Dr. Jessica Rivera-Mueller, an Assistant Professor in the Department of English, has recently published an essay in USU’s Journal on Empowering Teaching Excellence on “Enacting Rhetorical Listening: A Process To support Students’ Engagement with Challenging Course Readings.” Rivera-Mueller outlines a pedagogical approach to help teachers guide students into productive conversations about controversial issues. Many educators assign course readings to purposefully enlarge students’ perspectives. In doing so, though, educators may face a range of behaviors—reluctance, resistance, avoidance, disengagement—from students who feel that such readings negatively press upon their prior knowledge, belief systems, or educational goals. This teaching challenge is often present for social justice educators. However, “rhetorical listening,” a rhetorical theory developed by Ratcliffe (2005), is a pedagogical tool that can help shift students’ understandings of and expectations for the activity of reading, thereby creating a learning environment that supports meaningful engagement with challenging course readings. This essay is part of Dr. Rivera-Mueller’s broader research agenda, which explores teacher development for secondary and post-secondary teachers. An advocate for pedagogical inquiry, teacher agency, and social justice education, Rivera-Mueller’s work has also appeared in Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education and a number of edited collections. She also serves as the department’s director for English concurrent enrollment courses.