises faculty members, staff, graduate students, and post-doctoral educators who work in a variety of disciplines while maintaining an emphasis on advancing teaching and student learning.

9

Full time staff

7

Faculty Fellows

4

Graduate Student Fellows

In AY 22-23 CTE welcomed three new staff members to the team.

Omar Jamil Safir, data and assessment coordinator. Omar brings a background in higher education, nonprofit and community work, and market-based research.

Drew Vartia, documenting learning specialist. Drew is a former KU assistant teaching professor with years of experience in the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Mike Welchhans, communications coordinator. Mike joined us from the Kansas State Department of Education, where he was a communications specialist.

Joshua Potter, CTE's documenting learning specialist since 2017, was promoted to the center's associate director for student learning and analytics.

The new position reflects Potter's leadership role in advancing the assessment of student learning and in the use of learning analytics at the university and the expansion of CTE's work in those areas.

Mark Mort, professor of ecology and evolutionary biology, was added as a half-time associate director of CTE.

Mark is co-PI on CTE's Howard Hughes Medical Institute grant.

Faculty Fellows

Three new Faculty Fellows joined the CTE staff in AY 22-23.

Marie Brown, associate professor of history

Victor Gonzalez, director of the undergraduate biology program

Brad Osborn, associate professor of music theory

The new Fellows joined CTE's returning Faculty Fellows:

Darren Canady, director of English undergraduate studies

Elizabeth Esch, director of undergraduate studies in the Department of American studies

Amy Leyerzapf, director of director of instructional design and development at the Institute of Leadership Studies.

Carl Luchies, associate professor of mechanical engineering

Grad Student Fellows

The CTE Grad Student Fellows for AY 22-23 included:

Aaron Beuoy, graduate student in Educational Psychology

Abby Breyer, graduate student in English

Brynn Fitzsimmons, graduate student in English

Sarah Unkel, graduate student in Anthropology



Dea Follmer

Director and Professor of Psychology



Doug Ward

Associate Director and Associate Professor in Journalism and Mass Communications



Joshua Potter

Associate Director for Student Learning and Analytics



Mark Mort

Associate Director and Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology



Judy Eddy

Program Manager



Kaila Colyott

Teaching Innovation Program Manager



Omar Jamil Safir

Data and Assessment Coordinator



Drew Vartia

Documenting Learning Specialist



Mike Welchhans

Communication Coordinator

Celebrating 25 Years of Excellence: Founding Vision of KU's Center for Teaching Excellence

The history of CTE recalled by current and former directors and the associate vice provost that laid the foundation for the work of CTE at KU

25

Years the Center for Teaching Excellence has been driving teaching innovation at KU.

3

Directors over 25 years.

50

Faculty Ambassadors.

Watch video interviews of the founders and directors using the links below.



Fred Rodriguez and Sandra Gault



Dan Bernstein and Dea Follmer

In 1997, when the concept of CTE first emerged, the academic landscape was vastly different. Professors and researchers were revered for their mastery of disciplines, yet the art of teaching often remained siloed in departments across campus. It was a time when faculty members often spent the whole class lecturing behind a podium, and the idea of exploring a large-scale, organized dialogue about teaching at a research university was met with skepticism.

CTE founder Sandra Gault, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, was tasked to work on faculty development, particularly in the realm of teaching. Part of Gault's responsibilities involved collaborating with a group of instructors known as the Teaching Commons committee, an initiative established by Vice

Chancellor Del Brinkman. This committee aimed to identify and address teaching-related issues on campus, and to recommend strategies and interventions to enhance the quality of teaching. Gault's early focus on faculty development and her involvement with the Teaching Commons laid a strong foundation for CTE's future.

Building a Center for Teaching Excellence in a research-focused university required more than just vision; it demanded a reimagining of how teaching fits within the broader context of academia. The primary task for Fred Rodriguez, the inaugural CTE director and a professor in the School of Education, was to build support and buy-in for the Center across KU's campus. Through outreach to deans, chairs, and faculty in all departments,



CTE founders Fred Rodriguez (left) and Sandra Gault (right)

he fostered relationships, listened to needs, and promoted collaboration focused on quality teaching.

One of his first initiatives was the creation of the CTE Ambassadors, who were representatives from departments across campus chosen by chairs and recognized for their skill in teaching. The Ambassadors met in small groups twice a semester. Rodriguez would vary the groups so Ambassadors would meet others from different departments to create an interdisciplinary community among faculty.

After operating for a year out of a small office in Anschutz Library, CTE transitioned into a strategically significant new home in the renovated Hoch Auditoria now known as Budig Hall. Gault and Rodriguez found unused space under the tiered seating of Budig's western lecture hall and custom designed a home for the Center.

In 2002, Dan Bernstein joined CTE as director after serving as a professor at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. During his time there, he received a large grant that explored the peer review of general education, and he was chosen as a Pew Scholar by the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Both of these activities carried over to his work at KU's Center for Teaching Excellence. He spent his early days as director listening and learning from campus educational leaders, and he quickly recognized that KU highly values teaching.

Bernstein implemented the Faculty Fellows program at CTE, inviting individuals who had been visible either as an Ambassador or through CTE programs and projects. The idea was inspired by the Honors Program and expanded CTE's reach through new peer communities.

Finding a strong foundation that CTE was built on allowed Bernstein



Former CTE Director Dan Bernstein (left) and current CTE Director Dea Follmer (right).

to broaden the impact of the Center, within the university and nationally. New programs moved beyond individual faculty members to department-level work and later included assessment of learning. During his tenure as director, he shifted the Center's focus from a presentation of knowledge about teaching to understanding how students learn and new ways to make teaching visible.

Bernstein's influence on Dea Follmer, then an assistant professor in psychology, began during her time as an Ambassador. Dan challenged Follmer to think deeply about student learning outcomes and encouraged her to experiment with new teaching methods. Follmer pursued CTE opportunities to enhance student learning. She drew on cognitive development principles to experiment with new approaches in her classes and saw encouraging results, pushing her into deeper reflections on how teaching could be an intellectual exchange.

As Bernstein phased down to 75% time in 2013, Follmer was brought on as a 25% associate director. That

transitional year allowed Follmer to get increasingly invested in major CTE projects. Initially, she declined to apply for director. Follmer enjoyed her faculty roles, directing her memory lab and teaching. Over time, the thought of someone else as CTE director gave her pause. Follmer realized she wanted to sustain the momentum.

In 2014 Follmer was named director of CTE. She now oversees a staff of nine, including three assessment professionals. She has led the development of a range of new programs, from ones centered on DEIB to learning analytics to effective teaching evaluation.

Her work has brought the Center even more into national prominence, particularly with the Bay View Alliance and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, and with grants from groups such as the National Science Foundation. Under Follmer's direction, CTE has remained faculty-focused while expanding to meet the needs of departments campus-wide by listening, partnering, and collaborating to support teaching excellence and to make student learning visible at KU.

AY 22-23 CTE Essential Numbers

Through CTE’s programs, working groups, workshops, and collaborations, KU instructors are finding new ways to enhance their teaching, improve student learning, and connect with colleagues from around the university.

<h1>447</h1> <p>Participants in CTE workshops or programs.</p>	<h1>95</h1> <p>Departments (includes Edwards and Medical Center) represented in CTE programming.</p>	<h1>5,319+</h1> <p>Student credit hours served.</p>
<h1>441</h1> <p>Graduate students who took part in the CTE New GTA Program.</p>	<h1>60</h1> <p>Posters created for the Celebration of Teaching.</p>	<h1>857</h1> <p>Average opens of monthly email newsletter.</p>

Department Programs

- Ideas to Action
- Mapping and Assessment Planning Program
- TEval/Benchmarks for Teaching Effectiveness

Faculty Programs

- Course Transformation Grants
- Faculty Seminar: Inclusive Teaching
- Faculty Seminar: Teaching Innovation
- Teaching as a Member of the Global Majority
- Mellon DEI Scholars
- Course Design Institute

Annual Events

- Teaching Summit
- Student Learning Symposium
- Celebration of Teaching

Working Groups

- Flex & Online Teaching Working Group
- Collaborative Learning Working Group
- Canvas Instructors Working Group
- Teaching Scholarship Collaborative

Guest Speakers

- Martha Oakley - Toward More Effective and Equitable Introductory STEM Classes: Mastery-Based Grading in General Chemistry.
- Sheila Jaswal and Sarah Bunnell - Being Human in STEM as a Case Study for Humanizing Undergraduate Education

GTA Professional Development

- New GTA Program
- Teaching Development Group
- Final Friday Workshops

Workshops & Consultations

- Evidence-based teaching and assignment design
- Inclusive & anti-racist teaching
- Degree- and course-level assessment
- Curriculum mapping
- Representing, reviewing, and evaluating teaching
- Helping students learn, step by step
- Creating meaningful assignments
- Empowering students to be self-directed learners: using metacognitive strategies
- Ungrading: Rethinking grading
- Keeping students focused on learning: Competency-based approaches to teaching at KU
- Where do we go now with AI in teaching and learning?
- Community building non-workshop

CTE Course Transformation Program Analysis

Subset of the AY 22-23 course transformation work done by faculty through the Course Design Institute, Faculty Seminar, and Course Transformation Grants.

	2022 Course Design Institute	Faculty Seminar on Inclusive Teaching	Course Transformation Grants
Courses that incorporated more inclusive pedagogy .	87%	91%	67%
Courses that incorporated more active and collaborative learning (e.g., peer teaching, group work, case study, group discussion)	79%	91%	75%
Courses that developed new forms of assessment (e.g., rubrics, project-based assignments, staged assignments, and self and peer assessment)	87%	73%	25%

Overall observations for all three programs combined:

83% of the courses incorporated more **inclusive pedagogy**.

83% of the courses incorporated more **active and collaborative learning** (e.g., peer teaching, group work, case study, group discussion).

66% developed **new forms of assessment**, such as use of rubrics, project-based assignments, staged assignments, and self and peer assessment.

Of the 40 courses that had been taught by the time of the Celebration of Teaching:

48% of the instructors provided in their posters a rich description of the quality of student learning after the course modifications.

67% used student feedback (e.g., surveys, reflection papers) to provide insight into how students experienced the course.

73% documented meaningful improvements in student outcomes, such as student learning/achievement of desired learning outcomes or improved student engagement.

Assessment of student learning

100%

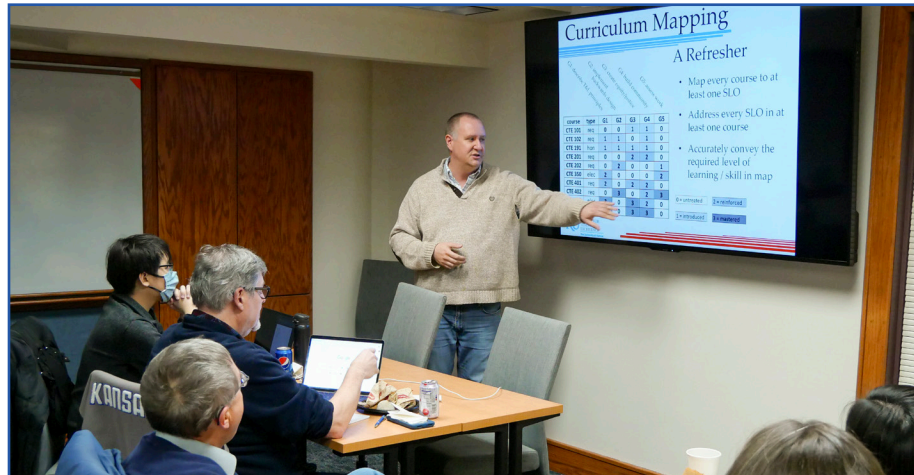
CTE directly facilitated the assessment work of 100% of degree programs at both the Lawrence and Edwards campuses.

48

Faculty members attended assessment-specific workshops.

36

Departments that were represented in assessment-specific workshops.



CTE Documenting Learning Specialist, Drew Vartia, gives a group of faculty members a refresher on the curriculum mapping process at CTE in November 2022.

Curriculum Mapping

In November 2023, the CTE Assessment team (aka the “A-Team”) launched the Mapping and Assessment Planning Program (MAP Program) for departments across the university.

The goal of the AY 22-23 MAP Program was to help undergraduate departments create curriculum maps and assessment plans that align with student needs and represent a shared faculty vision for student learning. The A-Team helped departments generate and reviewed necessary reporting documents for KU assessment reporting in 2023.

Ideas to Action

Team members from the Film and Media Studies, Economics, and Applied Behavioral Science departments gathered in November to kick off the latest round of the CTE Ideas-to-Action program.

The program helps academic units develop actionable plans for curricular improvements that promote equitable student growth, discovery, and success. During the kickoff meeting, team members identified themes to start the exploration into their individual curricula needs. Over the course of the academic year program, the teams worked on their chosen themes with help from CTE through access to data, tools, guidance, funding, and community.

Student Learning Symposium

The AY 22-23 Student Learning Symposium was held in-person in January 2023. The SLS is designed to get teams of colleagues within departments working on the nuts and bolts of solid assessment practice: learning outcomes, levels of learning, curriculum maps, and forward-looking assessment plans.

Bringing equity to introductory science classes

An interdisciplinary team led by CTE received a \$529,500 grant to improve student success and reduce achievement gaps in undergraduate science education.

The grant is part of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute Inclusive Excellence 3 initiative, which challenges U.S. colleges and universities to improve student belonging and student success, especially for students who have been historically excluded from the sciences. KU joins 13 other institutions as a part of a learning community supported by \$8 million in grant funds. The universities will collaborate on projects intended to make the content of introductory science courses more inclusive. The collaboration will focus on five overlapping areas: continuing education, inclusive curricula, student empowerment, inclusive collaboration and broader approaches to institutional transformation. A fundamental goal of the learning community is to shift institutions from deficit-based approaches that center on “fixing” students to achievement-oriented approaches that remove systemic barriers for historically underrepresented students.

The KU initiative, which began in November, is led by Andrea Follmer, a professor of psychology and the director of the Center for Teaching Excellence, and Mark Mort, associate director at the teaching center and professor of ecology & evolutionary biology. The team also includes faculty members from the departments of Chemistry, Geology, Physics & Astronomy and Mathematics as well as the Undergraduate Biology Program. Additional project support will come from the KU Center for Teaching Excellence and the office of Analytics,

Institutional Research & Effectiveness, along with an advisory panel that includes KU faculty members who have scholarly expertise in diversity, equity and inclusion.

KU’s effort will analyze the cross-department components of science programs and identify areas for innovating teaching methods and course content. The team will use data on learning and student success to study how students move through introductory science and math courses. A central goal is to identify curricular barriers and opportunity gaps for underrepresented students, who often have inequitable access to high-quality STEM learning experiences before college. These activities will inform adjustments in the ordering and content of the courses students are required to take to help them make clearer connections from one course to another.

“I’m excited to use data to find out where are the barriers for our students,” Mort said. “When we know where the barriers are we can use inclusive pedagogy to shift to an achievement mindset rather than a deficit mindset to help students move through those barriers.”

The grant will help build on a decade of work at KU to transform large, introductory STEM courses with student-centered approaches known to improve learning for all students, Mort said.

The KU team also plans to develop a set of common problems centering on pressing community and societal issues that will be embedded in multiple introductory science and math courses. The common problems will allow students to learn how different disciplines approach real-world problems in such areas as water, pollution and sustainable energy. This approach will help students learn and apply core skills and concepts across courses and disciplines. It will also bring more socially relevant content into the science curriculum, a strategy that is known to foster greater connection to science among underrepresented students.

529K

Dollars received to fund the project over 5 years.

5

University departments participating in student success research.

Creative freedom in new course yields unexpected student engagement

When Kevin Mullinix, an associate professor and undergraduate director in Political Science, decided to change things up for a new course in the Fall of 2022, he had no idea how powerful it could be to give students creative freedom to express course concepts.

The new course focused on conspiracy theories and misinformation, and it fit perfectly into Mullinix's research and teaching about how people form their attitudes and why they believe what they believe.

In other courses, Mullinix uses traditional assignment approaches such as research papers or summaries. In the new course, he challenged students to demonstrate their understanding of a particular concept or idea in a creative, engaging way. They responded by turning in everything from videos to a children's book.

"It blew me away," Mullinix said. "It was astonishing. They went above and beyond anything I thought they were going to do in terms of their creativity, but also the amount of effort they put into it."

The idea to use a creative approach to demonstrate an understanding of a course concept took Mullinix out of his comfort zone. The assignment idea was something he had heard was being used by other political scientists and decided to put his spin on it. He asked students to explain concepts from the course to a broader, non-expert audience in a non-traditional way. Students were allowed to communicate what they had learned in the class any way they wanted – almost.

"I told students, 'I don't want a research paper, and I don't want anything akin to PowerPoint-like slide presentations,'"



Kevin Mullinix, associate professor and undergraduate director in Political Science, shows a magazine layout created by students in his course on conspiracy theories.

Mullinix said.

He provided students a short list of potential creative options. Some of the formats on the list were familiar topics ranging from podcasts to videos. Students could work on the assignment individually or in a group. Along with the creative portion of the assignment, they submitted a memo explaining the concept they were exploring. He also required them to use peer-reviewed research to describe the concept.

"The memo was pretty short," Mullinix said. "I wanted the bulk of their time to be focused on this creative demonstration, and they were encouraged to make it as creative as possible."

In the end, the students submitted projects ranging from a scripted

podcast to magazine-style articles, songs, poems, and even a website.

"I think it gave students an opportunity to demonstrate that they knew a concept that they might not have been able to show in another mode," Mullinix said.

He used a rubric for grading, focusing mainly on the academic memos. Using a rubric freed Mullinix from grading the creative content and allowed him to focus on the accuracy with which student discussed a particular concept.

With a new semester underway, Mullinix plans to take his experience using creative approaches to student learning and engagement to larger classes.

Experiential learning helps Linguistics students preserve Native American language

In the world of linguistics, language is a treasure to be preserved and studied. And that's exactly what Phil Duncan and Allard Jongman set out to do with their independent studies class LING 496 in the Spring of 2022.



Phil Duncan

Students in the class analyzed and documented Kiksht, a Native American language spoken in the Columbia River region of Oregon and Washington. The Kiksht language has not been studied extensively, and there are no remaining first-language speakers. The students worked with a Wasco community in Warm Springs, Oregon.

Duncan's familiarity with Kiksht began approximately 15 years ago as an undergraduate at KU. It was during this time that he met Valerie (Lamxayat) Switzler, a fellow student who is currently involved in Kiksht language reclamation efforts. Switzler encouraged Duncan to work with the language, and this encouragement left a lasting impression.

"It's really exciting to be allowed to work with Kiksht in my classes," Duncan said. "This gives students a unique opportunity to really think about what it means to work with languages – not as disembodied objects, but in relation to people and communities."

The course co-taught by Duncan, assistant teaching professor of linguistics, and Jongman, professor of linguistics, had two major aims: to examine and document the sound structure of the Kiksht language and to provide outreach materials to the Native community. For this independent study course of five students, the professors created an experiential learning opportunity that benefited both the students and the community.



Allard Jongman

Over the semester, the class met in Lawrence but interacted with Kiksht speakers and learners from Warm Springs via Zoom. This included individuals who had worked on their fluency while first-language speakers were still alive and younger Kiksht learners. During those meetings, class members discussed ways they could assist the community and sought input on unclear transcribed passages.

"I was absolutely impressed with the students, their level of engagement, and the quality of their work," Duncan said.

Duncan and Jongman structured the course by assigning students a set of recordings. Transcriptions of the recordings were shared via Google Drive each week.

"Having a common shared repository for their data was invigorating and provided true motivation and ownership for the students to contribute to the project," Jongman said.

Because of a lack of first-language speakers and limited literature on the language, the professors opted to let the students analyze the language recordings and come up with their own

initial analyses, a strategy that proved successful.

"This approach allowed students to take ownership of the project and become partners in the learning process," Jongman said. "The students would then compare notes, discuss unclear cases, listen to relevant recordings as a group and come to a consensus on the transcription of specific consonants or vowels."

Through their interactions, students and community members developed a mutual respect. The community members also expressed appreciation for the scholarship and attention Duncan and Jongman's class gave to their language and culture. According to Jongman, one potential outcome could be the creation of a children's alphabet book for the community.

"I'm excited about the work we were able to produce," Jongman said. "We're still in the process of building on those materials for distribution at Warm Springs, and if they even have some small impact in terms of helping current and future Wasco people learn and use Kiksht, then that's certainly something we can be proud of."

The hands-on work and partnership with the course instructors drew praise from the Linguistics department chair, Jie Zhang.

"I think this was an excellent example of experiential learning that benefits both the students and the community," Zhang said. "It was also an excellent example of how a small-sized class can have a big impact, especially on cultural and linguistic diversity and inclusion."

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