Announcer: 00:05 Welcome to the Magic Mountie Podcast. This is a podcast that's dedicated to helping faculty and other college employees as they try and navigate the challenging fabric of serving students. Especially at Mt. San Antonio College. But everyone's welcome.

Christina Barsi: 00:24 Hey there, and welcome to the Magic Mountie Podcast. I'm Christina Barsi, your host for this episode, and I'm also a former student, and the co-producer for this podcast. Now that we've met, let's get started.

Christina Barsi: 00:37 It turns out that learning is not only reserved for the students at Mt. SAC. Today, we are highlighting the professional growth opportunities for faculty being offered this spring. There are some amazing out-of-the-box opportunities for faculty to expand their horizons and learn even more. These courses are not only cutting-edge, but are an immersive and fun experiential take on education. If that's not exciting, I am not sure what is.

Christina Barsi: 01:06 By the way, if you decide you dig this podcasting thing, and you're already thinking of all the ways you could use it for your students, or to get a message out to other faculty members in this very new and upcoming way, then guess what? You are in luck, because one of the professional growth opportunities is a Podcasting for Educators course, taught by yours truly, me. We're going to talk process, inspiration, different uses, styles, and I'll give you a little taste of tech in this level one, introductory class, on March 27th at either 1:00 p.m. or 4:00 p.m. That is the end of my plug, and I hope to see some of you there.

Christina Barsi: 01:50 Let's dive in to some of the highlights from these other eight opportunities, with your very own Liesel Reinhart. Hi, Liesel, and welcome to the podcast.

Liesel Reinhart: 02:04 Hey.

Christina Barsi: 02:05 Hey. Do you want to tell the listeners what exactly you do at Mt. SAC?

Liesel Reinhart: 02:10 I am the Faculty Professional Development Coordinator, and I also work with the Professional Learning Team, which is a subset of the Professional Development unit. We work in particular on equity-related professional development.

Christina Barsi: 02:26 Awesome! Okay, so before we jump in, can you also just tell us how we can sign up for these programs?

Liesel Reinhart: 02:32 Everything is available to full-time and part-time faculty, and staff, and managers, at www.mtsac.edu/pod, P-O-D. And then just click on the calendar. You can register right there. It's super easy, and there's an amazing array of offerings.

Christina Barsi: 02:53 Great! So I did want to begin by asking about Open That Door. This course is all about bringing experiential learning into the teaching practice. In fact, it has a bonus field day, which to me, sounds like the selling point. But can you tell us, Liesel, just real briefly, what Marco Benassi's style of experiential learning is?

Liesel Reinhart: 03:17 Yes. Marco takes his students out of the classroom, hence the name Open That Door, and he takes them out into the world for their class. It's not all out of the classroom, so he has some of it that's traditional classroom, but then there's always a field component. Now, it might be a few hours. It might be days, or even a week or two.

Liesel Reinhart: 03:40 He's taken them just on campus, in the state, in the country, and even internationally on interesting experiences. He doesn't teach biology or nature classes. He teaches communication. A range of classes can all be taught out of the classroom in an interesting way.

Christina Barsi: 04:02 Wow. That sounds really fun. Okay, so if there were just one compelling reason to take this course, what would you say that is?

Liesel Reinhart: 04:09 Because your students will love you for it. And you will love you for it. When you crack open your class, and let the fresh air in, metaphorically and literally, it's an opportunity for you to take maybe your most boring day and make it your best day. It really forces you to think about why your students are learning, in context. It just puts everybody in a different light. Not just fluorescent. Again, metaphorical and literal, a different light.

Christina Barsi: 04:42 I love that explanation. That course is coming up March 16th and 17th.

Liesel Reinhart: 04:47 Yeah, so the 16th, there's 50 seats, it's two-thirds full right now, already. But there's still seats. That's just on campus. There'll be a little bit of door opening, but a lot of it is normal, traditional learning, for those of you who are more comfortable that way. But on Saturday, there's still 10 spaces available, if you want to hit the road, do some hiking. It's going to be pretty intense.

Christina Barsi: 05:11 That's so great. I saw that, on select Fridays, there's an event called ReNew Faculty Seminar, which looks like it's a luncheon with activities for continuing and newer faculty. How does this experience differ from past events like this.

Liesel Reinhart: 05:26 Well, we have an award-winning new faculty seminar, for all of our first-year tenure-track faculty, where they get some great experiences as they orient themselves to their new jobs. But it's gotten very cool in recent years, and sometimes the rest of the faculty peek in and say, "Hey, what are you guys doing?" So we decide to formalize the opportunity for them to peek in, and to take a seat, and to join us for select weeks, when the topics we're discussing, we think, could be cool for all faculty to come and be a part.

Liesel Reinhart: 06:02 So there's free lunch, and the opportunity to hang out with some of our new faculty, learn what they're learning, and then do an extra bonus applied learning session. In this case, on April 13th, a sustainability tour of campus, and to learn about our Campus Climate Commitment, and what we need to do as faculty to make sure we meet the criteria.

Christina Barsi: 06:25 Very neat. I see this other one here that looks super innovative. It's David Middlebrow, and he's holding an Inspired Teaching Conference called Student Success: What Textbooks Have to Do with It. He takes his own experiences with ADHD and learning disabilities to approach textbook learning better, which I think is pretty interesting. Pretty innovative. Why do you think it's important to expand teaching skills to be inclusive of those students who experience ADHD and other learning disabilities?

Liesel Reinhart: 07:00 You know, reading is something we're supposed to be emphasizing in all of our courses. If it's a college-level course, we want our students to be reading. But sometimes, we need to support them in doing reading. People read at different levels, and read different materials, and in different ways.

Liesel Reinhart: 07:19 What David has done is create a really cool program called text mapping that we can use in any of our disciplines, a really simple skill that we can help our students utilize so that their reading comprehension improves, and that they don't have apprehension about reading texts.

Liesel Reinhart: 07:35 It's a really cool event. We've been doing the Inspired Teaching Conference for years. It used to be the Dev Ed Conference. And it's going to be a tremendous event that's coming up. There's a little pre-conference you can do, too, if you want to get even more out of it.

Christina Barsi: 07:51 Right, and I think the pre-conference is April 26th at 2:00 p.m.?

Liesel Reinhart: 07:55 That's right. For three hours. With Sun Ezzell, and then you can stick around all day on Friday, and again, free lunch.

Christina Barsi: 08:03 That is always a bonus. Another one I thought was really interesting is the Emotional Intelligence for Diversity. This one includes things like increasing empathy and consciousness. How do you think increasing these abilities can help interactions with students and colleagues.

Liesel Reinhart: 08:21 This is a great, cool new program, and it helps us understand that it's more than just a communication change that we need to make, if we want to truly respect and get to appreciate all the different cultural variables that exist in our diverse campus community. We have to feel differently. We have to address some of the fears, anxieties, and deeper emotions that underlie our beliefs about other people. This is a really interesting and innovative approach that combines emotional intelligence with understanding and appreciation of diverse people. I'm really looking forward to this one.

Christina Barsi: 09:05 Yeah, this one sounds great. It's happening on April 24th. There's also an entire Technology Week. April 16th through 20th. Are there any highlights of this event that you can tell us about?

Liesel Reinhart: 09:18 Well, you don't have to be somebody who teaches online classes to enjoy this week. This is going to be a bunch of really fun, short sessions that introduce you to new apps, new technologies, and new approaches to teaching in all of our classrooms with cool technology.

Liesel Reinhart: 09:38 It might be a cool new app that allows you to communicate with your students, or provide feedback for them. A way for them to submit homework. Something that allows them to do group activities. Or just makes your class cooler or more fun. The folks who put this on really scour what's going on in the world to find the neatest new apps, tools, and techniques they can share with you, that'll make your teaching really fun.

Christina Barsi: 10:06 Wow. Mt. SAC is so cutting edge. I had no idea. Our next opportunity is all about interactive teaching and learning, called Training from the Back of the Room. It's a two-day workshop, and it's happening on May 11th and 18th at 9:00 a.m. It seems to employ a lot of associative techniques, like drawing and physical movement, which sounds like a lot of fun for both student and teacher. Another person who's super fun is Emily, right? She's a certified trainer in this technique. Isn't she a super fun guide through this experience?

Liesel Reinhart: 10:40 Emily Versace, one of our faculty members in Counseling, is super energetic. She is a believer in this technique. Yeah. She got herself certified, and came to me last year, and was like, "We have to do this! We have to do this!" And I said, "We're going to do this!" So here it is. Two days. You come for both days. You get a bunch of cool materials, and you learn some great techniques. I think you actually went to her flex-day session and got a taste of it, yes?

Christina Barsi: 11:05 I did, and it's so creative. It's, like I said, it's fun for everyone involved, teacher and student.

Liesel Reinhart: 11:12 Right. Yeah. Making your class really fun, dynamic, and finding some new roles for yourself as the teacher.

Christina Barsi: 11:19 Definitely. That's a great way to sum that up.

Christina Barsi: 11:22 Okay. Last, but definitely not least, we have An Evening with Colson Whitehead on May 8th, which I imagine to be a really compelling night. He's the author of The Underground Railroad, and there is a series of other professional development and learning activities to frame this event. Can you tell us what some of those might be?

Liesel Reinhart: 11:40 Yeah. I think we'll probably do a whole other podcast about them as we get a little bit closer, but we have several faculty who are doing some cool custom lectures, and we're also going to be doing a series of book discussions that are going to be co-sponsored with the ASPIRE program, and the library. We'll be announcing those and talking more about it. It's a great evening. May 8th. We want you to hold the date.

Christina Barsi: 12:07 Wow. Great. That's an exciting one, too. Thank you so much, Liesel, for shining some light on these amazing courses. Maybe I'll see some of you in the podcast course! Till next time.

Announcer: 12:21 Hey, thanks so much for joining us for the Magic Mountie Podcast. We love your likes. We love your shares. And we love your comments, so please engage with our community. Download from wherever you love to get your podcasts: iTunes, Google, RateMyProfessor. We're there. We want you to be back with us next week. Remember, any opinions that are expressed in this podcast do not necessarily represent Mt. San Antonio College, or any any of its agents. We'll see you next time.