

# CROWN CENTER FOR TEACHING



## From the Director: Incubating Educational Excellence

[In our Block 5 newsletter](#), I introduced the HITS framework (Hub-Incubator-Temple-Sieve) for enhancing the effectiveness of Centers for Teaching and Learning (CTLs). I shared some ways the Crown Center serves as a hub for convening, connecting, and coordinating.

In Block 6, we move to the next letter in the framework: Incubator. In her book, [Centers for Teaching and Learning: The New Landscape in Higher Education](#), Mary C. Wright describes such CTLs as spaces designed to nurture growth, encourage experimentation, and provide the conditions necessary for innovative teaching practices to take root and thrive.

Fostering curricular innovation is central to the Crown Center's mission. Through our blockly lunches and workshops, as well as programs such as [New Faculty Orientation](#), [Instructional Coaching](#), and ELCs, we cultivate an environment where our community explores new pedagogical approaches, refines teaching practices, and engages in conversations that expand the boundaries of what a liberal arts education looks like at CC.

This work materializes from the ideas that you bring forward. Below, you can read about an ELC on Alternative Assessment in STEM led by Assistant Professor of Physics Dhanesh Krishnarao. You can also register for a Crown Conversations Project lunch led by Assistant Professor of Political Science Sofia Fenner. Although initiated by individuals, both endeavors have grown throughout the year because of our collective investment in the development process.

How can Crown be an incubating space for your continued educational development? Consider participating in any of our existing offerings. If you already are, please invite a colleague to join you. And please bring forward any seeds you'd like to sow, eggs you'd like to hatch, or whatever metaphorical incubation idiom might make your garden grow.

Spring is right around the corner.

Sincerely,

Ryan Raul Bañagale

Associate Professor of Music and Director of the Crown Center for Teaching

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# Upcoming Workshops & Opportunities to Connect

The Crown Center and partner organizations present workshops that allow the CC community to incubate new teaching methods in a supportive atmosphere. From developing strategies for critical analysis and thoughtful deployment of AI technologies to creating frameworks for challenging conversations and engaging with hands-on exercises that spark creative thinking, these workshops offer practical techniques and personal support for innovative teaching across campus.

## **Crown Center Lunch: The Crown Conversation Project**

Hosted by Sofia Fenner, Assistant Professor of Political Science

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 12:15 – 1:30 p.m.

Tutt Library 317

[Register for the B6 Crown Conversation Project Workshop](#)

What makes a conversation work? What sets an effective conversation apart from one that leaves its participants confused, frustrated, or disillusioned? Do important conversations have to be difficult? And how can we make even difficult conversations valuable?

Join us to reflect on some of the themes that have emerged from this project so far. We'll exchange strategies for generative conversation, think together about the challenges we're currently facing, and test-drive a few case studies. All are welcome.

## **Creativity & Innovation Workshop: Polarity Thinking**

Hosted by Kris Stanec, Director of Creativity & Innovation

Thursday, Mar. 6, 2 – 3:30 p.m.

Honnen C&I Classroom

[Register for the B6 C&I Workshop: Polarity Thinking](#)

Polarities—also called dilemmas, tensions, or paradoxes—are differences between two alternatives. Each pole brings something positive to the interdependent pair, and without its pole partner, each pole becomes a liability. This workshop will explore this phenomenon and how the dynamics of polarity thinking can creatively leverage our ability to work within this ambiguous space.

## **Crown Center Lunch: AI and Academic Integrity**

Hosted by Ryan Bañagale, Director of the Crown Center for Teaching

Monday, Mar. 10, noon – 2 p.m.

South Hall Commons

[Register for the B6 Crown Lunch: AI and Academic Integrity](#)

Whether we like it or not, generative artificial intelligence continues to integrate its way into our academic landscape, bringing challenges and opportunities to how we uphold CC's Honor Code. Faculty, staff, and students are invited to join this conversation to explore the evolving questions AI raises for academic integrity at CC. Rather than seeking immediate solutions, this session will provide space to reflect on the implications of

AI for student work, share diverse perspectives and experiences, and identify key concerns that need further exploration. Together, we will lay the groundwork for a thoughtful, principled approach to AI and academic integrity as we navigate this evolving landscape.

**Block Break Breakfast**

Thursday, Mar. 13, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.  
Cossitt Lounge

Responding to a request for more informal space to converse about all things teaching, the Crown Center for Teaching hosts Block Break breakfasts. Come grab a bagel and some coffee or tea. Join your Crown Center colleagues for conversation and support. We welcome all to enjoy a bagel on us! No RSVP is required.

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**Opportunities**

**Call for Applications: Faculty Fellows Program**

The Faculty Fellows Program supports CC faculty members’ professional leadership by providing opportunities to administer and collaborate on cross-campus academic-related initiatives. The program allows faculty to build their project-based leadership experience while strengthening institutional engagement. For the 2025-26 academic year, we anticipate hiring five Faculty Fellows to direct the following areas:

College Transitions Program: Bridge Scholars

College Transitions Program: Teaching Excellence

College Transitions Program: Student Engagement

Crown Center: Mentoring Alliance Program

Crown Center: Instructional Coaching Program

**The submission deadline is the first Friday of Block 6: Feb. 21, 2025**

Visit the [Faculty Fellows Program](#) for more information about specific positions and the application procedure. Please direct questions to Ryan Bañagale, Director of the Crown Center for Teaching:  
[rbanagale@coloradocollege.edu](mailto:rbanagale@coloradocollege.edu)

**Blocks of Opportunity**

Have you ever wondered what happens in other people’s classes? Do you have colleagues you know well in different contexts but have never seen them teach? If so, the Crown Center encourages you to follow your curiosity during your next non-teaching block by participating in Blocks of Opportunity. This new initiative supports faculty in sharing their expertise by visiting colleagues’ classes and having lunchtime conversations about teaching.  
How it works:

Faculty members interested in attending a class and/or hosting a colleague complete the [Blocks of Opportunity Form](#). If you know which class you'd like to visit, please indicate it on the form. If you are open to ideas, we can matchmake based on your interests.

When the day and time of the visit are confirmed, the host and the visitor receive a coupon to have lunch together at Rastall.

The visiting faculty member submits the [report form](#) to the Crown Center. Crown then deposits \$100 in both parties' research accounts to continue refining their teaching skills.

Space in the program is limited, so we suggest you reserve your spot quickly if you'd like to participate. Please get in touch with Jessica Hunter, Associate Director of the Crown Center for Teaching, at [jhunter@coloradocollege.edu](mailto:jhunter@coloradocollege.edu).

## Faculty Fellow Project Update: Dhanesh Krishnarao

The new ELC on Alternative Assessment in STEM has been meeting since Block 2 with a little over 10 faculty members to discuss and strategize new methods for assessment and ways to evaluate their impact effectively. The group has had many lively discussions, particularly on evaluating how assessment strategies contribute to an inclusive and antiracist classroom experience for students. We are working to implement some assessment strategies in upcoming courses this block and onwards, while intentionally collecting qualitative data to evaluate their impact across different departments and courses. With support from the Crown Faculty Fellow program, Dhanesh Krishnarao is preparing an initial and brief publication to share one assessment strategy widely with initial anecdotal evidence for success while working to collect more data over the rest of this year and onwards.

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## Announcements from Partner Organizations

**From Myth to Model: Computational Approaches to Ancient Epic** A lecture by Annie Lamar, Assistant Professor of Classics, UC Santa Barbara  
Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2 – 3:30 p.m.  
WES Room, Worner Center

High-performance computational tools and AI models are often associated with large datasets, but they also offer unique opportunities for analyzing smaller, "low-resource" datasets. With fewer than thirty thousand lines, the Homeric epics—*The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*—fall squarely into this category, making them an ideal subject for computational exploration in the realm of low-resource research. In this talk, Annie Lamar will explore the unique challenges and opportunities of using computational modeling in low-resource data contexts. Through a series of three case studies—including approaches with generative AI, statistical modeling, and word embeddings—Lamar demonstrates how such methods allow scholars to gain new insights into ancient texts.

## CCE Liberal Arts in Correctional Facilities (LACF) Initiative

The LACF Initiative seeks educators to teach courses in the 2025-2026 academic year and beyond. The program's mission is to address inequities in higher education by expanding access for incarcerated persons. Through the LACF, CC faculty and qualified staff offer for-credit courses at no cost in the Youthful Offenders System facility in Pueblo, which serves a population of 19 to 25-year-olds. Students receive credit through Pueblo Community College and courses are guaranteed to transfer as degree requirements at any Colorado public institution of higher learning.

CC faculty or qualified staff receive a grant-funded stipend to teach evening courses (typically twice a week) over a semester. Please [click here](#) to express interest or email [jradke@coloradocollege.edu](mailto:jradke@coloradocollege.edu) with questions.

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