

Fourth Annual What Works Conference: Continuous Improvement!

December 16, 2024; Call for proposals (due November 4)

To learn about and amplify what works for student success.

Building on four years of success with the *What Works Conference*, we invite presentation proposals reflective of the fast-changing world of students' lived experiences and how we, collectively, are adapting. How is learning and connecting improving in your classes? How can we continue integrating our strategic goal of creating inclusive classrooms and pedagogy? How is technology, especially artificial intelligence, changing our world? Tell us: ***What works in terms of furthering institutional purpose? What works in terms of building on the momentum of new and updated academic programs? How can we rethink and reaffirm our commitments to students?***

What are the goals of this conference? This is an opportunity to gather and learn (conveniently in a virtual medium) about evidence-based practices used here, or elsewhere, that benefit students. What outcomes are we striving for and how do we measure success? How can we contribute to student success by putting our purpose at the center of our thinking, building momentum for academic improvement, and supporting student well-being and success? What works for communicating with students from diverse backgrounds to foster student belonging and learning, and assessing whether we have accomplished our goals?

When is it?

Monday, December 16, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
All sessions are online. (A link will be shared closer to the date).

Who is the

audience? Faculty and staff from WP, PCCC and elsewhere; anyone who has a touch point with our students, either directly or indirectly.

Conference Plenary:

Embracing AI as Essential Learning: Preparing Students for Life Beyond College

Generative AI tools have had an astonishingly quick impact on the ways we learn, work, think, and create. While higher education's initial response was to develop strategies to diminish AI's influence in the classroom, it is now clear that AI competencies and literacies must be embraced as essential learning for most colleges and universities. [Dr. C. Edward Watson](#), our plenary speaker, will detail the challenges and opportunities that have emerged for higher education, especially in terms of pedagogical practice and student learning. The core focus of this keynote will be on concrete approaches and strategies higher education can adopt.

C. Edward Watson, Ph.D., is the Vice President for Digital Innovation at the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). He is also the founding director of AAC&U's Institute on AI, Pedagogy, and the Curriculum. Prior to joining AAC&U, Dr. Watson was the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of Georgia.

What are the conference's features?

- Keynote on utilization of artificial intelligence, building on last year's conference
- Traditional conference presentations discussing a student success strategy with time for questions at the end
- Roundtable – a guided discussion in which an idea/strategy is briefly presented with lots of audience participation
- Student Voice – a presentation of a strategy that includes student voices on their experience
- Case study analysis – a short presentation with a guided case study; more discussion than a lecture but more structured than a roundtable

What are the targeted outcomes of this conference? We are looking to share among ourselves outcomes-focused strategies and assessments for:

- Continuous improvement in student success
- Engaging in decolonization for equity, inclusion, belonging, and/or access
- Incorporating artificial intelligence in meaningful and responsible ways
- Consideration of redesign of systems, policies, procedures, student activities, curricula, and pedagogy
- Enhanced student retention, learning, and performance

Call for Proposals

We request proposals from faculty and staff for individual sessions and panel sessions. Faculty and staff may also propose a panel of students as presenters, or a mixed panel of students, faculty, and/or staff. Session proposals should showcase innovative programs, evidence-based practices or initiatives, research and scholarship, and/or assessment. Proposals should highlight what your best practice is, your strategy in using it, evidence that it works, and how others may apply it. Design your proposal to show how to facilitate the success of students, keeping the outcomes above in mind.

For example, if your presentation is about artificial intelligence, you might consider: what is effective communication about AI? How does AI connect with teaching? Does it help us teach, inspire, motivate? Does it help us (or impede us) in our listening? Or your presentation might ponder defining AI- what is it? Should we have a narrow definition that is about large language models? Or a broad definition that includes data analysis, MapQuest, and Siri? What do students know about AI? How can/should we include AI in classrooms? In assignments? Your presentation doesn't have to be about AI; these are merely examples of topics that we need to consider in terms of helping students succeed.

You may also present research on best practices in higher education. We are open to session topics that align with the conference theme, *Continuous Improvement!*, and to those that display your current findings on student success – even if they vary from our theme.

Session proposals are to be submitted via [THIS LINK](#) by November 4, with decisions anticipated by late November. Submissions should include:

- **Session Title**
- **Name(s), title(s), and email(s) for each presenter**

- **Presentation style: Lecture, panel, student voice (panel with students), roundtable, or case study analysis**
- **Session Description (including session goals, 300 words max.)**
- **Plan for engaging attendees in light of the virtual format**
- **Panel session length: 25 minutes (mostly for single speakers, case study analysis and round table discussions) or 50 minutes (mostly for multiple speakers).**

Criteria for selection include (a) clarity of proposal, (b) likely interest to session attendees, (c) evidence of impact, or prospective impact, on students, (d) potential for attendee application of learning, (e) how well the proposal applies to the conference theme.

Proposals are peer-reviewed. All presenters should be available to present between 9 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on the conference day.

You may use this QR code instead of the link if preferred.

