

## **GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE: THE JOHN S. KENDALL CENTER FOR ENGAGED LEARNING**

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At Gustavus Adolphus College, students perform “The Four Seasons,” titrate solutions, and analyze King Lear. They write plays, lab reports, and critical essays, research history and think through ethical dilemmas, speak a foreign language such as Spanish or calculus, and decipher video art or the human body. Students experience the world as their classroom, and in their classrooms, they come to understand that the global begins at home. The goal of this education is simple: to help students attain their full human potential and to develop in them a passion for learning throughout their lives.

Their best models and mentors are their professors, who themselves perform Vivaldi, study the intricacies of the Spanish language, and create aesthetic theories of the human form. Gustavus faculty members are engaged in the world as their classroom, and in their classrooms, they integrate the community, both large and small. And the goal for the faculty is as equally simple: to fulfill their potential as teachers, scholars, artists, and researchers and to continually learn in order to be more thoughtfully engaged in and responsible for their students’ learning.

[The John S. Kendall Center for Engaged Learning](#), named in honor of the long-time faculty member and former president of the College, supports the faculty in their continual learning. The Kendall Center’s mission is focused to assist the academic mission of the College in two specific areas: disciplinary expertise and pedagogical proficiency.

Faculty members specialize in a particular academic discipline and develop a deep understanding of a sub-discipline through graduate study. But academic fields continually develop and change, new ideas emerge, new texts surface, new connections among theories are forged. To stay engaged, faculty members read and research, converse with other scholars in their field to share discoveries, and then they join in the chorus of thought through the presentation and publication of their ideas.

The Kendall Center administers funding for faculty to travel to present research and creative work, disburses internal grants, develops opportunities for faculty members and students to collaborate on research or creative projects, provides on-campus forums for them to share their scholarly work with their colleagues, and regularly alerts them to opportunities in their fields that will allow them to continue to learn. Faculty members are committed to maintaining professional expertise, not only for their own erudition, but to bring these new ideas back to their classes. They share with their students the best of scholarly thought, and model for students what it means to be an active and present student of sociology or geology or music, and an engaged learner in the world.

In addition to disciplinary expertise, faculty members commit to developing teaching methods and strategies that consider how students’ varying experiences and perceptions influence their educational success. Working across disciplinary boundaries, the faculty learns from each other that there are common elements in teaching Roman history and marketing. They also learn, through reflection, curious inquiry, and the courage to teach differently, that different teaching styles affect students differently, and that the mark of good teaching, like the mark of a good scholar, requires active responsibility and commitment to their own and to their students’ learning.

To allow the faculty the opportunity to refine and enhance pedagogy, the Kendall Center provides workshops focused on enhancing teaching and learning, supports a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) program, creates fora for professors to talk together about teaching challenges and successes, offers support for those interested in developing new areas of teaching expertise, introduces conversation with experts in various fields who can offer the Gustavus faculty new ideas and ways of teaching students, and continually evaluates its programs' contributions to student learning.

The John S. Kendall Center for Engaged Learning is a signature program of the College, signaling not only a commitment to support teachers and scholars in achieving their potential but also, ultimately, a commitment to help Gustavus students attain their full potential as persons, to develop in them a capacity and passion for lifelong learning, and to prepare them for fulfilling lives of leadership and service in society.

The Kendall Center directs initiatives in five areas, all aimed at enhancing the professional lives of the Gustavus faculty and the educational experience of Gustavus students:

### **Teaching and Learning**

- **Curriculum Development and Revitalization Grants:** Available to professors to develop a new semester-long course or substantially redesign an existing semester-long course to reflect a global, multicultural, or interdisciplinary curriculum.
- **Minigrants for Pedagogy Enhancement:** Offer individual faculty members and departments support to learn, develop, implement and evaluate new classroom techniques and tailor newly acquired ideas to meet their own course needs.
- **Faculty Development Day:** Brings the faculty together to talk with each other about teaching practices, pedagogical innovation, and student learning before the start of the fall semester. Each year, the day focuses on a different topic, such as using technology in the classroom, incorporating service learning into courses, facilitating discussion, and creating and evaluating writing assignments.
- **Teachers Talking:** Informal lunchtime conversations that focus on issues of interest to teaching and learning, higher education, and best practices in pedagogy.
- **Teachers Talking Technology:** Informal lunchtime conversations that focus specifically on using technology in the classroom to enhance student learning.
- **Summer Workshops:** Workshops bring faculty members from across the campus together to generate ideas to enhance pedagogy, focus on particular issues vital to intellectual success, and develop better ways to engage students in collaborative learning endeavors. Previous workshops have focused on enhancing critical thinking skills, teaching multiculturally, and developing students as scholars.

### **Faculty Professional Research, Scholarship, and Creativity**

- **Research, Scholarship, and Creativity Grants:** Available to support faculty members in their professional scholarly and creative work.
- **Professional Travel Fund:** Offers support to the faculty in presenting scholarly and creative work at professional conferences, domestically and internationally.

### **Undergraduate Research**

- **Celebration of Creative Inquiry:** A campus-wide forum to publicly share the intellectual achievements of students from Gustavus Adolphus College. The event features student

presentations and encompasses research, scholarship, and creative work from every discipline.

- **Presidential Faculty-Student Collaboration Grants:** Available annually to support collaborative research between faculty and students.

### New Faculty Programming

- **Kendall Mentoring Partners Program:** Pairs a new tenure-track faculty member (years one and two) with a senior faculty colleague during the academic year to assist them in transitioning to Gustavus. Together, they confidentially discuss issues of importance to the new faculty member, learn about the institution, better understand the history and ethics of the College, and develop collegial relationships with faculty outside of their home department.
- **Orientation Day and Academic Year Sessions:** A series of orientation sessions throughout the year to assist all new professors and instructors in better understanding Gustavus and their role on the faculty at the College. Sessions may focus on advising students, active learning strategies, evaluating student learning, and other topics of interest to new faculty.

### Evidence-Based Teaching

- **Assessment of Student Learning:** Faculty members at Gustavus recognize the importance and value of seeking feedback from their students and in continually evaluating their students' learning and the efficacy of pedagogies. This initiative collects feedback on student learning, serves as a liaison with national surveys in which Gustavus students participate, and offers the faculty various means by which to better assess student learning.
- **Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL):** This program serves professors who want to incorporate systematic investigations of discipline-specific pedagogy into their scholarly agenda. The College's SoTL program brings the faculty together in regular discussion to explore common readings, discuss strategies for developing SoTL projects, and provide each other feedback as projects progress.



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