

Welcome to January!

The semester is about to get underway, and I hope your holiday break was relaxing. We have drop-in sessions each week if you need any refresher or have questions. Please check out the training calendar on the link below.

Remember, if you have a Brightspace issue, please get in touch with the SUNY Poly Help desk and put in a help desk ticket. You can always contact the SUNY Online Help Desk for assistance outside of regular work hours. 1 (844) 673-6786 - (toll-free within the US) or (518) 320-1300 (direct).

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## Office of Distance Education

We have moved our offices to the Kunsela C101 suite. We have created workspace studios designed to allow faculty, students, and staff to come in and work on materials using ready-made studios for production and receive help from our staff in designing courses, improving content, and developing presentations. The studios have a variety of hardware and software to help you create vibrant content or even teach from a small studio free of distractions.

We have moved the smartboard from the library administrative area to the conference/classroom in the suite and have turned it into a model learning center. There are still a few finishing touches to do in space but look for an announcement of a spring open house. Feel free to drop in for a tour.

Workshop times and dates offered by our office are available at this [Workshop Link](#). Workshops that we offer include but are not limited to Alternative Assessments, Effective Feedback, Respondus Lockdown Browser/Monitor, Improving Your Online Class, Effective Student Engagement in Online/Remote Classes, Universal Course Design, Preparing for the New Semester, Blackboard Grade Center, Rubrics, and a series of **open lab drop-in sessions** each week. We also offer to consult for deep dives into your course to work with you to bring your ideas to life.

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## D2L Transition News

We are almost finished with the transition from Blackboard to D2L Brightspace. We are still technically in the transition period, but we are fully operational at this point.

**We have cut off access to Blackboard** since the contract expired on December 31<sup>st</sup>. We are waiting for the Blackboard archive to be created and the campus admins to be granted access. Once that happens, we will be able to give faculty access to their old courses. Our migration request form is currently closed during this transition to the archive. Blackboard archive that will allow us to export more courses as needed but no student will have access.

We were able to work out a new contract with a few other SUNY schools to continue to have Collaborate Ultra as a conferencing option in addition to Class. Class Technologies purchased Collaborate Ultra from Blackboard allowing us to secure both systems. Collaborate Ultra has a couple of features that are missing in Class that allow students to be in a session without the instructor.

We have been working on tutorials that you can find on Brightspace when you first log in. Training opportunities, videos, and transition information can also be found on the [SUNY Digital Learning Environment website](#). You will be asked to log in to the site using your SUNY Poly credentials.

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## **SUNY Information**

### **Conferences of Interest**

The 32nd Annual SUNY Conference on Instruction & Technology (CIT), sponsored by SUNY FACT2 (Faculty Advisory Council on Teaching and Technology) will be hosted by University at Buffalo May 21-24, 2024. We welcome individuals from all SUNY campuses, as well as from outside of the SUNY system, to submit their abstract for consideration!

CIT is SUNY's largest and most prominent event on instructional technology, providing a forum for faculty, instructional support professionals, and policymakers to present, discuss, and explore innovative avenues for integrating technology into the teaching and learning environment.

This year's theme Creating Inclusive Innovation in Higher Education is supported by the following tracks:

- Leveraging Innovative Technologies in Practice
- Building Relationships
- Creation and Authorship
- Evolving Pedagogies
- Equitable Assessment in Practice

To submit your abstract, go to the [CIT Abstract Portal](#) and follow the instructions provided. The abstract portal will close on January 7, 2024.

We look forward to a dynamic and engaging program for CIT 2024!

Warmly,  
The SUNY Online Team, on behalf of the CIT 2024 Planning Committee

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## **Hypothesis**

We now have [Hypothesis](#) installed on Brightspace for everyone to use in their courses.

“Hypothesis is a new effort to implement an old idea: A conversation layer over the entire web that works everywhere, without needing implementation by any underlying site.”

If you are interested in a workshop from the Hypothesis trainers, please let our office know so we can arrange a day and time.

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## VoiceThread Training and Information

### VoiceThread Assignments!

[Video Link](#)

### Where can I get more training?

Join us for one of our live walkthroughs! Workshops are open to everyone, and each one will be These workshops are entirely free. The sessions are led by VoiceThread’s instructional designers and range in topics for the beginner to the experienced user. VoiceThread allows for a multi-media approach to discussions and class projects. [VoiceThread Workshop Link](#)

All upcoming maintenance windows can be found on the [VoiceThread Status Page](#). You can also subscribe to email notifications there if you want to receive reminders about these scheduled windows.

### Become a VoiceThread Certified Educator

We invite you to join the hundreds of VoiceThreaders who have already been certified. Unlike other edtech certifications, this course is not a rubber stamp for work you’ve already completed. Our course is designed to give you a genuine learning experience through creating, experimenting, and, most of all, fun.

Whether you are a novice or an advanced user, this course will help you become an expert VoiceThreader through personal guidance from the facilitator, group discussions, and hands-on activities.

[Register](#)

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## Accessibility News

We continue to see our Ally accessibility report showing that the number one problem with course content is images without descriptions. Many of these images are just PowerPoint slides in .jpeg format or images of charts and graphs. Please, if your course uses images of PowerPoint slides, put in meaningful descriptions or use the actual PowerPoint slides so a screen reader can tell students what the image information is. We find many of the same slide images used every semester and we should be doing better for our students. You can learn more about writing good image descriptions at this [W3.org link](#).

DAISY Consortium has an excellent webinar video series that can help you understand how to write good descriptions at this YouTube link, where they walk through different images. “This webinar builds on our first image description session to take a deeper dive into describing images, talking through plenty of examples from initial assessment through to a solution, and starting to address some of the more complex challenges which can arise from common image types.” [Daisy Consortium YouTube video link](#)

Please take some time to review the captions for your videos. The captioning process for videos is automatic in Panopto, but as content owners, you will need to review and publish the transcriptions to make the closed captioning visible and check for accuracy.

**Deque University is available for unlimited usage for the full curriculum – across SUNY.** Over the last few months, there have been several updates, including new tutorial videos, shortcut guides, and a newer course, “Overview of the ADA: Basic Concepts.” If you are interested in any classes, please get in touch with our office.

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## Online Instruction

[Interested in Online Teaching?](#) Is an openly licensed, self-paced online course that is free of charge and opens now to anyone interested in learning more about online teaching and learning. I encourage everyone who is thinking about offering an online course or who is teaching one now to take the time to sign up for this course. It is self-paced and has a lot of information you can use for remote teaching. Registration is not required.

### Interested in Teaching Online?

- Provides a set of online teaching readiness self-assessments.
  - Promotes and builds a common understanding of online education and common language and definitions within the SUNY context.
  - Addresses skepticism, assumptions, and misconceptions regarding online teaching and learning.
  - Promotes an understanding of the benefits and affordances of the online teaching and learning environment.
  - Presents an overview of the various online pedagogies and models of online course development and online teaching, and learning that exist in SUNY.
  - Provides the opportunity to view example online courses.
  - Showcases online faculty and online student perspectives about online teaching and learning.
  - Presents opportunities for self-assessment, optional interaction, and recognition for completing the course (badge).
  - Helps those interested determine if online teaching is a good fit for them.
  - Provides a framework and entry point for online teaching professional development.
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## **TechSmith Resources**

One of our software vendors, TechSmith, who supplies our Camtasia studio video editing software, has some tutorials for creating content you might find useful.

[Types of Videos to Make for Your Online Course Link](#)

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Thanks,

Rick Shelton

Director of Distance Learning

EIT Officer

SUNY Polytechnic Institute

sheltor@sunypoly.edu

315-792-7118