CUES announces 'Spanning Boundaries' winner and fellows for 2020-21

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The Center for University Education Scholarship has announced the first team to receive funding through the Spanning Boundaries Challenge, which funds project-based collaborations that build on faculty ideas, as well as its newest cohort of Distinguished Fellows.

CUES, which was founded in 2016 with a $3 million gift from a donor who asked to remain anonymous, aims to strengthen the practice of scholarship and innovation in university teaching and learning.

Guadalupe Lozano, CUES director, says this year's selected projects reflect the University's goal of inclusive excellence at a critical time:

"Long-standing inequities exacerbated by the current pandemic and civic unrest have more widely crystallized the need for an intentional focus on equity," Lozano said. "I am proud that, in various ways, this year's CUES grantees are poised to enhance equity and diversity through three CUES Distinguished Fellowships and the first-ever CUES Spanning Boundaries Challenge grant."

This year marked the debut of the Spanning Boundaries Challenge, which will have a new theme each year. This year's theme is quantitative intuition, or the ability to understand and interpret data in various forms and contexts in order to ask questions about the data, validate it and tell effective stories about it. (Read more about the challenge in this Lo Que Pasa guest column.)

The members of the selected Spanning Boundaries team are Anne Boustead, assistant professor in the School of Government and Public Policy, Victor Braitberg, assistant professor in the Honors College and the School of Anthropology, and David Sidi, doctoral candidate in the School of Information. The team will receive up to $100,000 over a two-year period to implement its proposal, "Developing Socially Aware Quantitative Intuition."

The project is designed to strengthen quantitative intuition by accounting for how and from whom data is collected. The effort involves adding socially aware quantitative intuition practices in existing courses through applied, interdisciplinary exercises.

"Data plays an increasingly important role in how decisions are made," Boustead said. "However, if it is analyzed without thinking about how it was collected? and the people it represents? it can lead to inequitable policy recommendations. Our goal is to help students develop the skills to analyze data while being aware of social context so they can participate in decision-making that creates sustainable and socially responsible growth."

The team also plans to develop an annual campuswide student competition in which
participants apply those skills to address a specific challenge facing society. A CUES quantitative intuition advisory board representing four University of Arizona colleges will support the team’s work.

**2020-21 CUES Fellows**

**CUES Distinguished Fellowships** aim to recognize and support faculty scholarship and innovation in university education. This year’s fellowships were awarded to faculty members undertaking projects involving the training of teaching assistants, problem-based learning pedagogy and student experiences with technology. Fellows receive up to $20,000 per year for up to three years to pursue their projects.

**Diana Daly**, director of undergraduate studies and individual studies in the School of Information, was awarded a fellowship for her proposal, which is titled "iVoices: Channeling Student Technology Narratives into New Media, Curricula, and Scholarship."

The iVoices initiative aims to strengthen the student experience with technology by taking into account personal and cultural experiences that often shape identities and self-efficacy. The program will transform the Social Media and Ourselves general education course into a student-centered think tank and digital media lab. The class will allow students to develop their own media creations, such as podcasts and simple graphical narratives, to shed light on how different experiences with technologies can shape student learning.

"Students are immersed in technologies when they arrive at college. They've built tech knowledge with the help of their families, their cultures, their economic struggles and their strategies to overcome biases," Daly said. "We want iVoices productions to amplify students’ individual and cultural tech knowledge, and to change the way we teach about and with technologies."

Through iVoices, some staff and interdisciplinary faculty partners will receive funding to help train students and use their stories to help shape curricula and scholarship.

The other two faculty members awarded fellowships are:

**Molly Bolger**, Associate Professor, Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology


This project aims to help improve the diversity of the STEM workforce through the expansion of a pilot program called Authentic Inquiry Through Modeling in Biology, or AIM-Bio, that was designed to improve persistence among students majoring in science, technology, engineering and math. As AIM-Bio transitions from pilot to implementation, Bolger’s CUES project will build capacity in teaching assistants to support open inquiry and develop stronger science identity in undergraduates.

**William Paul Simmons**, Professor, Department of Gender and Women’s Studies, and Director, Human Rights Practice Program

"Expanding the Campus and Global Reach of Problem-Based Learning Beyond Borders."

This project involves further developing a pedagogy Simmons created which he calls problem-based learning beyond borders - that focuses on engaging students, faculty and the
public in real-world problems, especially those raised by marginalized communities. The pedagogy is at the center of the University’s Human Rights Practice online graduate program, which requires students to complete community-engaged activities in each course. The CUES project will help expand the pedagogy's use at the University and globally.

More information on previous and current fellows and their projects is available on the CUES website.

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