

2024-2025

Youngstown State University
INSTITUTE FOR TEACHING & LEARNING

Annual Report

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Vision, Mission, and Values

VISION: The Institute for Teaching and Learning will be a catalyst towards a dynamic, learning-centered environment focused on teaching excellence in service or our core purpose – student learning.

MISSION: The Institute for Teaching and Learning leverages data and best practice to guide innovative, inclusive, and integrative teaching. ITL elevates reflective practice and a focus on student learning towards student success.

VALUES: The Institute for Teaching and Learning values the centrality of student success, intentional collaborations, advocacy for systemic support of teaching and learning, equity and inclusion, continuous improvement and lifelong learning, and transparency.

Institute Staff and Key Contributors

Hillary Fuhrman, Assistant Provost, Teaching & Learning

Alison Kaufman, Assistant Director, Assessment

Stephanie Richardson, Coordinator, Continuous Improvement

Cary Wecht, Director, Faculty Development

2024-25 STUDENT STAFF: **Jordan Sarjeant**, Graduate Assistant Intern

2024-25 YSU WORKSHOP PARTNERS: **Snjezana Balaz** (Physics, Astronomy, Geological, & Environmental Sciences), **Claire Berardini** (Student Success), **Joy Polkabra Byers** (Student Affairs), **Jessica Chill** (YSU Online), **Amy Cossentino** (Experiential Learning & Engagement), **Paul Ditchey** (Communications), **Rachel Faerber-Ovaska** (YSU Online), **Rosalyn Donaldson** (IT Training Services), **Kendra Fowler** (Management & Marketing), **Mike Greco** (Academic Success Center), **Mollie Hartup** (Honors), **Edmund Ickert** (Graduate Studies in Health and Rehabilitation Sciences), **Jessie Jones** (Math Achievement Center), **Nicole Kent-Strollo** (Dean of Students), **Matt Lindberg** (Psychological Sciences & Counseling), **Gina McGranahan** (Accessibility Services), **Angela Messenger** (Writing Center), **Susan Moorer** (Experiential Learning & Engagement), **Francine Packard** (Student Counseling Services), **Christina Saenger** (Williamson College of Business Administration), **Sev Van slambrouck** (Graduate & Research), **Dave Yargo** (IT Training Services)

2024-25 ACADEMIC SENATE TEACHING & LEARNING COMMITTEE: **Joe Alberti** (Cyberlearning), **Snjezana Balaz** (Physics, Astronomy, Geological, & Environmental Sciences), **Amy Fluker** (Humanities & Social Sciences), **Hillary Fuhrman** (ITL), **Jessi Hinz** (Management & Marketing), **Cryshanna Jackson Leftwich** (Humanities & Social Sciences), **Alison Kaufman** (ITL), **Monica Merrill** (Criminal Justice & Consumer Science), **Michelle Nelson** (Art), **Tomi Ovaska** (Lariccia School of Accounting & Finance), **Jordan Pintar** (Student), **Debra Wallace** (Nursing), **Cary Wecht** – Committee Chair (ITL/Communication), **Sharyn Zembower** (IT Customer Services)

2024-25 ASSESSMENT COUNCIL: **Diana Awad Scrocco** (English & World Languages), **Hillary Fuhrman** (ITL), **Michael Greco** (Academic Success Center), **John Hazy** (Criminal Justice & Consumer Science), **Alison Kaufman** (ITL), **Robert Korenic** (School of Computer Science, Information, & Engineering Technology), **Melissa McKenney** (Financial Aid), **Ryan McNicholas** (Campus Recreation), **Stephanie Richardson** (ITL), **Jordan Sarjeant** (Student), **Stephanie Smith** (Art), **Xiaolou Yang** (Lariccia School of Accounting & Finance)

Plan for Strategic Action to Take Charge of our Future

Highlighted ITL achievements in 2024-2025 aligned with the [Plan for Academic Actions](#) goal to, “bring innovative, student-centered teaching to scale in order to promote life-long learning and increase retention.”

Strategy: Update University policies and guidelines... to reflect the importance of faculty engagement in innovative teaching strategies.

Highlighted Achievements

- On March 2025, Academic Senate approved the policy [Supporting Student Self-monitoring by Posting Grades in and through Blackboard LMS](#). This policy requires all faculty members to post grades for all assignments in or through the Blackboard LMS. Along with supporting students’ requests for this practice, this policy supports the best practices in helping students to receive feedback and reflect and adjust their behaviors.
- ITL staff continued to serve on university wide committees of critical importance, including the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee, Student Government Association, General Education Committee, Academic Integrity Committee, and the Student Success Taskforce.



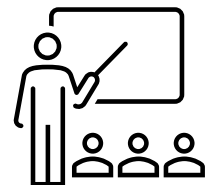
Focus for 2025-2026

- ITL will work to support both part-time and full-time faculty in implementation of the new [Supporting Student Self-monitoring by Posting Grades in and through Blackboard LMS](#) policy.
- ITL will continue to advocate for university policy changes that center innovative teaching and student learning. Additionally, ITL will support faculty in the implementation of new policy and guidelines related to Ohio Senate Bill 1, [Advance Ohio Higher Education Act](#).

Strategy: Define expectations and provide training opportunities for faculty to learn and apply best pedagogical practices.

Highlighted Achievements

- ITL continued to offer [programming for faculty](#), including the continuation of the New Faculty Academy with sessions covering student involvement, academic integrity, supporting all students, supporting students’ mental health, engaging all students, and Universal Design for Learning.



- Analysis in 2025 shows [evidence of widespread improvement](#) since the implementation of the TEACH principles in students' perception of effective teaching in face-to-face courses for faculty who participate regularly in ITL programming.

Focus for 2025-2026

- ITL will continue to strategically program, including high impact programming through professional development that focuses on gateway courses:
 - During Summer 2025, ITL staff will be training all YSU 1500 instructors (both new and returning) on active learning strategies.
 - ITL staff are working with the YSU Mathematics and Statistics department on an E-PRIME program review through the Mathematical Association of America to identify goals and areas of continuous improvement in undergraduate math education.
- Responding to feedback from university stakeholders, ITL will partner with campus experts to develop a Fall 2025 workshop series on best practices for pedagogy that supports our international student population.

Strategy: Provide faculty and students with the support and infrastructure needed to excel in technology-based learning.

Highlighted Achievements

- Twenty-seven participants joined [Dr. Hayden Noel](#), visiting YSU from the University of Illinois, to learn more about enhancing engagement in asynchronous online courses.
- ITL staff continued to partner with stakeholders at YSU to build policy, guidelines, and resources around the use of Generative AI on campus.
- In partnership with YSU Online and the Beeghly College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, ITL staff helped pilot the use of a social annotation in Blackboard via two tools, [Feedback Fruits](#) and [Perusall](#).

Focus for 2025-2026

- ITL staff continue to meet regularly as a part of the Academic Continuity Team, a group made up of the leaders of ITL, IT Training Services, and YSU Online, to coordinate relevant training initiatives related to technology-based learning.
- The Assistant Provost of Teaching and Learning will be leading a team from YSU in the [AAC&U's 2025-2026 Institute on AI, Pedagogy, and the Curriculum](#) (IAIPC). This year-long institute is designed to help universities develop action plans for AI use at the course, program, and campus level.



Strategy: Coordinate with ITL to develop tools for the improvement, evaluation, and assessment of Teaching and Learning.

Highlighted Achievements

- Co-curricular and academic programs continue to participate in annual [student learning assessment](#) reporting.
- In Fall 2024, ITL hired a new Coordinator, Continuous Improvement Processes to manage the growing number of online tools used via Watermark to support effective teaching. Significant time was spent developing clear processes, resources, and offering training for the following processes hosted in [Watermark](#): Tenure and Promotion, Chairperson Evaluations for Faculty Performance, Student Course Feedback Surveys, Applications for Research Professorships, and Applications for Sabbatical/Faculty Improvement Leave.
- ITL widely promoted the revised [Student Course Feedback Surveys](#) after its launch in Summer 2024. In Fall 2024 responses rates improved to 50.5% compared to 32.46% in Fall 2023. In Spring 2025 responses rates improved to 38.64% compared to 30.16% in Spring 2024. In partnership with statistician Dr. Lucy Kerns, ITL also evaluated the [reliability of the Student Course Feedback](#) tool. ITL also developed guidelines for [interpreting and using student course feedback](#).

Focus for 2025-2026

- A new tool, [Watermark Planning and Self Study](#), for academic and co-curricular assessment reporting is being implemented over the next two years. ITL staff will work with a pilot group of programs in fall 2025, with the goal of moving majority of programs from Taskstream AMS to this user-friendly platform for future annual assessment reporting.
- ITL is working with Chairs and Deans, to develop assessment plans and processes for the growing number of university associates and certificate programs. In summer 2025, chairs and deans are submitting learning outcomes and curriculum maps for these programs. Over the course of the year, ITL will be working to get these programs into active annual assessment reporting.



Strategy: Implement a faculty development and mentoring plan.

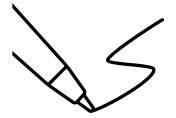
Highlighted Achievements

- ITL will be co-launching the AI Faculty Mentors program with YSU Online and IT Training Services. Four faculty mentors have been named for the upcoming academic year and will serve to educate their peers on best practices in using generative AI for teaching and learning.

- In addition to the mentoring offered through the New Faculty Academy, the Assistant Provost of Teaching and Learning met individually with each College Dean to discuss needs related to professional development, support, and training in their respective colleges.
- ITL continues to offer Tenure and Promotion Workshops (in-person and virtually) and share resources via Microsoft Teams. Faculty who had successfully navigated tenure and/or promotion processes offered their portfolios as examples for faculty seeking to apply for tenure and/or promotion to review.

Focus for 2025-2026

- The New Faculty Academy and Tenure and Promotion Workshops will continue into the next year. ITL staff are using participant feedback as well as the goals of the university and colleges, to ensure these offerings support the development of university faculty.
- In partnership with the English faculty, ITL is offering a Writing in the Discipline (WID) mentoring program, where WID mentors support development in writing curriculum specific to respective disciplines. This partnership grew out of a grant received last year, [Sensemaking for Student Success](#).



Programming Highlights

Despite spending a significant amount of time launching Watermark systems to improve teaching and learning over the past year and supporting goal setting initiatives with the Office of Academic Affairs, ITL still programmed in a way that was beneficial to campus stakeholders.

Hosted Speakers



In Fall 2024, **Dr. Elizabeth Wardle** led *There is No Inoculation: Exploring Solutions to the “Writing Problem”*, a hands-on session for 20 participants that examined what makes writing effective and how writing research can inform teaching across disciplines. Dr. Wardle is a leading scholar in writing studies and Director of the Howe Center for Writing Excellence at Miami University.



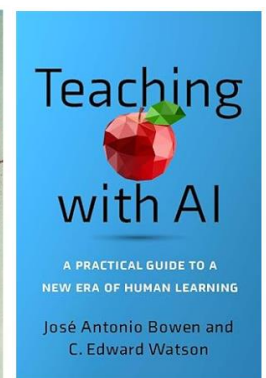
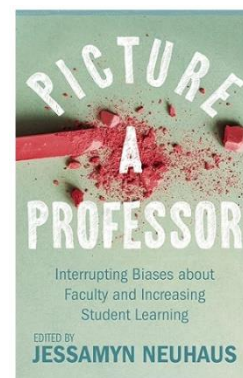
In Spring 2025, **Dr. Hayden Noel** presented *Enhancing Engagements in Asynchronous Online Learning*, offering 27 participants practical, research-based strategies to boost student participation, motivation, and instructor presence in online courses.

“I thought this was incredibly valuable and I appreciate y'all bringing it to campus. I'm thinking of ways I can implement it across my courses.” YSU Faculty

2024-25 Workshops and Series (participants)

ITL continues to shift from one-off workshops to a more strategic focus on workshop series and on-going engagement opportunities for faculty – building connection, support, and culture of teaching and learning.

- BCLASSE Planning: AI for Teaching and Learning (18)
- Class Observation for Chairs (28)
- **Generative AI Professional Learning Community:** Assessing Learning in the Age of AI (6), Using Social Annotation for Course Readings (10)
- **Graduate Student Assessment Presentations:** From Campus to Career (18), Impact of Study Abroad (4)
- **Faculty Book Groups:** Picture a Professor (13), Teaching with AI (22)
- **Fresh Start:** Community Engagement in Action (30), Social Annotation = Social Engagement (35), What is Community Engagement? (29), What's New in Technology (29)
- **New Faculty Academy:** Student Involvement & Academic Integrity (3), Supporting All Students (6), Supporting Students' Mental Health (5), Engaging Students/Universal Design for Learning 101 (4)
- **New Faculty Orientations:** Fall Part-Time (34), Spring Part-Time (14), Full-Time (19)
- **Preparing for Tenure and/or Promotion:** Summer (8), Spring (19)



“I always find the trainings offered by ITL to be incredibly beneficial and efficient. Your offerings are very much appreciated!” YSU Faculty

Lilly Conference

In collaboration with college Deans, ITL sponsored 15 faculty to attend the nationally recognized Lilly Conference on College and University Teaching—a dynamic forum where educators explore innovative, research-driven strategies to elevate student learning and advance scholarly teaching.

Faculty participants included: Jeff Basile (BCLASSE), Stephanie Caldwell (BCLASSE), Dawna Cerney (BCLASSE), Susan Citrak (STEM), Jeff Coldren (BCLASSE), Ron Davis (BCHHS), Kendra Fowler (WCBA), Sebastian Giraldo (CCAC), Dessalegn Guyo (BCHHS), Sherri Harper Woods (BCHHS), Jessi Hinz (WCBA), Sepideh Khavari (STEM), Matt Lindberg (BCLASSE), Debra Wallace (BCHHS), and Gloria Zhang (WCBA)



Faculty identified a wide array of benefits and takeaways from the conference:



I learned a lot of technology that can be used in the teaching and learning process in the era of AI.

One of the main takeaways I'm planning to bring into my teaching is using more low-stakes, formative assessments to keep students engaged and give them more timely feedback.

I learned the importance of identifying root causes—like lack of confidence or unclear expectations—and responding with proactive support rather than just stricter policies.

I had the chance to connect with educators from different backgrounds, reflect on my own teaching, and learn about evidence-based strategies I can actually apply in the classroom

It was a chance to focus on teaching methods (instead of discipline specific content), which is not always top of mind. It was also a nice way to bond with fellow faculty.

I picked up a few more things that I can do to make my syllabus more interactive and incorporate AI into lessons in a way that enhances rather than substitutes for learning.

I would really like to explore different grading methods especially in my upper division classes where I have smaller class sizes, so more latitude to do so.

I am definitely integrating into my classes the non traditional discussion posts... create podcasts, videos or audio responses instead of just writing.

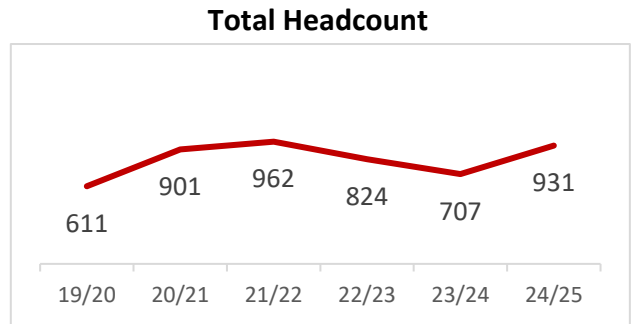
I appreciated the interdisciplinary nature of the sessions and the chance to network, which really broadened how I think about effective, research-informed teaching.



Campus Reach

HEADCOUNT YEAR-OVER-YEAR CHANGE

	2023-24	2024-25	
Full-Time Faculty	371	615	+ 66%
Part-Time Faculty	64	107	+ 67%
Administration	127	96	+ 119%
Staff	129	75	- 33%
Student	7	33	+ 371 %
Community Members	9	5	- 44%
Total	707	931	



40%

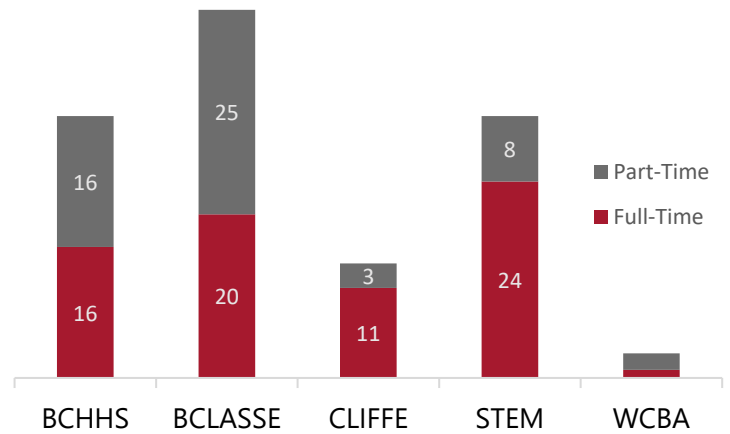
of participants engaged more than once in 24-25'

15.53

average attendance per offering in 24-25'

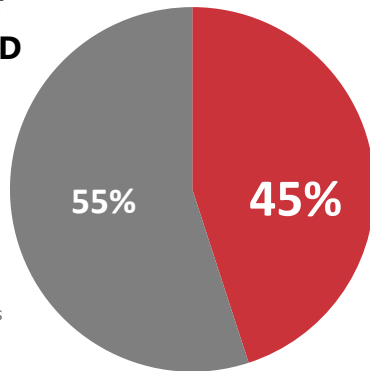
**Data does not include OAA Purpose & Goal Statement participation*

COUNT OF FACULTY INTERACTING WITH ITL FOR THE FIRST-TIME IN 2024-2025



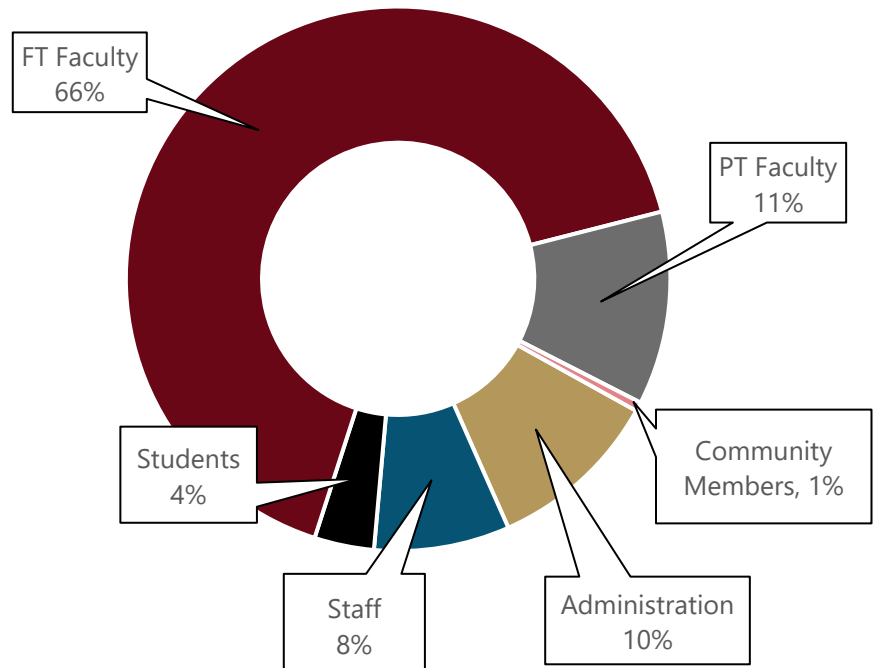
PERCENTAGE of FACULTY* SERVED in 2024-25

- Served in 24-25
- Hope to Serve

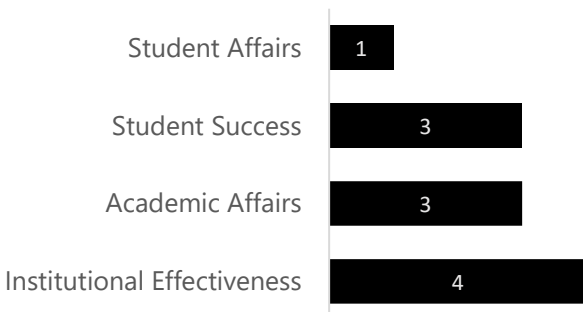


*Total faculty number includes full- and part-time faculty (Source: YSU Institutional Resources and Analytics)

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANT HEADCOUNT: 2024-2025



COUNT OF STAFF INTERACTING WITH ITL FOR THE FIRST-TIME IN 2024-2025



Assessment of Student Learning Summary

Annual reporting on the assessment of student learning by both [academic](#) and [co-curricular](#) programs is an essential tool for evaluating student learning and identifying ways that ITL can provide targeted support, workshops, and resources for both faculty and staff that encourage student success. Both academic and co-curricular units continued to engage in the assessment of student learning in 2024-2025 on reporting cycles through Taskstream Assessment Management System (AMS).

SUBMISSION RATE TRENDS

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Academic	59%	<i>Listening Tour</i>	80%	70%	77%	75%	79%	87%
Co-Curricular	88%	71%	90%	75%	75%	86%	90%	91%

2024-2025 ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Increased Reporting Rate:** For a third year in a row, ITL successfully increased the reporting rate by streamlining processes for accredited programs, conducting targeted outreach, and offering flexibility to programs experiencing staffing constraints or changes. ITL anticipates a slight decrease in response rate next year because of the influx of certificate and associates' programs and need for individualized support for each of these programs.
- **Planning and Self Study:** In spring 2025, it was announced that Taskstream AMS would be discontinued by 2027. As a result, ITL began implementing a new Watermark tool, Planning and Self-Study (PS&S). PS&S is a user-friendly product for annual assessment reporting that may also serve to support strategic planning, goal reporting, and course-based assessment. Implementation of the tool is in progress, and programs will begin in a pilot format in fall 2025.
- **Collaboration with Ohio Assessment Coordinators:** The Assistant Director of Assessment continues to meet monthly with other Ohio Assessment Coordinators for Cleveland State University, Kent State University, University of Akron, University of Toledo, Bowling Green State University, Shawnee State University, and Wright State University. These monthly meetings have been particularly useful this past year to discuss how Senate Bill 1 may impact assessment and evaluation processes across the state.
- **Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Surveys:** This past spring, ITL administered three versions of Ruffalo Noel Levitz survey tools to YSU students. The Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) was administered to undergraduate students aged 18-24. The Adult Student Priorities Survey (ASPS) was administered to undergraduate students age 25 and older, and graduate students. Both the SSI and ASPS have been administered for over a decade. For the first time this spring, ITL also administered the Priorities Survey for Online Learners (PSOL). This survey version was designed to capture online student satisfaction. When looking across all three versions, 20% of students participated in their respective survey. Data will continue to be disseminated widely across campus over the 2025-2026 academic year.

Looking Forward to 2025-2026

Since 2019, ITL has established itself as not only a useful resource for faculty, staff, and students on campus, but as an entity engaged in carrying out a strategic institutional goal to “bring innovative, student-centered teaching to scale in order to promote life-long learning and increase retention.” ITL plans to build on a successful first 6 years of programming, continue offering high-impact programming for faculty and staff, and focus on the following additional areas.

Academic Master Plan Support: The Assistant Provost of Teaching and Learning was instrumental in helping programs and departments develop goals as part of the Academic Master Plan. ITL will continue to support Chairs and faculty in work around the Academic Master Plan into the next year.

Assessment of Associates and Certificate Program: Through the next academic year, ITL staff will be working with chairs and/or program coordinators to ensure all associate degree and Certificate programs (above 17 credit hours) have student learning assessment plans and are actively collecting and reporting on student learning data.

Implementation of Planning and Self-Study: ITL will work to fully implement [Watermark Planning and Self Study](#) for academic and co-curricular assessment reporting. ITL will work with programs to align student learning outcome assessment with other strategic priorities and institutional learning outcomes.

Institute on AI, Pedagogy, and the Curriculum: The Assistant Provost of Teaching and Learning will be leading a team from YSU in the [AAC&U’s 2025-2026 Institute on AI, Pedagogy, and the Curriculum](#) (IAIPC). This year-long institute is designed to help universities develop action plans for AI use at the course, program, and campus level.

Student Employee Assessment: ITL is working with co-curricular units in both Student Success and Student Affairs to brainstorm and build tools for collecting and analyzing learning data from student employees related to the YSU Career Competencies as developed by the Office of Career Exploration and Development.

Watermark Resources on Wiki: With the growing number of Watermark processes managed by ITL and the hiring of the Coordinator of Continuous Improvement Processes, ITL staff are working to further develop tools and resources to post to the Wiki page for department Chairs.



Appendix

Academic Standards Policy Proposal

Supporting Student Self-Monitoring by Posting Grades in or through Blackboard LMS

Introduction: Students transitioning from high school to college often struggle with self-monitoring their academic progress. High school environments typically provide more structured and frequent feedback, whereas college students are expected to independently track their performance. This policy proposal aims to support students in developing the necessary skills for self-monitoring by ensuring consistent access to their grades through Blackboard.

This policy proposal is **NOT** about:

1. *Changing your grading schema or policies:* you may continue to use the same grading approach you have used in the past; the only change is that you record any grades you assign in Blackboard for students to be able to view. This may be in addition to, or instead of, other grade recording methods, whichever you prefer.
2. *Computing a total grade for students:* this policy only asks that you post individual grades. Students can compute their class standing and final grades using your syllabus grading structure, if you prefer they build that skill or you wish to reserve the ability to make final grade adjustments.
3. *Blackboard final grades:* this policy is not about the final grade column or transferring grades from Blackboard to Banner.
4. *Timely feedback:* Much Senate work had been done on articulating and supporting expectations around timely feedback, including the *TEACH Principles of Good Practice in Teaching*, and the *Reciprocal Responsibilities for Undergraduate Students and Instructors*.
5. *Grade reports ahead of the withdrawal deadline:* this proposal does not address the course requirement to provide a grade on a substantial class assignment, as that topic is already outlined in the OEA Agreement.

Rationale: Why provide access to grades in Blackboard?

1. **Monitoring Grade Progress:** Accessible grade information allows students to track their academic performance continuously and reduces the risk of students losing track of their grades due to misplaced papers or other issues.
2. **Bridging the High School-College Gap:** Particularly for our first- and second-year students, they are still in the process of developing the skillsets of self-monitoring, self-regulation, and academic responsibility. In high school many of these skills were significantly supported by teachers, including posting every single grade in their gradebook.
3. **Evidence-based stance:** research indicates that students are more likely to succeed when they receive regular feedback on their performance. “Students are more likely to succeed in classrooms that assess their performance and give frequent feedback about their performance **in ways that enable ... [them] to adjust their behaviors.**” Tinto, V. (2012).

Policy Proposal:

1. **Policy:** All faculty members are required to post grades for all assignments (homework, quizzes, exams, and other assessments) in or through the Blackboard LMS. Faculty are not required to compute a final grade in Blackboard.
2. **Implementation:** Faculty will have access to training and support on how to use Blackboard for grade posting.



Evidence of TEACH Framework Success

| A Case for Continued Support of ITL |

The purpose of this brief is to summarize the impact of the Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL). ITL was instrumental in the creation and approval of the [TEACH](#) framework in spring 2022. The TEACH Framework is meant to define principles of good practice in teaching at Youngstown State University (YSU), and is organized around five themes:

Transparent

Evidence-Based

Aspirational

Communicative

Humane

This document summarizes key findings that point to ITL’s effectiveness in improving instructional quality at YSU since TEACH.

What we know about supporting faculty development ([Brown & Kurzweil, 2018](#); [Haras et al., 2017](#)):

- ✓ Investing in instructional quality boosts student retention, which directly increases net revenue. Retaining one student for four years generates the same revenue as recruiting four who leave after one—at a fraction of the cost
- ✓ Higher instructional quality improves learning outcomes, motivation, and course completion—reducing costly course retakes and accelerating time to degree, which lowers institutional inefficiencies.

Evidence of Widespread Improvement

ITL analyzed all end of course Student Feedback Survey data from the 2024–2025 academic year, using anonymized student feedback records from the Watermark Course Evaluation tool. Courses led by professional staff were excluded from the analysis (i.e., Success Seminars). Faculty were classified as “engaged” if they participated in at least two ITL activities over the past three years (197 faculty met this criterion) and courses were identified either as *engaged* or *not engaged*.

While overall differences in student feedback were small, a deeper analysis of **face-to-face courses** revealed statistically significant improvements in student ratings for courses taught by the faculty engaged with ITL. Out of 17 survey items measuring instructor behavior, 11 showed significant differences ($p < 0.05$) among engaged faculty, based on over 28,000 student responses.

	Engaged	Not Engaged	Difference
The instructor was available during scheduled office/support hours.	3.00	2.87	+ .13
The instructor made feedback and/or grades readily available.	3.61	3.53	+ .08
The instructor responded to messages within 48 business hours.	3.18	3.11	+ .07
The instructor shared how to succeed in the course.	3.65	3.63	+ .02

The instructor indicated when to expect feedback or graded student work.	3.55	3.50	+ .05
I had a sense of my standing in the course...	3.59	3.54	+ .05
The course content was easy to access.	3.66	3.63	+ .03
The course used a variety of materials to support my learning.	3.58	3.53	+ .05
The technology used to deliver this course provided an effective learning environment.	3.62	3.56	+ .06
It was clear how and when to communicate with my instructor.	3.65	3.61	+ .04
The instructor responded to messages within 48 business hours.	3.18	3.11	+ .07
I felt like I could reach out to my instructor.	3.61	3.59	+ .02

From 2022 to 2025, YSU faculty logged **1,361** interactions with ITL through programs like the New Faculty Academy, Teaching with AI book group, and workshops on inclusive grading, international student support, and evidence-based strategies. During this time, ITL welcomed **215** new participants. While many factors influence teaching and learning, this 2024-2025 course data shows a positive link between faculty engagement with ITL and students recognizing effective instructional behaviors.

Positive Trends in Student Satisfaction

Additional insights from the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) suggest YSU undergraduate students are reporting improvements in effective teaching since the launch of TEACH in 2022. The survey tool captures student satisfaction across both academic and campus experiences and asks students to focus on areas of importance and satisfaction.

Six survey items related to teaching effectiveness are included below, with student satisfaction mean on a 7-point scale listed:

	2022	2025	Growth
Faculty provide timely feedback about my academic progress.	5.04	5.41	↑ .37
I receive ongoing feedback about progress toward my academic goals.	5.00	5.34	↑ .34
The quality of instruction I receive in most classes is excellent.	5.28	5.55	↑ .27
The content of the courses within my major is valuable.	5.38	5.57	↑ .19
Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students.	5.44	5.58	↑ .14
Faculty are usually available to students outside of class.	5.88	5.88	=

These findings underscore the vital role ITL continues to play in advancing teaching excellence at YSU. Data from student end of course evaluations and the SSI clearly show a positive relationship between faculty engagement with ITL and students' recognition of effective teaching practices. We believe the impact is not incidental -- it's the result of sustained, intentional investment in faculty development.

Takeaway

From improved student feedback to broader satisfaction trends, the evidence points to the conclusion: ITL is a continued driver of instructional quality and student success at Youngstown State University.

Student Course Feedback Survey Analysis: Dr. Lucy Kerns

The dataset used for data analysis includes $n = 5298$ participants after excluding those who failed to complete the survey 100%. The course evaluation survey contains 35 items. For most of the survey items, students reported their level of agreement on a 4-point scale from “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “agree”, to “strongly agree” (where 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree), or on a 5-point scale from “Not applicable”, “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “agree”, to “strongly agree”. Q1-Q7, Q25, Q29 and Q30 are binary questions, which provide students only two answer options, “Disagree” and “Agree”. These binary questions were excluded from data analysis because of low variability in responses (e.g., 99% of the respondents choose the option “Agree” for Q1-Q3, and all respondents selected “Agree” For Q25), which resulted in an insufficient information to identify a clear relationship with any factor in factor analysis. Also, Question 35 does not appear to relate to any of the survey questions, and an initial factor analysis confirmed that this question did not show a significant correlation with any of the identified underlying factors in the data and hence was excluded for further analysis. Therefore, a total of 24 survey items are included in the following data analyses. All data analyses were performed using RStudio (R version 4.4.0).

Validity Analysis

Factor analysis was used to assess the construct validity of the survey. First, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity were used to assess the suitability of the data for factor analysis. The KMO value was 0.97, indicating that the data was adequate for factor analysis, and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity gave a p-value of < 0.001 . Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was then carried out to investigate the theoretical structure of the survey. We performed EFA with a promax rotation and principal axis factoring. It was observed that three factors had Eigenvalues more than 1, i.e., 13.25, 2.28, and 1.07, respectively, and the variance explained 9.40, 3.76, and 2.38, respectively, as shown in Table 1. Figure 1 displays the three factors that emerged from the factor analysis, which correspond to students’ perception of course content (Q8, Q12-Q20, Q23, Q24, Q31-34), feedback and support hours (Q9-Q11, Q21, Q22), and communication with the instructional assistant (Q26-Q28).

Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha was calculated to assess the internal consistency, or reliability, of the survey items. The overall Cronbach's alpha was found to be .94, indicating a high level of reliability among all 24 survey questions. All three subscales demonstrated strong internal consistency ($\alpha = .96$ for course content, $\alpha = .80$ for feedback and support hours, $\alpha = .88$ for communication with instructional assistant.).

Figure 1: Factor Analysis

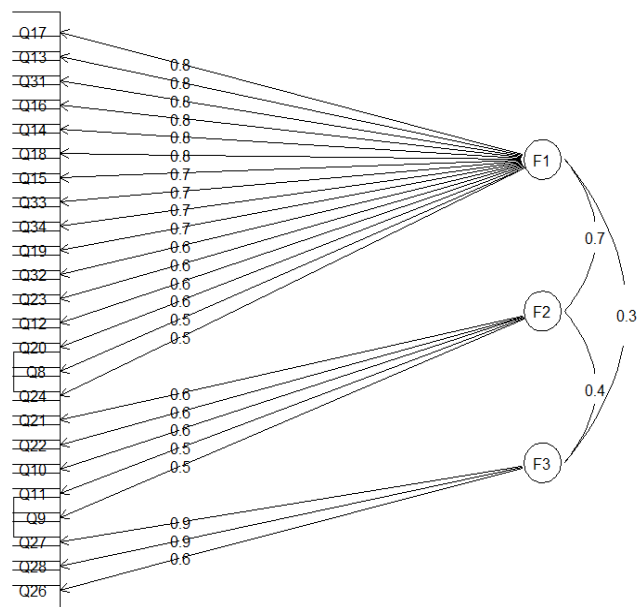


Table 1 Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis

Factor	Question		Eigenvalues	Variance explained	Factor loading
F1			13.25	9.40	
	Q8	8. [InstructorName] shared how to succeed in the course (e.g., criteria, rubrics, directions, examples).			0.5
	Q12	12. I had a sense of my standing in the course (e.g. grade, instructor feedback) before the last day to withdraw from the course.			0.6
	Q13	13. Content was connected to course goals.			0.8
	Q14	14. Course content was easy to access.			0.8
	Q15	15. The course used a variety of materials to support my learning (e.g., books, multimedia, articles, software).			0.7
	Q16	16. The technology used to deliver this course (e.g., BlackBoard, web-based instructional sites, collaboration systems) provided an effective learning environment.			0.8
	Q17	17. The class provided me with opportunities for problem solving, critical thinking, decision making, or application of material.			0.8
	Q18	18. This class helped me see how to apply course content to practical problems or real-life situations.			0.8
	Q19	19. The course was appropriately challenging for the course level.			0.7
	Q20	20. It was clear how and when to communicate with [InstructorName].			0.6
	Q23	23. [InstructorName] created an inclusive class environment that communicated value for all individuals.			0.6
	Q24	24. I felt like I could reach out to [InstructorName].			0.5
	Q31	28. I understood the syllabus.			0.8
	Q32	29. I looked forward to taking this course.			0.6
	Q33	30. I felt prepared to take this course.			0.7
	Q34	31. I logged in regularly.			0.7

F2			2.28	3.76	
	Q9	9. [InstructorName] made feedback and/or grades readily available (e.g., in Blackboard).			0.5
	Q10	10. [InstructorName] provided feedback that helped me learn/progress in the course.			0.6
	Q11	11. [InstructorName] indicated when to expect feedback or graded student work.			0.5
	Q21	21. [InstructorName] responded to messages within 48 business hours.			0.6
	Q22	22. [InstructorName] was available during scheduled office/support hours.			0.6
F3			1.07	2.38	
	Q26	25a. It was clear how and when to communicate with the instructional assistant.			0.6
	Q27	25b. The instructional assistant responded to messages within 48 business hours.			0.9
	Q28	25c. The instructional assistant answered my questions in a helpful manner.			0.9