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Upcoming Events:

Date/Time	Topic	Presenter(s)	Room
Coming Summer 2016	Teaching Men of Color Certificate Program	The Center for Organizational Responsibility and Advancement (CORA)	1 Week Online Training
August 1st - 11th APPLICATIONS CLOSED	Faculty Summer Institute	Various	Bundy Campus

[View our full calendar](#)

Check us out in the *SMC In Focus* Newsletter!

The Center and the Faculty Summer Institute were featured in an article in the October Issue. [Read and see photos from FSI 2015](#)

FOCUS ON: THE CENTER FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Where No One Stops Learning



Okay, we will be the first to admit it: The word “excellence” gets used a lot around Santa Monica College. But what other word can possibly describe a place that not only does what is needed for you to succeed—but also makes sure that your instructors are learning how to teach you better?

“I respect and enjoy diversity, but I did not know how to teach to it,” says Lynn Dickinson, SMC Communication Studies instructor. She joined SMC in 2013, fresh from a media industry background that included a stint as Weird Al Yankovic’s tour publicist, being the first Hollywood.com editorial director, and working as a content strategist for clients like NBC and Warner Brothers.

New to teaching, Dickinson applied to the SMC Center for Teaching Excellence’s Faculty Summer Institute. The Institute trains 30 selected instructors over eight days about things like learner-centered strategies (ways to adapt teaching techniques to help you learn, and to help you learn more effectively) and multiculturalism in the classroom (because, yes, our backgrounds and cultures do affect how we relate to

SMC’s Center for Teaching Excellence—“the Center”—is one of only a handful at community colleges in California. Funded by a federal grant for colleges that serve a large number of Latino students, the Center’s focus is on supporting faculty who teach classes in basics skills, courses for transfer, and career technical education.

“You have to pour yourself into it, show that you care... and not just show it, you genuinely need to care,” says SMC math professor John Quevedo, one of the Center’s faculty leaders.

There is a little rock that sits on Quevedo’s desk with the words “Positive Mental-Math Attitude” painted on it, which serves as a conversation starter with students. Seventy percent of math students at SMC are at the basics skills level, and Quevedo understands that there are circumstances outside the classroom that can stand in the way of a student’s success in the classroom.

Quevedo assigns more practice and review problems in class, so that his students can get a better idea of what an exam will look and feel like. He also devised a “question raffle” to get students to engage and

for Student Success Initiatives. “We’re focused on the art of teaching, and on how we can help faculty help our students.”

ESL professor Keith Graziadei is another faculty leader at the Center. He works to help bridge the “technology gap” between students and faculty by training his colleagues to use new technology like Google Docs, WordPress, Twitter, and Prezi in their classroom.

“I’m always looking for new things to do... what can I do to make my teaching more effective?” says Graziadei. To supplement reading assignments, for example, he uses a tool called Camtasia to video tape mini-lectures for his students. Graziadei and Quevedo helped set up a “Tech Mentor” program for the Center, where faculty can turn to a colleague to help them learn how to use a new tech tool.

“One of the reasons I love teaching at SMC is seeing the depth of talent here,” says Graziadei. “I really feel that the support students get here across the board is phenomenal.”

Instructors who have participated in a Faculty Summer Institute have seen an increase in the number of students who complete and succeed in their classes, and the Center has also started a Faculty Winter Institute for instructors who teach Career Technical Education classes. The Center offers workshops and professional development activities throughout the semester, and future plans also include a physical space that will be a “pedagogical playground” where faculty can come together to discuss what they can do better.

“I think the Center and its activities to help teachers teach better are what set SMC apart from other community colleges. You feel like you’re at a serious learning institution,” says Edna Chavarry, Project Manager for the Center.

Visit www.smc.edu/center to discover all the ways the Center is promoting teaching excellence at SMC.

“Our faculty live up to

background and cultures to affect how we relate to others and learn).

"The Institute raised my intercultural competence, and I realized that all my students are unique," says Dickins on. "Now, I try to teach in as many ways as possible." A new approach to teaching can mean things like having students work in teams to research topics like the effects of violence in media, instead of just hearing a lecture on it.

a question paper to get students to engage and collaborate with each other. Quevedo and other faculty leaders—by helping organize the Center's activities and bringing well-known experts to campus to help them address their challenges—are also living out what they tell their students to do: Collaborate.

"What the Center does is make sure that faculty have the support and safe space they need to talk about challenges they face," says Roberto Gonzalez, SMC Dean

*the momentum that
SMC runs with – it's all
about innovation."*

– Edna Chavarry, Project Manager
for the SMC Center for Teaching Excellence

About the Center for Teaching Excellence

The Center for Teaching Excellence is funded by the Title V - Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) Program under the U.S. Department of Education. The title of the Title V-HSI grant which was awarded to SMC is Building Foundations for Academic and Career Success. The aim of this project is to support low-income, Latino, and other traditionally underrepresented students as they pursue their academic and career goals.

At the heart of this grant will be SMC's new Center for Teaching Excellence (The Center), which will offer an annual Faculty Summer Institute, quarterly seminars for all faculty, departmental workshops that target career-specific improvements in math, English, and content specific-courses, and customized individual and small group support.

Faculty Summer Institute 2015

August 3rd through 13th, 2015

The Center for Teaching Excellence thanks each and every one of the 42 participants from the 2015 Faculty Summer Institute. This was our largest group to date, and we couldn't have asked for better teamwork and participation.

[See FSI stats and info, and photos of our FSI groups.](#)

Career Technical Education Winter Institute 2015!

February 3rd, 4th, and 5th, 2015

The CTE Committee and The Center for Teaching Excellence partnered to offer a professional development institute available for SMC's CTE faculty.

Thank you to all those that attended! It was a great success.

Faculty Summer Institute 2014!

August 4 through August 14, 2014

We are so grateful to our 36 selected participants who joined us this summer!

We are looking forward to seeing how you apply the techniques you learned, and build on the relationships you formed with your colleagues over the two weeks!

For everyone else: [2015 is now open for applications \(Google Doc\)](#).

During the Faculty Summer Institute, faculty explored issues of pedagogy and practice, exchanged ideas, studied new approaches and tested innovative strategies for building student skills and understanding. Experts and practitioners in the field of education shared research-based strategies that increase student success.

SMC's FIRST Faculty Summer Institute - 2013

July 29 through August 8, 2013

Faculty connected, collaborated, and created at the Faculty Summer Institute (FSI). This Summer marked our first Faculty Summer Institute: faculty learned about ways to revitalize their teaching, increase student retention and persistence, and keep students engaged.

During the institute, experts and practitioners in the field of education shared research-based strategies that increase student success.

Space was limited to 30 instructional faculty. Participating faculty will receive a stipend for their participation in the Faculty Summer Institute and continuing involvement in The Center. Implementation plans were drafted by each attendee explaining how they will use what they learned over the two weeks, and how they will collaborate with their fellow faculty members and other departments to improve their instructional skills and methods. We thank everyone who attended and were please to have such a motivated, involved group.

Information for the 2014 Faculty Summer Institute will be available in the Spring, but check back often for more reports from this year's institute, presentations from attendees and photos.