

The

Office for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning

2020-2021 Annual Report

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND



Core Services

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.

Faculty Development

Our faculty development staff help faculty create high quality learning experiences, reflect critically on teaching practice, and adapt evidence-based teaching strategies to enhance learning for all students.

Online Education

Our online education staff offer training and support for faculty designing and teaching online and blended courses, including workshops in Online Pedagogy and Blended Instruction, as well as individual consultations in instructional design.

Assessment and Accreditation

Our assessment staff promote student success, improved learning, and continuous program improvement through program-level outcomes assessment and curricular innovation.

URI Online

Our URI Online staff support 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

Our Academic Testing Center staff administer exams for students taking on campus courses who need to complete make-up exams and for students with approved accommodations.

2020-2021 ATL Staff



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Director



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Administrative
Assistant III



Kathleen M. Torrens
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Joannah Portman-Daley
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Elaine Finan
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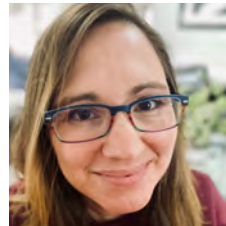
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URI Online



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Faculty
Development
Specialist



Penny Carroll
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Christy Ashley
Graduate
Assessment
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Jenn McWeeney
Student Contact
Support Center
Coordinator



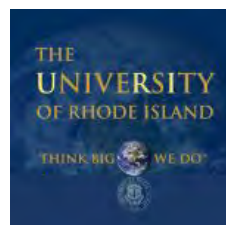
Keri McAlice
Testing
Coordinator



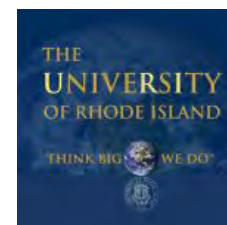
Andrea Munro
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Design Specialist



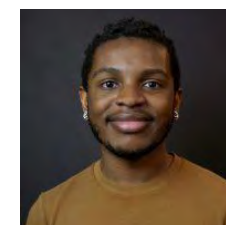
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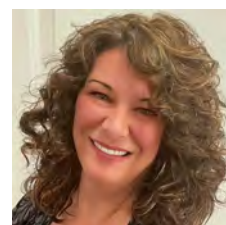
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Instructional
Design Specialist



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Student Support
& Recruitment
Representative



Jacob Jackson
Student Support
& Recruitment
Representative

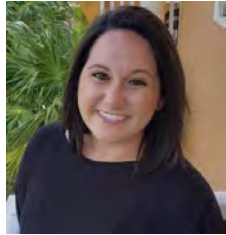


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Student Support
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Representative

2020-2021 ATL Staff (continued)



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Graduate Assistant,
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Graduate Assistant,
Faculty Development



Adriana Wilding
Graduate Assistant,
Assessment



Karen Bellnier
Graduate Assistant,
ATL and URI Online

Inspiring Evidence-Based Teaching

ATL provided a wide-ranging selection of faculty professional development opportunities this year. In Summer 2020, ATL offered a faculty orientation program 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. Throughout the academic year, URI faculty worked in **professional learning communities** through the High Impact Teaching (HIT) Seminars professional development series where evidence-based practices were modeled and applied in the creation of participants' teaching action plans. These are cohort-based experiences designed to develop participants' critical reflection and scholarly thinking towards their teaching; the seminars' follow-up cycle includes course action plans submissions, implementation consultations, post-implementation reports, and opportunities for ongoing individual support for further course revisions and assessment – such as consultations on IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction interpretation, and mid-semester assessment programs including Small Group Instructional Diagnosis student feedback.

In addition to ATL's core Teaching for Learning HIT, HIT Seminars supporting specific General Education learning outcomes were also offered in three areas this year: ; Researching Across the Disciplines; Ethics Throughout the Curriculum; and Writing Across the Curriculum. HIT seminars applications regularly exceeded registration capacity.

Thanks to the Davis Foundation grant, we were able to fund cohorts of 10 faculty participating in each of these programs. Faculty also explored pedagogy through our ATL Conversations workshop series, designed to bring **innovative teaching and learning programming** to faculty such as metacognition, backwards design, and alternative grading and assessment methods. ATL Conversations for this year consisted of: Exploring Metacognition, Memory, and Learning, Together Remotely: Centering Sense of Belonging while Distanced; Teachers, Learners, Citizens: Discussing the election with our students, Grief and Trauma Informed Teaching, Getting to Justice in Program Assessment, and Grading for Learning: Manageable and Equitable Grading

ATL also provided more discipline specific programming such as the STEM Teach Experience where faculty experienced a week-long program using the practices of Discipline Based Education Research (DBER) to create a course design plan and a team outcomes assessment plan.

"I have become a much better teacher. Participation in these workshops have introduced me to colleagues at URI whom I value a great deal. I felt a greater sense of community with fellow instructors. I am proud that URI cares about undergraduate education so strongly as to support these seminars & hire such excellent scholars in ATL."

-ATL Participant

Cultivating Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

A key ATL goal was increasing awareness and implementation of practical evidence-based teaching strategies that support Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI). 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* updated our website with in depth resources focused on Teaching with Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, including: Anti-racist & Decolonizing Pedagogies, Sense of Belonging, Difficult Dialogue, Trauma-informed Teaching. ATL was offered Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) grants focused on JEDI and the anti racism/achievement gap. This year's HITS redesign plans highlighted equity through alternative grading strategies and applying active learning strategies that benefit all students but specifically traditionally underserved students.

ATL collaborated across the institution with key stakeholders such as the Community, Equity & Diversity; Global Initiatives; University Libraries; Graduate School; college-level diversity coordinators; Provost's Office; Academic Enhancement Center; Talent Development; Writing Across URI. ATL supported the General Education Program which is composed of 12 major student learning outcomes to support life-long learning and student success. ATL staff consulted with faculty on curriculum design supporting these learning outcomes and their work to help students to complete their Grand Challenge. Because student voice is important to learning, ATL collaborated with the URI Academic Excellence Center (AEC) on the Ace Your Course Challenge and implemented metacognition into learning experiences. AEC and ATL also worked on a scholarly education project called the Future of Learning which collected and analyzed data to understand the student perspective on learning experience needs.

The Future of Learning findings were distributed to faculty to improve future course design.

If you are interested in research and projects like the Future of Learning, then consider applying for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) grant or request a consultation on implementing innovative action research proposals. The work on SoTL and DBER align with the URI strategic plan of fostering inquiry-based interdisciplinary knowledge across disciplines and academic units.



Photo by Gotta Be Worth It from Pexels

Supporting Professional Education & Online Programs

In 2019, URI began developing URI Online – an initiative focused on delivering fully online graduate degrees, undergraduate degree completion programs, and certificates for working professionals. Our first URI Online degree program, a Master of Science in Healthcare Management, was launched in Spring 2020 with seven students. This year, we launched an undergraduate B.A. degree completion program in Communication Studies, a P.M.S. in Supply Chain Management, and five certificate programs, one of which was also the first undergraduate certificate to be offered at URI independent of any other undergraduate program - Cannabis Studies. With these additional programs, we grew enrollment to 176 students. We developed URI Online with strong student support services beginning with our website. This was designed to help prospective students easily find information, including program overviews, curriculums, admission criteria, tuition and fees, and faculty introductions. In order to meet the growth of URI Online over this past year, we added four part-time student support and recruitment representatives to our Student Contact Support

Center (SCSC) who provide information and support to help students navigate URI from point-of-inquiry through graduation. One unintended consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic was the increased need for virtual services, including writing support for both graduate and undergraduate students, counseling and disability services. URI Online met this demand by creating 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, as well as compete in the marketplace, URI Online led the charge to allow students to receive college credit for relevant work experience through Prior Learning Assessment. 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. The need for consolidation of resources was evident, as students were unable to easily locate information and assistance.



Photo by Katerina Holmes from Pexels



Photo by Christina Morillo from Pexels

Supporting Professional Education & Online Programs

As such, URI Online proposed to University leadership that a central repository be developed and maintained to provide resources and guidance to students for portfolio development, CLEP equivalencies, military and other professional credits. 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 or Online Design Workshops. 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. This course follows a backward design approach whereby faculty begin by first establishing what students will be able to do and know by the end of the course and then move on to fully develop all course assessments and instructional content. In May 2021, URI Online celebrated its first graduates,

which represented the Cannabis Studies Certificate program, with a virtual graduation ceremony, including celebratory remarks from President Dooley, Provost DeHayes, Associate Dean Orr, Department Chair Dr. Seeram, and Program Coordinator Dr. Forscher-Dancause. 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.



Photo by Stanley Morales from Pexels

Assessing Student Learning for Program Improvement

ATL supported learning outcomes assessment and continuous improvement by providing academic programs with flexible biennial assessment report options to accommodate the upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. All programs scheduled to submit an assessment report in May 2021 were able to choose from one of five reporting options, and almost all submitted a timely report for faculty peer review. To improve turnaround time on program assessment report feedback to programs, and to use the overall results to plan for programming and support for the upcoming year, ATL condensed the annual assessment faculty peer reviewer initiative into a two-week asynchronous and synchronous professional development/retreat experience. Twelve faculty peer reviewers participated in the training and scoring of assessment report materials from 80 academic programs.

In November 2020, ATL surveyed faculty involved in program assessment activities to identify areas for additional support. Faculty feedback prompted several enhancements: a biweekly newsletter (*Assessment Updates*) was

developed for Chairs and Directors; virtual weekly drop-in sessions were hosted for all programs, with special drop-in sessions for graduate programs only; three “hot topic” sessions were delivered in response to areas of special interest (Funding Opportunities; Assessing Teamwork-Based Outcomes; Best Practices for Remote Assessment Meetings); a new funding resource was launched during spring 2021 (*Assessment Innovation Mini-Grants*), with four faculty teams receiving funds to enhance their assessment work.



Photo by Pavel Danilyuk from Pexels

Assessing Student Learning for Program Improvement

Additionally, several other resources were developed: a self-paced introductory training module was launched in fall 2020, *Program Assessment at URI*, five faculty teams were funded through our Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Mini-Grant in spring 2021, and three assessment tools, initially targeted to graduate programs, were designed to simplify the program assessment data collection, data management, and analysis process (Data Management Initiative, Grad Badge in Assessment, Individual Development Plan).



Photo by Thirdman from Pexels

ATL collaborated on the launch of the General Education program assessment process, which included facilitating the adoption of new assessment technology (Campus Labs/Anthology), helping to train 12 faculty assessors on scoring student artifacts for two of 12 general education student learning outcomes (Communicate Effectively, Information Literacy), and coordinating with the Office of Institutional Research to identify critical student demographics for analysis of learning data.



Photo by Gustavo Fring from Pexels

ATL supported the development and approval of program assessment plans for three new programs and three new certificates, in collaboration with the Learning Outcomes Oversight Committee, and compiled and shared the May 2020 assessment reporting results with Deans and the Faculty Senate. A 2017 research project aligned with the VALUE rubrics was updated using recent curriculum maps to code current program-level student learning outcomes for all academic programs, creating an institution-wide database.



Photo by Lukas from Pexels

Knowledge Dissemination

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. Due to COVID-19 ATL staff pivoted to hosting this year's Showcase via Airmeeet, an innovative online conference platform, which involved training over 70 conference participants on how to effectively use the new technology and developing a conference website. In April 2021, 60 faculty and staff shared their work through lightning talks and poster presentations with the URI community on topics such as: course design for online learning, fostering student engagement and accountability, and engaging in collaborative planning for student learning outcomes assessment. Feedback on the Showcase event was overwhelmingly positive, particularly around the pre-conference support offered by ATL staff.

Over the course of the 2020-2021 academic year, ATL staff undertook a comprehensive review and design of the website to increase ease of navigation and highlight the many

"I really liked the platform, that it was not Zoom, and how easy it was to use. I was nervous to do a virtual poster presentation, as this was my first, but was really impressed by the overall ease. I also felt really supported by ATL in learning the platform and for them providing so many times for me to assess that learning opportunity."

-
Showcase Poster Presenter

voices involved in teaching and learning across the University, as well as the various services, programs, and expertise of the team. This collaborative process involved each of ATL's four offices in evaluating existing information, developing new materials, and editorial review. The new [ATL website](#) aligns with URI's strategic plan of developing an interactive, visible, searchable website that lists faculty areas of expertise in research, teaching, and service.

Our redesigned website moves towards a more faculty-focused content interface that allows users to quickly access teaching and learning resources and ATL programming opportunities. This includes a new "Design for Learning" section that provides information on instructional design, backwards design, and understanding by design - all of which are intentional approaches for designing meaningful course learning experiences. The website also has a focus on inclusive teaching and works to provide resources to support for more inclusion and success in the academic environments. The site will continue to grow to meet the changing needs of teaching and learning at URI, and serve as a repository of the latest evidence-based teaching strategies.

"The diversity of projects was great. I also loved the networking at the virtual tables. Interacting with the presenter and the other participants at the tables gave a real community feel."

-Showcase Lightning Talk Speaker

Remote Learning & Instruction

Starting in fall 2020, all URI courses had to be delivered in Brightspace. Transitioning from one learning management system (LMS) to another at any point in time is a huge undertaking. During an international pandemic, it is another thing altogether. The pandemic necessitated faculty to shift their classes online, which offered ATL the opportunity to train far more faculty in Brightspace sooner than anticipated. The entire ATL team went into action to support the pivot to emergency remote instruction at URI in March 2020, as well as to introduce the campus to Brightspace. We developed introductory training for the new LMS, Online Pedagogy training in the new LMS, spearheaded informational documentation on migrating from the old LMS to the new, and developed a Hybrid Pedagogy Bootcamp, an intensive hybrid workshop to give faculty some skills and ideas for blending synchronous and asynchronous teaching strategies. To facilitate thoughtful and strategic design, we created a step-by-step Brightspace Design Guide that leads faculty through the process of building out each specific tool in Brightspace, both from a course migration and new creation perspective.

To date, the Design Guide has had over 1200 unique views. Additionally, to make the content even more accessible and engaging, we created an interactive design experience, Online Design for All, which provides modular, self-paced guidance and best practices in online course design.

Recognizing the importance and “just in time” usefulness of self-paced resources, we also launched a YouTube Channel, [Teach Online at URI](#), that contains a library of step-by-step course design tutorials. These videos help faculty in using tools, creating engaging learning spaces, and ultimately leveraging Brightspace to the greatest extent possible. Additionally, we developed a series of “Quick Links” on our website, which provide job aids with detailed instructions on how to perform various tasks in Brightspace. These job aids ultimately contributed to Information Technology Service’s Knowledge Base, providing a comprehensive collection of Brightspace-related self-help documentation. Furthermore, to streamline the design process for faculty, we created Course Design Templates for each of the various

semester lengths at URI (14, 7, 5 and 3 weeks), which allowed faculty to quickly populate the site with their content and learning activities.



Photo by RODNAE Productions from Pexels

Remote Learning & Instruction

The Brightspace Mentor program continued into the 2020-2021 academic year and supported the LMS transition as well. The original 10 mentors spent much of their time in July and August 2020 helping faculty better understand and complete the Sakai to Brightspace migration and archival processes. In addition to answering emails and providing one-on-one consultations, each mentor held two drop-in sessions per month. And, in partnership with ITS, we created step-by-step documentation on how to migrate Sakai Content into Brightspace and/or archive it in the cloud. Both ITS staff and Brightspace Mentors held multiple dedicated help sessions devoted to the process.



Photo by Anna Shvets from Pexels

To help new faculty onboard during a pandemic, the annual ATL event for new faculty was redeveloped into a full week of synchronous/asynchronous activities including presentations, panel discussions by faculty and students, and activities and resources for the first couple of weeks of the semester. An introduction to Brightspace was included, as well as the requirement that each participant create a Brightspace site and populate it with course materials so they would be ready to teach online on the first day of classes. As the academic year progressed, to facilitate the pivot from a pedagogical support perspective, we offered numerous ATL Conversations and Town Halls,



Photo by Edward Jenner from Pexels

all open to the URI community. Topics included: *Together Remotely: Centering Sense of Belonging while Socially Distanced*, *Remote Labs*, *Facilitating Difficult Conversations Remotely*, and *The Art of the Micro-Lecture*. These virtual events were well-attended by a variety of faculty and staff, with the community being willing to reach out for help to best support our students. In addition, the AEC and ATL collaborated on a scholarly education project, *The Future of Learning*, which collected and analyzed data to understand the student perspective on learning experience needs. The findings were distributed to faculty to improve future course design.



Photo by Edmond Dantès from Pexels

2020-2021 Faculty Partners

Faculty Development Affiliates

The ATL Faculty Development Affiliates program aims to build capacity for scholarly teaching and systematically expand learning communities that support faculty in sustaining evidence-based teaching excellence at URI. Faculty Affiliates serve as liaisons to their respective colleges and departments, and hold diverse roles based on expertise and disciplinary focus. They collaborate with the ATL team on a variety of consultations, workshops, presentations, and projects.



Christy Ashley
College of
Business



Bryan Dewsbury
College of the
Environment &
Life Sciences



Jay Fogelman
College of Education
& Professional
Studies



Cheryl Foster
College of Arts &
Sciences



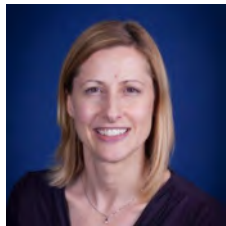
Julianna Golas
College of Health
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Education &
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Rebecca Millsop
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Sciences



Kayon
Murray-Johnson
College of Education &
Professional Studies



Becky Sartini
College of the
Environment &
Life Sciences



Annemarie Vaccaro
College of Education
& Professional
Studies

2020-2021 Faculty Partners

Online Education Brightspace Mentors

Brightspace Departmental Mentors are early adopters and champions of the new learning management system. These individuals have completed Brightspace training and can provide peer support at workshops, drop-in hours, and by appointment. See below for the calendar of drop in help sessions.



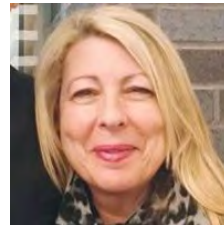
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Amy Correia
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& Professional
Studies



Kathy Peno
College of Education &
Professional Studies



Allison Harper
College of Health
Sciences

2020-2021 Faculty Partners

Assessment Mentors

Faculty engagement in the assessment process is an essential part of meaningful and manageable assessment. Program Assessment Mentors are available to support you and your department's assessment efforts by providing guidance and feedback with planning for assessment, constructing assessment activities, as well as supporting your effort to summarize and report on program level assessment activity in your department.



Alana Bibeau
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Ann-Marie Sacco
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Christy Ashley
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Kris Bovy
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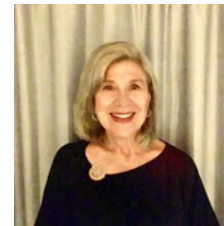
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**Office for the Advancement
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