

From: The Center for the Advancement of Faculty Excellence <CAFE@salisbury.edu>

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Subject: CAFE's 2025 accomplishments created to support you!



Your Center for the Advancement of Faculty Excellence (CAFE)



What do you love most about teaching? How can you overcome challenges in your scholarly writing? What's next in your career? How do you manage workplace stress? Addressing these topics and more is the focus of SU's Center for the Advancement of Faculty Excellence (CAFE).

Under the direction of Acting Vice President of Academic Affairs Jessica Clark in 2021, SU's CAFE joined other University System of Maryland (USM) institutions that had dedicated centers of teaching and learning. CAFE prioritizes four pillars to support faculty: 1) teaching and pedagogy, 2) research and scholarship, 3) professional development, and 4) personal wellness.

It was my privilege starting January 2025 to begin serving as the CAFE interim director to lead our USM self-study to determine how CAFE can best support faculty and academic staff. Among the feedback, colleagues indicated that we should better understand what CAFE does, to have a physical space to gather, and to address what educators need, want, and can offer.

Here are some of CAFE's 2025 accomplishments created to support you:

- **Increased Communication:** We redesigned the website to focus on the four pillars and the resources SU offers to support those areas. We created LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram sites to share content. We also sent weekly Monday emails to more than 1,000 recipients from August to October featuring programs, opportunities, and accomplishments, which received higher than average open and response rates. We will now send emails only on the third Monday of each month.
- **Made the Faculty Lounge a Place To Be:** We increased use of Guerrieri Academic Commons 230 by adding the lounge to SU's online reservation system, creating and placing banners and swag (bags, koozies, pens, stickers), replacing damaged and missing furniture, holding CAFE and Gen Ed Hours each Friday 9-10 a.m., and providing free drinks and snacks. Note that CAFE has no dedicated food budget, so these refreshments come out of pocket. Consider [donating to CAFE](#) to keep these services free. Special thanks to the Henson School of Science and Technology for providing our coffee and supplies in October and to colleagues who have donated to CAFE.
- **Tenure and Promotion Cohorts:** In August, we hosted colleagues eligible for tenure and promotion to associate professor and for professor in November. These sessions consisted of sharing models from recent successful applicants, insights from university promotion committee members, use of the Faculty Success platform, *Faculty Handbook* review, and answering questions.
- **SU-WISE Writing Initiative for Scholarly Engagement:** Colleagues can enroll in the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (NCFDD) 14-day writing challenge to commit to 30 minutes of scholarly writing or work each Monday through Friday. Then, SU members meet on Teams each Friday from noon-1 p.m. for support and accountability to advance our scholarly work. We spend 10 minutes to check in on what we will write that day, then silently write for 30-40 minutes on our own, and regroup for 10 minutes to report what we accomplished or learned. We hosted two summer cohorts and have continued each week this fall. Join us any Friday by emailing CAFE@salisbury.edu to be added to the Teams site.
- **"Read the Room" Book Discussions:** We launched these sessions to address this academic year's theme of "AI in Higher Education" through CAFE's four pillars. In September, we discussed [*The Last Human Job: The Work of Connecting in a Disconnected World*](#), which offers


hundreds of interviews with people working in the industries where we still prefer people over technology: education, healthcare, mental health, and spirituality. For October, we discussed *[The Present Professor: Authenticity and Transformational Teaching](#)* about being mindful, embodied, and authentic in our teaching and academic work. It is not necessary to read the books to join the discussion.

- **Further AI Exploration:** Ken Kundell (chief information officer) and I are the new co-chairs of SU's task force working to advance policy. Also, SU is part of the new AI Exchange in partnership with the University of Baltimore and Frostburg State University to share across USM institutions. We are proud to support two USM Generative AI Fellows: Casey Stratton (communication) and Jess Walter (exercise science).
- **Faculty Learning Communities (FLC):** We have 13 active FLCs this year that focus on different aspect of the four pillars. We added a participant survey and facilitator survey to get useful feedback on these programs. To highlight a few FLCs: First Year Seminar (FYS) recently met with local high school teachers to learn more about our incoming students. The Chairs and Directors FLC is going strong with a year and a half of meeting every other week, including meeting with top SU leaders. The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) FLC is partnering with the University of Baltimore on a three-semester fellows' program, plus training SU faculty as teaching advocates. Email CAFE@salisbury.edu to learn more.
- **Thank a Teacher Week:** In conjunction with the Provost's Office and Instructional Design and Delivery, CAFE supported an enhanced event with digital and print appreciation cards, kudos slides on campus monitors, and a recognition event for everyone who participated in teaching development throughout the year. We also supported new or redesigned Welcome Week events, like the Ignite teaching training, New Faculty Orientation with a library scavenger hunt, Faculty Development Day with AI breakout sessions, and Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) Pinning Ceremony.
- **Leadership Trainings:** To uphold the pillar of professional development, CAFE helped redesign the Department Chairs and Program Directors Institute in August and will adapt the January session for management training with Human Resources. We also coordinated training for associate deans and the associate provost with the Kansas Leadership Center on "When Everyone Leads," and we are supporting the "Getting Things Done" training for chairs, directors, faculty, and staff. We also increased participation in our professional organizations, including the USM Kirwan Center for Academic Innovation and with the Professional and Organization Development (POD) Network. I have a chapter in the upcoming book, *Transitioning to the Professoriate: A Practical Guide to Obtaining and Thriving in Your First Faculty Position*.
- **Wellness Sessions:** We are delighted to offer free Functional Movement wellness sessions one Monday per month this semester. The classes are open to everyone at all fitness levels.

Bring a mat or towel and wear comfortable clothes to join us on December 8, 5-6 p.m., in the Guerrieri Student Union 206 (above the Fireside Lounge).

- We are proud of our hard work and innovation with CAFE in 2025 and look forward to serving you more in 2026.

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Center for the Advancement of Faculty Excellence



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