



CHBS Canopy

Inclusive Excellence

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CHBS Highlight

LAUD Fellow – Dr. Tracy Zinn

In November 2023, the Learning Access Through Universal Design Fellows (LAUD) presented their projects and talked about their learning in a scheduled Professional Learning Community (PLC) session sponsored by CHBS IE and the JMU Libraries, and collaboratively facilitated by professionals from Instructional Design and Center for Faculty Innovation (CFI). The LAUD Fellows represented COB, COE, CVPA, and CHBS. All Fellows' projects were captivating, illustrating how to make course content and students' course experiences accessible and interesting. Our highlight is CHBS LAUD Fellow Dr. Tracy Zinn, who is in her twentieth year in the Psychology Department and primarily teaches statistics.

Dr. Tracy Zinn shared the joy of learning, insights, and the practical wisdom gleaned from being a LAUD Fellow, which enhanced her skills for inclusive teaching practices. Her interest arose from a variety of experiences, such as a chance conversation with an amputee involved in ADA advocacy ([Americans with Disabilities Act](#)) or increased awareness of the ways students participated or struggled in her classes. It became clear that students' personal challenges or circumstances impacted student learning and her teaching process. Dr. Zinn sought to enrich her teaching philosophy after speaking with colleagues who had engaged content on the LAUD Canvas site. Being a LAUD Fellow allowed her time, technical support, and skill building to deepen her understanding of universal design principles and how these are helpful for making course content more accessible to more students, whether they have an [ODS accommodation](#) or not.



As a LAUD Fellow, Dr. Zinn became part of a supportive group of peers working independently on specific projects with additional support from JMU Libraries Instructional Design professionals led by Dr. Juhong Christie Liu, Director of Instructional Design. Dr. Zinn's efforts support [higher education's increased awareness](#) that there are students who do not have the resources for formal diagnostic processes to gain ODS accommodations, who did not receive services during their K-12 years, who work over 20 hours per week, who are experiencing increased mental health challenges as we emerge from the pandemic, or who have other family caregiving responsibilities that reduce historical study times and learning processes. Even as we think about today's [traditional-age college students](#), they are a different generation than ten years ago. The Chronicle of Higher Education Executive Summary on the *New Generation of Students* highlights this is a "generation accustomed to learning by toggling between the real and virtual worlds" who turn to online sources

for information because a computer is in their hands and “prize project-based learning” to hone skills for life, not just the pursuit of a degree (p.3).

Dr. Zinn identified her process as reviewing the Canvas LAUD site before the Fellowship began in the summer. She agreed that there is a lot of information on the site and that it can feel overwhelming, but acknowledges that as faculty, you realize that it provides a menu of choices to get started, from syllabus updates to new student assessment methods. Matched with peers and LAUD Fellows program facilitators Jessica Lantz (JMU Libraries) and Danya Henry (CFI), goals were established to help manage feelings of being overwhelmed by options for starting and recognize what was doable within the timeframe. Dr. Zinn found her teaching philosophy validated and supported as good practice. The use of universal design principles does not make one’s courses easier; there is rigor in making courses accessible. It just looks different than what has been imagined as good teaching and builds on beliefs about community, mutuality, and shared accountability.

A shift in teaching is a refocus on what is best for your students, all of your students, not just the student who grasps concepts immediately. Learning is a process; students learn in different ways at different paces and with differing supports. Dr. Zinn’s pedagogy is informed by a belief that most students can learn course concepts when presented to reflect variations in learning preferences or styles. *“I think sometimes we think the purpose of a class is to reward students who do well as students. And not really to help and support students along a couple of different paths to get to this end goal.”* Faculty today must not envision the world of learning they developed in as students and simply replicate it but must learn to be responsive and agile, assisting students in developing professional skills for graduate school or workforce success.

Dr. Zinn was reminded and affirmed that some changes in teaching she had made before becoming a LAUD Fellow were supported by universal design perspectives, especially processes of student assessment used in her statistics class.

What can faculty gain from Dr. Zinn’s experience as a LAUD Fellow?

- First, it’s not easy to reimagine processes to accommodate more students. Learn universal design perspectives and concepts. Recognize that supportive collaboration can assist in the transition.
- Second, yes, acknowledge that faculty workloads are heavy. Learn to use incremental change and to work by starting with what is doable within the LAUD content materials but start.
- Third, think about the universal design principles of engagement. How might this generate creative processes for welcoming students to learning by minimizing threats to students, real or imagined, that help students to reframe what it means to be a learner and to be a teacher. Increase student engagement through innovation. As an example, graduate psychology doing a Saturday morning run for faculty and students. Not for everyone, but it did provide a different method of engagement and promotion of student wellbeing.

To explore the LAUD Canvas site or to learn about the upcoming LAUD Fellows Program, contact Dr. Liu at liujc@jmu.edu

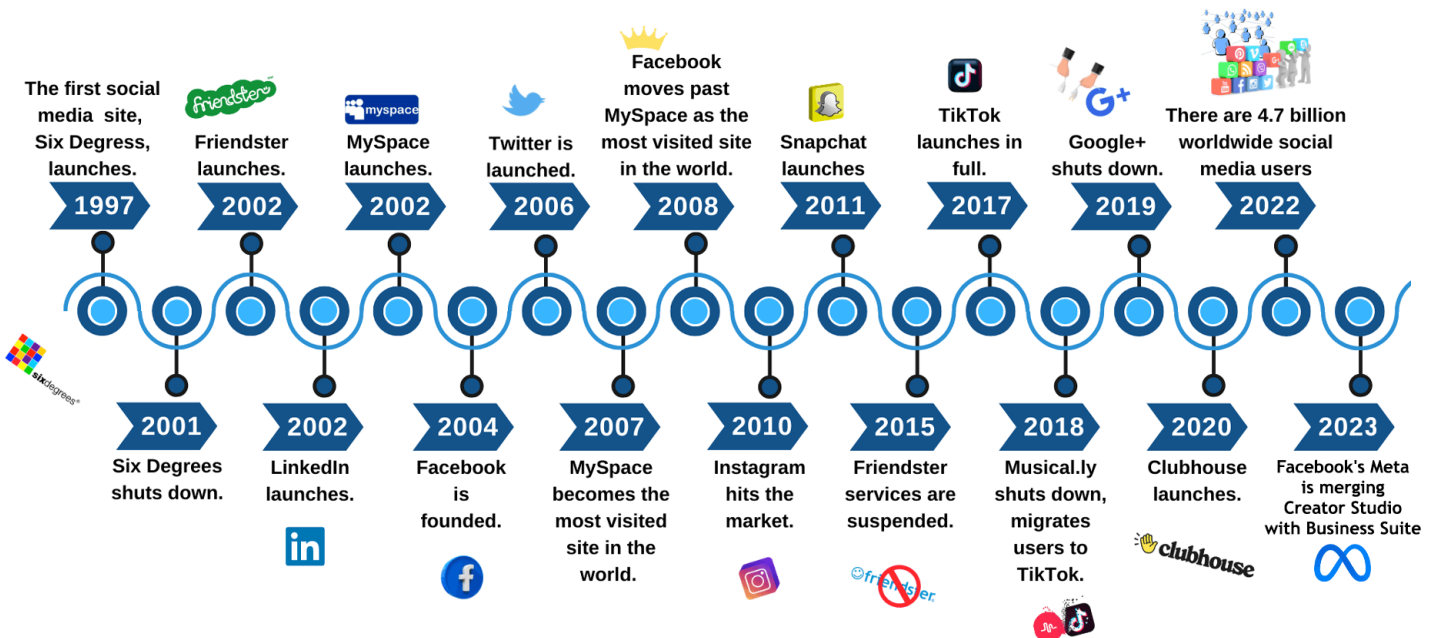
The Learning Access through Universal Design (LAUD) has been a multi-year project with over 30 professionals engaged in its development under the primary leadership of Dr. Juhong Christie Liu, Director of Instructional Design, through a collaboration between the JMU Libraries and the CHBS Inclusive Excellence Inclusionary Practice efforts. Within the overarching CHBS IE strategic plan, these efforts fall within the faculty, student, and curriculum domains of change. The LAUD Project was opened to the JMU campus in fall 2023, with special thanks in its development by CHBS faculty fellows over time – Lori Gano-Overway (KIN), Lesley Lemons (HS), Amy Russell Yun, (OT/HP), Danya Henry (HS), Ayasakanta Rout (CSD), and IIHHS staff members.

Ten Trends in the Era of Generation Z College Students

Gen Z students = “zoomers”, born between mid 1990s to 2010
Unique group with its own set of values and needs.

1. Nontraditional education is in – Gen Z students are digital and tech-savvy with forms of technology they have been exposed to in K-12.
2. Career-based programs take precedence – Most interested in skill and career-building experiences as influenced by the high cost of education through traditional four-year schools.
3. Finances are top concern - Gen Z’s aversion to student loans cannot be overstated. Nearly 75% of the 2,200 high school students polled in “[Question the Quo](#)” say paying back student debt is a top worry. Up to [one-third say the financial fall-out of the pandemic](#) makes it unlikely they will pursue a 4-year degree.
4. Self-learning is preferred, with hands-on learning and self-directed educational alternatives desired.
5. Tech-driven experiences are essential - Gen Z expects technology to play an instrumental role in educational experiences. Virtual tools guide nearly every aspect of their lives, including learning.
6. Social media engagement continues to grow, especially on Instagram. Many college students engage on social media with their colleges, with some finding their college through Instagram posts.
7. Prospective students like web chats and email functions for learning about schools.
8. Diversity and inclusion are non-negotiable. College students are more racially and ethnically diverse than previous generations and are often exposed to issues of racial equity, climate change, and same-sex marriage knowledge.
9. Mental health services are a priority. A [recent survey](#) found 70% of teens see anxiety and depression as a major problem among peers, which has only worsened with COVID-19.
10. Off-campus living is a norm, with almost 20 percent of Gen Z students planning to live at home and commute to campus. One report from [Chronicle of Higher Education](#) indicates today’s students want fewer comforts, like plush dorm rooms or rec centers, and more support, such as guided tutoring groups with their peers.

Social Media Timeline



Unit-level Student Organizations: As an Inclusive Best Practice Strategy

A [recent article](#) from the Chronicle stated, “The cost of student disconnection is too high to ignore.” Pandemic health restrictions contributed to a decline in the ways students engage on campus. Universities are strategizing new methods to increase student engagement in the context of reports of lower student bandwidth for extracurricular activities.

Even before the pandemic ravaged student engagement and connections, especially for our diverse students, forging a sense of belonging within academic units was not a priority. Units that attempted the development of professional or social groups met minimal student participation compared to the number of majors in units. A sense of belonging is [associated with](#) continued enrollment, higher academic performance, individual persistence, and has some protective mental health benefits. Getting more of our diverse students – first-gen, rural, LGBTQ+, racial, and ethnic identity members – engaged with units could change their trajectory within our fields.



Health in Color/Health Sciences



Difficulties in getting students engaged in unit efforts are challenged by two realities. Within the first few weeks of any semester, students are drawn into commitments with JMU's 400+ student organizations. First-year students enter their major courses, and thus their unit connections as they are finishing their gen-ed courses, typically second semester sophomore year. While there are individual advisors that students connect with, the full benefits of unit opportunities for engagement, such as student groups with a professional focus, may not compare to the

excitement of JMU student organizations that provide socialization opportunities that promote fun rather than learning. Social-emotional development is an important milestone for the age group often met by peer engagement opportunities.

JMU quickly advertises that every student can find their niche within the [Student Life](#) area. Twenty percent, over 4,000 students, are part of the 31 organizations that make up the JMU fraternity/sorority community.

[CMSS](#) is the home of 46 multicultural student organizations, including **religious affiliation, service, multicultural Greek life, academics, and other diversity organizations. Do you know about the Divine Nine representation on campus?** Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Inc.? Shades of Pride? Native American Student Union? JMU Hillel? These are some of the student organizations that support JMU's diverse student populations.



Even with such efforts on campus, many students can feel disenfranchised because the environment requires additional work to be welcomed into everyday spaces. Diverse students must work harder when a lack of obvious cultural cues is absent to make the environment what they need for fuller wellness. Even in the classroom, there are typical examples of diverse students being selected or asked to join group projects last or being vetoed on topics they want to study. They may quickly find the learning space unwelcoming, shrugging into the anticipated and replicated real-world experiences of exclusion.

Unit efforts that can foster a sense of belonging for diverse students include peer-facilitated small group meetings, cohort groups, faculty-facilitated discussion groups, peer mentoring groups, themed study abroad or regional study trips, the development of technology-driven or innovation work groups like unit podcasts or student-developed social media. Efforts should provide consistency and utilize social-emotional learning (SEL) activities in support of student development. Unit



efforts should not be an afterthought with limited focus but should be intentional with target group advertisement and developing student champions for efforts. Attempts will have smaller numbers of students engaged, but the long-term benefits may be substantial for those students and the unit's reputation of being responsive to student needs and a place of awareness.

EVENTS

Please join your colleagues in graduate education for this special virtual presentation.
Improving the Success and Readiness of Graduate Teaching Assistants through Morgan's Innovative TA Program

Date: February 14, 2024

Time: 3–4:30 p.m. U.S. Eastern Time

During this event, you'll learn about a unique program focused on improving the success of graduate Teaching Assistants implemented at Morgan State University. The recipient of the **2022 ETS/CGS Award for Innovation in Promoting Success in Graduate Education: From Admission through Completion**, Morgan has launched a TA program (MSTAP) that focuses on intensive training through graduate coursework, mentoring, and ongoing professional development.

Graduate Dean Mark Garrison will describe the program's innovative and unique features as well as the extent to which this program addresses critical issues for higher education, including issues of inclusion, readiness of new professors, and teaching quality.

Takeaways include:

- Learning what makes MSTAP an innovative and unique program
- Reimagining student success and career readiness
- Embracing the obligation of instruction for future faculty
- Valuing the importance of creating teaching credentials in higher education
- Understanding the impact of training in assessment and testing for content specialists
- Learning more about the ETS/CGS Award for Innovation

[Register Today](#)

CARS Talk: Improving Equity & Inclusion for International Students

- Friday, February 16th, from 2-3pm in 1104 Lakeview Hall.

Research prompted concern about international students' adjustment and acculturation as challenges to their US college experience. This conversation between ISSS and CARS will examine the issue in-depth.

Women's Work: Scholarship, Voice, and Resistance in the Academic Generation of Knowledge

Fri, 16 Feb 2024 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Center for Faculty Innovations

[For more information](#)

Black History Month Speaker Dr. Stephen Quaye

Feb. 22 | 7 p.m. | The Union, Warren 256.

Join CMSS for the Black History Keynote Speaker, Dr. Stephen Quaye. Dr. Quaye is a professor in the Higher Education and Student Affairs Program within the Department of Educational Studies and will discuss supporting Black student activism across college campuses and using a racial justice lens to enhance their experiences. All are welcome to attend!

Commemorate Black History in our community: Dr. Steve Reich (JMU History) will present his research that studies African American history, violence, and memory on **February 29 at 6 pm** at the [Lucy F. Simms Continuing Education Center](#).



The National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) will host the **Health Disparities Research Institute (HDRI) from August 5 - 9, 2024**

HDRI is a unique weeklong program that supports the research career development of promising early-career minority health and health disparities research scientists.

The program will feature:

- Lectures on minority health and health disparities research
- Mock grant reviews
- Seminars and small group discussions
- Opportunities to directly engage with NIH scientific staff

All applications must be submitted via the HDRI [online application](#) system no later than 5:00 p.m. ET on March 14, 2024.

Visit the [HDRI webpage](#) to learn more about the program, eligibility requirements, selection criteria, and how to apply.

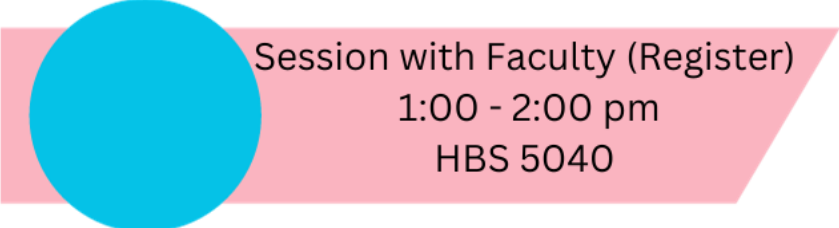
College of Health and Behavioral Studies
Viewpoints on Health

February 29, 2024
4:00 – 5:00 p.m.
Wilson Auditorium

Dallas Michelle Ducar
MSN, RN, D APRN, PMHNP-BC, CNL, FAAN



"Gender-Affirming Healthcare as a Model of Person-Centered, Value-Based Care"



Session with Faculty (Register)
1:00 - 2:00 pm
HBS 5040



Faculty
Registration
