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Fast Five with the TFSC, March 2022

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Wally Cordes Teaching and Faculty Support Center

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Fast Five with the TFSC

A Newsletter for First Year Faculty at the University of Arkansas

MARCH 2022 THEME: THE TEACHING ACADEMY

2 Quick Tips from the TFSC Co-Directors:

1. The Teaching Academy is dedicated to recognizing high quality teaching at the university of Arkansas. Here is a link to the webpage: <https://teaching-academy.uark.edu/>
2. A lot of times people confuse the Cordes Teaching and Faculty Support Center and the Teaching Academy. These are two different organizations! The TFSC focuses on teaching related presentations and development. The Teaching Academy inducts 8 new members campus wide each year recognizing teaching excellence. They have a workshop in the fall that recognizes the winner of the Baum Teaching Award from the Arkansas Alumni Association. Additionally, they co-sponsor the Fall Teaching Reception and have monthly member meetings along with recognizing the Imhoff Award Winner (see the February 2022 Fast Five Newsletter). Both tenure track and non-tenure track faculty members are eligible to be a member of the Teaching Academy.

3.



From **Dr. Mary Savin**: Mary is from the Crop, Soil and Environmental Sciences Department in the Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences and is a former Wally Cordes Teaching Faculty Support Center (TFSC) co-director and former Teaching Academy President. She is the current chair of the Faculty Senate.

The Teaching Academy is a University of Arkansas honor society that was established in 1988 by Dan Ferritor to promote and celebrate outstanding teaching on campus. I have heard rumors of the Teaching Academy referred to as a “secret society”. Sometimes even its own members confuse the Teaching Academy with the Wally Cordes TFSC, which is a Provost’s office sponsored support center to help anyone who teaches develop pedagogical skills, strategies, and programs to result in effective learning. There is a nomination process and annual nominations are limited in number. However, any honor society meant to “encourage recognition and reward for exceptional teaching” should not be so abstruse.

Therefore, I challenge all deans and current Teaching Academy members to seek out our exceptional, inspirational teaching faculty and promote the full diversity of our teaching faculty. Their positive impacts on students’ learning and development and on us as a faculty cannot be overstated. Nominate a colleague from a different discipline or a different type of position. Let us learn from each other, from those with different perspectives and backgrounds, and continue to promote different approaches to teaching and learning that have deep, lasting impacts. Let us embody that “drop of water falling into a pond creating ripples spreading out in all directions, having an effect which can neither be controlled nor predicted”.

4.



Dr. Paul Calleja, is the current President of the Teaching Academy. He is the assistant department chair in the (HHPR)-Health, Human Performance, & Recreation Department in the College of Education and Health Professions. He is focused on students and community.

Students attend universities to earn a degree and subsequently secure employment. However, as faculty it is imperative that we utilize methods to slow down the process, so learning is rooted. In addition, we need to develop a classroom foundation that allows for learning to occur unimpeded. When I first started teaching, I made some bad assumptions, (1) That I would provide students with information, and they would learn, (2) Students would be excited about learning, and (3) The student interactions with myself and fellow classmates would naturally develop and evolve throughout the semester with very little pre-planning on my part. I was incorrect on all accounts because I didn't consider the importance of student community development, which I believe is the foundation for establishing an effective classroom dynamic. Building a classroom community starts with the syllabus. The syllabus is your contract with your students. It provides policies and procedures that set expectations. However, it can also act as a deterrent as you try to connect with your students. Syllabi can contain language that is more law like than guiding. Phrases such as, don't accept, will not, and responsibility of can immediately raise the blood pressure of any student. Using punitive language can deter students from taking that first step towards building relationships, learning, and becoming involved. For example, I don't accept late assignments, but instead of laying down law, I provide guidance and evidence for my reasoning. Here is a sample from my syllabus. *All assignments are due on Mondays (please check the course schedule for exact dates). It wouldn't be fair to those students who submit assignments on time to accept assignments past the due date.* By including the group, I move the conversation back to the student community.

Students also want to know that you care and understand that their struggles sometimes get in the way of what they do in your course. This can be addressed by providing students with the means to manage their own absences or assignment struggles, while still being able to earn lost points. In my face-to-face courses, I provide students with an extra credit assignment that is due three weeks before the end of the semester and is worth the equivalent of two absences (10 points for each day). The 20 points can also be used to supplement an assignment where the student has performed below their expectations. The result of providing this option is an equitable pathway for the student community to re-coupe points due to the curve balls that life can throw at them.

I hope these tips provide you with avenues to connect with and further develop your student community. Who knows, you just may find a student showing up to your office hours to talk about life and their future. Have a great semester!

5.



Dr. Eunjoo Cho was one of the most recent inductees into the Teaching Academy in 2021. She is an Associate Professor and Graduate Coordinator in the School of Human Environmental Sciences in the Bumpers College.

I always try to look for ways to capture students' attention while they are learning about a new subject. I use lots of real-world examples to make students get interested in the subject. I relate the subject to how it can be applied in a work environment. I worked in the fashion industry as an apparel merchandiser for 4.5 years. I use my work experiences as examples in class. I also bring 2 to 3 guest speakers to the classroom per semester. My guest speakers include Coach global merchandising team, Dillard's fashion buyers, Walmart's fashion marketing director, American Eagle buyers, and Academy Sports and Outdoors marketing team. I developed and maintained networks with the industry partners as I wish to connect my students to professionals. Such network efforts opened internships and led to full-time employment opportunities.