


# Office for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning

## 2021-2022 Annual Report

THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF RHODE ISLAND

THINK BIG  WE DO<sup>SM</sup>



# Office for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning

The Office for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (ATL) is proud to support the teaching and learning mission of the University of Rhode Island. Primarily a faculty-facing group of professionals, ATL brings together Faculty Development, Online Education, Assessment and Accreditation, the Academic Testing Center, and URI Online. These groups work independently and collaboratively to advance the mission of ATL, to support URI's Agenda for Change, and to promote the University's Strategic Plan.

The 2021-2022 academic year was one of transition, not just for the University returning to face-to-face interaction and life, but for ATL. Our director of 8 years, Diane Goldsmith, retired and her place was filled by Kathleen Torrens as Interim Director. Dr. Torrens has represented faculty in ATL for many years. In addition, two of our faculty development staff left the institution and we were joined by Todd Dresser as the new Associate Director of Faculty Development.

In addition, the Academic Testing Center re-opened after a 20-month closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the guidance of a new Assistant Director, Lisa Macaruso, the testing center is once again offering testing resources for faculty, to assist in accommodations for students, makeups, and other services to support the campus.

In light of the challenges and changes, ATL remains committed to quality programming across all of our areas, and we look forward to continuing to add to our ranks, and to providing a critical service to URI.

## Mission Statement

The Office for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (ATL) promotes excellence and innovation in teaching and learning at University of Rhode Island by supporting evidence-based teaching, learning, and assessment practices. ATL staff collaborate with faculty and administrators to cultivate and sustain a university culture that values and rewards teaching, respects and supports individual differences among learners, advocates for learning environments in which diverse students and instructors can excel, and advocates for improved student learning at the academic degree program and institutional levels through regular assessment activities.



# Office for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning

## ***Faculty Development***

The Faculty Development group is committed to innovative, equitable, and accessible teaching practices and provides programming to help faculty to be successful in the classroom. From ATL Conversations to book clubs to High Impact Teaching Seminars, our Faculty Development professionals help faculty members develop their pedagogical skills throughout their careers, to learn and demonstrate best and innovative pedagogical practices to enable student success. Prior to each Fall semester, our Faculty Development group leads Strategies and Tools for new faculty as an introduction to teaching at URI and an opportunity to begin to know faces, offices, and resources on and off campus.

## ***Online Education***

The Online Education group offers training for faculty in the use of URI's learning management system (LMS) and in the best practices of online pedagogy and blended teaching and learning. Three to four times a year, Online Ed offers Online Pedagogy, a faculty-designed and led online, asynchronous workshop that involves discussions, assignments, and deliverables intended to prepare URI faculty to provide rigorous, effective online learning for their students. A prerequisite to any online training workshop is the Basic Brightspace Competency course, which ensures faculty are well equipped with a fundamental understanding of the LMS that encompasses both technical and pedagogical best practices. Online Education also designs and oversees all instructional design training and support for URI Online faculty and programs. The Quality Matters framework for quality assurance in online course design guides the work of Online Education, ensuring adherence to NECHE guidelines.

## ***Assessment and Accreditation***

The Assessment and Accreditation group works closely with departments and programs across URI to both adhere to federal guidelines for institutional assessments of student learning and to promote best practices of assessing student learning from the course level through the major. The Assessment group also collaborates with the other groups in ATL to oversee our SoTL (Scholarship of Teaching and Learning) and DBER (Discipline Based Educational Research) programming, which includes resources, conversations, workshops, and consultations on faculty projects small and large.

## ***URI Online***

The URI Online team supports the development, marketing, and enrollment of fully-online, accelerated degree-granting and certificate programs in alignment with federal, state, and accreditation regulations.

## ***Academic Testing Center***

The Academic Testing Center (ATC) provides a safe, secure, and accessible space for students to take and make up exams. Adhering to the protocols and standards of the National College Testing Association (NCTA) the ATC offers services to faculty and students that ease faculty time commitments and allow students a greater opportunity for academic success as it relates to exams.

# Inspiring Evidence-Based Teaching

ATL provided a wide range of faculty professional development opportunities during the 2020-21 academic year. In Summer 2021, ATL offered a faculty orientation program for incoming instructors called *Strategies & Tools for Teaching* to support inclusive teaching practices, course design, course mapping, and the use of online learning standards such as Quality Matters. We offered two HIT (High Impact Teaching) seminars focused on *Teaching for Learning* and *Ethics Across the Curriculum*.

URI faculty came together for several ATL conversations on topics ranging from *Using IDEA Feedback* and *Large Lecture Barriers and Solutions* to *Working with ATL to Research Student Learning*. We also sponsored a series of three workshops with Dr. Annemarie Vaccaro on Equitable Teaching.

During this year of transition, ATL remained committed to creating community among URI instructors and investigating their needs.

## Strategies & Tools for Teaching

- 26 participants (100% completion rate)

## HIT Seminars

- Teaching for Learning Seminar, Fall 2021 - 10 participants
- Ethics Throughout the Curriculum HIT Seminar, Summer 2022 - 10 participants
- Researching Across the Disciplines HIT Seminar Alumni Gathering - 12 participants

## Faculty Workshops

- *New Faculty Reunion* - 2 participants
- *Equitable Learning - Workshop 1: Introduction to Equity: A Focus on Faculty Spheres of Influence* - 7 participants
- *General Education at URI* - 3 participants
- *Equitable Learning - Workshop 2: Designing Courses for Equity* - 6 participants
- *IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction at URI* - 3 participants
- *Equitable Learning - Workshop 3 : Teaching for Equity* - 3 participants

## ATL Conversations

- *More than Just a Number: Using IDEA Student Feedback for All Its Worth* - 13 participants
- *Large Lecture Course Barriers & Solutions Conversation* - 20-25 participants
- *How Can I Best Support My Multilingual Learners?* - 17 participants
- *Writing an Effective Assessment Report* - 9 participants
- *Graduate Program Assessment Basics & Planning* - 10 participants
- *Investigating Your Impact on Student Learning: A SoTL Primer* - 2 participants
- *Investigating Your Impact on Student Learning: Working with IRB* - 20 participants
- *Working with ATL to Research Student Learning* - 23 participants
- *'Tis the Season (with ATC)* - 3 participants

# Cultivating Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

A key ATL goal is increasing awareness and implementation of practical evidence-based teaching strategies that support Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. This included supporting faculty to focus on learner-centered teaching with explicit outcomes, intentionally modeling reflective and inclusive pedagogical practices, and the application and dissemination of key scholarship models and frameworks. ATL facilitated a faculty inclusion book club focused on the work in the book, *Bandwidth Recovery: Recovering Cognitive Resources Lost to Poverty, Racism, & Marginalization*. We facilitated another DEI-focused book club with *Grading for Learning*.

The Academic Testing Center offered testing accommodations for students fasting during Ramadan, including halal foods. The ATC is also designated a Safe Zone for LGBTQ people, staff are Mental Health First Aid trained, and serves to support ADA accommodations.



## DEI Book Clubs

- Grading for Learning Book Club/Faculty Learning Community (3 sessions) - 38 total (8 submitted action plans)
- Bandwidth Recovery Book Club - 9 participants (2 submitted action plans)

## Other DEI Efforts

- Collaborations with other ATL offices/stakeholders
- Testing accommodations for fasting students during Ramadan
- ATC designated as a **Safe Zone** for faculty, student, and staff by the URI Gender & Sexuality Center
- ATC proctored ADA/504/508-accommodated exams for faculty (approximately 850 exams between November 2021 and May 2022; exams for students with disabilities accounted for approximately 56% of total volume)
- All ATC staff became certified in Mental Health First Aid
- Faculty Development and ATC offered the following ATL Conversations: *How Can I Best Support My Multilingual Learners?*, and *Tis' the Season*

# Supporting Professional Education & Online Programs

URI Online (URIO), which focuses on delivering high quality, fully online, accelerated programs for working professionals, has grown extensively since its inception in 2019. We began with a Master of Science in Healthcare Management in Spring 2020 with seven students. and this year alone added another 11 programs ranging from graduate degrees, undergraduate degree completion, and certificates.

URIO also offers strong student support services beginning with our website, which delivers detailed, digestible, information to prospective students. The program pages are easy to navigate and provide overviews, curriculum, admission criteria, tuition and fees, and faculty bios.

In order to support the students, URIO has a robust team of representatives in the Student Contact Support Center (SCSC) who work to support students from the time of inquiry through graduation. This team has grown from 3 PTE to 6 PTE representatives this year. As a result, total enrollments have now grown to over 550 students across all programs. Additionally, URIO has worked to create a dedicated student resource page on our website where students can easily connect with all of the URI services and resources available to them.

This year, in order to better serve our target audience of working professionals and compete in the marketplace, URIO led the charge in two critical areas: 1) allowing students to receive college credit for relevant work experience through Prior Learning Assessment and 2) developing partnership with businesses in the community.

In the first instance, ATL and URI Online staff collaborated with individuals across URI by investigating services offered across campus as well as the state's other public higher education institutions. Second, URIO established a partnership with PureVita Labs for the undergraduate certificate program in Cannabis Studies to better equip individuals with the skills and knowledge needed in the industry particularly with the recent legalization and regulation in Rhode Island.

All URI Online courses are developed by URI faculty with the support of our growing instructional design team. Each course is then peer reviewed by URI trained faculty to ensure it meets Quality Matters (QM) standards for online course design, including accessibility and ADA compliance. We provide all URI Online instructors with training in best online pedagogical and design practices either through our Online Pedagogy Course, the Online

Design workshops, or the newly designed Non-Designer Online Pedagogy. The goal of the Online Design course is to provide a platform for collegial discussion, collaboration, and reflection as faculty progress through the stages of course design and development. NDOP intends to provide training in online course facilitation to faculty members teaching in an already designed course shell.

Lastly, URI Online ensures that the university is compliant with all state and federal regulations for online learning, as well as our regional accreditor's standards. URI Online annually applies to the state portal and NC-SARA to maintain its membership in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement and provides annual data on its out-of-state enrollments and placements.



# Supporting Professional Education & Online Programs

Our team worked individually with faculty on 40 courses:

- Trish Casey (PSC 507) JN
- Len Kahn (PHY 571,572,573,574)
- Pat Burbank (NUR 383 Gen Ed)
- Sarah Larson (NFS 207 Gen Ed)
- Karl Aspelund (TMD 326G Ged Ed)
- Colleen Mouw (OCG 533)
- Katie Kelley/Spivack (OCG 540)
- Martha McConnell (OCG 601)
- Melissa Omana (OCG 501)
- Brian Heikes (OCG 506)
- Kathy Peno (EDC 589,590)
- Kathy Peno (EDC (591,592)
- Rob Coyle (DSP 557)
- Michelle Peach (EVS 514,519)
- Lauren Mandel (LSC 548,510, 519)
- Melissa Villa Nicholas (LSC 518,524)
- Yan Ma (LSC 505, 528, 547)
- Yan Ma (LSC 558, 506)
- Mary Moen (LSC 536)
- Jack Martin (LSC 521)
- Ashley Selima (LSC 597)
- Angie Chiang (COM 310)
- Angie Chiang (COM 442)
- Jerry Jalette (COM 440)
- Jennifer Danielson (COM 351)
- Vince Petronio (COM 361)
- Tracy Drake (LSC 523)
- Nilton Porto (HDF 205G)

## Basic Brightspace Training

- 78 completers

## Online Pedagogy training

- 72 registered, 37 completers (51% completion rate)

## Non-Designer Online Pedagogy Training

- 17 completers

## Online Design Cohort Training

- **Medication Outcomes:** Faculty participants - Stephen Kogut, Meghan McCormick, Ashley Buchanan, Ami Vyas, Xuerong Wen
- **Data Analytics for Accounting and Auditing:** Faculty participants - Judy Beckman, Devendra Kale, Qi Liu, Xiaowei Xu
- **Social Media Certificate:** Faculty participants - Ammina Kothari, Nicholas Corsano, Joon Kyoung Kim, Ying Xiong
- **Master's in Public Administration:** Faculty participants - Aaron Ley, Jackie Kelley, Karen Sweeting, Skye Leedahl, Perri Leviss, Ping Xu
- **Human Relations Certificate:** Faculty participants - Aimee Phelps, Donna Gamache-Griffiths

## Brightspace Mentors

This year we reduced our mentors from five to three (Sarah Larson, Amy Correia, Allison Harper) due to most faculty having nearly two years of Brightspace behind them. Graduate Assistant Hayley Pomerantz continued to serve as our resident Brightspace expert and offered 2-3 drop-in sessions per week in addition to the mentor drop-in sessions (average 2-5 attendees per session).

## Partnerships

We established a new partnership between URI Online undergraduate certificate in Cannabis Studies and PureVita Labs.

## Quality Matters Approved Online Courses

57 URI Online courses passed QM during the 2021-22 academic year:

AFS 597	LSC 517	LSC 597	PSC 504
COM 310	LSC 518	MBA 578	PSC 505
COM 442	LSC 521	MHM 508	PSC 506
DSP 556	LSC 524	NFS 207	PSC 507
DSP 557	LSC 528	NUR 383	PSC 508
EDC 589	LSC 531	OCG 533	PSC 510
EVS 514	LSC 536	OCG 540	PSC 524
EVS 519	LSC 540	OCG 601	PSC 573
HDF205G	LSC 544	PHY 571	PSC 583
LHR 500	LSC 547	PHY 572	PSC 590
LHR 531	LSC 548	PHY 573	PSC 592
LHR 573	LSC 550	PHY 574	TMD 326G
LSC 510	LSC 570	PSC 501	
LSC 511	LSC 596	PSC 502	
LSC 515	LSC 597	PSC 503	

# Learning for Improvement

## Program Assessment Reporting

After two years of pandemic reporting adjustments, Cohort I programs, with assessment reports due in May 2022, reported using the traditional, NECHE endorsed, report template options. Program assessment reporting templates and rubric scoring tools are posted on the [Assessment Office website](#). In fall 2021, the institution-, college, and program-level assessment reporting results were shared with Deans, and the summary assessment report was compiled for Faculty Senate. Initial results for May 2022:

- 76% programs compliant overall (n=82)
- 92% compliant undergrad (n= 53)
- 53% compliant graduate (n=30)

## Faculty Peer Reviewers

Twelve new faculty peer reviewers were hired to review, score, and provide feedback on program assessment reports submitted during the May 2022 reporting cycle. The group consisted of a mix of full-time faculty and lecturers (teaching professors) and represented 6 different colleges (A&S, CELS, CHS, CB, EGR, Pharm). During the 3-day Assessment Retreat, program assessment report materials were scored for 59 academic degree programs.

## Programming and Collaborations

We continued our support for faculty through consultations, drop-in support sessions, and collaborations with key stakeholders across URI (Faculty Senate/Faculty Senate Subcommittee for Teaching, Advising, and Assessment; Arts and Sciences Assessment Committee; NECHE; the Office of Institutional Research; General Education Program; Graduate Council; Graduate School; Student Success Committee).

## General Education Program Assessment

The Assessment team collaborated on a variety of communications and reports on the progress for developing sustainable assessment reporting processes. In June 2022, we supported the second round of the General Education program assessment process by co-sponsoring training of 12 faculty assessors to score student artifacts for two of 12 general education student learning outcomes (Civic Knowledge [C1] and Responsibilities, Writing [B1]).

We also supported the second round of of the General Education rubric revision by co-sponsoring training of 6 faculty “Scholar Advocates for General Education” to review and revise the 7 remaining [Gen Ed rubrics](#).

## New Program Proposals

Assessment plans were approved for 6 new programs and 9 URI Online graduate certificates in conjunction with the Faculty Senate and members of the Learning Outcomes Oversight Committee.

### New programs approved:

- Quantum Computing, MS
- Masters of Public Administration (URI Online)
- Nutrition and Human Health, BS
- Data Science, BA/BS
- Data Science, MS (URI Online)
- Early Childhood Care and Education, BS degree completion (URI Online)

### New graduate certificates:

- Quantum Computing Certificate
- Medication Outcomes
- Data Analytics for Accounting and Auditing
- Social Media
- Human Resource
- Learning and Development
- School Library Media Teacher Certification
- Teacher Certification Program for Working Professionals (Post-Baccalaureate Pre-K-2 Certification)



# Learning for Improvement

## Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

We are very excited to scale up our SoTL efforts to build upon the mini-grant initiative. The Assessment group collaborated with Faculty Development on a successful proposal to the Vice Provost to embark on the development of a robust presence of SoTL (and DBER) at URI.

Our Fall 2020 needs assessment survey indicated broad interest among our faculty in this type of work. We collaborated with the Office of Research Integrity to develop a SoTL Blanket IRB intended to support and streamline the IRB process for instructors interested in conducting course- and program-based SoTL/human subjects research projects.

As of summer 2022, 13 faculty and 5 graduate students are working on 9 SoTL projects using the SoTL Blanket IRB. Taken together, these projects have the potential to impact the experiences of 1000+ URI undergraduate students.

We have launched a [SoTL webpage](#), offered a 3-part series of SoTL workshops, and convened an Advisory Committee to respond to the interest and needs of our faculty.

## 2021 Assessment Climate Survey

In November 2021, the Assessment Office surveyed 110 department/program chairs; response rate in for this survey administration was 32% (n=35). [Results summary](#):

- the value of assessment for their own departments remains high;
- infrastructure support for assessment is increasing;
- university-wide faculty norms have risen significantly; and,
- university-wide implementation has also increased

Recommendations based on these findings include the need to provide:

1. more resources to chairs and faculty with assessment-related duties;
2. greater recognition and reward for faculty peer leaders who demonstrate and promote the value of program-level assessment; and,
3. visible and explicit incorporation of program-level assessment goals, results, and impacts into program review, strategic planning, and external promotion of academic quality.

## Funding Initiatives

ATL supported innovation across the campus through the award of 6 Assessment Innovation mini-grants to support unique and engaging program assessment efforts: 6 projects, 16 faculty engaged, \$6,400 mini-grant funds. AI mini-grant application [webpage](#).

ATL also awarded 4 Scholarship of Teaching and Learning mini-grants to support faculty engaged in course-based research that has an impact at the program level: 4 projects, 10 faculty engaged, \$6,027 mini-grant funds. SoTL mini-grant application [webpage](#).



# Knowledge Dissemination

## *URI Teaching & Learning Showcase*

The Annual URI Teaching and Learning Showcase highlights the critical pedagogical work and assessment innovations of faculty and staff who have participated in ATL-sponsored programming and scholarly educational action research. We were delighted to return to an in-person format this year, with online posters and streamed lightning talks for those who could attend personally..

In April 2022, 31 faculty and staff shared their work through lightning talks and poster presentations with the URI community on topics such as: Alternative grading, Brightspace checklists for assignments Developing an online program from certificate to master's, General education program assessment outcomes and Understanding the context of the lives of students of color in CHM 101.

What did you like most about this year's Showcase?

- Poster Presenter - "Being in person!! It was a thrill and I loved the lightening [sic] talks and how many things were shared in a short amt [sic] of time!"
- Poster Presenter - "Inspiring speakers"
- Poster Presenter - "I liked the lightning talks and the ability to discuss my poster with the attendees."
- Poster Presenter - "Just coming together again after the pandemic was nice"
- Attendee - "Different formats (lightning, posters, etc)"
- Attendee - "Lightning talk & virtual aspect for people who cannot attend in person"

## *ATL Website Redesign*

We have re-organized our website to enhance clarity and provide more faculty-focused content that allows users to quickly access teaching and learning resources and ATL programming opportunities.

<https://web.uri.edu/atl/>



# Office for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning

## 2021-2022 Staff



Kathleen Torrens  
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Assessment



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Karen Bellnier  
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Amy Marcetti Topper,  
Program Evaluation &  
Assessment Specialist

# Office for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning

## 2021-2022 Staff



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**Office for the Advancement  
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