The Campus Guardian

Houston City College · AAUP Chapter

Upholding Faculty Rights and Academic Standards

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Supporting the work of teaching

Eight priorities for constructive dialogue: meaningful assessment, departmental visibility, access to teaching resources, and the support faculty need to serve students well. These are topics for chapter discussion and proposed improvements.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

What does a grade tell us?

A course grade should communicate something meaningful about what a student knows and can do. Preserving that meaning requires clear expectations, sound assessment practices, and institutional support for faculty judgment.

AI tools add complexity to that responsibility. Faculty need guidance while retaining flexibility to establish expectations appropriate to their disciplines, assignments, and learning objectives.

A useful process for academic integrity concerns should explain documentation, review, and communication of outcomes. It should give students a fair opportunity to respond and faculty confidence that their professional judgment receives appropriate consideration.

Written explanations, applied problems, and oral follow-up can help reveal understanding. Developing and administering those assessments takes time. Practical support is essential.



Richard Gosselin at an HCC economics recruitment display. Departmental materials can give students a clearer picture of academic pathways.

DEPARTMENTAL VISIBILITY

Helping students discover their options

Eagle Preview and similar events offer departments a chance to connect courses with students' interests, transfer plans, and career possibilities.

Faculty need current promotional materials and a clear process for requesting design, approval, and production assistance. Coordination with recruitment and marketing can help turn a brief conversation into a lasting connection.



"From Prompt to Play": a supplied workshop concept illustrating practical faculty development. Scheduling and registration details are not announced in this edition.

AI RESOURCES & PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

A fair opportunity to explore

Faculty need opportunities to evaluate AI tools and make informed decisions about their use. Access should extend across departments, campuses, and teaching assignments.

Free versions offer a starting point, but some features require paid subscriptions. When instructors purchase tools personally for instructional work, access can depend on individual finances. Institutional licenses, funding assistance, or a transparent request process deserve discussion.

Professional learning should connect tools to teaching: designing practice, developing feedback, checking materials, and helping students understand appropriate use. It should also address inaccurate output, bias, privacy, and the handling of student information.

Introductory workshops, advanced sessions, and exchanges of classroom examples could serve different needs. Faculty also need time to experiment and apply what they learn.

FACULTY-CREATED CANVAS TOOLS

A clear path from idea to classroom

Faculty-created tools can provide practice, feedback, and new ways to apply difficult concepts. A clear review process can help promising ideas reach students while addressing institutional requirements.

Before submitting a tool, faculty should know what requires review, what information to provide, which offices will evaluate it, and how decisions will be communicated.

Different tools raise different questions. A self-contained activity that collects no student information differs from a service that accesses rosters, records responses, or connects to the gradebook. Explaining how those differences affect review would help instructors prepare appropriate submissions.

Predictable timelines matter when preparing for a semester. Acknowledgment of receipt, an estimated review period, and a way to check status would support course planning. Specific feedback should give instructors a practical route to revision.

Review works best as collaboration. Faculty bring disciplinary expertise and knowledge of students' needs; technical and accessibility staff bring essential implementation expertise. A consistent process can bring those perspectives together.

A practical question

What would help you move an instructional idea from a promising prototype to a dependable classroom resource?

ACCESSIBILITY

Timely, practical assistance

Accessible materials help students participate fully in their courses. That goal requires faculty attention, technical expertise, and institutional capacity to review materials and help resolve problems.

Instructors need to know how to request a review, what turnaround time to expect, and where to obtain assistance. A report identifying a concern is most useful when it explains the barrier and offers a practical way to address it.

Documents, videos, graphs, interactive activities, and outside platforms present different challenges. Guidance should reflect those differences. Clear points of contact and coordination among offices can help requests move toward resolution.

Workshops, examples, templates, and individual consultations can help faculty build accessibility into materials from the beginning. Complex resources may also require specialized assistance or changes by an outside provider.

FACULTY TIME & TRAINING

The work behind the materials

An effective resource begins long before students see it. Faculty identify objectives, develop explanations, design activities, check accuracy, and revise based on student performance.

A workshop introduces an approach; implementation requires experimentation and troubleshooting. Follow-up consultations, working sessions, and technical assistance can help carry projects through to completion.

Maintenance deserves recognition, too. Updating a resource, correcting a problem, and adapting materials to new requirements take time alongside teaching, grading, advising, and service.

Workload planning, professional development opportunities, and institutional recognition should account for creating and sustaining instructional resources.

CANVAS TEST ACCOUNTS

Check the student experience

Faculty need a dependable way to check course activities from a student's perspective. Instructions, quizzes, and connected tools may behave differently for instructors and students.

Canvas student view provides a starting point. Some situations may require additional approved testing capabilities, especially when an activity connects to an outside tool. Clear guidance should explain when a test account is appropriate and how to request one.

An established process should identify who authorizes accounts, how they are created, and what uses are permitted. It should address course enrollment, access to student information, and connected services.

Clearly identifying test accounts and assigning responsibility for maintaining or removing them can prevent confusion with actual enrollments. Guidance should also explain how test activity is handled in gradebooks and

reports.

Examples showing when student view is sufficient, together with a clear point of contact for other testing needs, would support reliable course preparation.

DEFINING STUDENT SUCCESS

Put demonstrated learning in the picture

How a college defines success shapes its priorities and its understanding of classroom work. Completion, credentials, and transfer are meaningful indicators. Faculty contribute another essential perspective: whether students demonstrate the knowledge and skills a course is designed to develop.

Faculty expertise should guide decisions about what counts as evidence of learning and how that evidence is interpreted. The percentage earning an A, B, or C provides completion information; its value increases alongside direct evidence of proficiency.

One proposal for discussion is to measure the percentage of assessed students demonstrating proficiency on essential, faculty-defined learning outcomes, using common assessments or shared rubrics where appropriate.

Faculty would help select outcomes, establish proficiency standards, and determine suitable methods. Results should appear alongside beginning-to-end learning gains, assessment participation, withdrawal rates, and progress toward credentials or transfer.

Participation matters: results from assessed students should not be assumed to describe every enrolled student. Context makes the measures more useful.

The goal is to retain course completion as one indicator while giving demonstrated learning a clear place in the college's definition of student success.

CHAPTER CONVERSATION

Your concerns shape the priorities

Members may have additional concerns that reveal a need for clearer procedures, better communication, or more support. Describe the issue, its practical consequences, and a desired outcome when possible. A fully developed solution is not required.

Discussion should focus on policies, practices, and constructive improvements while respecting students' and colleagues' privacy. Members can help identify priorities, follow-up responsibilities, and matters for dialogue with administration.

CHAPTER MEETING

Tuesday, November 10, 2026 8:00 p.m. Central Time

Review these priorities and help determine the chapter's next steps. Refer to the chapter meeting announcement for Zoom access.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

The chapter has openings for Vice President and Membership Director. Members interested in serving are invited to contact Richard Gosselin.

CHAPTER OFFICERS

Richard Gosselin, President
Clay McFadden, Secretary/Treasurer

FACULTY ESSAY

Beyond the Right Answer: Making Student Thinking Visible

By Richard Gosselin

One practice I have become much more deliberate about in both my macroeconomics and microeconomics courses is providing students with handwritten and hand-drawn solutions to selected end-of-chapter questions and problems. I also continue to require students to show their written work on exams, especially when a question involves a graph, calculation, or multi-step line of reasoning.

Part of what has pushed me in this direction is a concern that students can become overly reliant on passive forms of learning. Reading an explanation, watching someone else solve a problem, reviewing a completed graph, or recognizing the correct answer can all be useful, but they do not necessarily require students to reconstruct the reasoning for themselves.

That distinction matters to me because economics is not just about arriving at a correct answer. It is about being able to identify the relevant relationships, organize them, apply them, and explain why a particular conclusion follows. When students write out a calculation, construct a graph, or work through a sequence of steps, they are making those mental processes visible.

There is a substantial cognitive-science literature that supports this general approach. Research on generative learning emphasizes the value of actively producing and organizing knowledge rather than simply receiving it (Fiorella & Mayer, 2016). Research on retrieval practice shows that recalling and using information can strengthen later retention and understanding more effectively than repeated review alone (Roediger & Karpicke, 2006; Karpicke & Blunt, 2011). Work on learner-generated drawing likewise suggests that creating visual representations can help learners identify important relationships and organize information spatially (Van Meter & Garner, 2005).

Handwriting adds another dimension. Mueller and Oppenheimer (2014) found that longhand note taking can encourage more processing and reformulation than verbatim transcription on a laptop, although that literature should not be reduced to a simple claim that handwriting is always superior to typing. More recent neuroscience work has also found different patterns of brain connectivity during handwriting and typing, suggesting that handwriting involves a distinctive combination of visual, motor, and sensory processing (Van der Weel & Van der Meer, 2024).

For economics, I think the drawing component is especially important. Our graphs are not merely illustrations placed beside the reasoning; they are often part of the reasoning itself. Constructing a graph requires students to decide what belongs on the axes, which relationships matter, what changes, what remains fixed, and what follows from those changes. In that sense, drawing becomes a way of thinking through the economic problem rather than simply decorating an answer.

That is also why I prefer to give students handwritten models rather than only polished answer keys. A finished textbook solution can sometimes hide the intellectual work that produced it. My goal is to expose that work by showing where I begin, what I label, what intermediate steps I include, and how I move from the information in the problem to a conclusion.

Then, eventually, students have to do that work themselves.

I certainly do not assume that this practice is unique, and I suspect many faculty members have developed their own ways of moving students beyond passive review. For me, though, this has become a more deliberate response to the concern that students can spend a great deal of time watching, reading, and recognizing without spending enough time actually constructing knowledge.

The phrase I keep coming back to is visible thinking. I want students not only to arrive at an answer, but also to make the reasoning that produced it visible enough that both they and I can examine it.

I would be very interested to hear how others approach this. What strategies do you use to move students from seeing a solution to constructing one for themselves?

SELECTED REFERENCES

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