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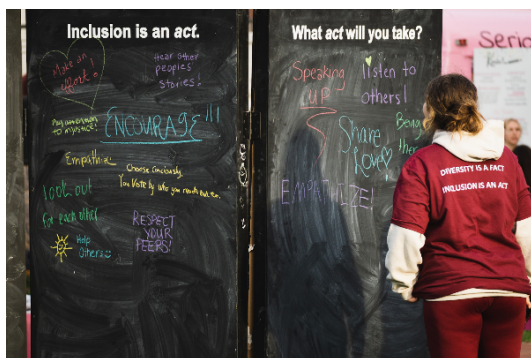


## Fall 2022 Newsletter

The Hanson Center had a busy fall semester! We know you were busy, too, so you may have missed learning about our efforts. This newsletter provides an update on some of the work and activities that furthered the Hanson Center's mission to advance diversity, equity and inclusion as we work to transform STEM!

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On a glorious September afternoon, the Lafayette community came together on the Quad for the Hanson Center's Raise Up Inclusive STEM event. This celebration highlighted the Center's programs and the launch of the new student group RAISE (see below). In addition to enjoying music, kite-making, food, and fun activities, participants reflected on what inclusion means to them. Check out this powerful [video](#) filmed during the event to hear some of these reflections. In addition, students from classes taught by Professors Nestor Gil and Jim Toia raised up their wind-powered artwork to show support for inclusive STEM and RAISE. Thanks to everyone for coming out and supporting our efforts!



## S-PAL Returned To Full Summer Program

After COVID restrictions forced the cancellation of the summer 2020 program and then required an abbreviated one-week pre-orientation session in 2021, we were thrilled that the Summer Program for Academic Leadership in STEM (S-PAL) returned to its full 6-week summer session this year. Nine terrific students participated in our strength-based summer transition program. A new feature included enhanced workshops on leadership development. The program was led with great skill and dedication by our new S-PAL Faculty Director, Professor Lindsay Soh (Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering) with diligent and enthusiastic logistical support from Millie Smith '10 (Academic Division Coordinator).



In addition to taking two courses (Writing Seminar and Calculus I), S-PAL students expanded their knowledge about the STEM fields through weekly sessions with Lafayette faculty. As an exciting example, S-PAL students explored the Gateway National Recreation Area in Sandy Hook, NJ with Professor Dave Sunderlin (Geology and Environmental Geosciences), where they learned about beach erosion and sand micropollutants. They also took time to enjoy the ocean waves and the camaraderie of fellow S-PALers (see photo). Thanks to all the members of the Lafayette community who contributed to the success of this signature Hanson Center program!

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### **New Research-Based Peer Mentor Programs Launched**

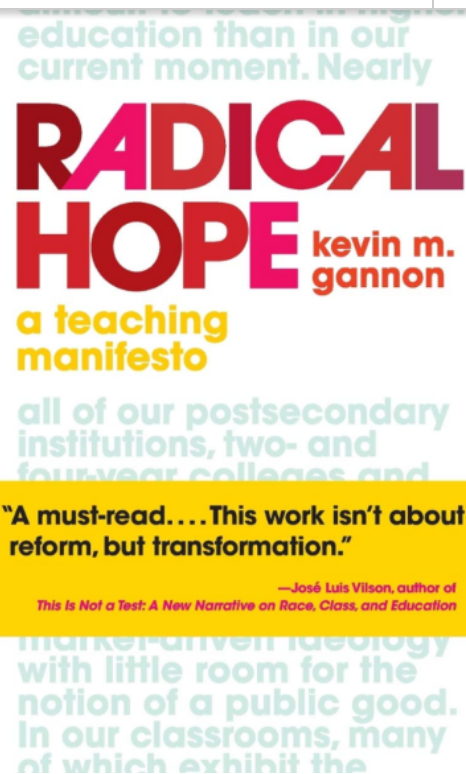
This fall we were excited to launch three research-informed, peer mentor programs for first-year students in computer science, engineering, and psychology. Peer mentoring helps first-year students transition to college and positively impacts their academic success and sense of belonging. Nearly 100 first-year students have been paired with juniors and seniors with similar academic and co-curricular interests. The Hanson Center led training sessions for the mentors based on the latest research on effective peer mentoring. As one peer mentor said: “My favorite thing about being a peer mentor is meeting someone I would normally have not met and being able to provide the support I wish I had when I started college.” If your department is interested in partnering with the Hanson Center on a peer mentor program, please contact us.



Advance Inclusive STEM Education) participated in a dynamic workshop facilitated by Chirag Nijjer '20 – and also enjoyed an awesome brunch with local ingredients from LaFarm. RAISE brings together students from eight inclusive STEM organizations along with “at large” members to collaborate on projects to deepen and expand their impact. We were thrilled that Chirag—who works at Google and has his own company, EntreKey, that helps small businesses as well as being the Dyer Center “innovator-in residence”—helped students explore their organization’s mission and vision, and how they can actively partner via RAISE. The most common adjective used by students who participated in the workshop was “inspiring”! The Hanson Center plans to host a followup workshop early in the spring semester to deepen the conversation and lay a strong foundation for the collaborative efforts at the heart of RAISE.



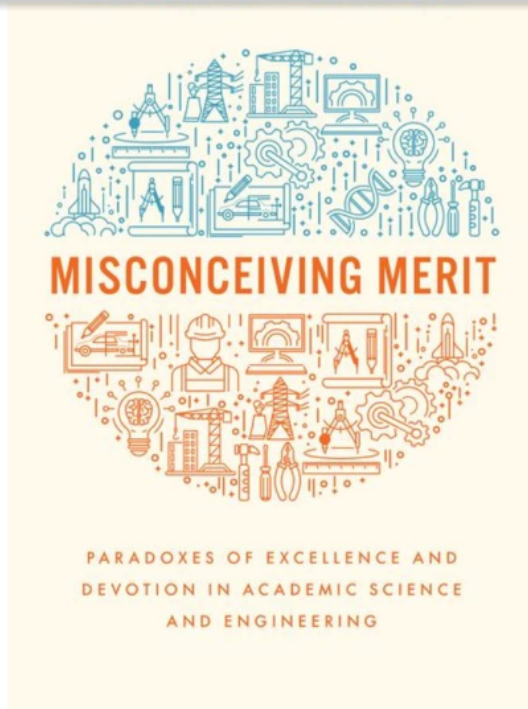
Faculty from across campus came together for the Hanson Center Reading Group to discuss *Radical Hope: A Teaching Manifesto* by Kevin Gannon. Participants found the book both practical and uplifting. In what is becoming a tradition for the reading group, we held our final discussion of the semester at the College Hill Tavern. While eating Old Bay seasoned fries and drinking our beverages of choice, we discussed the last chapters of the book and reflected on the tangible advice and inspirational passages of the text. We will be holding discussions in the spring semester on a new book, *Misconceiving Merit*, and invite you to join us (see below).



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### Theme for Spring Semester: Culture of STEM

The Hanson Center is organizing a wide range of programs for the spring semester around the theme Culture of STEM. As part of these events, we look forward to welcoming to campus, on [Feb. 22 at 7pm](#), [Dr. Erin Cech](#) (University of Michigan) who will present on “Professional Cultures and Inequality in STEM.” Later in the semester, on [April 12 at 4:10](#), [Dr. Mary Blair-Loy](#) (University of California, San Diego) will speak on “Misconceiving Merit: Paradoxes of Excellence and Devotion in Academic Science... And What To Do About It.” In addition to their presentations, both scholars will visit classes and interact with students and faculty. If you are interested in meeting with these scholars during their visits, please contact us. We are grateful to the following groups for co-sponsoring these presentations—Africana Studies Program, Anthropology and Sociology Department, Engineering Division, Psychology Department, and the Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Program.



Hanson Center Reading Group will read Blair-Loy and Cech's new book *Misconceiving Merit: Paradoxes of Excellence and Devotion in Academic Science and Engineering* (University of Chicago Press). If you are interested in discussing this book—which has been described as “an incisive study showing how cultural ideas of merit in academic science produce unfair and unequal outcomes”—[please let us know!](#) Colleagues from **all** academic departments and programs are welcome to join in this discussion.

Look for updates about other events as part of the Culture of STEM programming.



### Inclusive STEM Studies Conversations

A core element of the Hanson Center's mission is to foster collaboration and community among faculty with interests in Inclusive STEM Studies – an interdisciplinary field in which the theories, perspectives, and methods of inquiry from the social sciences, humanities, and other disciplines are used to study the cultures, practices, methods, and products of STEM. To help understand the interests and needs of faculty who teach and/or do research in Inclusive STEM Studies, the Hanson Center has been holding one-on-one conversations with faculty members whose expertise falls in this area. The goals of these conversations are to a) provide a comprehensive description and analysis of the current faculty expertise in Inclusive

practice in Inclusive STEM Studies. *Please reach out if you have an interest in inclusive STEM studies.*

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### Department Climate Studies

As part of our mission as a research and praxis center, the Hanson Center conducts climate studies of STEM departments and programs. Our climate study work provides a powerful avenue to partner with departments to deepen their adoption of inclusive pedagogies, practices, and curriculum. Throughout each study we celebrate what is being done well and develop action steps for what can be improved. The findings from the climate studies have stimulated rich conversations about specific teaching practices and curricular changes that contribute to more inclusive and equitable educational experiences for our students. This fall we conducted two studies, one for the Chemistry Department and the other for the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department, and we thank these departments for their engagement and partnership. The findings will be shared with students early in the spring semester. If you would like to have the Hanson Center conduct a climate study of your department during the 2023-24 academic year, please let us know.



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### Redesigned Hanson Center Website

We've updated our [website](#) and encourage you to take a look at our new pages. Hopefully, you will find our site not only engaging, but it will help you find ways to



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We are grateful for the guidance and support from our wonderful colleagues who serve on the [Hanson Center Advisory Committee](#)—thank you!

Wishing you a rejuvenating winter break and all the best in the new year!

Wendy Hill  
Director

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