**Description of Themes for EDC-Formed Professional Learning Communities in 2024**

After eliciting and assessing interest in a number of PLC themes for the 2024 grant cycle, the review committee has decided to invite individuals to apply to join either of the following groups:

**Generative AI in Teaching & Learning**

Some of us have jumped right into using generative AI, while many of us are less than excited or procrastinating. Yet we know that that we need to engage all students in thinking critically and creatively about its use, while they are here at WPI and in their careers. This PLC is for those who would value learning collaboratively about generative AI, with colleagues across departments and disciplines. Participants will develop their critical AI literacy and pedagogy. Activities are likely to include such things as: 1) sharing, creating, completing, and/or modifying assignments that include critical thinking and ethics of generative AI; 2) experimenting with the use of generative AI for teaching activities such as finding learning resources for courses or projects, generating assessment questions, identifying examples and applications, and providing feedback. This group will benefit from a broad spectrum of faculty and staff educators, from experienced to inexperienced, from early adopters to non-adopters who are curious and open-minded about how generative AI might affect their teaching and student learning. Those who expressed interest in “Imagining Higher Education Futures with Generative AI” are encouraged to apply to this PLC with an eye toward engaging students in conversations about the future of their education and discipline(s) in an age of generative AI and human-AI interaction.

This PLC requires a 12-month commitment, from May 15, 2024 to May 15, 2025, and participants will receive a $3,000 stipend. (The commitment is estimated at ~60 hours spread over this time period, for work that goes beyond normal expectations for teaching development.) The work of the group will proceed as follows:

- **Summer 2024:** On their own schedule and with partner(s) if desired, each participant will start or continue to explore generative AI tools and resources in the context of their courses and/or projects in AY 2024-25. The PLC facilitator will provide some guidance and structure for this exploration in the summer, but it will be designed to be flexible.
- **AY 2024-25:** The group will meet monthly to support each other as participants refine, implement, and reflect on use of generative AI.
- **The outcome from this group will likely be an OER collection of instructional materials as well as reflections.**

**Alternative Grading**

Traditional grading often dampens the joys and good habits of learning and teaching, contributes to educational inequities, and can cause significant stress for students and faculty alike. This learning community will be structured around *Grading for Growth: A Guide to Alternative Grading Practices that Promote Authentic Learning and Student Engagement in Higher Education* (Clark & Talbert, 2023). The authors identify four pillars for growth-based grading: clearly defined standards, helpful feedback, marks that indicate progress, and reassessment without penalty. They present multiple case studies of what alternative grading systems can look like, from a wide range of disciplines, institutions, and teaching contexts (e.g., large classes, labs). The book concludes with a workbook that guides instructors to build a prototype of an alternative grading system.
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- **Summer 2024:** Each participant reads the book on their own schedule, contributes to an asynchronous discussion board, and makes a first pass through the book’s “workbook for alternative grading” (which is timed for one day’s worth of work on a particular course).

- **AY 2024-25:** The group will meet monthly to support each other as participants refine, implement, and reflect on alternative grading practices. Participants may do a comprehensive redesign of the assessment and grading system in a single course, or make smaller changes in multiple courses, depending on their particular context.

- **Participants will be encouraged to craft their final report as an entry for their teaching portfolio.**

Please note that individuals interested in PLC experience with a different theme can recruit their own interdepartmental group and submit an application for a self-formed Professional Learning Community. See the *Professional Learning Communities – Guidelines and Application 2024* document for details.