

# Associate Professor of Psychology and CEHS Dean's Leadership Fellow Launches Podcast to Enhance Online Education

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Jennifer Grewe, Ph.D., with podcast guest Robert Mills, professor in the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business

Jennifer Grewe, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology at Utah State University, has launched a new podcast focused on online instruction, *A Curious Learning Curve*, as part of her participation in the Dean's Leadership Fellow Program within the Emma Eccles College of Education and Human Services (CEHS).

Drawing on her decades of experience with online teaching for the USU Psychology Department—home to a nationally ranked online bachelor's degree in psychology—Grewe interviews Utah State faculty members to explore innovative approaches to improving student engagement and instructor presence in online classes.

"Over the years, I've seen colleagues who genuinely want to excel in online classrooms but haven't always had the resources or guidance to do so," Grewe said. "Teaching online is a skill that must be developed, and strategies that work face-to-face don't always translate well to digital spaces. Recognizing that gap has driven me to continually seek fresh ideas, new approaches, and more effective ways to engage students and strengthen online teaching."

Grewe began developing the podcast after being selected as one of four 2025 fellows in the inaugural CEHS Dean's Leadership Fellow Program, a competitive initiative led by Emma Eccles Jones Endowed Dean Al Smith. Introduced

to the college in late 2024, the Dean's Leadership Fellow Program is designed to give fellows the opportunity to develop strategies to address leadership opportunities and challenges, identify and cultivate personal leadership values and skills, and apply skills through completion of a leadership project that will benefit the college.

"I was excited to receive Dr. Grewe's proposal to the leadership program," said Dean Smith. "She saw a critical need for advancing the quality of our online instruction, and brought the expertise and creativity to address it. Her podcast will be a valuable resource that both showcases the wealth of knowledge in CEHS and advances our overall instructional



effectiveness."

Grewe recognized the fellowship as an ideal opportunity to create a podcast that could empower instructors across USU and other faculty in higher education. "I've been wanting to do a podcast for years," Grewe shared. "When I saw the Dean's Leadership Fellowship announced, I saw it as the perfect way to see the project through and, hopefully, provide resources and information that my colleagues find interesting—and that I've found informative and engaging myself."

On her podcast, Grewe engages with USU faculty who bring firsthand experience in online teaching and fresh perspectives on engaging with students. Grewe said online education continues to evolve rapidly. She pointed to the COVID#19 pandemic as a major turning point that highlighted the importance of human connection and creative methods for engaging learners at a distance. These themes—and others shaping the future of digital learning—are central topics of the podcast.

"It can be challenging to build a sense of community in online courses," Grewe explained. "My main focus is engaging students and maintaining a strong instructor presence so they see the real person behind the screen. With students relying so heavily on technology and AI, we have to work harder to humanize ourselves and show we're genuinely invested in their learning."

The first episode of *A Curious Learning Curve* launched on January 28 and features Kelli Munns, professional practice professor in the Instructional Technology and Learning Sciences (ITLS) Department at USU. Future guests of the podcast will include Robert Mills, professor of data analytics and information systems in the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business, and Todd Partridge, mathematics and statistics lecturer for the College of Arts and Sciences. Grewe also plans to interview professors from USU's statewide campuses to bring a wider range of ideas and perspectives on online education.

"I'd love to see this become something people are interested in, not just as listeners but as contributors who share their own ideas—big or small," Grewe said. "Too often, there's a sense that they don't have anything to share, and that simply isn't true. The things we do every day are often innovative and worth sharing."

To learn more or listen to *A Curious Learning Curve*, visit [A Curious Learning Curve website](#) or tune in on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, or YouTube. For those interested in being featured on the podcast, email Jennifer Grewe at [jennifer.grewe@usu.edu](mailto:jennifer.grewe@usu.edu).