**Uplevel Your Teaching by Joining the ACUE Cohort!**

**Episode 125**

Lisa Amos:

The ACUE course was more meaningful to her with her teaching than her master's degree program was. So that speaks volumes to what you're doing across this one year. I'm not sure if we mentioned this, by the way, but this course is free.

Christina Barsi:

Hi, I'm Christina Barsi.

Sun Ezzell:

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

Christina Barsi:

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.

Sun Ezzell:

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

Speaker 3:

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

Speaker 4:

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

Sun Ezzell:

From transforming part-time into full-time.

Speaker 5:

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

Christina Barsi:

Or just finding time to soak in the campus.

Speaker 6:

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

Christina Barsi:

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.

Sun Ezzell:

And I'm Sun Ezzell, learning assistance faculty and professional learning academy coordinator.

Christina Barsi:

And this is The Magic Mountie Podcast.

Christina Barsi:

In this episode, we feature an opportunity to up your teaching game and it's free. The program is called the American Association of College and University Educators course in effective teaching practices or ACUE in which you will learn teaching techniques for face-to-face and online instruction in the following areas, creating an inclusive and supportive environment because equity is a foundational principle of ACUE, designing student-centered courses, promoting active learning, inspiring inquiry, and preparing lifelong learners. All faculty are welcome to apply for the 2021 to '22 ACUE cohorts. So keep listening to hear from Lisa Amos, ACUE coordinator and ACUE course completers, Tania Anders and Catherine McKee, as they share their ACUE experiences. Enjoy.

Sun Ezzell:

Well, welcome back to The Magic Mountie Podcast. This is Sun Ezzell. I'm so excited to be here today with Tania Anders, Catherine McKee, and Lisa Amos to talk about a professional learning opportunity, ACUE. Welcome, everyone.

Catherine McKee:

Hello.

Lisa Amos:

Hi, Sun.

Tania Anders:

Thanks for having us here.

Catherine McKee:

You look great.

Sun Ezzell:

Thank you so much for joining. It's such a treat to get to see you and chat with you for the podcast today. I was wondering, to start out with, maybe we could have each of you just go ahead and introduce yourself. Tell us a little bit about the work that you do for the college.

Tania Anders:

Sure. So I've been at Mt. SAC for six years now, and I'm currently our faculty professional development coordinator. I'm also the sustainability coordinator for our campus, but my primary teaching is for the earth sciences and astronomy department, where I mostly teach oceanography.

Sun Ezzell:

Thank you so much. How about you, Catherine?

Catherine McKee:

Hello, I'm Catherine McKee. I've been here at Mt. SAC either 25 or 26 years. I teach full time in the department of business administration, where I teach law and paralegal classes. But my primary responsibilities since March of 2020 is I'm the assistant distance learning coordinator, which means I'm in charge of, not in charge of, but my mainly responsible for SPOT reviews, so the Skills and Pedagogy for Online Teaching certification program we have here at Mt. SAC. I'm very excited to be here.

Sun Ezzell:

Thank you so much. And Lisa.

Lisa Amos:

Hi, thanks for having us today, Sun. I have many hats just like these other two wonderful colleagues of mine. I coordinate the ACUE program, A-C-U-E. We'll talk about that in just a few minutes here. I also have been faculty facilitator for BPTCC, Best Practices for Teaching in the Community College and other skills-based course. I'm faculty in the family and consumer studies program, where I primarily teach personal finance and life management. That program is in the consumer sciences and design technologies department in the business division. I also am the faculty coordinator for financial literacy efforts through the Title V grant. So it was a new Mountie Money Management Center, the MMMC that we launched at the beginning of the spring semester.

Sun Ezzell:

Wow. You are all very busy people involved in so many different aspects of, of making the college such a wonderful community to be a part of and you have all decided to make time to be a part of ACUE. So I was wondering, Lisa, just to get us started, could you talk a little bit about ACUE, the goal of the program? What is it?

Lisa Amos:

All right. Yeah, absolutely. So ACUE is... What it is, it's an acronym. It's A-C-U-E. I know some people are familiar with AQ as in AQ, but this is a course in effective teaching practices that we have been leading here at Mt. SAC. Just finishing out our second cohort, that Catherine was a part of, and the next cohort in 2021 that Tania has been a part of, it's just finished. And so, we are looking to gear up to next year. So what ACUE is all about, it is a year-long course in effective teaching practices. It's across five or across four different blocks of work, 25 modules in total of the course takers complete work over the fall semester and spring semester. They are working together virtually collaboratively in primarily asynchronous format, although we do have some virtual face-to-face meetings as well throughout the year to share out what we're doing, work on aspects of the course that may be a little bit more challenging and need more of that interaction aspect to it.

Lisa Amos:

They watch videos. They read materials. They complete discussions. And then they choose an element from that module, a teaching practice that they want to implement. And so, they could be implementing that in a online course, which we've been doing since March 2020, or going forward, they could also do that in a face-to-face course. So there's options for both aspects there. So they write about it. They implement it. When they implement it, and then they write about it and then they submit that. They work through module by module, along with their colleagues in the cohort. The goal is completion of the course by the end of May of the academic year.

Lisa Amos:

One wonderful thing that we do when they complete is we have a celebration. In fact, our cohort that is completing right now, we have a celebration for them on June 4th, but we are really looking forward to '21, '22, when we can do a massive celebration for all three cohorts in a face-to-face format. Catherine, you can't see it because we're all virtual right now. We're live and audible, but she's showing us her completion pin. So it's a huge honor to get the completion pin and official certificate.

Sun Ezzell:

That's so wonderful, Lisa. Thank you so much. As you were sharing, I was thinking about how often times teaching can feel a little bit lonely. Even though we're in a space with our students, we don't always have that space and time to think and learn together with our colleagues. So that idea of a year-long cohort I think is so powerful and nurturing as we think about continuing to learn and grow in our practice. I was wondering, and this is a question for Tania or Catherine, if you might share a little bit about your experience in ACUE as a participant and anything you wanted to share about what you may have discovered about teaching and learning as a participant in ACUE.

Catherine McKee:

I was a participant last year, and that was an interesting year to do ACUE because we were interrupted in March. Up until that point, we'd been having face-to-face meetings some Fridays in building six, which I really enjoyed because I ended up sitting with three people from three different divisions. So there was four of us for four different divisions and very different disciplines experiencing this together, which was really great. It was great to meet these people. I was probably the most senior faculty member there. Many of the others were just starting out. And so, it was so great to see them undertaking this commitment. I'm sure Tania and Lisa will agree, it is a commitment to complete this program, but to implement these exciting skills as they get started, and well, for me, I'm an old dog who wanted to learn some new tricks and I was so excited to do so. As someone who helps others with teaching online, I was very excited that part of the ACUE component is online teaching methodologies, which were very helpful, even to someone like me who's been teaching online for a while.

Catherine McKee:

So anyone who's thinking about doing it, I would highly recommend ACUE. It really gave me some great ideas. I'm excited to try some of the things in my real classroom that I didn't get a chance to try because of COVID once we are face-to-face in the classroom again. So, I couldn't recommend it more highly. It's a great program.

Tania Anders:

I completely agree with Catherine. It is an amazing program. It's funny that you mentioned how you enjoyed being together in person, because I feel like our cohort, we missed that a little bit. And so, I chose the importance of discussion threads, for example, a way for student-student interaction, which we're also doing for our current classes also, right? So we were doing that also. We have these discussion threads. And then you could see how others are implementing it across campus, certain ideas. Luckily, you have access to all of that for whole nother year. I really want to go back in and look at some things and then in contexts, certain faculty members like, "Oh, you said you would try this out. How did it go?" So I feel like it sticks almost a little better, that interaction with your colleagues actually when you are face-to-face. So maybe we'll try to do some ACUE gatherings with our cohort ones for back in the fall. So that definitely is great.

Tania Anders:

The reason why I applied to be part of this program is I've been an educator for over 20 years and I always felt like a fraud in some way, because I'm a trained scientist. I have a PhD in marine geology, right? So I know how to work with data and all of that. And then just I love being with people. I love sharing knowledge. And so, you know how your career path at some point takes this turn and my turn was towards education. So I was at Texas A&M as a professor for almost 15 years. I always asked the faculty and the education department, "Man, shouldn't I take some of your classes some time? They'll give me some ideas for how to be a better educator." And they're like, "Tania, you've been teaching for so long now. It just doesn't make sense for you." And so, I felt like this was my opportunity to learn how some of the tricks that make you a good educator. And so, that was really, for me, the big thing with this ACUE. I'm really, really so happy that I did it.

Tania Anders:

I will say as a more seasoned educator, it helped through some of the work with ACUE. So I really want to encourage people who are more seasoned to also apply for this, not just newcomers, because it's almost like you have this little advantage of, "Oh, I've tried this out a little bit in that, but it's just not perfected yet." And it's like, "Oh my gosh, yes, I just needed this little component to make it better and to help improve my classes." So, there's definitely something in it for everybody at any level of their professional career as an educator.

Catherine McKee:

I'd like to agree real quickly with that, that committing to ACUE does not mean you're committing to redoing your entire teaching method. You can pick up little things that are just cool to try in the classroom that don't require a total engine rebuild. It's just some little thing you can implement that really helps change the atmosphere of your class and how well it works. I highly recommend it.

Tania Anders:

Yeah. What I also really liked it somehow confirmed for me, like I said, I felt like a fraud, but I've realized I'm doing a lot of things really good already, apparently, because there were some things that are mentioned in the course, I'm like, "I'm doing that. I'm doing that. I'm doing that." It gave me a confirmation of I'm doing things right in many ways. Again, we can always all improve, obviously. We were all lifelong learners, but it made me feel much better and more confident about myself as an educator.

Catherine McKee:

It can be very affirming. I agree.

Lisa Amos:

It definitely gives you the validation, too, for what you're doing, because I know in the past, remember when I was brand new faculty years ago, 19 years ago, actually 15 years ago because 19 was when I started part-time, but I remember some of the challenge why I did something one way. I didn't know. I didn't have that research-backed information to go to and say, "This is why I'm doing it because dah, dah, dah, dah, dah." It was more, "I just know it feels right and I can see the successes because of how I'm doing this." I'm not standing in front of the classroom lecturing for the entire class period day after day after day. That's the old model. Even back then, that was the old model, but I just didn't have the research to show. Now, it's like if someone questioned, "Why are you doing this this way?" it's like, "Well, here is the data. Here is the research to go back to to say this is why we do this this way and this is why it works."

Sun Ezzell:

Thank you all for sharing your experiences. It's really inspiring to just be in a space and hear about other educators ongoing learning processes. As I was listening to you both share, Tania and Catherine, about what it was like to be in the program during the pandemic, I was wondering about what was it like for you to be in a learning space as a student in an online learning space during the pandemic while you are also transitioning to doing your jobs online. Did you make any interesting discoveries? Were there things that you noticed about online learning that you might not have noticed otherwise?

Tania Anders:

I can start us off. So one thing that I found interesting is that the way the modules are structured in ACUE is always the same. There's always an introduction, a interview with an expert, a teaching demonstration, and then your own implementation and just contributing to the discussion thread. In the beginning, I was like, "I would like it if it was more mixed up, if there's something new every now and then." Weird enough, just actually not until the almost the very end, I felt like, "Oh, it's nice to have this consistency too. You know what to expect." So for me that was interesting to see, because in my classes, when we went to remote teaching, I do like to mix it up a little bit. I want to have certain structures the same, like my content page and embedded videos for the students and so forth, but I didn't have all the assignments the same. Sometimes it was a discussion thread. I just varied it up a bit more.

Tania Anders:

And so, I can see now that for some learners, one thing is better and for other learners, another thing is better, right? And so, it's important to keep that in mind to serve all of our students best. You need to find the right middle ground there, I guess. One thing I will say, I've never really been a fan of discussion threads. When I asked my students about it in surveys, they say the same thing, but it's interesting why they say it also. Some say they want to get their work done for the week. And so, they work on their post and then they forget to go back in and then they lose valuable points because they have to wait. They're dependent on others to also make their contribution. And so, for me, it's the same thing. I would do my contributions and I would have to remind myself to go back in to see what other wonderful contributions my colleagues have made to the discussion thread. So that's why I'm saying it's good to have access for another year because there's so much more for me read up on.

Catherine McKee:

I've taken a fair amount of online training just because of my assistant distance learning coordinator position and I appreciated very much the way that ACUE was set up. So, Tania's right, it's set up in a very predictable, consistent way every module. One thing that I liked is that the videos are short. And so, one thing that helped me finish in such a difficult time is I set a certain amount of time. I think it was like 7:30 to 8:30 every morning was my ACUE time. I'm not checking email and I'm not checking spot. I'm not doing anything else. That's my time to do ACUE. I knew I could get a certain amount done just by chipping away at it every day. Even if I didn't have an hour, you could get something done in even 15 minutes, because the videos are short.

Catherine McKee:

They're often short and some are cringe-worthy, because some are videos of someone not doing a very good job in their classroom. It usually has the disclaimer that these are not real students. These are actors. So this person is not harming these people, but they're often entertaining. And so, I appreciate it. There's some good pedagogy modeled in the ACUE course, the way they have things set up in chunks, no long videos, a variety of things to do, so I appreciated it for that.

Sun Ezzell:

Thank you all so much for sharing it. It sounds like a little bit of humor didn't hurt your experience either. So I was wondering, and this is a question for anyone who wants to share, I was wondering what changes you've made in your teaching, or what changes you maybe are thinking of making in your teaching as a result of participating in ACUE.

Tania Anders:

So like Catherine said earlier, you can add little bits and pieces here and there, and I think that's mostly what I've been able to do over the course of the pandemic. So sometimes what I really liked, they give you a lot of resources to work with. Some you can translate into your own courses very, very quickly. For example, I've always done a little section on study advice at the beginning of the semester so I just needed to add onto that a bit. For example, they had a reflection questionnaire. "Do you do this? Do you do that? Do you visit your professors office hours, right? How much time do you spend studying each week? Do you write yourself summaries after, or do you reflect on exams?" All of that. And then it's like however many questions you answered yes or no to, it directly translates into what grade you can expect to get in the course.

Tania Anders:

And so, I was like, "Oh, I really liked this little questionnaire." I just adapted it for my course a little bit so it wasn't too much work. And then I posted it for my students to look at. So that, I really enjoyed that, these little quick changes here and there. The major, major changes, that's what I want to use the summer for if you want to rehaul something, like a little bigger project, but there are lots of little things.

Sun Ezzell:

I'm so glad you shared that, Tania, because I think it can feel overwhelming to think about engaging in professional learning and then wondering, "Gosh, am I going to want to change everything? And that seems so overwhelming. I don't know if I have the time or the energy." But being able to make small changes to an existing core structure seems like a really gentle, friendly way to be able to dip your toe in the water.

Lisa Amos:

And then to build off of what Tania was saying there, how the modules work is a block of modules will open at one time and then there's a start. So it's like six or seven modules will open at once. And then a week later, the first module will start and you have two weeks to complete that module. Of course, because the modules open up early, you could technically ahead a little bit or go, "Okay. This one I know will work better for me right now." So you can change it up a little bit within the blocks of modules. I saw some of that with some of our course takers over the past couple of years, but definitely it's a way for you then to look ahead and see what's going to be coming up.

Lisa Amos:

Maybe you don't even go through the whole module, but maybe you go, "Okay. That has something in it that I can use now so I'm going to pick something and I'm going to try that in my class. That way, I can do my implementation with it and then be able to write my reflection." Because I think sometimes people go, "Oh, a week, that's really tight," when you think about 25 modules over basically 32 weeks semester, sorry, two semesters, 16 and 16. Sometimes we go, "Oh my gosh," but there's blocks of time too that the course takers are working on these. So there is flexibility in there with them. As well as with the 25 modules, faculty are able to do five plan to implement. What that means is if there's something, like Tania was talking about, there's something they really want to do, but they're like, "This just isn't the right moment for it for whatever reason."

Lisa Amos:

Maybe it's something that you could have implemented earlier in the semester, but here you are now halfway through the semester. So then you can put it as a plan to implement. There's five of those allowed over the year. And then there are also a few modules throughout the whole 25 that don't require student interaction to do them. And so, that's kind of a fun one too, because then people go, "Oh, okay, well..." Like Catherine was talking about, working early in the morning, so she could be or he or the course taker could be doing that during the 7:30 to 8:30 hour. They're doing some of the work and be like, "Dah, dah, dah, dah, done, submitted." So there is a variety of things.

Lisa Amos:

And then also to tie back with Tania was talking about, the discussions, that is definitely something that I have pondered for a while. I do know and I can say that different cohorts of students, whether it's in the classroom or it's with the ACUE cohort, some people thrive really well in discussions. Other times, it's kind of like, "Okay. Anybody? Anybody? Let's get some discussion going." So, I have seen even two classes I'm teaching this semester. I have one class where they can't wait to jump into the discussion and they have very lively interaction. The other one it's like 11:59 on Thursday night, they submit, and then they do their replies to classmates 11:50 on Sunday night. So there really isn't the interaction and you can't force it. It just happens or it doesn't happen.

Sun Ezzell:

It sounds like the course itself is a really nice combination of structure and support and flexibility that we're all aiming for in our own classes that we're teaching. Catherine, did you have something you had wanted to share as well?

Catherine McKee:

I was just going to say that the modules cover a variety of topics and some of them are more big picture, like the learning outcomes for your course and making them align with what you're actually doing in the course. And then the different types of syllabi that you can use. The ones I think there is graphic syllabi and other different types, things you think about while you're structuring your course before you even started. And then there are ones that you can just... Like Lisa said, there's some that you're supposed to try out in your classroom. Some of those are small and easy that I had fun inflicting on my business law students when we were still in the classroom and telling them, "Okay. I've been trying these things out on you. So today we're going to try something new."

Catherine McKee:

We would have fun. I get feedback from them on trying that out. And so, it's unfortunate that Tania's group didn't get to try that, to use their classroom students as guinea pigs, because that was fun. They'd come in and say, "Okay. What are you going to try on us this time?" So I'm looking forward to trying those out in the next academic year.

Tania Anders:

I'm glad you brought up the big picture thing, because I'm really excited because I am currently in the process of developing a second oceanography course for our department. I'm going to use all the ACUE planning ideas for that course. And so, what an opportunity that is for course completers to say, "Oh, I have a new course. Let me do it right out to get go." I love the idea of the syllabus is actually something we can always do, right? I want to try to do a graphic syllabus for next semester. Like Lisa said, some things, when you were introduced to them in that class of ACUE class, that already happened, right? The semester had already started. So it's like, "Oh, this is nice. I'm going to try this out another time." But yeah, structuring the course, using all the ACUE. So I can't wait to develop my new course now. I'm applying all that knowledge.

Sun Ezzell:

I'm so impressed by how energized all of you are talking about this professional learning opportunity at the end of spring semester a year plus into a pandemic. It's really inspiring to get to be in this space and hear from all of you. This is a question for anyone who wants to answer it. I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about what you're learning in ACUE supports equitable learning opportunities for our students. So we've been doing a lot of equity work on campus to provide equitable learning opportunities for all of our students. As you're going through this course, how is that supporting your work as a faculty member?

Lisa Amos:

So in looking at the 25 modules that are part of the ACUE course across five different blocks, equity is an underpinning of all of it, because the goal is that our students are successful and not just students of privilege, but all of our students. And so, when we're focusing on our students that are coming from greater challenges, then by doing something like this, you're going to learn skills to help to elevate those specific students, as well as all students across your program in your classes. So, I'm just going to read off some titles of modules just to give a little bit of a starter, but again, it's across all 25, really. Even just one of them leading a productive first day, think about how many of our students, when they come in, they come in the door and that professor doesn't even look like them. And then if we're leading a productive first day, how are we embracing all students so that the students who don't feel like they are like you feel accepted?

Lisa Amos:

I was looking at one program online looking for some names yesterday and I noticed that there's one program at our college that every single faculty member is male. I thought, "Oh, that's interesting." It wasn't a program that I thought would be predominantly male professors, full-time and adjunct faculty. And so, I thought, "Oh, interesting. If I was a female, how would I feel coming into that classroom?" Every one of my classes, I had a male professor, no females, or if I was a student of color and I came in every class I came into, I had a white professor. We've talked about that, the white female professor. So, how are we embracing our students so that they feel a part of the environment and want to stick around and keep going forward from day one?

Lisa Amos:

Another one, too, is engaging our underprepared students. There's equity all across that module, equity-based strategies. Of course, one specifically called embracing diversity in your learning environment. I know they were talking about the note-taking skills. So there's one on teaching powerful note-taking skills. This is something that I've thought about and not just individuals who are BIPOC, but a lot of our students. They never were taught how to take notes. They were never taught how to study. There's not a class on that. And so, helping to elevate those students who maybe have had it and the students that haven't and help them together to build and move forward.

Lisa Amos:

Oh, here's another one too, with a developing fair, consistent and transparent grading practice, getting us to think about how we do our grading. I've been listening to some people talk recently about how they grade and it's like, wouldn't it be wonderful if you could take those names off the work and be able to just look at the work? Because we all have biases. Do we sometimes look at a name and go, "Oh, well, they couldn't possibly do well in my class because they are fill in the blank." When the reality is every single one of those students has a huge opportunity to excel in your classroom. So, my hope is that with a course like this that has equity all across it, although not maybe screaming at you that it's all in there, that people will see and grow from that. The reason I say that it's not super loud in it is because, of course, the four-week BPTCC, Best Practices for Teaching in the Community College, that is a heavy equity course with underpinnings of teaching practices in it.

Tania Anders:

Yeah, I completely agree. It's really embedded in there all over and partially, of course, all things that we can directly use for our students, but also for us to grow as professionals. By coincidence, all four of us here are having this conversation, we're very seasoned educators. So, we are all familiar with growth mindset and those kinds of things, but somebody who's new as an educator, that may be a learning moment for them right there and to not just learn about it for yourself, but then to actually also embed it into your classes and talk to your students about it. "I believe in you and you can do this. You're just not there yet."

Tania Anders:

And so, for example, with the grading, like grading rubrics, we've all gotten so used to using grading rubrics now or many of us as we have more opportunities to grade material on Canvas, and that really wonderful platform that we have their and use grading rubrics. And so, instead of having as a header, like insufficient or just like bad work or whatever you, like, in full score or just partial score, you can make it just sound more friendly. You're not there yet, but you're on the right path, but you're just not quite there yet. And so, those are all wonderful things that we can can take and build on.

Catherine McKee:

ACUE in the syllabus module, it also talks about using flexible language in your syllabus. There's also a module, I'm sorry, Lisa, if you already said it, but helping students persist in their studies is also one that's based on equity.

Sun Ezzell:

Thank you all so much for sharing. What I love about what you shared is all of the examples that you talked about are those bite-sized things, right? It doesn't necessarily have to mean, "Oh gosh, I need to reenvision my entire class and build it from the ground up." Right? Really thinking about how we welcome students the first day and working on that, or really thinking about how we can give students supportive and encouraging feedback, or really thinking about how we can build flexibility into our syllabus. That seems like a bite-sized piece and a great way to dip a toe into the water. So thank you so much for sharing those examples. Well, I'm really excited about this program. Oh, Tania, go ahead. You we're going to jump in.

Tania Anders:

No, I was just going to just share, because Lisa reminded me about this first day of class, because we were in a remote setting now. One thing, because I was not an online educator before that I never did and now do is sending out an email to my classes about a week prior to the class, actually beginning and explicitly explaining, "This is how you log on to Zoom. This is how our first class. This is how you get access. This is how you find that on Canvas. I've opened up the course now. Take a look already. You can see the syllabus already." Oh my gosh, when I did that, within 30 minutes, I think I had like five or six emails from students and they were excited like, "Oh, I'm so looking forward to your course and thank you." They felt more confident.

Tania Anders:

My older son is a Mt. SAC student right now. And so, he was a brand new student this academic year. I can see the student perspective better now. It's like if you don't hear from your professor beforehand, it's like, "Am I really enrolled in this class? Did that all work my registration?" And so, I think it's just lovely to reach out to your student a week before classes even begin. So as we're thinking about going into the summer, those of you listening, that's something you could already do. It's a tiny little piece. You don't even have to be enrolled in ACUE, right? Send your students an email the week before, explain to them how to log into your course.

Sun Ezzell:

Thank you for sharing that as well, Tania. It's such a lovely, welcoming idea, right? It really centers a human connection that centers building a relationship with each other and building that sense of community in the classroom so thank you so much for sharing that. So if listeners are excited and interested to learn more, how can they learn more about the opportunity to be involved in ACUE?

Lisa Amos:

Well, we are in the process right now of taking applications for our '21, '22 cohort, our jumbo cohort. We're going to have 60 faculty this coming year, '21, '22 launching on August 17th and going through mid May of 2022. So in your email, you should have gotten more than one email from me. Or if you're like, "I can't find it," you can always email me. I'm lamos1@mtsac.edu and I can connect with you about that. But if you find one of the emails from me, there'll be a link for a Smartsheet application and you click on that, fill out the application and boom, you have applied. Our application opened on the 19th, just last week, and it would be closing on June 21st. And then between the 21st and the 30th, we'll be determining who is a part of the cohort and then contacting everybody on the 30th. So, I hope you will apply. It is amazing.

Lisa Amos:

I want to just read a couple quotes from some of our completers that we had. So one, it's a little bit long, but it's phenomenal. "The ACUE course has impacted how I view my role as an instructor and facilitator. And now that I am equipped with additional effective teaching tools, I feel that my students will be the benefactors of this knowledge." And that's Kambiz Khoddam, one of our professors in the natural sciences division. And then another one that really sticks with me is from one of our completers last year, Ann Adamiak, and she said that the ACUE course was more meaningful to her with her teaching than her master's degree program was. So that speaks volumes to what you're doing across this one year.

Lisa Amos:

I'm not sure if we mentioned this, by the way, but this course is free. So it's funded through the Title V grant and POD and SEAP, and also partly through Guided Pathways, Guided Pathway project. And so, we are super excited to be continuing. This will be our third year with the ACUE course, our first year funded through Perkins, our second year funded through Title V and SEAP, and then going into our third year starting in August.

Sun Ezzell:

Wonderful. Thank you so much. We'll include a link to that information in the show notes in case anybody wants to access that. I know we're keeping an eye on the time, but I just wanted to open it up. Does anyone have anything else they'd like to share before we close out?

Catherine McKee:

It's interesting that, like Tania said, you can be a professor and not really have any background in education other than being a student and maybe a TA or something. But what Tania said is so right on is that this is really a great way to expand your bag of tricks, to think about the way you teach both online and in the classroom to get some validation to what you're doing, but really, I think especially if you're feeling maybe bored in teaching or looking for a new challenge or maybe just wanting to mix things up a bit, this is a great opportunity to do that.

Catherine McKee:

When Lisa first advertised our cohort, I looked it up online and I said, "Wow, this is an opportunity that I need to jump on." It was well worth the investment of time that I put in. I would just encourage everybody who if even thinking about doing it to apply, because it can really give your teaching a new life, make it so you're more excited to go into your own classroom and try out some things, find new ways to interact with your own students. It's an exciting opportunity so I highly recommend it.

Tania Anders:

Yeah. I'll add to that. As our faculty professional development coordinator, I really think our goal as an institution should be that each department has people trained in ACUE, because it will also help with the tenure process for new incoming faculty. If we have more trained people, then we can share that with our new faculty. We can tell them, "Look, I noticed this in your teaching. Here are some strategies in which you can address this." So I think overall, it's like having a few seeds planted here among our faculty, and then they can take it from there and share the knowledge with the broader base. Really, that's our goal, right? We want to be a campus of all excellent educator.

Lisa Amos:

So, I guess to sum it up a little bit there, too, is when we improve our teaching skills and teaching strategies, then it's a win on our side because we feel better prepared, more knowledgeable, not just subject matter experts, which happens a lot of times for us, but our students win. It's a huge win for them because they are more successful in our classes. And then they move on to other classes and can be more successful in them as well.

Sun Ezzell:

Well, Lisa, Catherine, and Tania, it's such a pleasure to talk with you today for The Magic Mountie Podcast and so inspiring to be in conversation with you and hear about your ongoing professional learning. I'm looking forward to many happy years of learning and growing together as a community. Thank you so much.

Tania Anders:

Thank you.

Catherine McKee:

Thank you for having us, Sun.

Lisa Amos:

Bye.

Tania Anders:

Bye.

Lisa Amos:

Thanks for having us.

Christina Barsi:

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