What’s New and Exciting at the FCLT

00:00:00 **Hugo**

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00:00:24 **Christina**

Hi, I'm Christina Barsi.

00:00:25 **Sun**

And I'm Sun Ezzell, and you're listening to the Magic Mountie Podcast.

00:00:29 **Christina**

Our mission is to find ways to keep your ear to the ground, so to speak - by bringing to you the activities and events you may not have time to attend, the resources on campus you might want to know more about, the interesting things your colleagues are creating, and the many ways we can continue to better help and guide our students.

00:00:46 **Sun**

We bring to you the voices of Mt. SAC from the classroom to completion.

00:00:50 **Speaker 2**

And I know I'm going to achieve my goals and I know people here are going to help me to do it.

00:00:54 **Speaker**

She is a sociology major and she's transferring to Cal Poly Pamona! Psychology major, English major ...

00:01:01 **Sun**

From transforming part-time into full-time-

00:01:03 **Speaker 2**

I really liked the time that we spent with Julie about how to write a CV and a cover letter.

00:01:10 **Christina**

Or just finding time to soak in the campus.

00:01:13 **Speaker 2**

To think of the natural environment around us as a library.

00:01:16 **Christina**

We want to keep you informed and connected to all things Mt. SAC. But most importantly, we want to keep you connected with each other. I'm Christina Barsi, Mt. SAC alumni, and producer of this podcast.

00:01:27 **Sun**

And I'm Sun Ezzell, Learning Assistance Faculty and Professional Learning Academy Coordinator.

00:01:32 **Christina**

And this is the Magic Mountie Podcast.

00:01:34 **Christina**

We checked in with FCLT or Faculty Center for Learning Technology back in early May, Episode 78 if you haven't listened yet. And a lot has changed, like the fact that the FCLT has been awarded not one but two Burning Bright Awards for the amazing work they've done this year during a time that has been inexplicably difficult, with one of those awards going directly and deservingly to Hugo Aguilera.

00:02:03 **Christina**

Though the core of FCLT hasn't changed ... like their innovative and supportive methods in guiding faculty in designing curriculum, and offering support with technology-based tools. It's pretty amazing what this team has accomplished this year.

00:02:16 **Christina**

So, let's jump in and learn more about what they've created since the last time we checked in earlier this year.

00:02:26 **Sun**

Eva, Michelle, and Hugo from the Faculty Center for Learning Technology, thank you all so much for joining me on the Magic Mountie Podcast today.

00:02:35 **Hugo**

Thanks for having us.

00:02:36 **Eva**

We're happy to be here.

00:02:37 **Michelle**

Hi, yeah, we're happy to be here.

00:02:40 **Sun**

So, in case folks aren't familiar with Faculty Center for Learning Technology, would you each tell us a little bit about yourself and your role at the FCLT?

00:02:50 **Eva**

Sure, I'll get us started. I'm Eva Figueroa, I'm an Instructional Designer with the FCLT. If you're not familiar with our center, the FCLT stands for Faculty Center for Learning Technology. And FCLT is the word faculty with the vowels taken out. So, that's an easy way to remember our acronym. And we support faculty with technology, teaching with technology.

00:03:15 **Eva**

So, a lot of that is Canvas and a lot of other integrated tools that you can use from within Canvas or sometimes outside of Canvas.

00:03:26 **Eva**

I've been an Instructional Designer with this team for a little over a year, and it's really fun. I love learning, meeting new people, and learning all the new technology and it's ever-changing. So it's always interesting.

00:03:42 **Michelle**

I'm Michelle Newhart, I'm the other Instructional Designer in the Faculty Center for Learning Technology. And as you can imagine, Eva has joined us at a very interesting time to be an Instructional Designer at Mt. SAC, with the move to remote instruction and 90-plus percent of our college using online tools to teach.

00:04:07 **Michelle**

We had an incredible workload in the spring because ... our faculty had an incredible workload in the spring to transition in a very short period of time to be using Canvas and other online tools to maintain their spring courses. And yeah, so it was quite a trial by fire in some respects, I am sure.

00:04:26 **Michelle**

As she said we do a lot to support faculty with teaching and learning technology in our unit, as well as helping with general course design principles and designing well in digital tools. We provide a lot of workshops and training office hours for faculty and some direct consultation about those things as well.

00:04:57 **Hugo**

My name is Hugo Aguilera, I'm the computer technician for the Faculty Center for Learning Technology, which is a subgroup of the library and learning resources division.

00:05:06 **Hugo**

So, my primary role as a computer technician is to provide different levels of technical support to our users, which includes faculty, but also, of course, our unit's Instructional Designers, Eva and Michelle. My support varies from helping develop training, creating website content, Canvas content.

00:05:22 **Hugo**

I do serve as a liaison between our unit and other departments on campus. When we work with things related to support such as IT, I work with people from IT all the time.

00:05:32 **Hugo**

I work with a lot of vendors to help vet, procure, and roll out many of the technology tools available to faculty and students at Mt. SAC. And also, I'm a self-proclaimed expert Googler. Contrary to popular belief, I do not have the answers to everything, I'm just very fast at typing them into Google. So, it's a little bit about myself.

00:05:54 **Sun**

Thank you all so much. So, we had chatted for the podcast in the spring when we were in the midst of the great migration to remote instruction. And so, I was wondering if you could share with us a little bit about what's new and exciting at the FCLT.

00:06:10 **Eva**

Sure, we do have some really exciting things that we want to share. We have a new blog that we rolled out. It's called FCLT News Bites. My most recent post today was about PDFs and how to make those accessible, or actually how to work around making them accessible because they're so hard to make accessible.

00:06:33 **Eva**

And then Hugo as mentioned, he's a master Googler, so that was his post a couple of weeks ago. So, we are using that blog as a way to get information out to faculty, for things that people ask us a lot of questions about. So, we're really hoping that that's going to be a good resource for people that is searchable and easy to access. And it's also linked in our Canvas Faculty Center, which is another great resource.

00:07:00 **Eva**

The faculty center, if you're not aware, that is a space where we put a lot of our information about various tools, about Canvas, how to do certain things in Canvas and how to use different tools in there about course design. There's a lot of information that's more detailed than what we have on our website, which is more surface-level information.

00:07:23 **Eva**

And then we also highlight certain things about distance learning on our blog because they're part of a branch of the FCLT. So, we have distance learning side of FCLT and the instructional design side of FCTL.

00:07:39 **Michelle**

That's right, Carol Impara is our Distance Learning Coordinator in the FCLT. And she's been on our team for a couple of years now, and that means she also chairs the Distance Learning Committee, and then our Assistant Distance Learning Coordinator is Catherine McKee.

00:07:58 **Michelle**

We're trying to post weekly in our blog. As you can probably imagine, we've looked for all kinds of ways to scale information because we are three people supporting usually upwards of a thousand professors in a term. In fall, I think it's a little over 1,500 faculty members.

00:08:22 **Michelle**

So, we have to think of clever ways to provide information that a lot of people can use. But I'd like to think we're also a human face on technology. We have lots of interpersonal interactions with our professors who many of whom we know by name and gotten to know over the years. And so, we're always happy to have that human connection with people too.

00:08:49 **Michelle**

It would be beyond the scope to be able to help every person one-on-one. So, we have the benefit of seeing the trends of things that people want to know about. Or just knowing what's going on maybe in terms of what's been adopted in our unit or at the college, or what's been brought from the state level into the college, or state-level resources. And so, we'd like to try to translate that information and communicate it to our instructors.

00:09:18 **Michelle**

One of the things about the FCLT has been, we've been working for a couple of years about raising awareness, and boy, did that get a boost when everybody was suddenly in Canvas. We suddenly didn't really need to advertise our services anymore. In fact, we just had to figure out a lot of things about how to control the amount of traffic that we had to make sure that everybody got service in spring. And even in summer, it was very, very busy for our unit.

00:09:49 **Michelle**

And we know that faculty were really busy too, but they were always so kind in contacting us to say, "We know you're really busy." And just very understanding and appreciative.

00:10:02 **Michelle**

I'm just so grateful for what a great faculty we have in that respect that everyone was so nice to our unit, as we were trying to keep up with the traffic that we were faced with during that time. And it was all capped off by being nominated as a team for the college champion Burning Bright Award, which we were awarded this summer. Was it in summer?

00:10:30 **Hugo**

Yeah, I think it was summer.

00:10:32 **Michelle**

Yeah. So, then we were awarded during the summer. It just felt so like such a thank you from the campus for all of the work we'd been doing. And I just felt super appreciated through that. And I think our whole team just really felt that sense of connection to our faculty.

00:10:51 **Hugo**

I did just kind of want to briefly say things have changed a lot from now from our last podcast to today's episode, in that the other one was sometime in May, I believe. And I think we were just in the middle of kind of like the whirlwind, the storm and everything going on. And now, things have changed significantly in terms of the amount of load that's on our small unit.

00:11:15 **Hugo**

We have a lot of units to thank for that, a lot of faculty members who during the summer and during spring were leading the charge and answering and helping each other answer questions and kind of show people how to use Canvas, where to direct them to where to find resources.

00:11:31 **Hugo**

And we're very happy that we've been able to extend that through our faculty facilitators, which basically it's more of the same thing where you can reach out to fellow faculty to ask questions about, if you're confused about doing something in Canvas, confused about using Conference Zoom, and you need kind of advice.

00:11:49 **Hugo**

We have faculty facilitators in place that work closely with FCLT to support other faculty. Kind of train the trainer model, which has been able to help us tremendously. And I wanted to give a quick shout out to them and also let everybody know that that is available, and you can find the link to contact them on the remote teaching webpage.

00:12:07 **Sun**

Oh, congratulations on being honored with the Burning Bright Award, you absolutely deserve it. It's been such an incredible lift, and I know it's a collaborative effort, but also, your team has done such an incredible amount of work and support to make this transition successful for our students, so thank you.

00:12:26 **Michelle**

Well, and it wouldn't be complete without saying that not only did we win a team award, but Hugo was called out individually for that same award. And we wholeheartedly agree that Hugo is such a wonderful, agreeable fundamental part of our team, we just really appreciate him so much. And we're glad that he was called out for that special recognition.

00:12:54 **Hugo**

Thank you, Michelle. Fun fact, they actually came to my house today to deliver my award.

00:13:00 **Sun**

Oh, that's so great.

00:13:02 **Michelle**

Yay!

00:13:03 **Hugo**

I even got the, they give you a poster, it's supposed to be like a lawn sign, and I hung mine up on my wall right next to me. It's great to get an award, but I can't do what I do without the help of not just Eva and Michelle, whom I appreciate greatly, but also my manager, Meghan Chen, and all the people around campus that I work with, people from IT, I just would not be able to do what I do without their help. So, thank you, everybody.

00:13:28 **Sun**

Congratulations.

00:13:28 **Michelle**

Even though recognition of our team was widespread, we know there's probably still some people who don't know who we are, or even if they've heard our name, they don't necessarily know what we do. So, it might be useful to just spend a moment to say our number one job is really on the front end of helping with designing courses.

00:13:52 **Michelle**

We have a lot of tool knowledge, including a lot of expert knowledge about Canvas and any institutional tools that have been integrated into Canvas or adopted even if they're not integrated into Canvas to support teaching. We are always happy to talk to people about those tools, and to point them to the many self-help resources that exist that can get them started in tools like that.

00:14:20 **Michelle**

And then we're most useful when it comes to how to take the tool knowledge and use it for good pedagogy. That's really the point of instructional design, is to think about how to use those tools so that you're also using best practices for learning and combine that knowledge to create good course design.

00:14:44 **Michelle**

So, a lot of our workshops are around that. Sometimes they can be very tool-based because we'll give introductory tours of various types of tools that have just been introduced. But we love to also really talk about teaching.

00:15:02 **Michelle**

And we know we have a lot of amazing professors at our college, and we love to help them think through how to design good, engaging activities and feel confident in their ability to use the tool so that the tool doesn't get in the way of good teaching, it actually supports that teaching.

00:15:24 **Michelle**

So, a lot of what we work on is actually just helping professors have confidence that they know how the tool is going to operate when they try to do the teaching thing that they're trying to do.

00:15:37 **Michelle**

I think another thing that our team really focuses on is, we really pay attention to what faculty tell us, especially what they tell us about the things that they care most about or need and the places where they have pain points and processes.

00:15:54 **Michelle**

Especially if we can see that that might be mission creep on what professors are expected to do - we know that professors are here to teach and not to figure out how to do various technical things or caption videos, or the million other things they ... fill out forms, all the various things that you end up kind of needing to do.

00:16:18 **Michelle**

And some of those things we can see, maybe have a solution that's an institution's level workflow, instead of each individual professor trying to figure out how to do that thing by themselves. And anytime we see that, we're always trying to think through solutions on our team when it has to do with the teaching technology side, to make sure that that's taken off of individual professor's shoulders.

00:16:45 **Michelle**

Especially when it's meeting some kind of institutional goal or obligation under the law, we want to make sure that there's an easy and clear pathway to meet that for individuals which ultimately helps our institution make sure we have met our obligations for accessibility and that we do well on accreditation review, all those kinds of things.

00:17:13 **Sun**

So you mentioned tools for good pedagogy, and I was wondering if you could share, what are some tools that faculty and students are liking the most?

00:17:22 **Hugo**

We just recently rolled out a tool that many faculty probably are already familiar with. It's called Screencast-O-Matic. It's a tool that lets you record different kinds of videos and edit them and caption them and distribute them to your students.

00:17:36 **Hugo**

And this is a tool that I have gotten a lot of great feedback on, people are enjoying the tool. It's fairly simple to use compared to other video recorded programs.

00:17:45 **Hugo**

So, here's the reason I mentioned this tool because, as a CIS admin for this tool, I can kind of see information about its use. And a lot of the tools that we have aren't overly used, I'm sure that's not a surprise to anybody. But this is one tool that I am very first of all, surprised, and also very, very happy that it's been used heavily. In our account, there's close to 2000 videos that have been made by faculty because it's a faculty only tool and I'm just like, I'm blown away.

00:18:16 **Hugo**

And I'm so very happy that people are using it. Because we just recently got it thinking that it's something faculty would use and the fact that they're using it, and I don't get a ton of questions of people having difficulty with the tool. It says a lot about our decision and it just makes me all warm and fuzzy inside about this tool.

00:18:34 **Hugo**

Screencast-O-Matic, if you do want to learn more about it, you could find information on getting started as well as tutorials and guides on how to use the tool inside of the Canvas Faculty Center in the tools and apps section.

00:18:45 **Eva**

We're also getting really great feedback on City Labs. It's called, the full name Cidi Labs Design Plus, and it's comprised of three tools that help faculty create their courses to look nice and also it makes accessibility easier. It's like a graphic design tool for Canvas without having to know graphic design, because all of the styles are already built into the tool and it makes accessibility super easy to implement on your pages.

00:19:19 **Eva**

We will be soliciting official feedback, but even unofficially we've gotten several emails from people saying, "Oh my God, Cidi Labs is so good. It's amazing, thank you for getting this." And they've even asked for additional part of divisional pieces to that package.

00:19:37 **Michelle**

I'm always happy every time I go into a course, because somebody has a question. We never go into courses unless somebody gives us permission and has a question.

00:19:46 **Michelle**

But when I go in there and realize that they've implemented Cidi Labs in there ... you can immediately tell because the pages have specific layouts that make them graphical. And so, once you know what that looks like, just clicking into it, you realize, "Oh, they're using that tool."

00:20:04 **Michelle**

All of our tools, each has a page inside of the Mt. SAC Faculty Center in Canvas to tell you how to find the tool, or if you need to download anything, how you do that to get set up to use it. And then it gives you the basics, and then it gives you links to other resources.

00:20:25 **Michelle**

In this case, Cidi Labs has a full course shell that you can use to go through the beginner training and get familiar with the tool.

00:20:34 **Michelle**

We've been giving workshops on that tool as well to get people started. But if you didn't attend a workshop on that, you can still do the self-paced reference that we have inside Canvas, which is linked from the Faculty Center.

00:20:50 **Michelle**

Another tool that we've been getting early good feedback about, we've received from the state a license to use a tool called Ally, which is actually a Blackboard tool, but it's a freestanding tool, so it works with any LMS system. We had implemented the first part of that early in spring, which offers alternative formats of documents that are inside Canvas.

00:21:19 **Michelle**

So, if you look inside Canvas now, anywhere where there's a file that's been connected on a page or just anywhere within there, it will have a little A and a black down-pointing arrow. And if you click on that it allows you to download or preview the document. But it also provides alternative document formats, which include several that are easier for screen readers to read such as EPUB. And it also includes audio version.

00:21:49 **Michelle**

And so, that helps with accessibility. It helps create many different formats of the document that meet different needs to make sure that people can access that document and use it.

00:22:04 **Michelle**

And then we rolled out a second piece of Ally, which is a little gauge that has kind of like traffic light colors and looks like a little speedometer kind of, and it shows up next to any file that's inside Canvas but just for the teacher. The student does not see that little gauge because it's a guide for the professors to know which of their documents are accessible as they are, and which ones need accessibility work.

00:22:37 **Michelle**

And so, if you have a green light, you've got a good document that's had all the accessibility checks done properly on it. And if you have one that has a yellow or red, it probably has some things that need to be addressed within it. And so, it helps prioritize that accessibility work within a course, so that professors know which documents need the most remediation or have the most egregious inaccessible items in them so they can address those.

00:23:06 **Michelle**

We've been getting very good feedback. Professors like that ability to prioritize that work. Accessibility can be an overwhelming task or feel overwhelming. So, anything that kind of helps you figure out what to do first can be very helpful.

00:23:22 **Michelle**

We do have a Faculty Accessibility Center in Canvas in addition to the Canvas Faculty Center, which gives advice and talks about the accessibility tools. And that can be reached from our website or from within the Canvas Faculty Center as well.

00:23:40 **Sun**

Thank you so much, those all sound really exciting. So, if folks are excited and they want to learn more, in addition to the Canvas Faculty Center and the workshops through POD, are there any other opportunities for faculty to learn more either through Mt. SAC or other organizations?

00:23:59 **Eva**

Well, there's @ONE, they have a lot of professional development opportunities for faculty. They have some short videos about Canvas, they have some challenges. They have like five-day challenges. They have self-paced courses, as well as facilitator-led courses on different topics.

00:24:25 **Eva**

They also have a yearly conference called Can•Innovate. And the last couple of years, we've hosted that for faculty to attend sessions and receive SPOT re-certification credit for faculty who already have a SPOT certification and they need to re-certify. So, they're a group of faculty, staff, and other college employees, and they support all the California community colleges. So those are really great resources as well.

00:24:56 **Eva**

In POD Connect, there's several options. There's lynda. com, there's a Vision Resource Center, which is also part of the California Community College System. So, there's a lot of resources that faculty have available if they go either to our website or to the POD website, to get more information about additional resources that are available for them.

00:25:22 **Michelle**

I think it's important to know about those resources. @ONE was actually started by a community college professor. It was first created by professors in the Community College System for the community college audience, even though other colleges and universities can access it if they wish.

00:25:40 **Michelle**

The self-paced resources are not tracked and that means they are not worth specific credit at Mt. SAC. So, you cannot get PGI credit or SPOT re-certification credit or anything like that for something that is self-paced through their system, which they post that very prominently on those resources. But it's always good to remind people that those are a little different than facilitated work, where that work can be tracked and therefore, it can count toward credit.

00:26:10 **Michelle**

They have a terrific introduction to teaching with Canvas course that is either a four-week facilitated course or a self-paced course. That course is free. So, any professor can sign up and take that course for free.

00:26:28 **Michelle**

And then they offer a number of other facilitated courses, but they do have a cost associated with that. They're usually around 60 bucks for a four-week course. So, they're pretty affordable as those things go. But it's just something that you would want to know maybe if you're going to use those resources.

00:26:49 **Eva**

I did want to talk a little bit about some student resources because faculty help to support students. Faculty are student's first line to information.

00:27:01 **Eva**

So, we have a new program that hopefully will be able to continue past December. Funding is still tentative, but they are called Canvassadors. And it's because the college currently does not have a support system for students using technology or using canvas.

00:27:22 **Eva**

So, these Canvassadors are experienced students in Canvas and they can answer student questions about using Canvas or other integrated tools that their professors are using, including Zoom and other teaching tech tools. And they also can refer students to other resources if they sometimes ask general questions about, how do I register for a class? Why isn't my class showing up on my dashboard? They can help students with either Canvas or tech-related questions or other general questions and refer them to the appropriate department or resource.

00:28:01 **Eva**

And we also have a new look in the Mountie Student Hub, and we are still trying to get the word out about that resource for students. It is available to all students and it's free. All students are automatically enrolled in there and faculty can also join to see what information is available for students. And we strongly encourage faculty to link to the hub in their courses.

00:28:26 **Eva**

There's even a Canvas commons page to help promote the hub. If they go to the comments and search for Mountie Hub, Mountie Student Hub, Student Hub, it'll pop up, it has a blue Mountie background. And then they can just put that page into their course and the students will be able to easily link to it.

00:28:47 **Eva**

But it's also available in the global navigation in the gray Canvas menu. So, the little backpack icon, that will take students to the Mountie Hub.

00:28:58 **Michelle**

Well, first of all, great job professors. I know all of you have been going through a lot of technology learning and we applaud you for all of the learning that you've been doing in this area. And I just want to reiterate that course design is really important for student success. It helps with student retention, it helps with student engagement, and it helps with equity gaps when it's used well.

00:29:30 **Michelle**

And so, we're here to help you make that tool powerful in your teaching. And we hope that you've found some tools that, it turns out are going to be useful on the long haul, even once you get back to the classroom, that helps you save time and do things more efficiently, and meet expectations of students who do expect to find some things online in the times that we're living in.

00:29:55 **Michelle**

We will be looking for official feedback. So, please, when you get survey invitations from us about specific tools, we'd love to hear that you really liked or didn't like the tools that we think you like based on what would the informal feedback we've heard.

00:30:15 **Michelle**

Because, those decisions about what gets prioritized and carried forward and funded on an ongoing manner, really depends on faculty feedback. We really listen to what you have to say about that and we advocate and use your feedback as our way for advocating for you to keep those tools that you're relying on.

00:30:36 **Sun**

Well, I just want to thank you all so much for taking the time to join me on the podcast today and congratulate you on your Burning Bright Awards (not one but two for your team). And just a heartfelt and gigantic thank you for your incredible hard work, for your expertise, for you and enthusiasm. It's easy for us to get excited about these tools and these opportunities for teaching and learning when you are excited. So, thank you so much.

00:31:01 **Christina**

Thank you for listening to the Magic Mountie Podcast. Remember to subscribe on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or wherever you like to get your podcasts, so you can listen in the car, in your office, or however you like to listen.

00:31:17 **Christina**

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