



College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Undergraduate Programs

University of Iowa

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Directors of Undergraduate Studies Meeting—April 2025

Meeting Notes

Wednesday, April 9, 2025

11:00 AM-12:30 PM

UCC 2520D

Welcome and CLAS Announcements

- There will be a May DUS meeting, at which we will not have any guest presenters. The purpose of the meeting will be to provide some updates about the CLAS syllabus template, the process for requesting curricular changes, etc. (After the April meeting, the May meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, May 7, 2:00-3:00.)
- CLAS is hiring an [Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education and Curriculum](#). The job posted on April 8. Contact Associate Dean [Cornelia Lang](#) or HR Manager [Ali Romano-McClain](#) with questions.

University Lecture Committee

Shriya Magatapalli, Committee Co-Chair

Carter Fitzgerald, Committee Member

David Hensley, Faculty Advisor

Shriya and Carter explained what the [University Lecture Committee](#) does, including their goals and mission. The committee is a student-run University Charter Committee that brings national and international figures in the arts, sciences, sports, business, politics, and more to campus to deliver between six and ten lectures per year. Shriya and Carter highlighted some of this year's guests and spoke about the breadth of fields and audiences the committee considers when creating each year's roster of lecturers.

The committee is currently working on their marketing strategy to reach more students.

Suggestions from the DUS group included:

- Sending their materials to undergraduate coordinators in each department
- Reaching out to specific courses relevant to specific scheduled speakers
- Using mass email/surveys in addition to their website submission form for collecting speaker ideas from students

Course Accessibility and Anthology Ally

Eden Jones, Office of Teaching, Learning, and Technology (OTLT)

Announcements and resources:

- [CAFÉ \(Course Accessibility for Everyone\)](#): On this page can be found information about and links to:
 - The top 8 things to focus on when working to make ICON course content more accessible (listed below)

- The [OTLT events calendar](#), which includes live accessibility trainings
- [CAFÉ To Go](#), an asynchronous, on-demand ICON course covering the same material as the live trainings (link go to ICON course signup and requires login)
- [Information about Anthology Ally](#), a tool that has been built into ICON sites to provide instructors with reports about the accessibility of their course content
- [Student Instructional Technology Assistants \(SITA\)](#) can work one-on-one with instructors and have been trained on (among other things) PDF remediation.
- Eden can also come to departmental meetings and conduct more in-depth trainings on accessibility topics, but it would be best to ask instructors to complete the asynchronous ICON course first.

Q&A about Anthology Ally:

- Can instructors turn off the Ally alerts in their ICON sites? Can students see the accessibility markup? Are instructors expected to address everything flagged by Ally?
 - Students do not see the Ally markup, even though you can see it when you're in "student view." The alerts cannot be turned off, but keep in mind that you do not have to address everything flagged by Ally. Think of accessibility as a marathon, not a sprint, where you address things as you can, starting with the most important. There will also be things in the alerts that you choose to ignore, because there is no way to improve accessibility while retaining the pedagogical purpose of the material.
- How do instructors know what to focus on first when addressing accessibility issues? When instructors copy their ICON courses from semester to semester, will their changes save and carry over?
 - Eden recommends starting with "content with easiest issues to fix," and "fix low scoring content." Items in the first category should be the quickest and simplest to address, while items in the second category will give you the biggest improvement in your overall accessibility "score." Yes, the changes you make will save and copy over if you copy your course to a new semester.
- What does it mean when a file is "untagged?" This issue often happens with PDFs, so how can we make PDFs better in general?
 - Tags are things like headings, subheadings, and captions that help us navigate documents. Without tags, screen readers can only advance through a document sentence by sentence, rather than being able to hop from section to section. PDFs often strip out these kinds of tags when documents are converted from Word, PowerPoint, etc., so Eden's advice is to share documents with students in the format in which they were created.
- What about material in more than one language, uploaded handwritten notes, equations and chemical structures, and maps?

- Ally is screening for presentation much more than content, so multiple languages shouldn't cause problems, but do remember to set the languages of your documents. If you have OCR (optical character recognition) built into your device, you can use it to scan handwritten notes and see if its readable to screen readers. Right now we don't have great university-wide solutions to handwritten notes, equations and formulas, and maps, but know that OTLT is working on these issues and you don't need to stop using these kinds of materials.

The Big 8 things to do to improve your ICON course content's accessibility:

1. Use headings and subheadings (built-in functions) that are navigable by screen readers
2. Label your links in ways that make it clear what they are (not just the URL)
3. Use tables for data only, not for layout purposes
4. Use lists (built-in functions) to make them navigable by screen readers
5. Make sure your colors have sufficient contrast to be seen by all sighted users (there are online tools to check color contrast, and Ally will also flag it)
6. Use alt text for all images. Alt text does not have to describe everything about the image; focus on why its included/what students should get out of it
7. Use captions and/or transcriptions for video and audio content
8. Make sure the documents on your ICON site do the prior seven things as well

My Career Path and updates from the Pomerantz Career Center

Matt Augeri, Director, Operations and Strategic Initiatives

Sauvik Goswami, Associate Director, Assessment and Analytics

Susie Regan, Associate Director, Academic and Leadership Programs

Announcements—one upcoming event and highlighting two recent events:

- [Refill Your Cup: My Career Path Updates](#) event on May 1. (RSVP before April 22; there will be refreshments.)
- Events recently held for the first time: Rural Health in Iowa Virtual Career Fair; HawkShadow Program (21 companies, 49 students, shadowing happening over two-day period)

My Career Path:

- A “unique, accessible, and integrated platform that motivates students to engage in ongoing and personalized career development”
- Video embedded in attached PowerPoint includes information on how to find it, how to customize it, and how to use it
- Anyone with HawkID can access [My Career Path](#). Faculty are encouraged to log in and check it out. There is material there for staff and instructors—when students were surveyed, they reported they most expect to hear about this kind of resource from faculty, and would be most likely to use it based on recommendations from faculty and staff
- My Career Path also includes modules instructors can use in their courses, specific to Iowa and to major and career fields



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Data and analytics:

- Overview of data collection process
- Dashboards:
 - [Hiring Data and Reports](#) is public-facing
 - [Exploring Majors & Careers](#) is public-facing, includes outcomes of recent UI grads
 - [Campus Data](#) is for internal use (requires login), includes Career Center reports
- PCC surveys and reports 5-year and 10-year outcomes as well as career outcomes immediately post-graduation
- PCC can work with departments to create and develop data dashboards, and can partner with departments that conduct their own surveys of graduating students. Contact [Sauvik Goswami](#) with questions
- PCC provides career outcomes information to external stakeholders as well, such as the Iowa Board of Regents and the Department of Education

Mental Health Update

Emily Hurst, CLAS Student Care Manager

Emily highlighted some common themes she is hearing in meetings with departments and elsewhere on campus, as well as her vision for the role of CLAS Student Care Manager.

- What's going well:
 - The university has many services to support students
 - People are confident in those services' quality and helpfulness
 - There is a lot of enthusiasm about CLAS creating and developing Emily's role to connect students with resources and to better support faculty and staff
- Some areas where people have requested additional help/improvements, in Emily's meetings around campus and in the DUS meeting itself:
 - Challenges around accommodations and absences related to mental health
 - Unique issues faced by graduate students
 - More ways to "close the feedback loop," so instructors who do refer students to these resources hear more about the follow up and outcomes of those interventions
- [Working with CLAS Students in Distress](#) (PDF from CLAS)
- [Student Academic Concern Form](#) (opens in Workflow, requires login)
 - Note: This form should be used for concerns related to what you have observed in academic settings, such as a student no longer attending, not communicating for more than a week, not responding to your outreach attempts, appearing to need support or sharing concerning information but not necessarily asking for help.



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General information about supporting students' mental health, working with students in distress, and the whole range of relevant support services on campus can be found in several places:

- [Supporting Students' Mental Health and Wellness](#) (on the CLAS Resource site)
- [Student Care and Assistance](#) (a unit within the Office of the Dean of Students)
- [Helping Students in Emotional Distress](#) (on the University Counseling Service site)