

Teaching and Learning Council  
Meeting Minutes  
10/21/20

- **Present:** Judi Cook, Maria Domingo, Jody Eberly, Brenda Leake, Elika Mohebbi, Anne Marie Maratea, David Murray (minutes), Elizabeth Sims-Pottle, Rachel Snider
- **Members not present:** Hailey Weinstein
- Minutes approved with minor corrections
- Report from Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning (Brenda)
  - Re: meeting with vice-provost Clydesdale: Several items were updated including the suggestion that the Good Reads choice might have something transferrable to issues of mental health.
  - First Fridays for the rest of this calendar year are in place. The initial First Friday will take place in November and will concern the care community and mental health connection; Beth Gallus & Meghan Sellet are coming to talk to new hires.
  - DocuStory is still on track.
  - Matt Winkel is working on getting a web presence for the Center.
- Report from the Director of the Office of Instructional Design (Judi):
  - Flex pilot started on Monday: 6 faculty members doing between 2 and 4 class sessions that have gone through an approval process. Sometimes just 2 or 3 students in physical class where others are remote. Trying to figure out the challenges for this modality. Are we providing an equitable experience for all?
- GoodReads conversation:
  - *How to Be an Antiracist* (Judi and David): David liked it; weaves personal biography into theoretical anti-racist framework; did not find Kendi's history problematic, but at least one TCNJ historian questions the book's history.
  - *Human Kind* (Maria and Rachel): Rachel really liked it. Easy read. The premise of the book is that people are inherently good rather than bad. Potential challenge: Long read; about 397 pages. Maria agreed with Rachel (i.e., liked the premise). It is an unconventional idea that people are actually good. Those who believe that people are good are often called naive. Not entirely sure if the book would be the most appropriate for the entire campus community and GoodReads. Very positive message.
  - *Presumed Incompetence* (Anne Marie): Four sections: women, women and race, sexualities, and gender. Discusses tenure, students/faculty, student evaluations (professors often rated on looks and presence; presentation important and attitudes pre-determined); women and minorities are promoted and earn tenure at lower numbers than white males; long book (527 pages). Essays are engaging, say 10 in each section from a different perspective.
  - *Caste* (Jody and Brenda): Jody read the first part and jumped to the part that she felt was most interesting and relevant for today (i.e., "Democracy on the Ballot"). A very thorough book; knowledgeable and goes deep into history (looks at caste in India, Germany, and the United States). A beautiful work that is easy to read

(388 pages plus many pages of notes). The book is engaging and draws the reader in. Brenda heard the author discuss her work in a recent webinar in which the author stated that she undertakes deep research for her writing projects. Very readable, but to best appreciate this book one must read it straight through.

- *Begin Again* (Elizabeth and Brenda): Elizabeth is finding the book hard to put down. Weaves historical events into the works of James Baldwin. It should have wide appeal on campus; would conjure up uncomfortable conversations that are worth having; ties in with the goals of James Felton's Inclusiveness Center; author talks about three lies: stereotypes of African Americans, Indigenous peoples, and the lie we tell ourselves about America (i.e., "city on a hill"). Also talks about contemporary relevance and the current administration. The book touched. Brenda strongly echoed Elizabeth's appraisal of the book.
- We will take another week to vote on our choice.