

NCTL Newsletter - Spring '25, No. 1

From the Jane B. Nord Center for Teaching + Learning

Events and Calendars



As we dive into a new semester, many of us are likely recommitting to organizational systems with the optimism of a fresh calendar. Whether it's color-coded planners, new apps, or a stack of sticky notes with the best of intentions, the start of the year feels like the perfect moment to promise ourselves we'll stay on top of everything.

Having a clear sense of what's ahead can make a big difference. In our teaching, [providing a daily agenda](#) supports the achievement of our objectives and can help our students feel welcome and confident. How might we expand these types of positive outcomes across an entire semester, when our to-do lists grow increasingly longer and our time shorter?

In the article, "[Suggestions for Avoiding College Student & Staff Burnout](#)," therapist Anne Rulo provides this advice:

*Treat each semester like a season of life, not work. Rather than working intensely and only resting when a formal break comes, **recognize that each semester is a season of life where work requirements are higher, and so should be the strategy for restoration.** Filling out your planner or syllabus each semester should take into account not only what needs to get done during those approximately sixteen weeks, but also how to come out on the other end physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy.*

As you see the many learning events offered from the Nord Center and others, consider your capacity, intentions, and needs for the semester. It is always my hope that NCTL events offer meaningful and applicable learning as well as connection and community. And I hope that by providing an overview of the full semester allows you to prioritize the learning and topics that are most important to you.



Special Event

Workshop: Neuro-Inclusive Studio Course Design ([registration link](#))

- Friday, March 28, 12:15-1:45 PM. This workshop will include strategies and accommodations effective in helping neurodivergent students succeed in studio setting, focusing on visual supports, sensory conditions, structure and routine.
- This workshop is presented by **Mandi Rickelman**, Founder and CEO of **Welcoming Spaces**, a local company whose mission "is to empower businesses and organizations by transforming their environments into inclusive, accessible, and welcoming spaces for individuals on the autism spectrum."
- This workshop extends recent efforts to understand and support neurodivergence at CIA, including the **2023-24 Neurodivergence Learning Community**, the **CIA Climate for Neurodiversity Student Survey & Report**, and the **2023 Teaching Summit**, *Supporting Belonging by Centering Neurodivergence*. That Summit featured an **interactive workshop** by **Megan Kohler**, Professor and Learning Designer at Penn State University.

Gen AI Call to Action - Try One Thing!



During the 2024-25 academic year, a committee of faculty has been engaged in the **AAC&U Institute on AI, Pedagogy, and the Curriculum**. This Spring, our AI in Creative Practice Committee is supporting exploration of the potential of generative AI (Gen AI) in our work as

educators and professionals. We ask that all CIA staff and faculty join us in taking deliberate, thoughtful steps to engage with this transformative technology, aligning with our mission to remain at the forefront of creative education while equipping our students with the skills they need for the future.

How can you get involved?

- **LEARN:** Our team will offer several opportunities to engage with webinar content from the AAC&U Institute on AI throughout the semester. Topics will include introductory information on Gen AI, ethics, and application.
- **EXPLORE:** Experiment with Generative AI by trying something new in your professional and teaching practices.
- **SHARE:** Report your efforts for learning and experimentation. This data will help our team learn more about how our community is using, thinking, and curious about Gen AI.

As an added incentive, our committee is offering student gift cards (for groceries, art supplies, etc.) based on the amount of faculty and staff engagement with these workshops and AI exploration activities. [Click here for detailed information](#) and access to forms to report engagement and experimentation.

Upcoming Learning Opportunities (*specific dates coming soon!*). [Click here](#) for details and registration links.

- **Kickoff Event with the AI Committee.** Friday, January 31, 12:15-1:45 PM
- **Using Gen AI in Teaching.** Wednesday, February 12, 11 AM-12 PM
- **Gen AI: Studio Faculty Sharing Practices.** Wednesday, February 26, 11 AM-12 PM
- **February-March: Ethics of AI**
- **March-April: AI Applications**

New Resource Page

Additional information about events and resources for **Gen AI and the Interactive Media Lab (IML)** is located on a new myCIA page for [Educational Technology](#). This page will be updated with both internal and external learning opportunities for current and emerging technologies.

Reading Group Starts in February



**What Can
a Body Do?**
**How We
Meet the
Built World**
**Sara
Hendren**

Assistant Professor Amber Kempthorn (drawing) received the Bickford Award for Visiting Artists to bring in artist, design researcher, writer, and professor **Sara Hendren** to speak at CIA on **Thursday, November 14**. Hendren is the author of the book, [What can a body do? How we meet the built world](#), which explores the ways disability shows up in design across all spaces. She was also featured on an [episode of the podcast, On Being](#) with Krista Tippett, where she talked about questions of "of why we organize the physical world as though vulnerability and needs for assistance are not commonplace — indeed salutary — forms of experience that reveal the genius of what being human is all about."

Dr. Amanda Fronek (Dean of Students) will lead the reading group for **What can a body do**, which will meet for the first time on **Thursday, February 6 from 11 AM - 12 PM**. [Sign up here](#) to receive calendar invitations and further information.



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