



Dartmouth Center for the Advancement of Learning

Fall 2022

Scott Pauls, Cheheyl Professor and Director

DCAL FY22 Annual Report

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Prologue

Last year was yet another year of rapid changes and adaptations at Dartmouth. Fall 2021 reopened campus, welcoming all students back to a fully residential experience. Almost all of our classes were offered in-person and over the course of the academic year, COVID restrictions were relaxed and eventually lifted. Extra-curricular and social activities resumed, bringing back the missing aspects of the complete student experience. While this was a welcome return for most, the pandemic persisted in shaping Dartmouth's academic and social environment. As new variants created additional, albeit less serious, waves of illness, faculty quickly moved to change their courses again to accommodate rolling waves of absences as students were exposed and then tested positive to COVID (see chart below). Many moved into hybrid modes of teaching - using the technology of remote teaching to bring isolated students who felt well enough into the classroom virtually. This proved a useful if imperfect stopgap but incredibly resource and time-intensive. Many faculty report Winter and Spring terms in 2022 as the most difficult teaching terms in their careers. Students are appreciative of the flexibility and additional resources that are now available due to our experimentation with remote teaching, but many are still struggling to recover as well - we are seeing spikes in mental and physical health issues among the student body.



Figure 1: Newly arrived '25s attend an orientation session in Spaulding Auditorium.

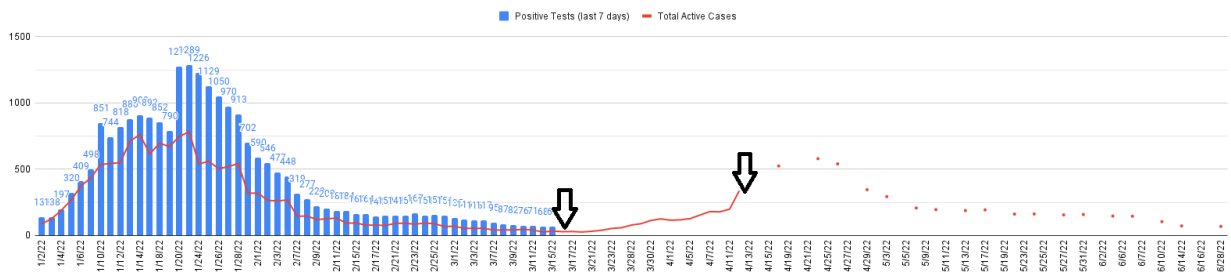


Figure 2: COVID data for Winter and Spring 2022. Blue bars indicate the 7-day positive test totals (which were discontinued at the first downward arrow on 3/15/22) while the red dots indicate total active cases (which switched to weekly reporting at the next arrow on 4/13/22).

Learning to work within the confines of the pandemic and seeking to mitigate the harms done to students, faculty, and staff are priorities for everyone at Dartmouth, but the work will take time and resources. Our time teaching remotely brought rapid experimentation and innovation in the classroom through enormous efforts from faculty and staff. Many of these have been integrated into the foundations of our educational environment. These provide the foundation for mitigating inequities between students in the classroom and provide a measure of resilience for Dartmouth

in the face of future disruptions. DCAL sees one of its primary roles as advocating for and providing the resources, training, and support necessary to cement these gains.

With this backdrop of both enormous gains and continued challenges, DCAL looked to reset its work to meet the needs of campus. The return to in-person teaching removed much of the demand for “nuts and bolts” training on technologies and innovative techniques for remote teaching - faculty and TAs didn’t need as much assistance as they had already mastered the techniques they preferred to use. Consequently, we shifted our programming towards bigger picture professional development on themes we see emerging on campus - inclusivity, mitigating inequities in the classroom, trauma-informed teaching, mental health and wellness - and the teaching tools that can help achieve them.

Strategic Planning

At the beginning of 2022 we embarked on a strategic planning process, during which we grappled with our changing roles on campus and with the challenges we wanted to address. Our process produced seven high-level goals for our work:

1. Assert and advocate for student learning as Dartmouth’s primary institutional priority.
2. Advance Dartmouth’s educational mission in serving all students equitably and inclusively.
3. Promote research-informed teaching.
4. Empower pedagogical experimentation and innovation through collaborative partnership.
5. Act as an organizational hub for teaching and learning-related initiatives, resources, and collaborations.
6. To contribute to a teaching culture where excellence is publicly recognized and rewarded.
7. To be recognized for pedagogical expertise and provide leadership for teaching and learning across the higher education landscape.

We also identified tools that we feel are effective for achieving these goals, including creating and disseminating programming and resources, advocating for equity and inclusion for all learners and for the inclusion of learning science in institutional decisions, providing physical and digital community spaces, and enabling pedagogical innovation for better learning. Our work in the next year centers on evaluating and aligning our work with these goals.

In the next sections, we report on activities, events, and resources over the last year, linking them to these strategic priorities.

Programming

DCAL is a faculty-facing professional development organization who also serves graduate students, postdocs, and staff educators. We primarily engage with faculty and future faculty (postdocs and graduate students) through programming - workshops, institutes, consultations, etc. Improving the skills and resources available to educators translates into impact on students and those educators endeavor to create better learning environments in their classes. Associate Director for Faculty Programs and Services, Elli Goudzwaard, leads our programming efforts in collaboration with others in DCAL as well as partners across campus. Our primary partner in much of this work for faculty programming is the Learning Design and Innovation group in Information, Technology, and Consulting. They bring learning design, universal design, and other expertise to our collaborations.



[Home](#) • [How Learning Works](#) • [Course Design Foundations](#) • [Assessment](#) •

[Assignments & Activities](#)

Welcome to the Course Design Institute!

Dartmouth's Course Design Institute (CDI) introduces an integrated course design process that promotes student-centered teaching and learning. Through this experience, you will have the opportunity to focus on one course in-depth, whether it is a new course being developed from scratch or a redesign of an existing course. We're looking forward to working with you!

Figure 3: A screen shot from the opening page of the Course Design Institute.

Changes in modes of interaction

As with other parts of campus, our practices changed around *how* we offer our programming. We saw a shift towards more asynchronous options with Elli moving one of our flagship institutes - the course design institute - into a canvas course. Now educators can access these materials asynchronously at a time of their choosing. Those who wish a more guided experience can attend a synchronous version in one of the three offerings during the year, where the canvas course serves as the set of background resources. Similarly, resources we helped create in support of teaching during the pandemic contribute to new guides on [resilient teaching and course design](#). Other programs DCAL partners on, such as Inclusive Pathways for Advancement in the Academy and the Librarians Active Learning Institute continue to be offered remotely to accommodate more participants.

Cindy Rosalbo, our Senior Associate Director who designs and delivers programming for our future faculty, has also moved significant pieces of TA training to asynchronous platforms. Similarly, to the course design institute, she offers these resources for self-study as well as resources for synchronous sessions and has embraced a hybrid model for many workshops to accommodate grad students and postdocs who do not work on the main campus or are sick or

unable to attend in person for some other reason. Lessons from the pandemic inform her academic job search series where new entrants to the job market look for ways to apply their new skills. Cindy's role with the Guarini School of Graduate and Advanced Studies evolved as well where she is now the Director of Postdoctoral Affairs.

Dartmouth has recently entered a partnership with the JED Foundation to promote mental health and wellness on campus. DCAL participates in this collaboration as part of the Working group on integrating wellness into the academic curriculum. We bring expertise and a host of potential professional development opportunities to this important work.

Academic support and the student experience

The pandemic highlighted the inequities we see among our students and the need for robust and overlapping academic support. We've extended our efforts to highlight student experiences through our *Critical Dialogues* series where we invite student panels from different groups - veterans, affinity groups, racial or ethnic groups, etc. - to share their experiences at Dartmouth. We complement these with professional development opportunities guiding educators to create more inclusive and flexible curricula. These include a series of events on anti-racist pedagogy, inclusive teaching and course design, resilient course design, and others. These offerings ground and extend the campus conversation on how to best support students in their time at Dartmouth. These efforts connect directly to our first five strategic goals.

Several of our existing initiatives promote pedagogical experimentation (goal four) and further enhance the learning environment, promote flexibility and resilience, and create more infrastructure in support of students.

The Learning Fellows Program

The Learning Fellows Program, started in 2016, brings students into pedagogical roles as in-class fellows who facilitate group active learning activities. The program has grown from just 5 courses to dozens of Learning Fellow supported classes. This year, we had 29 LF courses, with 114 fellows, impacting 1355 students. The decrease from the previous year, shown in the figure above, stems from several factors but the primary one was the departure of Adrienne Gauthier who

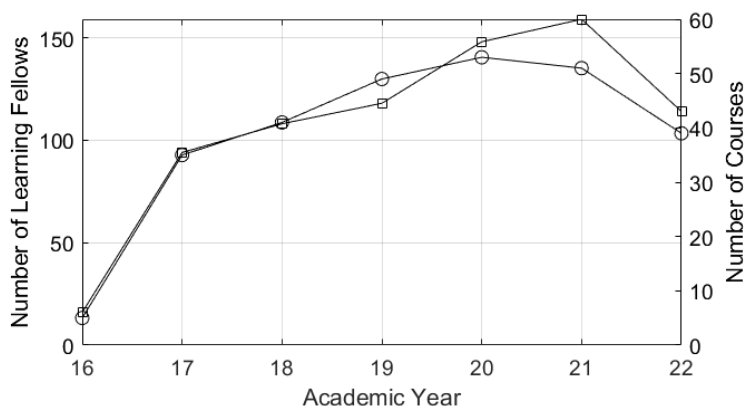


Figure 4: Data from the Learning Fellows program from its inception through FY21. Circles indicate the number of course sections while squares indicate the number of fellows.

served as the Program Manager at the end of Winter 2022. This loss of staff diminished our capacity to support all the courses we could have otherwise. We look forward to bringing on a new Program Manager in Winter 2023. At its current scale, the LF program impacts over a quarter of the student body each year. Cumulatively, there have been 273 sections of courses with LFs, 757 Learning Fellows, and over 10,000 students impacted.

We are transitioning the Learning Fellows Program out of its pilot phase due to the generous gifts of two alumni and continued support from the Provost's office. The transition solidifies the Program as a key component of the educational landscape and provides a novel layer of student support. Additionally, we have structured the transition to allow for continued growth of the program over time.

The Accessible Dartmouth Initiative

Our work in Learning Innovation led by Associate Director Mike Goudzwaard dovetails with these goals across several initiatives. In the last year two initiatives have hit their stride - the Accessible Dartmouth Initiative (ADI) and the Design Initiative at Dartmouth (DIAD). The Accessible Dartmouth Initiative focuses on bringing the tools of [Universal Design for Learning](#) (UDL) to bear on Dartmouth courses to make the experience of neurodiverse learners better and more positive. Applications include redesign of course components for multiple modes of engagement, access, and expression. ADI launched its inaugural UDL Institute drawing ten faculty participants from across the Arts and Sciences and from all ranks. The Institute was exceptionally successful as reported to us by the participants and has led to continued engagement. ADI also sponsored three UDL grants for faculty to dig deeper into one aspect of their course(s) and are nearing completion. This work has deepened our connection and collaboration with Student Accessibility Services which holds the promise of extending our work on accessibility, and on equity and inclusion, more broadly across campus.

Educators that worked with us rethought different aspects of their courses - the syllabus, content delivery, assessments, and so on. We saw interesting interventions in the French curriculum where the discussion prompted the instructor, Professor Mosenthal, to think about the inaccessibility of a syllabus that is entirely in French for students in an introductory class. Another instructor, Professor Cottingham, noticed that some students in her biology course, particularly those with ADHD, struggled with the structure and demands of some of the assignments and used UDL principles to rethink them with a wider class of learners in mind. A third instructor, Professor Chamberlin, who teaches film courses, wanted to rethink her lesson structure to better reach neurodiverse students. Collectively these courses will impact over 500 students each time they run.

We were able to accelerate this work substantially through a new addition to our staff - Carly Lesoski, our Program Manager for Learning Innovation. Carly comes to us with a strong interest and skill set in accessibility and disability studies, enhancing both our capacity and programming in this area.



Figure 5: Carly Lesoski, DCAL's new Program Manager for Learning Innovation.

The Design Initiative at Dartmouth



Figure 6: A tile showcasing one of DIAD's design thinking projects for ENVS 7: Nature-based solutions.

DIAD is a collaboration between DCAL and the Thayer School of Engineering, who are building a design thinking infrastructure at the College. Our collaboration centers on [incentivizing and supporting faculty who wish to incorporate a design thinking component into their courses](#). DIAD has supported 9 course grants to faculty in all divisions ranging from geography, to energy, to anthropology. Interestingly, we have seen broad interest from the language departments who have created design projects for study-abroad courses. All these faculty report that the design thinking toolkit provides an excellent entry point for students integrating aspects of language and culture during their immersive study in a foreign country.

In ENVS 07, Nature-based Solutions, the instructor incorporated the design thinking framework into each of three units of the course by creating weekly design labs for students to workshop their potential solutions.

The Rapid Refresh Program

This year, Provost Kotz reconstituted DCAL's Classroom Committee as the [Provost's Advisory Committee on Classrooms](#) (PACC) and charged us to represent and align all stakeholder interests across projects and initiatives affecting A&S and Guarini classrooms, and to advise the Provost on planning and updating A&S and Guarini classrooms. One aspect of this charge is to bring forward a yearly as well as five-year recommendations on classroom renovation and updating. This committee, spanning faculty and staff across many units, has prepared a "Rapid Refresh" Program that will go into this year's budget cycle.

We crafted this program in response to several challenges. First, our approach to classroom renovation has always followed larger renovation projects - e.g., when we renovated Dartmouth Hall, we also rethought classrooms there. This approach has two drawbacks - it is slower than we would like due to the scope and size of the projects, and it does not treat classrooms uniformly across campus. Second, teaching during the pandemic demonstrated that many of our spaces did not have sufficient technological resources to support remote or hybrid teaching.

As many faculty wish to bring some of these tools into the in-person experience, we see the need for a new, and uniform, technological baseline across campus.

The rapid refresh program will update the technology and furnishings in every classroom once every five years. This cycle allows for continual evaluation and improvement so that no part of campus will fall behind. Further, the design specifications emphasize flexibility and resilience wherever possible so that classrooms can be used in multiple ways and for multiple purposes.

Online Learning

Interest in online educational offerings has exploded in the last few years. Interest is primarily at the Professional Schools - Tuck, Thayer, and Geisel - where they are exploring online or blended Master's programs as well as a host of non-credit offerings. Headed up by Josh Kim, DCAL's Director of Online Learning and Strategy, and Erin DeSilva, ITC's Senior Director of Learning Design and Innovation, this team is currently scoping 6 potential online Master's Programs and has completed several certificates (4), specializations (3), programs (2), and courses (38) in partnership with Coursera, edX, Emeritus, and ExecOnline. They are currently developing 3 specializations, 1 program, and 2 courses with the same partners. The screenshot above shows one of the courses

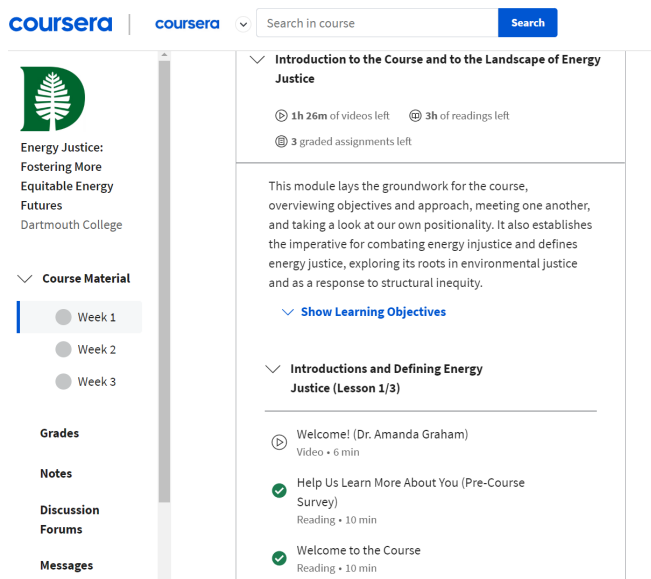


Figure 7: A screen shot from the Coursera instance of Energy Justice, one of the online learning projects completed in the last year.

completed with Coursera in the last year. Developed with Amanda Graham, the Academic Director for the Arthur L. Irving Institute for Energy and Society at Dartmouth College, Energy Justice prompts students to think about aspects of energy through the lens of personal, societal, and institutional justice. This course has been quite successful and represents something of a new direction of education at Dartmouth. We helped develop it out of the Irving Institute - not a traditional department or program - allowing students both at Dartmouth and elsewhere the opportunity to engage with a new curriculum centered on Energy Justice.

As you can see, this work is moving quickly and growing. To help guide these developments, Provost Kotz charged a new [Committee on Online Learning and Strategy](#) (COLS) with engaging stakeholders and crafting an online strategy. This group, co-chaired by Josh, Erin, and Kenya Tyson, Senior Associate Provost, has convened first in Fall 2022.

In terms of our strategic goals, we see exploration of the online learning space as a lever for pedagogical innovation, a tool to promote equity and access, and a conduit for applying research-based teaching practices.

Leadership

DCAL continues to take leadership roles across campus to advocate for improved teaching and learning. In addition to those discussed above - chairing the PACC, co-chairing COLS, working with the JED collaboration - DCAL has several other intertwined roles. During the height of the pandemic, DCAL was a central unit in our academic continuity efforts. This role evolved as the campus operations evolved. At the end of Summer 21, at DCAL's request the Provost convened the Teaching Transition Coordination Group (TTCG) to help operationalize the transition to a fully residential mode in Fall 21. This group collected data, provided guidance and recommendations for policy adjustments as we continued to work in the presence of a pandemic. We have constructed and maintained a [FAQ](#) elaborating on campus policy and providing guidance for structuring classes and the classroom experience. We were also asked to provide recommendations for longer term remote teaching guidelines - the Provost would like to articulate when it is appropriate to adopt remote teaching for all or part of a term.

Dartmouth recently went through its ten-year reaccreditation process. One of the concerns raised by NECHE related to [Standard 8 - Educational Effectiveness](#), noting that Dartmouth could do much better at tracking and measuring student success. At the request of leadership, DCAL joined the team helping to think about possible responses and actions that can help us understand how students are progressing through and succeeding in our curricula.

Epilogue

As we look to the next year, we are excited to begin integrating the different strands of our work according to our strategic goals. We see an opportunity to capitalize on this period of transition to advance learning through helping Dartmouth create more flexible, accessible, and engaging learning opportunities. We will achieve this by both convening and participating in campus conversations on diversity, inclusion, and equity; wellness and mental health; educational disparities; and the extension of the curriculum beyond the classroom. Our existing programming, initiatives, and online learning work already provide us with good tools but we can better integrate them with one another and with our goals.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Paul". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.