



Dear Colleagues:

In this issue see what's happening within our campus communities, find out about team building and strategies for getting students excited about learning, and explore some popular online student engagement tools.



One way Valpo will foster community is through the Valpo Connect [Sustainability Scholars](#) leadership program. This program aligns with the Strategic Plan Initiative to become "beacons of stewardship for the environment" (Initiative 2.3). Scheduled to launch this fall, in this program, first-semester students will take part in interdisciplinary cohorts specializing in environmental issues. The Sustainability Scholars will gain experience in fieldwork and projects that address campus and local community needs.

From,
The Center for Innovation in Teaching, Assessment, and Learning



COMPUTING A POSITIVE CHANGE

Take a look at how the Department of Computing and Information Sciences forms a community among its students.

"When you have everybody working together, you see real change in society."
— Chinedu Emeka '17 a double major in computer science and economics from Onitsha, Nigeria.



Building Community Through Group Work

I was fortunate to recently attend the [Midwest Conference on Scholarship in Teaching and Learning](#) with a group of faculty members from Valpo. Many of the sessions focused on regaining student attention or reducing distractions. However, perhaps my favorite session was **Engagement of Students and Teams: by Developing Own Team Policies**. This presentation dealt with how to encourage and support students in developing their own policies related to group work. By participating in the process, students were given latitude to figure out how their groups best functioned, set expectations, and hold each other accountable.

As someone who has taught using groups for years, I was a little embarrassed to have not thought of this myself. I always thought of it as my responsibility to provide the accountability structure, instead of allowing students to generate their own best practice through community. This does not absolve an instructor from providing examples, guidance, and still stepping in when necessary. However, the approach can lead to a more cohesive bond between students participating in group work

Ed Finn, Director of Instructional Technology, Design & Assessment

Getting Your Students Excited About Learning

Two proven ways to get students excited about learning are research and philanthropy. In the article below, you will learn about how the students of Kristi Bugajski (Biology) are raising money to combat malaria. You will also hear about two alumni whose introduction to research at Valpo led to a lifetime of continued exploration and learning. Scott Sanders talks about his continuing work on solar research and Anna Strauss shares her journey back to public policy research.



Cynthia Rutz, Director of Faculty Development

Read the Full Article Here: [Getting Your Students Excited About Learning](#)

Tools for Creating Fun and Productive Community Engagement Experiences

There are many learning tools online that are effective for instructors to use in achieving learning objectives and attracting and retaining students. Blackboard Learn has several tools to encourage communication, collaboration, group learning, and a sense of community.

Click on the icons below to learn more about three specific tools.

Would you like to see how you can implement these tools in your Blackboard courses? [Gina Rue](#), Instructional Designer, is available to schedule one-on-one or group sessions via Zoom or on campus. [Click here to submit your helpdesk ticket requesting to meet with Gina.](#)



zoom Did You Know?

Every Blackboard course has its own Zoom meeting room. Since COVID when Zoom was the only way to meet, many of us still use it today as a means to engage with students during office hours or with those who are taking online courses only. Zoom still proves to be an excellent tool for forming communities and staying connected with our students. Not using Blackboard? You can [log in to VU Zoom](#) with your VU credentials.

Life at Valpo - [Service](#)

Students give back to the community through Valpo's many service opportunities. One example is [SALT](#) (Chapel of the Resurrection's Social Action Leadership Team.) To learn more, click the student image below.



Visit the CITAL Website, Your One-Stop-Shop for Faculty Resources

Submit a Helpdesk Ticket Request