

Sarah Anderegg

From: Jonathan Eldridge
Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 12:49 PM
To: Jonathan Eldridge
Subject: Fall 2023 Faculty Information & Updates, Volume XI
Attachments: 5 Steps to Integrate Climate Action Into Your Courses This Fall.pdf

Dear College of Marin Faculty:

Several items to note this week—and a request—all below.

But first, **this week's article** provides some concrete steps you can take to integrate climate action into your courses—regardless of the discipline. I'll look forward to your thoughts on whether these ideas resonate.

My request—I will be reaching out in the coming weeks to meet with faculty, staff, and community members to hear what you most need, want, hope for, and expect as I transition into the role of president at the College. But I also want to hear from students, which is where my current request comes in. *If you are willing and able, I would appreciate the opportunity to interrupt a class for as much (or little) time as you can spare so I can hear from as many students as possible about their needs, wants, and expectations in their new president. Please let me know if this is something you can help me do and I'm happy to arrange it for a class session that works for you.*

Here are the items to note, beginning with **Fall Y'all, tomorrow, Wednesday, October 18th**. Please stop by the Academic Center courtyard as you are able between 11a.m.-2p.m. for the fun engagement with students. I hope to see you there!

Next, **midterm grade entry** is now open for faculty. Midterm grades are due Thursday, Oct. 19 at 11:59 p.m. You have received a notice from Enrollment Services with details. As a reminder, short term, early, or late start courses do not have midterm grade entry and faculty in these courses are encouraged to use canvas to post student progress. The more we can do to help students understand how they are doing in their classes, the more we are then able to connect them with resources to help ensure their success. **Thank you for taking the time to post midterm grades.**

Finally, a **construction update** for activities happening on the site of the Learning Resources Center, **October 16 – October 22.**

1. **Today, Tuesday, 10/17, will include the placement of critical equipment for a concrete pour happening on site today. You can expect to hear backup alarms and idling trucks, and see a large concrete-pumping crane.**
2. Off haul of materials continues

Noise you will expect to hear onsite:

1. Jackhammering
2. Large equipment such as drills/augers
3. Idling trucks
4. Back up alerts

PLEASE NOTE: Beginning next week, rebar for the building foundation will begin to arrive and be installed. There will be a lot of truck traffic on the site, a crane operating all day, and noisy steel work.

Please reach out to facilities@marin.edu directly with questions or concerns.

As always, if I can be of assistance in any way, please do let me know.

All my best,

Jonathan



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5 Steps to Integrate Climate Action Into Your Courses This Fall

The wildfires, heat waves, and floods that increasingly appear on our news feeds are real. Small actions can be an antidote to despair.

By [Karen Costa](#)

AUGUST 30, 2023

As a faculty member, unless you're a climate scientist or an environmental engineer, it's easy to assume there's little or nothing you can do to deal with climate change. Likewise, the idea that, to make a difference as a citizen, you have to become a Greta Thunberg clone puts an impossible pressure on you that keeps you frozen when action is needed most. Finding simple ways to act where you are — in this case, in the college classroom — can make all the difference.

That realization dawned 18 months ago as I listened to a podcast about climate action and the philosophy that “all jobs are climate jobs.” The idea is to look to the spaces where you already have power and take action there. I pulled out my journal and wrote out a plan for what I call “climate action pedagogy” — a vision to help faculty members integrate climate-change issues into their teaching. As a faculty development facilitator, this is where I hold some power to make change. I didn't need to go anywhere else to act. I simply needed to keep my head where my feet were and get started. All jobs are climate jobs and all courses are climate courses.

Since then, I've worked to share this pedagogy with faculty and staff members around the world in a self-paced, online course with [OneHE](#) and via Zoom [workshops](#). My aims are twofold: to integrate this vital issue into their teaching and remind them that action is an antidote to despair. The wildfires, heat waves, and floods that increasingly appear on our news feeds are real. So is the resulting climate anxiety. Faculty and staff members can play a vital role in shifting our worldview from one of deadly consumption to that of mindful equilibrium with this planet. Read on for five ways to integrate climate action into your courses this fall.

Small is all. In addition to the climate-action mantra that “all jobs are climate jobs,” I adopted a second one from adrienne maree brown, a writer and community organizer: “[Small is all](#).” Everything — every huge system, every large change — is a collection of small actions.

Part of the battle against climate change is also a battle against “[overwhelm](#).” Shutting down and checking out is a very human response to situations that feel insurmountable. To fight it, I invite faculty members I work with to play a game with their course design and teaching choices. “How small can you make this change?” I ask them. That counters a prevailing suggestion in higher ed to scale everything. If we can't make it massive, we're told, why bother?

But keeping things small is how you begin and sustain climate action in your work. Redesign one — just one — lesson in your course to include this issue. Send an email to invite a guest speaker. Invite a colleague for coffee to brainstorm about ways to incorporate climate issues in your courses. If you start to feel overwhelmed and tempted to shut down, go smaller.

Find your feet. In seeking to make changes, educators can get tripped up by trying to be something they're not or by getting frustrated with the chorus of voices telling them how to be a great teacher. I experienced that when I first started making instructional videos for my courses and was constantly advised to create flashy, elaborate videos. I pushed back on that pressure and intentionally made simple and engaging videos that worked well for both me and my students.

Already, [more educators are embracing](#) the need for climate-action pedagogy, which means you're going to be exposed to more and more advice on what you should do. Take what you need and leave the rest. Find your own feet. Which teaching strategies align with your gifts, personality, and limitations? I make videos. That's my thing. Maybe your thing is being really good at motivating students to attend office hours, so use that time to spark climate conversations. Maybe you have a great partnership with campus librarians; talk with them about the library's climate-change content and how it might be used in your students' research projects. Perhaps you excel at being quiet enough in class to hold space for your students to reflect. Build on that strength by asking students to keep journals about their views and fears on this issue.

Practice curricular weaving. Your job here is not to design a course on climate action. You teach psychology, English, or graphic design. Your aim can be to weave this content into your existing courses and help students see that all subjects are climate subjects. Take a moment to scan your syllabus:

- Is there a lesson that's always a hit? Build on what's working. Look at the lesson through the lens of the natural world and create an opportunity for students to study climate action. Say, for example, you usually assign students to read and analyze a case study related to the causes and impacts of poverty. Add a question asking students to consider how climate change or "[climate grief](#)" might be influencing the case.
- Or come from the opposite direction: Is there a section of the course that seems to fall flat? When your students (and you) lose motivation and energy? Re-engage all of you by weaving climate action into the lesson.

Again, the point here is not to re-create the wheel or to start teaching an entirely new course. The work is to weave.

Just start. Here are specific suggestions if you're still feeling stuck about how to begin. Visit the [Nexus page](#) on the [Project Regeneration website](#), which lists various climate-action strategies and includes curated lists of resources including podcasts, videos, and readings. Provide the lists to students at the start of your next course and ask them to select one issue that speaks most strongly to them. Have them introduce themselves to the rest of the class and share which climate issue they chose and why. Simple. Just start.

Other ideas include having your students create [course zines](#), [video public-service announcements](#), [climate-action “punch lists,”](#) and explore [land-ownership](#). Don’t overthink which one will work best. Pick one, try it, note the results, and listen to your learners. You can always adapt or try something else next term. Let’s not be precious about the work of climate action.

It’s worth noting that you might encounter the rare student who doesn’t believe in climate change or believe that it’s a threat. That, too, can be a teaching moment. Invite the classroom to engage with climate doubt. Bring that doubt into the lesson as an object of inquiry, asking students to consider and design solutions to educate people about the realities of climate change.

Community is key. I’ve participated in a sobriety and recovery program, [The Luckiest Club](#), that counsels, “You can’t do it alone. Only you can do it.” This both/and method of recovery applies well to climate action. The scale of the crisis is massive, and the way forward is strewn with obstacles. Best not go it alone. Further, doing climate-action pedagogy with a few colleagues helps you notice the power of small, because when all of our small actions join together, they aren’t so small anymore.

Find a partner on your campus who is also working to integrate climate action into their courses. If you can’t find anyone to collaborate with at your home base, many of us are having this conversation on social media. On what used to be known as Twitter, search [#ClimateActionPedagogy](#) to find your people. We’re talking about it on [LinkedIn](#), too.

You can’t do it alone. You don’t have to save the world; you just have to do your part. Your one, small part, right where you already are. Only you can do it.

Karen Costa is a faculty development consultant who works with colleges and faculty members on student-success, course design, and inclusive teaching.