

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Good morning, good morning, Penguin Nation. This is Rhianna Johnson welcoming you to our *Penguin Pathways* podcast, where we talk about all things related to Guided Pathways and student success initiatives. We've got Lindsey Schuhmacher in the building today, so we're going to get started shortly.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

All right, welcome to the studio, Lindsey. It's great to have you today. Lindsey's coming to us from the Teaching and Learning Center. So, welcome.

Thank you.

All right, let's go ahead and get started with telling us a little bit about what is the Teaching and Learning Center.

Yeah, so the Teaching and Learning Center, or the TLC, is both a physical space and a service to the college. So the physical space is in Gaiser Hall 206. And we have a commons area with a teaching and learning library, a small kitchen, a small gathering space that faculty can use, adjunct workspace, and soon a rotating art show, which we're excited about, featuring artists from the Clark community.

But the service that we offer is equity-focused professional development related to continuous improvement of teaching and learning practices across modalities. We also offer support for faculty in setting and reaching professional development and advancement goals. And our team is made up of me, Dr. Raul Moreno, who's our program specialist, and Tre Sandlin, who is Clark's indispensable instructional accessibility specialist.

Excellent. So I believe we have a Teaching and Learning Advisory Council. Is that up and running?

No.

Oh, OK.

[LAUGHING]

Short answer, no. Right now, we don't have a Teaching and Learning Advisory Council. But part of our task this year is to revitalize the TLC. It's been dormant for quite some time. So that council had disbanded.

The idea of having a council back that offers support and guidance around teaching and learning and professional development is certainly a welcome thing. And that may be happening, like maybe towards the end of this year or into next year, just, like, as we are working on our big priorities.

So for right now, we're focused on revising and kind of completely revising our website, building our programming, renovating our physical space and building our library, and supporting professional development-related processes on campus, including PPAC and sabbatical application process. But getting the council up and running again is certainly in our minds. So as we work towards stability and consistency in our offerings, I think we'll have more time to engage with that project.

Awesome. Thanks for addressing that. I know people have wondered, as we've had different iterations of the Teaching and Learning Center. So that's good information to know. So what are some of the outcomes that you're really trying to achieve by offering professional development for faculty?

Well, it's a lot.

[LAUGHING]

Uh-huh. For sure.

But some of our outcomes that we're trying to achieve by providing professional development for faculty is to improve teaching and learning at the college, and also to connect our teaching practices to Guided Pathways and to Clark's social equity framework. So with those outcomes in mind, we're offering professional development around student services at the college, warm handoffs to those services, deeper understanding of what resources are here for the students in order to provide strong wraparound services, and also to support the concept of a Caring Campus, which is an initiative this year.

The Caring Campus is evidence-based, and it tends to retain students better. So we see all of that as in line with Guided Pathways. And also, because one of the areas of focus for Guided Pathways this year is improving classroom environment, we also see our programming related to active learning, culturally-inclusive learning, and universal design for learning as related to Guided Pathways, too.

And they're also related to Clark's social equity framework that centers antiracism, UDL, and disability justice. And then we're also hoping to build culturally-responsive community among faculty, staff, and students to improve not just the classroom environment, but the college environment, as well. We're committed to supporting adjunct professors at Clark, who do, in fact, make up the majority of our teaching force.

And we're committed to providing leadership, transparency, clarity, and caring support for all faculty in their professional development advancement goals. So kind of in short, we want to retain students, we want to retain faculty, and we want Clark to be a fun, engaged, caring, and inclusive place to learn and to work.

That's wonderful. It sounds like just really building that culture of inclusion and welcoming for the students. And I know I've been an adjunct before, and it's not always easy when you don't have a dedicated space. And I remember using the Teaching and Learning Center as a workspace when you're kind of coming and going. And so that's a great resource for faculty to be able to use.

So you talked a little bit about this, but how is the TLC using its Guided Pathways funds in improving the space? You talked about some of the things that you're bringing in. Will it be available for faculty to use soon?

Yeah, so as I mentioned, we're renovating our physical space and we're building our teaching and learning library. And soon, we'll have a nice place for faculty to gather, chat, share ideas, participate in teaching squares, hold meetings, et cetera, right? Lots of things that space can be used for. We're going to have three comfortable workstations for adjunct professors. We have a kitchen, a nice big window. We'll have art.

Our library is already well-stocked with new, relevant books. So that part is done, and people are always welcome to come up and start browsing. We have a variety from CAST, which is the organization behind the Universal Design for Learning guidelines. And we have a lot of equity-focused books on antiracism and teaching, critical language awareness, gender equity in the classroom, learner-centered teaching, and a lot more. We also have games. We have LEGO tables and bricks, which is fun--

Yes.

--active learning card decks, and more teaching and learning tools. And all of those things can be checked out for classroom use. So if faculty are interested in incorporating some of that into their courses, they're always welcome to come up and see what's there. And we'll also offer programming to highlight how these materials can help students engage, have fun, practice skills, and show their learning in multiple ways. So that's one thing.

We're also spending our funds on help and support from talented folks around campus. So we're getting people to support us in creating an equitable, accessible syllabus template, to help us organize and catalog our teaching and learning library. So all of those things are there and ready to be explored and checked out, but they're also still a bit of a mess. But we have a wonderful adjunct librarian who's working with us to fix that space up and also create some guides, some library guides and help us with different projects around that.

We also have some folks from around campus helping us to build a culturally-inclusive education mentorship program through the TLC. So we're paying them, as well, for their hard work. We're spending funds on faculty professional development, of course, including stipends for adjunct professors who complete our Communities of Practice this year in Demystifying Disability or Antiracism and Universal Design for Learning.

And we're paying for the authors of those books that serve as the anchors for those communities to come and visit us and support us in our learning and growth around that. And then we're also building an avenue for adjunct professors to report their Clark professional development hours that aren't already paid to be able to earn stipends and follow certificate paths.

Wow. It sounds like you've got quite a lineup for the next year. And that's so important, in terms of the Guided Pathways model, that students have that really great classroom experience, as you mentioned. You know, we've got a lot of working students, a lot of adult students, a lot of students whose primary experience may be only in the classroom.

And so it's important that that's really a good experience for them. So you talked a little bit about this. Just wondering if you want to add anything about how we're really addressing those equity gaps real quickly before we wrap things up today?

Yeah. So, well, as I mentioned, we are focusing on Universal Design for Learning, which is a framework that centers marginalized students. But it also improves design, instructional materials, activities, and assessments for all students. And in spring, as I mentioned, we're studying Andratesha Fritzgerald's work for our Community of Practice, which will center students of color in a Universal Design for Learning framework. That's the antiracism and UDL Community of Practice coming this spring.

[LAUGHING]

Register now. So we're really excited for that community and for Andratesha's visit. We're also committed to increasing awareness of and knowledge about student services and resources on our campus, like I talked about before, and how to engage with them and initiate warm handoffs from the classroom. And we see that in line with Guided Pathways and with Caring Campus.

And we're rolling out programming related to active learning, engagement in the classroom, as well as formative feedback, which is one of the most important aspects for improving student learning outcomes, and grading for equity. We offer accessibility training to improve experiences of students with disabilities and improve design and outcomes for everyone.

And I just want to mention that while our primary focus is faculty and supporting them in their important work, both in and outside the classroom, we're also always thinking of students and how our work impacts them, how it supports them and empowers them to be successful at Clark.

Wow. Well, I'm really impressed with everything that we're doing in the Teaching and Learning Center. Love the collaboration and coordination with Guided Pathways and other departments. And I just want to thank you so much for being with us today, Lindsey.

Thanks for having me, and thanks for the support through Guided Pathways, Rhianna.

Absolutely. Take care.