



Welcome to UVM!

**We're glad you're
joining this
community of
teacher-scholars.**

Welcoming Students and Finding Your Colleagues: Starting the Semester with Connection

Presented by

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Today's goal:

to foster joy,
connections, and
sharing as you
join a campus-
wide teaching
community

We'll address, in 20 minute chunks:

1. Who are we? Who are you? Who are our students?
2. How to create connections in the first week
3. How to create connections beyond



Who are we?

From the Division of Faculty Affairs,
which is led by Vice Provost Jane Okech:

Susan Munkres, Office of Community Engaged Learning

Susanmarie Harrington, Director of the Writing in the
Disciplines Program and Center for Teaching & Learning

From the UVM Libraries:

Daisy Benson, Associate Library Professor and (CURRENT
TITLE)



Who are you?

What's something that you know a lot about simply because it makes you happy?

*This can be personal, professional, serious, or silly:
you decide what to share!*

8 minutes, in pairs (4 minutes each—person whose birthday is closest to today should manage time)



Who are our students?

Approximately 10,000 undergraduates

- Slightly over half are from New England
- 80% are from the Northeast
 - *Adding New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania*
- Vermonters are about 23% of the student body
 - About half of Vermont students are from Chittenden County

all data: UVM Office of Institutional Research + Assessment



Student demographics

- First-Gen students are 11% of undergraduates
 - (40% are from Vermont)
- Students of color make up just over 13% of the undergraduate student body
- Female students are 62% of the undergraduate body



Situating Students

Pandemic cohorts

- Current traditional-age students born approx. 2004-2007
- Seniors were 16 and incoming first-years were 13 in 2020
- Profound but highly variable impacts
 - Gaps in foundational knowledge, math loss
 - Disrupted social development
 - Higher reported mental health diagnoses
 - Higher reported social isolation
 - UVM Student Accessibility data

Departmental/unit cultures



Building focus and connections: the first week of class

You build connections

- with students
- with colleagues
- with your library liaison

How do we achieve this?

- First, with your activities in class
- Second, with your syllabus, which is a document

Students build connections

- with each other
- with your expectations



Fostering Connections from the Start

inspired by James Lang's Chronicle columns

- Open with a question: get the class started immediately (logistics can wait)
- Ask students to write something about their own hopes and goals connected the course
- Arrive early, and talk with students before class starts
- Help students meet each other



What connecting strategies have you seen that work? Let's share!



Scan the QR code or visit https://padlet.com/smbarrin/LIVM_NEO_2025



Building a Welcoming and Effective Syllabus

- Invite students into the course
 - Welcome students
 - Explain the course, its goals, and purpose in plain language
 - Highlight what you think is cool about the course
 - Tell students how to contact you and what to call you
- Make expectations clear
 - Create structure
 - Explain your approach to flexibility
- Build in support for everyone
 - Tell students what to do when things don't go as planned
 - Give everyone info about campus resources
 - Consider a “catchup day”
- Use the syllabus throughout the semester
 - Create assignments or activities involving the syllabus
 - Do a mid-semester check in with the syllabus—how is it holding up?

No one works alone!

Come to **Syllabus Day!** Wednesday, 9-4, at the Center for Teaching and Learning (303 Howe Memorial Library)

Snacks, good company, and hourly presentations on practical syllabus tips! (no Brightspace help)

See [syllabus resources at the CTL website](https://www.uvm.edu/ctl/syllabus-resources):
<https://www.uvm.edu/ctl/syllabus-resources>
(or at the QR code)





Keep connecting over time

Building relationships with librarians



Center for Teaching and Learning

- We help with instructional technology, pedagogy, active learning, Universal Design for Learning, inclusive pedagogy and more...
- Join us for workshops or personalized consultations!
 - Email ctl@uvm.edu
 - See the CTL/WID events calendar (www.uvm.edu/ctl/events)

Connect with us at the resource fair on Tuesday!



UVM Libraries

- We can help you plan assignments; visit your class to work with your students; and more.
- Contact us to schedule workshops or research consultations!
 - Find your subject librarian
(library.uvm.edu/about/staff/specialist)
 - No librarian for your subject? Contact Daisy Benson about teaching issues & course support



Office of Community-Engaged Learning (CELO)

- Specialized office supporting faculty who incorporate work with community partners into their courses (service-learning)
- Reach out for workshops, consultation and resources
 - Email celo@uvm.edu
 - See www.uvm.edu/celo for upcoming events + opportunities

Connect with us at the resource fair on Tuesday!



Writing in the Disciplines

- We support
 - Instructors as writing teachers (even if you don't think you teach writing!)
 - Instructors as writers
- Join us for workshops, writing groups, or personalized consultations!
 - Email wid@uvm.edu
 - See the CTL/WID events calendar (www.uvm.edu/ctl/events)

Connect with us at the resource fair on Tuesday!



We're here for you!

- Connect with us at the resource fair on Tuesday!
- Join us for workshops or personalized consultations!
 - Email ctl@uvm.edu or wid@uvm.edu or celo@uvm.edu
 - See the CTL/WID events calendar (www.uvm.edu/ctl/events) and CELO's upcoming events (www.uvm.edu/celo)
 - Find your subject librarian (library.uvm.edu/about/staff/specialist)



What's on your mind? Open conversation and questions.