

COUNCIL ON TEACHING
Follow-Up Report for
Teaching in Higher Education Conference Award

Name: Benjamin Hassman

Department/Unit: Rhetoric Department, CLAS

Conference Attended: NAFSA Region IV

Date of Conference: Oct 21-24, 2023

Award Amount: 1450

Briefly summarize how your attendance at the conference enhanced your professional development and allowed you to gain a better understanding of teaching in your discipline or trends in higher education in general.

I was author and co-presenter of two sessions at NAFSA Region IV, one with University of Iowa Colleagues from ESL, *Building Students' Intercultural Capacity: Trained Conversation Partners in ESL Classrooms*, and a second with colleagues from across the state including University of Northern Iowa and the diplomatic non-profit, Iowa Sister States, *Bridging Universities to Connect Individuals: Iowa universities supporting citizen diplomacy*. These formed the foundation for my networking at the conference, and the presentation with ESL including very useful discussion for our eventual presentation at TESOL International the next spring.

Perhaps most importantly, I got to see how people are engaging international education to help embrace intercultural communication in the classroom. In my experience, seeing student interactions as inherently intercultural (given the types of educational, cultural, and even linguistic differences they bring with them to campus) helps ensure each student has a path to success within our classroom (not just those who feel like their own culture "fits" naturally into our higher ed space).

How have you been able to share what you learned about teaching with your department, the University of Iowa, and/or beyond?

As I mentioned before, presenting at NAFSA Region IV helped me and my ESL colleagues prep for the TESOL International Conference Presentation.

Additionally, I brought my NAFSA experience to bear in collaboration with the Obermann Working Group on Difficult Dialogues here at the University of Iowa, and developed the idea of “Awkwardness Skills.” With encouragement from NAFSA Region IV Colleagues, I have presented on this new avenue of supporting student resiliency both at the state level (Iowa NAFSA Conference this spring), and at the national level (the Lilly Evidence-Based Teaching Conference this summer).

More practically this work grows from seeing the classroom and the undergraduate development space as benefitting from an intercultural lens, something I’ve brought to Rhetoric Department Meetings, to Chairing the CLAS Faculty Assembly, and to my committee work across the department, college, and university.

Thanks for your support! It was a fantastic experience and I feel buoyed by it still months later.