



Faculty Hub

2022-2023
Year in Review



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Director's Note



It has been just about a year since the first time I set foot in the Faculty Hub. I remember being in awe of the beautiful and welcoming space—those who labored to create the space seemed to have thought of everything. As impressed as I was by the space, however, I was even more excited that this initiative for educational development and faculty career support was called a “hub” instead of the typical nomenclature of “center.” The fact that the faculty at the University of Richmond had chosen to call this place the Faculty Hub revealed to me something essential about both the aspirations for this initiative and the faculty here at UR. While the etymology of the word “hub” is unknown, its meaning—the center of the spokes of a wheel—represents a sort of mission or mandate. Instead of being a passive central locale, as indicated by the name “center,” the Faculty Hub is all about creating connections radiating in many directions. These connections are the structure that keeps the institutional wheel turning and moving forward. The role of the Faculty Hub, then, is about community, bringing people together and providing space for them to learn together. It is about growth, for in this learning together, we also grow and develop. Finally, it is about impact: the ways that we connect with each other to make a difference for the institution, its faculty, and its students.

Accordingly, this "Year in Review" tells a story of community, growth, and impact. When the Faculty Hub officially opened in its new space on the third floor of Boatwright Library in 2021, we were in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic and many of our services remained virtual. Now that pandemic restrictions have eased, people are finding their way to our space to reconnect with colleagues for a meeting, a writing retreat, a workshop, a coffee break, or a recording session. As the Faculty Hub completes its fourth year in existence and its third year in its physical space, we are seeing exponential growth in the use of our facilities and services, and we're engaging more faculty members than ever before.

Just as the Faculty Hub played an essential role in helping faculty navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, we continue to provide timely support for faculty as new challenges and opportunities arise in higher education. Our "Year in Review" charts the Faculty Hub's commitment to responding to emerging faculty and student needs. Over the course of the academic year, we have striven to promote inclusion and belonging on campus, to address the challenges of new technologies like ChatGPT, to expand support for faculty scholarship, and, particularly critical in this (almost) post-pandemic year, to create opportunities for faculty to connect with and learn from each other.

We are proud to serve as a true hub for the campus community—a central place that fosters collaborations and connections to sustain the faculty who are at the heart of the University's academic excellence and cultivation of belonging.

As I complete my first year as director, I express my deep gratitude to the many members of the campus community who have welcomed me as a colleague, collaborator, and newbie finding her way. During this year, I have benefitted from the many talents of my colleagues here in the Faculty Hub and those across campus. I have also experienced firsthand the commitment and dedication of faculty members here to their students, their teaching, and their scholarship.

I invite you to reach out to me if you have feedback or suggestions for the Faculty Hub, and please know that you are welcome to visit us anytime.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kitty". The script is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Kitty Maynard
Director, Faculty Hub

A photograph of three students working on a science project outdoors. The student in the center is wearing a white baseball cap with the University of Richmond logo and is focused on a clear plastic bottle with a yellow tube inserted into it. To her left, another student wearing a red t-shirt with 'RICHMOND' printed on it and sunglasses is looking on. To the right, a third student is partially visible, also looking at the project. The background is a soft-focus view of green trees and foliage.

IMPACT

Preparing for the Future

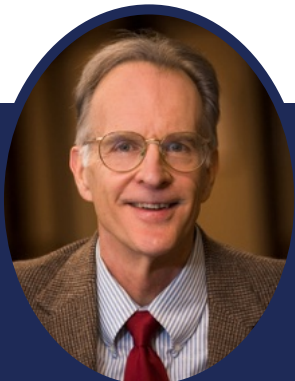
Exploring the Role of AI in Teaching and Learning

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT for text generation and Midjourney for image generation exploded in popularity over the course of the Spring 2023 semester. Major questions about academic integrity and these tools' utility in the class were raised. In response, the Faculty Hub hosted a number of Faculty Hub conversations about the impact of these tools on teaching and learning. We also visited a number of departmental meetings and offered one-on-one consultations to help faculty consider the ways the growing use of these tools affects their disciplines.

Faculty Feedback

“[This conversation was a] great overview to an issue that professors needed to understand and discuss.

[The Faculty Hub] did a fantastic job presenting a complex issue. This workshop was very informative, and I am so glad I attended.”



"Thanks for everything: your preparation, your examples, and the time you gave for audience discussion!"

Art Charlesworth, Professor of Mathematics and Computer Science



Building a Culture of Faculty Development

Early Career Faculty Seminar

In its fourth year, the Early Career Faculty Seminar is open to faculty from all five schools in their first three years of a faculty appointment. The group meets twice a month with Faculty Hub staff to discuss teaching and scholarship and to share experiences and lessons learned during their first critical years as faculty members. This year, fifteen early career faculty members participated in the group, exploring topics like inclusive pedagogy, time management, finding mentors, and teaching with technology.

Key Takeaways from ECFS Members

“ *A network of mentors and collaborators, more tools in my teaching toolbox, and a better understanding of UR*

A group of supportive colleagues

Ways of thinking about the most effective teaching strategies ”



“ECFS gave me the skills (and the confidence) to adopt a more inclusive pedagogy and to embrace a structured research schedule. Thank you for the mentorship and support during my first year at UR! This seminar is a big reason why I feel like I belong in the Spider community.”

Christine A. Mihelcic, Assistant Professor of Management

Developing Inclusive Classrooms

Inclusive Pedagogy Programs

An academic initiative since 2018, the Inclusive Pedagogy Cohort (IP) Cohort moved into the Faculty Hub in Fall 2020 and remains the Faculty Hub's key initiative for helping faculty deepen and expand their knowledge of inclusive teaching practices. This year's cohort was co-facilitated by Kylie Korsnack (Faculty Hub) and Tamar Schwartz (Law) and brought together twelve faculty from eight different departments to explore how to apply principles of inclusive pedagogy to their specific teaching contexts. Meeting twice a month throughout the spring semester, the group began by completing an inclusive syllabus workshop together and then used the recently published "Inclusive Teaching: Strategies for Promoting Equity in the College Classroom" (Hogan and Sathy, 2022) as a springboard for their bi-weekly discussions.

What Faculty Are Saying

“ ...I [now] have a network of individuals here at UR who, like myself, are all striving to improve how they integrate inclusive practices in their classrooms. I look forward to tapping into the wealth of information within this community throughout the rest of my time at UR.

This cohort gave me the chance to practice the IP mindset when planning and delivering my courses. The discussions with colleagues...provided a wealth of ideas for implementing IP during course planning and delivery.”

New This Year: Engaging Students as Partners in Inclusive Pedagogy

This academic year, the Faculty Hub expanded the IP initiative to a second cohort (IP Cohort 2.0), which focused on the theme of engaging students as partners in IP. For this initiative, the Faculty Hub employed five students as Student IP Consultants who joined together with five faculty members and two facilitators to form a cohort comprised of students, faculty, and staff. This group met twice a month for the entire academic year and was tasked with a specific project: to co-create a faculty development program that would bring student voices and perspectives into UR's discussions on inclusive teaching. A team of three cohort members (a faculty member, a staff member, and a student consultant) presented a snapshot of this cohort's work at Elon University's Conference on Engaged Learning in June 2023. The cohort will also be piloting the first iteration of their newly developed program – The IP Partnership Program – in Fall 2023. After the initial phase of the pilot, the Faculty Hub hopes to open this program up to a new cohort of faculty/staff participants in Spring 2024.



Student Participant

“ Being a part of this cohort has truly expanded this university for me, and I’m really looking forward to the work that we’ll be doing next year as well. It’s taught me how much of an impact I can have and made me feel heard as a student. ”

Faculty Participant

The great joy of this cohort has been the [student] partnership aspect of it. While I had read some of this material before, the students brought fresh insights to it every week, and I learned from them in a way that I didn’t expect. ”

A serene landscape featuring a calm lake in the background, surrounded by lush green trees. In the foreground, a family of geese, including an adult and several fluffy goslings, are gathered on a grassy bank. The scene is bathed in soft, natural light, creating a peaceful and idyllic atmosphere. The word "GROWTH" is superimposed in a large, bold, black serif font across the center of the image.

GROWTH

Enhanced Scholarship Support

Writing Retreats, Groups, and Coaching

This year, the Faculty Hub increased its level of support for faculty scholarship. In addition to offering regular writing retreats and writing groups, this year we launched a new professional development service that provides faculty the chance to work with an experienced writing coach on projects such as major articles, book proposals, book chapters, external grants, and external fellowships. Thus far, 16 faculty members have participated in the coaching program. We also hosted programs for all faculty with nationally recognized writing experts Helen Sword, James Lang, and Tara Gray.

In addition, we partnered with Boatwright Memorial Library and the Office of Foundation, Corporate, and Government Relations to offer programming support for research and finding grants.

26

**Scholarship-Focused
Events This Year**

“The coaching process offered me new perspectives to think about my project, which was helpful [for] my grant proposal.”

Growing Services and Engagement

One-On-One Support

The Faculty Hub provides University of Richmond faculty with personalized support for teaching and scholarship through confidential, individual, or small group consultations.

We work with faculty to practice new ideas, address challenges, create projects, and design learning experiences.

This past year we consulted with faculty from all five schools and across all ranks from Professors to Adjuncts.

162

Total Consultations

18%

**Increase in Consultations
Compared to Last Year**

95

**Faculty Requested
Consultations**

16%

**of University Faculty
Consulted with Faculty Hub**



What Faculty Are Saying

“ I had a great consultation experience! I described a teaching challenge in one of the courses I teach (i.e., how to hold students accountable in group/pair projects), and my consultant immediately identified the pedagogy term 'team-based learning,' and sent me helpful links to relevant pedagogy resources. The consultant also shared an example of a peer-and self-evaluation form, which helped me easily create my own for my course. I implemented this evaluation form in my course this semester, and it really helped me monitor student collaboration dynamics, and even helped me intervene in a couple of groups during the semester by adjusting team members. I'm very happy about the result, and will keep using this approach. ”



More Events, More Opportunities

Faculty Hub Programming

We offered over 40 more events in the Faculty Hub this past year than the previous year. In addition, our staff and campus partners shared their expertise and resources over the course of 21 shorter format "Morning Blend" sessions.

Selected Events from 2022-2023

- "Text-Generating Artificial Intelligence and Its Implications for Higher Ed, Teaching, and Scholarship"
- "Getting Published and Getting Read" with James Lang
- "Promoting Academic Integrity in Your First-Year Seminar"
- "Course Design Institute"
- "Specifications Grading"
- "Teaching Difficult Topics" with Cynthia Ganote
- "Balancing Flexibility and Structure"
- "High-Impact Practices for Creating a Flexible Learning Environment on Blackboard"

96

Events

44%

Increase in
Attendance in Faculty
Hub Events Compared
to 2021-2022

4.75

Average Satisfaction
Rating for Faculty
Hub Events
(out of 5)



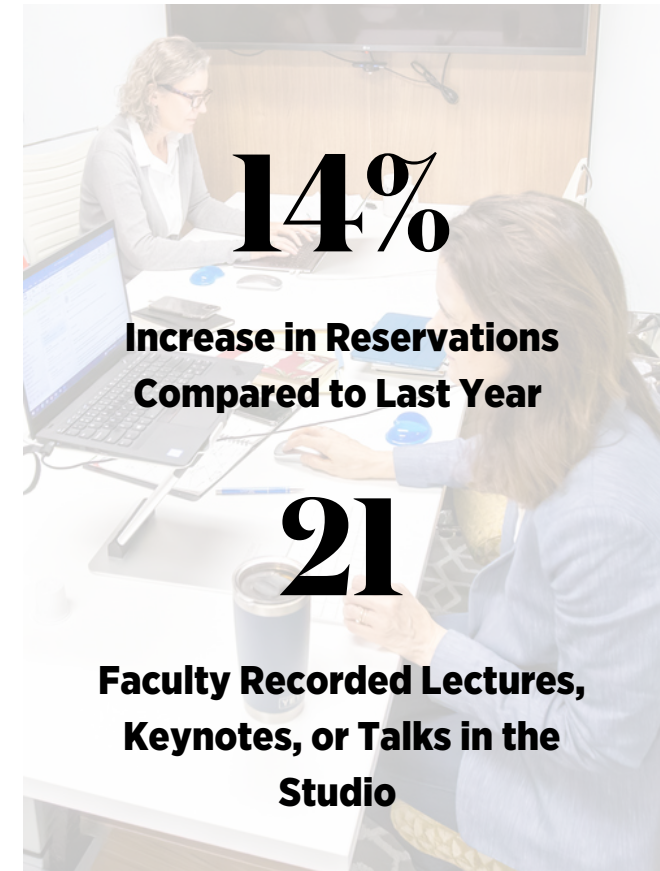
COMMUNITY

Offering a Welcoming Space

Writing, Collaborating, and Gathering

The Faculty Hub space offers a wide range of functionality including meeting and quiet writing spaces, as well as room to accommodate large conferences. This year we hosted over 550 meetings in our reservable spaces and many more took advantage of our drop-in workspaces.

A new addition this year was the use of the space for departmental conferences and workshops, including: "Philosophy and International Law: Contestations and Extensions," the "Mid-Atlantic International Trade Workshop," and the "River City Project."



"The Faculty Hub was an exceptional space for hosting the 'River City Project,' UR's sustainability-focused faculty development workshop. The Faculty Hub has multiple rooms, sitting areas, and spaces that make it an ergonomic and inviting space for workshops, education, networking, and community building."

Daniel Hart, Associate Director of Sustainability and Environmental Justice

Supporting a Community of Scholars

Hub Talks and Scholars' Exchange



The Faculty Hub continues to build community across disciplines and schools with Faculty Hub Talks, designed to enrich the scholarly engagement of our faculty by focusing on recent and ongoing scholarship being conducted at the University.

The Faculty Hub hosted a panel of recent Faculty Fellows to learn about their important work. That panel included:

- David Brandenberger on his English translation of a famous Stalin-era textbook, "A Short History of the USSR"
- Monti Datta on the nature and role of trust in contemporary anti-slavery organizations
- Julietta Singh on the narrative script for her film, "The Nest," an experimental documentary in collaboration with filmmaker Chase Joynt that charts the history of a single brick-and-mortar home in central Canada

“ We need to do more of this. Our faculty do such amazing work and we never get to hear about it. This was terrific. ”



We also hosted the following Hub Talks this year:

- Marina Astakhova: “Passion Amid the Pandemic: Applying a Person-Centered Approach to Explore the Relationships between Co-Existence of Work and Non-Work Passion and Life Satisfaction”
- Julie McConnell: “Bridging the Justice Gap through the University of Richmond Children’s Defense Clinic”
- Matthew Oware: “Claiming Black Lives: Reverse Passing and Identity Work Among White Individuals”



Additionally, a new series of faculty panels, Scholars’ Exchange, was introduced this year. A panel of three faculty members was asked to address a theme from the perspective of their scholarship, discipline, and experience. The first theme was “truth,” and the panel featured Vincent Chiao (School of Law), Lauren Henley (Jepson School of Leadership), and Eric Yellin (School of Arts & Sciences).



“This was a great idea, and a great event. It provided me time in the day to have an intellectual scholarly discussion around a specific topic that resonated with my work.”

Manuella Meyer, Associate Professor of History and Associate Dean, School of Arts & Sciences



Celebrating Scholarship and Teaching

Celebration of Teaching and Faculty Accomplishments Reception

In March 2023, the Faculty Hub, in conjunction with Boatwright Memorial Library and the Office of the Provost, hosted the University's annual Faculty Accomplishments Reception. The event recognized over 180 faculty members who achieved success in 2022 in the form of research and scholarly publications as well as creative achievements in the visual and performing arts.

In early April, we held the second annual Celebration of Teaching, created and hosted by the Faculty Hub, where faculty share teaching materials and outcomes and celebrate their successes in teaching.



Faculty Profile

Isaac Skromne, Associate Professor of Biology

Isaac Skromne is a developmental biologist who uses zebrafish to explore the mechanisms involved in building the nervous system. His research is published in leading developmental biology journals and is supported by numerous grants. He is a dedicated champion of student learning both as a lab mentor and a teacher who has regularly engaged with the Faculty Hub over the last four years.

Creating Cross-Disciplinary Content That Stretches Students' Understanding of Hard Science Courses

In his quest to broaden students' understanding of hard science, he juggles the task of integrating science and current events. The goal is for students "to see the connections between their courses across disciplines." Skromne's philosophy is evident in his developmental biology and neurodevelopment courses, where cross-disciplinary discussions involve controversial topics such as stem cells and reproductive rights. "Those discussions can be difficult. I was not trained on having those discussions...with the students, but I've certainly learned from past years coming to the Hub how to make those discussions and ensure they are inclusive."

Skromne underscores the value of the Faculty Hub, sharing that, "one of the ways the Hub has helped me create an inclusive space, one where those discussions can happen, is by giving my students agency." This strategy shifted his teaching methodology from instructor-led to a more collaborative approach. "Over the years I've changed my process for designing a course from me creating the grading scheme to giving students input on how they want to be graded." This approach establishes a classroom environment that promotes respectful, open discussions.



Responsive Teaching Based on Student Feedback

Skromne considers responsive teaching to be the cornerstone of his pedagogical approach. "I've changed my developmental biology course every year since I got here because, until now, I wasn't pleased with the way it was going," says Skromne, emphasizing his commitment to growth. His introspective approach to teaching, assisted by student evaluations and the Faculty Hub's Facilitated Course Assessment service, help steer the course's direction.

He points out that earlier in his career, he taught developmental biology from an evolutionary perspective, but found it detached from his students' immediate context. He adapted and "now the content is based more on specific topics like stem cells and reproductive technologies - things that are more proximal to the students' lives."

Skromne also made significant changes to his course structure based on student feedback. Initially, students compiled a grant proposal for their final project; however, they did not always find it helpful in their career development. Acknowledging this, Skromne "switched the class to a CURE (Course-Based Undergraduate Research Experience) because they're going to have to be able to summarize and analyze complex information regardless of their various career choices." Skromne values student feedback, recognizing its vital role in refining his teaching practices. "Reading the students' evaluations sometimes makes me uncomfortable. Nobody likes to be criticized, but from discomfort comes knowledge and insight. I learn and I grow as a teacher. It is essential for the evolution of my teaching," Skromne noted.

Writing Groups Help Build a Sense of Community and Accountability

Skromne highly values the sense of community and accountability engendered by the Faculty Hub's writing groups and retreats. As Skromne says, "I have a hard time writing, and so I like to take advantage of these programs because they put a little bit of pressure on me to be present." Moreover, Skromne appreciates the communal aspect of these programs. He acknowledges, "Writing can be very isolating. One of the things I like about the writing programs is that they build community." By participating in these groups, he interacts with colleagues from diverse disciplines, and the exchange of ideas creates a dynamic intellectual environment that resonates beyond these sessions.

For instance, he brought Sydney Watts, Associate Professor of History and Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies, into his developmental biology class to discuss gender portrayals in scientific books. "These opportunities have emerged because people from different disciplines have been put in the same room and you naturally start talking," he explains.

Skromne believes the Faculty Hub is an indispensable tool for his teaching growth. "If the Faculty Hub wasn't available, I wouldn't be doing the teaching I do," he asserts. The Faculty Hub's programs facilitate growth, fostering teaching practices that, in Skromne's words, "trickle down and really benefit our students."

Looking Forward

In the University's strategic plan adopted this spring, one of the five key priorities is academic excellence. For this priority, the plan proposes to "invest in the Faculty Hub and build its capacity to connect faculty and support teaching and scholarship." We look forward to working with faculty and administrative leaders to meet faculty needs and institutional priorities as they take shape. In addition, in the coming academic year, we will be focused on the implementation of the new general education program, the implications of AI tools on teaching and scholarship, participation in institutional efforts on inclusion and belonging, and support for faculty scholars.





Faculty
Hub

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