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Collaborating for Student Success **Elizabeth Dooley**



Dr. Elizabeth A. Dooley serves as Vice Provost for the Division of Teaching and Learning and Dean of the College of Undergraduate Studies. Focused on UCF's undergraduate students, she leads several units that provide students with access to signature academic experiences, as well as the Interdisciplinary Studies degree program. Additionally, she collaborates with faculty to develop transformative teaching and learning practices. She joined UCF in August 2015 and is also a Professor in the Department of Child, Family, and Community Sciences.

Dear Colleagues:

Welcome to the 2017-2018 academic year!

The beginning of a new year is an exciting time. The campus is bustling with activities—new students learn to navigate, classes begin, and relationships form. We are welcoming approximately 140 new faculty members. They will bring perspectives and expertise that will strengthen our dedication to excellence in teaching and learning.

At UCF, bigger is better. We are a vibrant education community focused on academic excellence. We empower our faculty and students. I know firsthand that there are a myriad of opportunities to innovate, engage with colleagues and students, and develop professionally.

I am looking forward to the year ahead. The Division of Teaching and Learning will invest in areas that will continue to strengthen our community, foster an environment that enables our students and faculty to pursue their passions, and position UCF to become a national role for teaching and learning.

We will also continue to collaborate with faculty across UCF to enhance the undergraduate experience. An example is scaling our Signature Academic Experience initiative to enable 100% of students to participate in a

high-impact experience, such as undergraduate research, internships, co-ops, and service-learning. As part of this effort, our colleges are working to build new upper-level high-impact learning opportunities. We make certain that our students receive the best education in the nation.

Another way that we can help our students succeed is to assist them in managing the rising costs of educational materials, specifically textbooks. UCF has implemented a Textbook Affordability policy that complies with the Florida Board of Governors' Regulation 8.003 Textbook Adoption. It requires instructors to post textbook information 45 days prior to the first day of classes each term and supply one copy of all course packs to the UCF Bookstore or Computer Stores four to eight weeks before the start of classes. It will help students defray the costs of course materials by providing time to explore price match, rental, and used course materials programs and digital options. To learn more, please visit the Textbook Affordability page (<undergrad.ucf.edu/dtl/for-faculty/textbook-adoption>).

Once again, welcome back to campus. Together, we'll make it an outstanding year!

Spring 2017 at the Faculty Center

Melody Bowdon



Melody Bowdon is Associate Dean of the College of Undergraduate Studies and Executive Director of the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning. Her research interests include technical and professional communication, innovative teaching strategies, and community-based learning and research. She joined the UCF faculty in 1999 and is a Professor in the Department of Writing and Rhetoric.

On behalf of the Faculty Center team, I'm happy to welcome our faculty colleagues to the 2017-2018 academic year. As returning faculty members know and new ones will soon learn, there is a lot happening at UCF in terms of teaching and learning, and it can be tough to choose which activities and opportunities are the best fit for you. We hope you will find this issue of *Faculty Focus* inspiring and informative, and that you will find time to build some of the Faculty Center programs described at the end of this article and throughout the issue into your fall schedule.

As you plot your 2017-2018 professional development plans, keep in mind the four key recommendations below. At a recent conference, I presented these ideas to help faculty members to balance the demand and desire for innovation with a commitment to sustained excellence in instruction.

Suggestion #1: Have a clear and specific personal and/or professional mission statement and apply it when new opportunities come your way. The personal mission I attempt to uphold for myself as I determine how to use my time is below. I regularly revisit this statement to recalibrate my thoughts and actions to align with my values.

I am committed to making a positive impact on the world through my work as a teacher; a scholar; a member of the academy, and an engaged citizen. I will work to lift up the positive; offer productive and responsible critique of the problematic; and maintain high ethical standards for equity, stewardship of resources, compassion toward others, and intellectual rigor.

Suggestion #2: Pursue meaningful partnerships. The Faculty Center team relies on our colleagues across and beyond the UCF campus in everything we do. As an individual faculty member I have always counted on colleagues as research and writing partners, sounding boards for ideas, and sources of support in my work. Creating and maintaining interdisciplinary support teams is worth the effort.

Suggestion #3: Engage in high quality research about our practices. Most of us are extremely busy with teaching and, in many cases, discipline-based research, leaving little time to ask hard questions about the impacts of our teaching and administrative efforts. If we can carve out some space for conversations with colleagues and for engaging students in meaningful intellectual inquiry about our courses, research (formal or informal) can be a source of inspiration, an opportunity for academic recognition, and an exciting way to impact students beyond our own classrooms.

Suggestion #4: Finally, I challenge us to always **keep an eye on what is human about what we do**, embracing technologies if and when they are relevant, but carefully considering them, asking questions and boldly wondering about their implications. This is the approach our team tries to take as we constantly explore and vet emerging teaching tools.

This *Focus* issue contains articles about teaching and learning from a variety of faculty perspectives, addressing topics such as promoting a sense of belonging in the classroom, designing active learning, developing approaches for revising courses, engaging student consultants on teaching, succeeding in interdisciplinary collaborations, working with international students, and enhancing faculty productivity. You'll also find informative pieces about integrative learning, mentoring undergraduate students, and enhancing security related to grade submission, as well as details about award programs and professional development opportunities from Faculty Excellence.

We hope that you will take advantage of the programming we have planned for you for this coming semester, including the following: (See the Faculty Center website for dates and times.)

- Course Innovation Project: Improving Student Learning Approaches
- Faculty Development Cohorts on An Asset-Based Approach to Coping with Secondary Trauma **and** Teaching in Active Learning Classrooms
- Special Interest Groups on Contemplative Pedagogy **and** Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
- New Faculty Learning Community
- Lunch and Learn focus groups about barriers to innovation
- Book Clubs on *Minds Online* **and** *Presentation Zen*
- Workshop Series' on Assessing Student Learning, Teaching Large Classes, Handling Classroom Emergencies **and** Teaching and Learning with Adobe Products
- Student Consultants on Teaching
- Faculty Writing Club

Integrative Learning at UCF: Helping Students Plan, Connect, and Reflect

Anna Maria Jones



Anna Maria Jones is Director of *What's Next*, UCF's Quality Enhancement Plan, and Associate Professor of English. Her research and teaching focus on Victorian literature and culture and, more recently, on contemporary transnational neo-Victorianism. She is the author of

Problem Novels: Victorian Fiction Theorizes the Sensational Self (Ohio State, 2007) and co-editor, with Rebecca N. Mitchell, of *Drawing on the Victorians: The Palimpsest of Victorian and Neo-Victorian Graphic Texts* (Ohio, 2017). She joined the UCF faculty in 2001.

Exciting things are happening in the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), and that is owing to the creativity and dedication of UCF faculty! As many of you may know, the topic of our QEP is *What's Next: Integrative Learning for Professional and Civic Preparation*. We have three main areas of focus in promoting integrative learning at the university: we encourage **intentional learning**, helping students not only set goals but identify the knowledge and skills necessary to reach those goals. We support the development of **high-impact learning experiences** that allow students to *connect* what they learn in the classroom to real-world contexts. Finally, the QEP fosters opportunities for students to practice **metacognition**: to *reflect* on what (and how) they learn and to communicate their knowledge and experiences effectively.

Each year *What's Next* solicits proposals from faculty and staff to develop innovative integrative learning projects. In 2016 and 2017 together we awarded over \$338,000 to 50 projects from 11 different colleges. We offer two different types of competitive awards: Program Innovation, which provides up to \$10,000 over two years, and Enhancement, which provides up to \$3,500 over one year. Projects cover a wide range of topics: from developing new high-impact courses and curricula that encourage students' professional development, to partnering with local organizations to provide services to those in need, to creating resources that foster campus community and support students' self-reflection.

For example, one Program Innovation project titled "I am UCF: Diverse Digital Narratives"—a collaboration among faculty in the Theatre Department, the School of Visual Arts and Design, and the Department of Writing and Rhetoric, with the Office of Social Justice and Advocacy—aims to foster empathy and self-reflection through digital storytelling. Last year the "I am UCF" team invited students to create personal digital narratives that allowed them to reflect on what it means to be a part of UCF. Students who participated in the initial phase

of the project had great things to say. One student wrote, "This project helped me recognize the unique experiences that make me who I am and how I fit into the UCF community." Another remarked, "I think ["I am UCF"] is a great way to connect with the community. In such a big campus, it can be difficult to connect with others. It showed how unique UCF is and how different we all are." In phase two of the project, the team will continue to collect digital stories and build a searchable, visual campus map with these videos that will allow others to learn about their fellow Knights and reflect on the diversity of our campus community.

In another Program Innovation project, "Ready, Set, Learn What You Need for Work!," faculty in the Department of Psychology developed the Career Readiness Solution, an assessment center for majors, created in tandem with a new Touchstone course and designed to measure the core competencies desired by employers in the field, such as: work ethic, critical thinking/problem solving, and teamwork. In the CRS students practice professional communications, such as résumé and cover letter writing; conduct mock interviews; and receive detailed feedback and mentoring to help them hone their skills. The "Ready, Set, Learn" team piloted the Touchstone course and CRS in fall 2016, garnering some very encouraging preliminary results: 86% of student respondents "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statement "I value the feedback I received from the Career Readiness Solution." One student wrote, "I loved getting practice writing résumés and cover letters (and learning the importance of changing these to target the specific job for which you are applying). ... [A]nd I really loved having feedback from CRS at the end of the semester that told me what areas I could improve in and what areas I excelled in." This year, the team will build on their initial successes to expand access to the Touchstone course and CRS for their majors.

Projects newly funded in 2017 include a collaboration between faculty in Modern Languages & Literature and History, partnering with Hillcrest Elementary School, to expand an after-school language tutoring club into a service-learning course. In the Biology Department, faculty are redesigning their Plant Sciences track to feature hands-on, high-impact learning experiences with the UCF Arboretum, allowing students to develop valuable skills in areas such as biotechnology, plant breeding, and hydroponics. Faculty from the Departments of English and Psychology are working with the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning to create a faculty handbook of classroom activities and assignments that connect course and program learning outcomes with career readiness.

These are just a few of the worthwhile projects that the QEP supports! You can learn more about the Program Innovation and Enhancement Awards programs by visiting our website

(<<https://undergrad.ucf.edu/whatsnext/faculty-staff/awards-program/>>). Take some time to browse the descriptions of the funded projects in our interactive map. And, if you have an idea for your own integrative learning project, please consider submitting a proposal. Our call for proposals goes out in January each year, and you can take a look at previous CFPs on the website to get an idea about the process. We'll also run a workshop this fall for those interested in putting together a proposal—stay tuned to the Faculty Center's weekly list-serv email for announcements about this and other upcoming workshops. Finally, we're always happy to chat with you one-on-one if you have ideas for getting involved with the QEP. Feel free to drop me a line at anna.jones@ucf.edu. I look forward to working with you this year as we help our students prepare for what's next!

An I/Opening Perspective on Faculty Development

Amanda Wolcott



Amanda Wolcott is an Instructional Specialist at the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning. She earned her Ph.D. in Industrial and Organizational Psychology from the University of Central Florida, and her research areas include diversity and mistreatment in the workplace, organizational climate, and team dynamics.

If I were to sum up my perspective on faculty development in one sentence, it would be this: it's time to re-conceptualize your role as a teacher as the Chief Executive Officer of your classroom. Now I understand that this may seem controversial and counterintuitive to many, especially as we enter an era of learner-centered education and moving away from the sage-on-the-stage model, but bear with me while I clarify.

A good CEO is a leader who inspires and empowers their followers to greater achievements. They are the individuals with the overarching vision for the organization, but not the ones who carry the load. Rather, they build up those around them through facilitating continuous improvement. An excellent leader does not give the answer—they assist in the process of discovering the solution. CEOs are driven to facilitate the success of their followers, because they understand that when their people are successful, their organization is successful.

A college classroom is in many ways like an organization. My first inclination was to refer to it as a small-scale organiza-

tion, but when I consider that many companies employ 15–30 employees and many courses contain 300–450 students, the true impact of the comparison really hits home. Like employees in the workplace, students in the classroom share a common goal. At the very least they have all agreed to strive to complete the course. In an organization, there will always be employees who get themselves hired simply to receive a paycheck. It is the leader's task to inspire and motivate them to move beyond that thinking and reach for greatness. So, too, are there students who enter your classroom hoping just to pass, and it is your job as the leader of your classroom to show them the value of the content and inspire them to embrace learning. You are the visionary responsible for translating the importance of learning and facilitating the process of self-discovery for your followers. Their success is your success, and you should be every bit as vested in their achievements as any CEO would be in their organization.

To be fair, my point of view is heavily influenced by my educational background, and I do not endorse replacing pedagogical science and scholarship of teaching and learning research with industrial and organizational (I/O) psychology, but I do support using it to supplement and enhance traditional thinking. For those not in my particular academic niche, industrial and organizational psychology is essentially the application of psychology and the scientific method to issues facing individuals, teams, and organizations in the workplace.

Beginning with issues concerning individuals, one of the most prominent areas of research in my field is leadership. This body of work concerns itself with (among other topics) how to assign rewards, how to motivate and inspire, how to facilitate and elicit high performance, how to build quality relationships, and how to manage individuals and teams. For example, Transformational Leadership Theory posits that leaders must embrace idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. Idealized influence is the notion that the leader is a role model who gains admiration from followers for doing as they say. We know that learning is facilitated through modeling, especially when the model is someone whom the learner admires, and research shows that students (especially at the undergraduate level) are highly influenced by their instructors as these students are still learning about themselves while learning course content. Hence, being an admirable role model has implications for holistic student development that can be capitalized upon. Inspirational motivation is often considered the charisma of the leader; however, charisma is not a necessary component to inspire and motivate. Faculty who demonstrate passion for their content and are able to convey that enthusiasm to their students can inspire students to see the value in their learning, and that passion has been shown to improve student motivation and attendance, which have both

been linked to academic performance. Individualized consideration is the personal, genuine concern for the followers' needs and feelings. For the purpose of this article, I will parse out needs and feelings into separate constructs to discuss. Students' needs will vary both between individuals (from person to person) and within an individual (from topic to topic). While an instructor cannot know every student's story, there are measures that can be taken—even in large courses—to demonstrate concern for individual students, such as applying universal design elements in the course, administering formative assessments early and often and reaching out to students who don't perform up to expectations, and even having students pick up their graded assignments in your office to get a few minutes for a personalized chat with them. Regarding student feelings, it is important to maintain a respectful environment in your classroom and your interactions with students; not only are feelings important for their own sake, but research also shows that student IQ can be adversely impacted by occurrences such as stereotype activation, which will negatively affect learning. Finally, intellectual stimulation is the component in which the leader believes that their followers are able to succeed and, as such, challenges them to be creative and to exceed performance expectations. Here, the leader challenges the conventional wisdom that the followers enter with and facilitates the followers' new levels of understanding and thinking about material. Although many faculty members may feel pressure to make exceptions and lower expectations for students for reasons ranging from a desire to see the student pass the class, to empathy, to concern for their own evaluations, the extant research shows that holding students to consistently high standards will influence the excellence of the standards that students hold themselves to and motivate them to succeed.

You may wonder why the theoretical conceptualization borrowed from industrial and organizational psychology is important if we already know each of these components in piecemeal form from SoTL work. To that, I offer two responses: the first is that the implications of integration reach far beyond this one example, and the second is that it facilitates research endeavors.

In addition to the study of leadership, industrial and organizational psychologists deal with issues faced both in and out of the classroom for faculty: team composition, diversity, performance enhancement, climate and culture, process losses and gains, training, assessment, work-life balance, role overload, role clarity, job satisfaction, commitment, and well-being, among many others. Hence, industrial and organizational psychology has plenty to offer faculty in nearly every aspect of their position.

Alas, no intervention can be deemed successful unless it is measured and analyzed, and the actions of our faculty members are too critical to students not to ensure that best practices are being used. Industrial and organizational psychology is among the most methodologically rigorous branches of psychology, as evidenced by the massive statistics and methods course loads required for training. Hence, if the methods of I/O psychology can be implemented in classrooms to improve courses, then the assessment and research methods of the field can also be utilized.

In sum, I hope I have provided you with a little insight into who I am, what I do, and how my field can work for you. I am very excited about beginning collaborations with faculty who wish to develop and implement strategies in their classroom using I/O psychology principles, measure impact, and produce literature that will influence the future of pedagogy and continue to improve the student experience here at UCF for generations to come.

Advocating the Freedom to Speak and a Sense of Belonging in the Classroom Yovanna Pineda



Yovanna Pineda is Associate Professor of History. Her research interests center on how global economic development impacts local communities, and how these communities influence global institutions. Her current book project, *Harvesting Innovation: Agricultural Science, Technology, and Memory* examines the social and cultural effects of technological innovation in farming communities of the fertile Pampas region of Argentina from 1860 to 1940.

In Spring 2016, I participated in the Active Learning Course Innovation Program offered through the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning. The program offered new pedagogical and creative methods for classroom teaching, and I, who had been teaching undergraduates for nearly twenty years, felt it was time to update my teaching style. Ostensibly, there was nothing wrong with what I was doing—my evaluations have always been fine—but I sought to do more. Since the start of my teaching career, I have always engaged students with visual materials, PowerPoints, and group discussions, but lately, each semester I competed for attention against not only the students' heavy work schedules but also the gadgets they brought into the classroom that distracted them. But it is unfair to blame only my students; my brain had gotten wired to

go into an “automatic mode,” whereby lecturing with limited student-teaching interaction had become acceptable, as easy, and as passive, as checking Facebook.

In short, my style needed a change, and I took advantage of having a particularly small class of nine students in my upper-level Atlantic World History course to begin learning, applying, and assessing active learning. I wanted to explore new pathways to the three indispensable goals I strive to achieve in every class: challenge stereotypes about historical characters, promote students’ critical analysis skills, and provide them the knowledge to creatively analyze the past with empathy. My work began before the semester started as I rewrote my syllabus to include short weekly lectures, short readings that could be discussed in class in a week, in- and out-of-class writing assignments, and active learning strategies.

When the class began meeting, I made the first six weeks as interactive as possible, bringing in no fewer than five different activities/methods in the classroom, such as group discussions, the World Café method, flipping the classroom, and historical analysis of online teaching apps. I even invented an activity all my own, “Ask the Historian Anything You Want. Yes, Really!” During those six weeks, I learned three lessons that I eagerly share with anyone interested in active learning. First, don’t try *everything* in one semester. I was determined to enact a real change in the class, but devising activities and incorporating them into a structured curriculum, on top of preparing lectures and grading papers, proved extraordinarily time-consuming. In the wee hours of the night, I often cursed my ambition. Instead, in the future, I will slowly add new components to this course. Second, do a new activity every two or three weeks rather than every week. Breaking free from my comfort zone was personally and intellectually healthy, but perhaps because I was re-wiring my brain, I felt disoriented. Third, tell the students that an experiment is in progress; share the fact with them and make them partners in it. If I had heard a complaint, which I didn’t, I would have reminded them that we were experimenting and learning new things. For the most part, however, complaints were nonexistent and the students seemed as genuinely curious about these interactive course methods as I was.

Of the five strategies, the week of “ask the historian anything you want” was more challenging than I had expected. I had been prepared to field questions about the Atlantic World. Instead, I was pleasantly surprised that my students wanted to discuss history more broadly—a fact that is not only often hidden in a standard course, but implicitly discouraged. This was so unexpected that I was delighted to answer their questions, though I did not have all the answers. We discussed the teaching of history at the K-12 levels, how certain topics were considered less important than others, and how people

of color were either erased from history or viewed as victims. And then one student asked, “Have you seen *Drunk History* on Comedy Central about bananas and the exploitation of Honduras?”¹ I had not even heard of *Drunk History*; hence, at the students’ suggestion, the class took a moment to watch the “Scarface of Bananas” about Sam “the Banana Man” Zemurray. Despite its comedic nature and the taming of Zemurray’s worst abuses such as financing the overthrow of the Honduran government, what was presented was generally, and astonishingly, accurate. Watching and evaluating this particular episode in class, and having students watch others on their own, led to new, expansive class discussions about both how the media presents and how the general public consumes history. Though they agreed that comedy series such as *Drunk History* or the *American History Guys* podcasts should not replace the work of real historians doing archival and ethnographic research, the students found both to be good sources for helping the general public connect with history and historical characters in a funny way, since loving history for its *own* sake was insufficient for them to convince future employers of its importance.

By the end of the semester, I had not only achieved ten different strategies, I learned new things about my students. In addition to evaluating what they now knew, I learned how they perceived and thought about their new knowledge, and in turn, I appreciated them *teaching me* about popular cultural sources. I realized my efforts in enacting a change in the classroom were bearing fruit when my students began taking charge of their own education—when they were becoming *active* learners. They came to class prepared with questions and sent me links to materials they found relevant and interesting to our class discussions. At the end of the semester, as I closed the Canvas gradebook, I realized I had not only reached my three teaching goals, I had also succeeded in what all history professors strive for: to have students be engaged participants and to think about how history relates to the world around them.

1 <http://www.cc.com/shows/drunk-history>

Incorporating Hands-On Activities into Large Engineering Courses

Tian Tian



Tian Tian is Lecturer of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering. She is interested in research in various aspects of engineering education, with a focus on project-based learning, digital learning, and offline computerized assessments.

Throughout my 4.5 years at UCF, I have conducted an anonymous survey of learners each semester. One of the questions offered is, “How would you help improve the course within a budget of five thousand dollars?” The three most common answers are: 1) hands-on lab sessions, 2) a field trip to a manufacturing facility, and 3) in-class demonstrations of concepts. This article briefly describes the various attempts made in incorporating hands-on lab activities into large enrollment courses by the author and the department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering at UCF as a whole. The response that students desire hands-on activities is pervasive throughout CECS; after all, many engineering students are tactile learners. One can’t emphasize too much the significance of real-world practice to engineering education. In a sense, applying knowledge rather than simply acquiring it is the essence of the engineering profession. The challenge lies in its implementation: how to incorporate labs to a class of 100–300 students with limited personnel support, restricted extra space, and troublesome scheduling issues, not to mention the already complex theories that need to be delivered.

A single lab session in Fall 2015

Without prejudging how students would react, I decided to take on the initiative. Dr. Jayant Kapat (Director of CATER, the Center for Advanced Turbomachinery and Energy Research) graciously offered the wind tunnel in CATER for the two classes I was teaching, EML 3701 Fluid Mechanics I and EML 4143 Heat Transfer II. Students in Fluids measure velocity and characterize the velocity boundary layer. Students in Heat Transfer II measure temperature and characterize the thermal boundary layer. Additionally, a heat leakage test was arranged for heat transfer students, which they used to verify the law of energy conservation. As far as logistics and resources are concerned, there was \$2,130 expended to purchase equipment. There were two graduate teaching assistants retained at 20 hours per week and two undergraduate teaching assistants on a 10-hours-per-week contract. The 294 students enrolled were assigned to groups of three-to-five students each to attend 45-minute sessions conducted over a seven-day period from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

The student feedback received from the post-project survey was extremely supportive. About 80% of students stated that the project was beneficial to their learning. Almost all students, over 90%, indicated that having a well-designed companion lab would be helpful. Many expressed their appreciation of the instructor’s effort and encouraged continuing to work in this direction. The major complaint was that the lab period was brief, and many students would recommend additional time to participate fully. Some students, about 50%, raised concern about scheduling conflicts since the lab occurred outside of class time. A few complained about the extra work undertaken in attending the lab and writing a full report, despite benefits to their learning.

A virtual lab session in Spring 2016

Given the students’ eagerness for hands-on activities, it was desirable to expand hands-on activities with resources already available. An innovative approach that was adopted was video recording elements of the lab, and then passing the data to students to analyze and report. In this way, students would be able to observe a broader experiment and learn from it without the need for all the resources that go into conducting a lab meeting. This approach was quite scalable; however, about 70% of students indicated in a post-survey that actual hands-on activities would be more beneficial.

Departmental project-based learning committee

As a departmental effort towards integrative learning, the department formed the Project-Based Learning Committee (currently known as the Active Learning Committee), which was charged with developing a plan to introduce a PBL component into one of the foundation courses. As a committee member, I proposed a semester-long project for EML 4142 Heat Transfer I, a mandatory senior-level course for all undergraduate students in the department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, with an annual total enrollment of 400–500 students. Traditionally, the course only involves face-to-face lectures. Over the years of instructing the course, I have observed students struggle with understanding the complex theory without having opportunities to apply it in the real world, and being unable to relate the theoretical knowledge gained in lectures to practical platforms.

A semester-long project in Spring 2017 and Summer 2017

The semester-long project entitled “An active heat sink project” was carried out in five biweekly labs, in four of which students work with the same specimen (a heat sink) but keep advancing their methods as the semester proceeds. It is meant to help integrate traditionally separate subjects so that students can grasp a more authentic understanding. The labs are crafted to be concurrent with subjects delivered in regular lectures. For example, right after the subject of “forced convection” was covered in class, in the lab, students created a flow

over the heat sink by a blower. They measured various parameters such as air velocity and temperatures. Before labs, students designed their experiment and predicted results. After labs, they carried out an analysis on the measured results using concepts and theories learned in lectures. Approximately 80% of the course topics were represented in the lab activities. Besides basic tasks that were well-defined and carried out by students as given, each assignment also included open-ended tasks for which students must engage in exploration and make decisions.

Assessment

The whole project is worth 20% of the total course grade. The five lab reports count for 40%, the final report counts for 40%, and peer evaluation for 20%. Methods and principles of the project were also assessed in midterm exams. For example, Exam 2 in Summer 2017 included two questions relevant to the project; 87% and 91% of students answered the two questions correctly, respectively. Additionally, one identical question was adopted as a final exam question in Spring 2016 (student enrollment: 124) and Spring 2017 (student enrollment: 173); the average student score on this question was 14/20 and 15.8/20 respectively. Both semesters were taught by the same instructor while one implemented the virtual lab project and one implemented the semester-long project.

Post-course survey results

In post-course surveys, 91% of respondents indicated that the project enhanced their learning of fundamental concepts. 88% agreed or strongly agreed that the project improved their hands-on ability with heat transfer experimentation. Additionally, 75%–91% indicated the project was moderately challenging or extremely challenging depending on the labs. 79% agreed or strongly agreed that the lab fosters deep learning that leads to long-term retention in contrast to a pure lecture-based environment. Meanwhile, 68%, 71%, and 58% agreed or strongly agreed that the project has improved their critical thinking ability, practical thinking ability, and creative thinking ability, respectively. 68% agreed or strongly agreed that working with group members has stimulated their thinking. Finally, 78% agreed or strongly agreed that they had the opportunity to apply the information provided by group members to solve problems.

All in all, this journey of integrating hands-on activities over the past two years has been largely positive and highly rewarding. A link to a brief video about the semester-long project is provided below:

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTR-rj1XZZ8>>

Rethinking General Education in the Humanities

Nick Shrubsole



Nick Shrubsole is Lecturer in the Philosophy Department, where he teaches Humanistic Traditions and courses on religion. He is working on a book titled *The Search for Indigenous Religious Freedom in Canada*, which explores how the definition, location, and conditions of religion offered in the colonial state of Canada continue to impede the survival and development of indigenous religions today.

As part of the Engaged Pedagogies CIP through the Faculty Center, I sought to rethink my lower-level GEP Humanities course titled *Encountering the Humanities*. Unlike the two other GEP courses in the HUM program, the catalog description of “Encountering” speaks of theory and methods rather than content. Nevertheless, the course tends to be taught much like the other two GEP courses with a heavy focus on content. From the outset, I knew I wanted to do something different, but something did not sit right when I first taught the course in Spring 2016. I quickly realized that, despite my efforts to be innovative, I had mirrored the status-quo with a content driven course, organized around film, literature, music, and art rather than historical periods (as is the case in the other two GEP courses and many iterations of “Encountering”). Even more problematic was that the course appeared as almost four separate courses with the loose tie of social justice at its foundations. In my previous iteration of the course, I also tended to default to historical fact and biography as if memorization was all that mattered. At the end of the day, the examples I brought to class were recognized as focal points rather than supplementary objects of analysis in the broader scope of a social justice agenda. The result was an overly superficial and disengaged classroom.

The journey to redesign this course began with two simple questions: What are the Humanities and what makes them different from, say, Art History? What do I want students to take away from the course? On the first question, the Humanities are more intersectional in content and theory than, say, art history. While the Humanities may deal with art, music, and film, it should not assess them separately but rather holistically. What do these different cultural productions tell us about the human experience and how to they speak with each other? Why would I cover race in the work of Jean-Michel Basquiat’s work in early March and not discuss Public Enemy until late April? The easy fix was bringing elements together that spoke to the same issue of social justice. On the matter of the second question, I decided that I do not care if my students walk away knowing the specifics about Public Enemy or Jean-

Michel Basquiat but rather that they can speak to the critical theory behind our analysis of such work. So, the course goals became theory-based rather than content-based. This led me to re-organize the course around Postcolonial Theory, Feminist Theory, and Critical Race Theory. I hope later to develop modules on Queer Theory and Disability Studies, to be swapped in and out of the course in different iterations.

The next question was about how to execute this new course. Multiple-choice questions are a reality at UCF where I can be teaching this very class with 60, 75, 150, or 300 students in any given semester. (This particular discussion is about my online offering in Summer B, though I am teaching a small and large section mixed-mode in the fall and another fully-online iteration the following spring.) My goal was to include at least one short writing assignment in each theory module. Each module consists of four assignments, worth 5% each. These low-stake assignments are part of a strategy to ensure that students develop the necessary skills for heavily-weighted applied theory discussions at the end of the course.

Let me draw on the Postcolonial Module as an example. First, students read a short but intensive reading on defining Postcolonialism. The assignment that follows asks them to define specific words from the reading, explain the sentences in which those words appear, and then complete a short elevator-pitch to a fellow student on the definition of Postcolonialism. This written assignment is followed by a multiple-choice test on the art of Norval Morrisseau and an introduction to colonialism on Turtle Island. We then turn to a short poetry reflection while examining residential school survivor literature, before watching a documentary film called *Reel Injun*, which offers a postcolonial critique of Hollywood cinema. The student-led discussion that follows is an assessment of Disney's *Pocahontas*.

There are no final exams, no heavily-weighted multiple choice tests. What I have constructed is a series of smaller assignments that build toward student-discussions that I hope will lead to more engagement with the material. Again, my hope is not that students can then go and critique that one particular film or recognize the postcolonial art of, say, Norval Morrisseau, but rather that they can recognize postcolonial creations and offer postcolonial critiques of whatever they encounter. As the course develops, I hope to offer intersectional discussions where, say, students are tasked to think about feminist and critical race theory in the same work. I will also set up a fully-online iteration of the course, where different groups can be moving through different modules at the same time to come together in intersectional discussions throughout the semester.

Student Consultants Provide an Independent Eye to Improve Teaching Gregg Buckingham



Gregg Buckingham is a second-year lecturer in the College of Health and Public Affairs. He regularly teaches a mix of undergraduate and graduate courses in the School of Public Administration. He comes to UCF following a career in the federal government with NASA.

As a first-year School of Public Administration faculty member in the 2016-17 academic year, I was anxious to gain feedback from students about the mechanics of my courses. How did students perceive the classes and were the classes conducive to their learning? I generated my own observations, but was concerned about confirmation bias—the tendency to confirm your own beliefs. I knew the students would complete course evaluations, but they come too late to make changes. An independent observer might provide feedback midstream, and with no “iron in the fire”. During a Faculty Center for Excellence seminar, the FCTL Student Consultants on Teaching (SCoT) program came to my attention as the perfect answer!

In the SCoT program, an FCTL-trained student consultant will analyze your courses, tailored to your needs. Ms. Lauren Younker was assigned to consult with me. She studies English Literature as well as Women's and Gender Studies. One concern I discussed was the divergence in disciplines—she studies English while I teach public administration. She stated that consultants don't evaluate course content; their training centers on observing classrooms and facilitating focus groups. Training for online classes includes observing how students interact with one another and their instructor, the instructor's online personas, and presentation of course materials. I was also pleased to have someone studying gender studies, as it would provide a different lens of observation.

Lauren visited my office to discuss my goals for the observation. We also chose which of my classes from the spring semester to utilize. We chose two: an undergraduate online class in survey research and a face-to-face graduate class in public policy. It was my second time teaching both courses and my first time teaching in these modes for each class. I was particularly interested in the online class feedback. For the online class, in addition to general observations about the class, I was particularly concerned about questions such as “Are the weekly plans easy to navigate and understand?” and “Are the ungraded assignments helpful?” For this course, I inserted five ungraded activities each week because I was attempting to provide students with different methods of thinking about

the material. One example is called, “What you might know about this topic, and what we will learn.” Here I attempted to use the concept of scaffolding to build a bridge from what students might already know about the topic to what they will learn. Another was use of CDL’s “widgets.” We decided she would “observe” the first three modules of the class and provide feedback. As well, we did a mid-course student survey on process-related issues. The roster in this class was about 50 students.

Lauren provided three services in the face-to-face class: first, we developed a student survey to prime students’ thinking about the course; second, Lauren sat in one evening for the entire class and observed the lecture, student activity, and learning environment; and third, she held a focus group discussion at the end of class, which lasted about 40 minutes, to gain real time, face-to-face input. We could triangulate the three sources of information to build a bit of reliability. The roster in this class was 23 students.

In implementing the project, there were concerns. First, it is a bit nerve-racking to have an observer in the classroom or collecting data from students. It makes you feel a bit vulnerable. Second, we implemented this mid-term, and while that gave me time to correct any glaring issues, I did not want it to color my feelings about the classes. Finally, how much time would it take? Was it too much of a burden? All three concerns disappeared, as Lauren was professional, efficient, and sincere about improving the learning process.

The online course evaluation contained many more elements than I expected. There were three sections; the first was the “Initial description of course elements” which included feedback on the digital environment, the course overview, class rapport and the faculty online persona. The second area considered the “Course elements.” This included items such as encouraging course participation, creating a comfortable atmosphere, linking content week-to-week, and providing learning objectives for each module. The final section was “Observation of the course modules.” This reviewed items like sound, visuals, course energy, interaction and diversity of participation.

The results of the observation were very useful. Some observations were comforting in that they confirmed my initial intentions. I try to create a welcoming environment and Lauren noted that through the instructor introduction and the class expectations this was achieved. She found student participation was good, and particularly noted the diversity of the respondents. On the ungraded assignments she noted that “additional practice is helpful... better to offer than not... but as a busy student she might not always participate in ungraded work.” The student survey seemed to bear this out; two of the

five weekly, ungraded assignments received a score of less than 50% in terms of students utilizing them weekly. As far as navigation, her report indicated the material was very accessible and it was easy to participate. In terms of improvements, she noted the order of a couple items might be switched for improvement. She also noted more visuals to break up some of the text would be useful.

The face-to-face results were similar in offering confirmation and suggestions for improvement. For the in-class observations she reviewed voice, performance, content, organization and classroom environment. She recommended slight improvements in my speaking voice. The survey, which was also discussed qualitatively in the focus group, included fifteen questions on a variety of topics. Questions were on a five-point Likert scale with “strongly agree” being the most positive answer. The questions covered topics such as instructor feedback, instructor interest in student learning, organization of the class, use of state and local current issues, syllabus adequacy, Webcourses structure, etc. A majority of students answered strongly agree to each question. One interesting outcome was the number of students strongly agreeing with group work. That seemed at odds with my previous experience. One area for suggested improvement was reviewing overlapping due dates on some assignments.

Overall, this was an excellent experience! It is always humbling to be evaluated, but the program was well planned and the quality of the student consultant was excellent. She was efficient and did most of the work after discussing my goals. It gave me points-to-ponder in planning fall classes, areas of improvement, streamlining opportunities, and areas to expand due to positive consultant and student feedback. For a new faculty member, it was invaluable and timely third-party feedback. I recommend the program to other faculty to step away from your own bias or expectations and have a fresh look at your teaching.

Life is a Dream Project: Adapting Language and Performance for Multicultural Theatrical Settings and Audiences

Julia Listengarten and Martha Garcia



Dr. Julia Listengarten is Professor, Graduate Program Director, and Artistic Director of the Department of Theatre in the School of Performing Arts. She has worked professionally in New York City as a theatre director and dramaturg. Her research interests include avant-garde performance and theory, contemporary scenographic practice, and nationalism in theatre. She is the author of academic books and articles, translator, and co-editor of scholarly publications. She has directed multiple productions and her projects have received national and international recognition. She is currently editing a multi-volume collection on Modern American Playwriting.



Dr. Martha García is Associate Professor of Spanish and Coordinator of the Honors in the Major of the College of Arts & Humanities. Her research concentrates on the aesthetic aspects of the literature and culture of Medieval Spain, as well as early Modern and Enlightenment periods of Spain, the dialogue within the text, the theological aspects of the narrative and theatre, and the interdisciplinary application of theory. She is the author of academic books and articles, contributor to edited collections, and editor of a scholastic edition of a theatrical masterpiece of the Golden Age theatre. She is active in NEH programs and is currently working on interdisciplinary and collaborative projects.

The Origins and Staging of a Multicultural Performance Project

In 2013, we embarked on a project that involved the process of adapting and producing a play in the contemporary Spanish language. This project was made possible in part by an Information Fluency Award we received in 2014, which we used toward producing a contemporary version of Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *Life is a Dream* in Spanish in a multilingual setting. This initiative facilitated a multicultural interaction by engaging students in the process of communicating across different languages, cultures, disciplines, settings, and backgrounds. To access the cultural and linguistic complexity and engage in communication across the disciplinary borders, students from the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures and the Department of Theatre participated in an artistic exploration, which incorporated theatre as a tool in the acquisition of language and culture. This collaboration turned into a rewarding experience with measurable pedagogical outcomes: *The Life is a Dream Project* (2015-2016) provided us with valuable data to fully understand the benefits of this kind of initiative across the Arts & Humanities disciplines. We used several modules and practicum assignments in the courses we taught during this period, in which we focused on accessing and integrating the project-related information effectively and efficiently. Specifically, the project offered all student participants the opportunity to master their language skills through a concentrated practical application involving a performance aspect. Theatre students, in particular, benefited from working across languages and cultures, embracing the challenges of interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, and multilingual communication. Furthermore, this project, with its focus on interdisciplinary, cross-curricular, and multilingual collaboration, contributed significantly to UCF's goal to inter-

nationalize research and curricula in an emerging Hispanic Serving Institution.

Collaboration and Interaction among Disciplines and Languages

Through the integration of theatre, language, and culture across the curriculum, the project engaged students in various aspects of reading, writing, analyzing, synthesizing, and devising, with special attention paid to creating meaning, interpreting culture, facilitating multicultural sensitivity, and understanding cultural similarities and differences. During the project, three key components gradually emerged: faculty promoted information literacy through exposing students to the inter/cross-cultural and multi-disciplinary model of practice-based research; students developed their technical literacy through the process of creating a production and presenting it to the public; and faculty focused on developing students' critical thinking in order to achieve the objectives of the project. This project also fostered an integration of theory and practice: the students understood theoretical constructs more effectively by applying them to practice and measuring the results in a tangible way. Moreover, we were fortunate to collaborate with music faculty member Dr. Nora Lee García and her student musicians, who performed the Baroque's instrumental music throughout the entire play, providing a musical background and enhancing the audience's experience. In the fall semester of 2015, faculty and students from the three departments across the university offered the first production of *The Life is a Dream* project in Spanish to the local community. The production took place at UCF's Black Box Theatre. In the spring semester of 2016, the production was selected to be part of the UCF Celebrates the Arts Festival at Dr. Phillips Performing Arts Center located in downtown Orlando.

Measures, Outcomes, and Objectives Accomplished

The idea to incorporate theatre as a tool for language acquisition led to the decision to produce a play in its original language in contemporary adaptation. The result was a multilingual theatrical event created in collaboration with the students from the Theatre and Music Departments. This process promoted an environment that compelled the students to discover multiple complexities around the original work such as customs, fashions, aesthetics, politics, and economics. Under the supervision of the faculty members, the students welcomed a multiplicity of cultural perspectives in a studio setting. Specifically, the student learning outcomes demonstrate that the project identified and met the challenges that are inherent in interdisciplinary creative work. The project furthered the development of a shared vocabulary to communicate effectively across the disciplines. It promoted critical thinking in evaluating cultural specifics such as politics, economics, and literary trends. It prompted the students to apply research and analysis to practice and appreciate the use of technology in an interdisciplinary creative setting. It is important to note that the increase in student self-growth and assessment in several areas of learning such as language and technical fluency, in conjunction with critical thinking, took place gradually and consistently throughout the entire learning process.

Considerations of Discipline Specifics and Quality of the Project

This project involved a selection of students from the three departments to participate in the pre-production and rehearsal process. A group of theatre students comprised the production team: the director, dramaturg, and set/costume/lighting/sound designers under the supervision of design faculty Vandy Wood. A group of advanced graduate students from the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures were the first readers of the contemporary adaptation created for this specific academic purpose. Since we worked with a masterpiece written in Old Spanish language, it was required that the participating graduate students had a strong background in Spanish early modern literature and theatre. These participants from the Spanish MA program were invited to observe one of the rehearsals of the project in the middle of the process, and to provide their suggestions and recommendations to the actors since they had read both texts—the original play, *La vida es sueño*, by Pedro Calderón de la Barca, and the abridged and contemporary adaptation of the *Life is a Dream* project. The students from the Department of Music, led by the faculty member, performed music during the performances. The design and rehearsal process continued throughout the entire semester, supervised by the three leading faculty members in their area of study: theatre, music, and early modern Spanish literature. The distinctive quality of the project emerged in encompassing all aspects of theatrical production from playwriting to stage realization. The students applied

their acquired knowledge of culture, language, and theatre to play analysis and staging. It is noteworthy that the production was performed entirely in the original language of the written play. The cast consisted of performers who were native Spanish speakers as well as those who were learning Spanish as a world language. The reception of these efforts by the university and local community was very favorable.

A Final Thought

Creating an experience for a multicultural audience and offering ways to bridge cultural, historical, and social gaps, especially in Florida where Hispanic heritage is rich and has become an integral part of the community, proved to be both challenging and inspiring. It made us aware of what the central region of our state has to offer, not only to our student populations and faculty members, but also in terms of shared cultural heritage within the local community and beyond. It provided us with the ideal creative space to continue the dialogue that brings together past and present and encourages us to creatively shape our future, inside and outside of classroom settings.

Metacognition and Learning Strategies—Working with International Students

Catherine McCabe



Catherine McCabe is an Instructor at the English Language Institute at UCF Global. She joined UCF in August 2015, but has been teaching international students the English language and how to navigate the U.S. educational system since 2003. Her professional interests include curriculum planning and development with a special focus in writing and assessment.

This past semester, two paths converged for me. The first path I was on required me to teach a group of international students how to study and learn from an American-style textbook so that they could successfully take a content-area unit exam. The second path was my own professional development, which led me to join the Metacognition and Active Learning cohort. This was my second look into this topic; I had participated in the 2016 Summer Conference, where I attended a session on Active Learning and listened to the keynote, Sandra Yancy McGuire, speak about how teaching her students to become aware of their learning processes had been so successful for them. Near the end of this semester, the ideas that we had been discussing within the metacognition cohort solidified into a course of action for me and my students.

Can incorporating learning strategies into class be innovative? Most of us have become blasé about learning strategies. The topic seems fairly overdone at this point. We were even warned in our workshop sessions not to tell students that we will be talking about learning strategies for fear that they simply would not show up. However, my international students needed a way to gain access to the structure, ideas and vocabulary in a typical college-level textbook. This was challenging because, in my experience, international students generally do not have active relationships with learning materials. They are very happy for you to tell them what they need to memorize and then they will go home and cram and come back to regurgitate those ideas for you. My immediate goal was to get students to actively engage with the textbook and prepare for a content area test that would look very different from the exams the students typically take in ESL Reading 3. My more far-reaching goal was to have international students experiment with different learning strategies in the hope that they would find methods that they could use in their future university classes.

An independent learning project using strategies. For this unit, the students had copies of a social studies textbook. I gave each student a choice of topics (Mass Media or Crime and Technology) and developed a series of independent study activity pages that required the students to use both reading strategies and learning strategies as they completed activities related to each of the readings in the unit. Some of the active learning strategies that they used were discussing the ideas of the unit with another student, creating study questions about the readings, creating infographics about the content of the readings, creating study tools to prepare for the exam, and teaching the concepts to another group of students. I based many of my ideas on Saundra Yancy McGuire's *Teach students how to learn: Strategies you can incorporate into any course to improve student metacognition, study skills and motivation* (2015), which we had read for the Metacognition and Active Learning cohort. Each student read and independently completed activity worksheets for three different readings. After the first reading and activities were completed, I presented a learning strategies session to the whole class that included a four-step method for identifying key ideas in the text, a variety of study tool suggestions for actively learning (and memorizing) the key concepts, and a study session plan.

Measuring success without numbers. I should not have been surprised, but more than half of my class was absent for the "learning strategies" lesson day. Even international students, it seems, have developed a negative bias for the topic. Fortunately, the schedule was flexible enough to allow me to present the lesson two days in a row so that no one missed out on what I felt was the most important content of this two-week unit. One way for the students to measure their success

was their score on the final unit exam. I am happy to say that all of them passed the final test. However, many of them did not do as well as they thought they would. Even though we had discussed in class that the questions would not be multiple choice and that they would need to explain concepts in short essay/answer format, the reality did not sink in for many of the students until confronted with the actual exam. Prior to this final exam, students were required to complete a Survey and Reflection which I had developed for this unit. This was my measurement tool. I divided the survey into three parts (word knowledge, identifying key concepts, remembering ideas) and asked the students to check the strategies that they had used for this unit. In addition, I asked them to explain in two to three sentences what study method or learning tool they had used. While I had one student who honestly admitted that he hadn't studied, many of them indicated that they had used some of the strategies I had borrowed from Saundra Yancy McGuire:

"I used the method of reading and summarizing one paragraph at a time."—Sara

"The first one is to teach someone else."—Omar

"The second one is following a study plan."—Haitham

"Create questions—I think this method is the best."—Mar-
ialicia

In retrospect, I learned a lot about the needs of my students by incorporating active learning and learning strategies into the curriculum. While learning strategies might be old news to students coming out of U.S. high schools, much of what I presented to my group of international students included new ideas for them. I discovered that active learning activities were essential for the success of this independent learning unit. I had been worried that an independent project would not provide enough guidance to achieve the student learning outcomes, but, by requiring the students to actively engage with each other and with the content, the students were able to complete the unit successfully. One last student comment summed up our experience with this unit and learning strategies: *"In this unit, we can integrate all the tools that we learned."*

Faculty Writing Club: Accountability, Collaboration, and Productivity

Claire Knox



Claire Connolly Knox is Associate Professor and the Emergency Management and Homeland Security Program Director in UCF's School of Public Administration. She teaches Disaster Response and Recovery, Environmental Planning, Environmental Policy and Management, and Managing Emergencies and Crises courses.

The learning curve was steep when I started as a new Assistant Professor at UCF six years ago. While I had two years of adjunct teaching experience, my dissertation was fresh off the presses and my research agenda was hanging out in the last chapter. Luckily I stumbled up on the newly created FCTL Faculty Writing Club, which provided a positive writing community with faculty from various disciplines and rankings. I have found many benefits to the Faculty Writing Club, which has held me accountable to my writing goals, created collaboration opportunities, and greatly increased my productivity. As I finish my last semester as an Assistant Professor, I wanted to reflect on how the Faculty Writing Club has helped me achieve my goal of becoming an Associate Professor and break a school record.

As Kerry Ann Rockquomore writes in *Inside Higher Ed*, not all writing groups are created equal. She highlights five types of writing groups: traditional writing groups, writing accountability groups, write-on-site group, online writing groups, and coaches or nags. While working on my dissertation nearly 500 miles away from my home university, I was part of an online writing group (<www.PHinishD.org>); so I was not new to the idea of a writing group to hold me accountable and increase my productivity. FCTL's Writing Club is a combination of a writing accountability and write-on-site group in which we state our goals in the first few minutes and then spend the rest of the two hours writing. Unlike traditional writing groups, we do not read or edit each other's work and attendance is optional. (Read Rockquomore's article here: <<https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2010/06/14/shut-and-write>>).

First, the Writing Club provides a level of accountability to others that I have not been able to find working alone. It is often easier to keep than to myself. Stating our goals out loud for the week or day is an important step in holding ourselves accountable to those goals. Some of us have started writing our goals on social media networks to add another level of social accountability, as well as a place for those needing to

set daily goals. We also share our milestones for each writing project in our writing group and on social media.

Second, writing with colleagues from other disciplines has led to a National Science Foundation grant collaboration and invaluable peer-editing feedback. It is sometimes hard to realize the value of these connections until they are put to use. Recently, I was working on two revise and resubmit manuscripts with tight deadlines. Reviewers for both manuscripts requested I include literature from a related, but different discipline. I expressed this challenge to my writing group members and they quickly referenced a few main scholars in their disciplines who are researching similar topics.

Third, I was not protecting my dedicated writing time on my own. I started each week scheduling at least 15 minutes a day to write; however, I consistently found myself at the end of a busy week filled with prepping new classes, attending meetings, teaching, and advising students. It felt like each week was flowing into the next, and soon it was a month later and I had not written or worked on a drafted manuscript. The Faculty Writing Club helped me rethink and protect my writing schedule. Knowing that every Thursday and Friday from 10 a.m. to noon is a "meeting" in my Outlook calendar prevents me from scheduling other meetings/events during that time. If I miss a writing session, I know I will receive at least one friendly email or social media message from a colleague checking in with me. As previously mentioned, it was this level of accountability I needed to secure my success for tenure.

Lastly, we often forget to celebrate the little writing achievements that often slip by us, yet motivate us to keep moving forward. While it is important to celebrate the acceptance notifications, it is vitally important to recognize the completion of a first draft, the restructuring of a section that ties your argument together, the submission of a manuscript, the receipt of a revise and resubmit, and the resubmission of the manuscript. The acceptance is one of the last steps in a journey for each manuscript.

Besides enjoying the free coffee and hot tea, I have achieved my goals and broken a School of Public Administration record by receiving all three RIA, TIP, and SOTL awards in one year. More importantly, I have made lasting friendships across this university. These faculty have supported me through manuscript rejections, celebrated the little victories and acceptances with me, and helped me quickly get back to writing after having my daughter.

Recommended Resources:

1. *Writing Your Journal Article in 12 Weeks* by Wendy Laura Belcher, Ph.D.

2. *How to Write A Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing* by Paul Silvia, Ph.D.
3. *Professors as Writers: A Self-Help Guide to Productive Writing* by Robert Boice, Ph.D.

Faculty Mentorship in Undergraduate Research

Kevin Jardaneh



Kevin Jardaneh is Assistant Director of the Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR). He serves as OUR's faculty-facing support and outreach liaison for faculty currently mentoring undergraduate researchers or those interested in doing so across disciplines. Kevin also teaches for UCF's Interdisciplinary Studies program.

Little did I know, almost 20 years ago when I was working to complete my undergraduate Honors in the Major thesis with Dr. Houman Sadri of UCF's Political Science department, that today I would be here at UCF supporting faculty and students engaging in undergraduate research. Upon joining the OUR team, one of the first students I spoke with said his faculty mentor was Dr. Houman Sadri—still mentoring, 20 years later. The impact that a single faculty mentor can have on the lives of aspiring undergraduate researchers over the course of their career cannot be overstated.

In my short time in this role, I have seen faculty judge at our annual poster showcase, commit their own time to serving as a faculty reviewer, and open their doors, at times on very short notice, to event-host a visit with prospective researchers. These faculty have earned reputations for their commitment to undergraduate research. We call them our 'superstar' faculty.

Whether one is a junior faculty member seeking to earn tenure, or a seasoned veteran with years of research and mentoring experience under their belt, here at UCF it is clear the soil is already prepared for sowing the seeds of tomorrow's greatest discoveries and breakthroughs through mentoring and supporting undergraduate researchers. Last year, we had 650 students come in to our office to meet with peer mentors seeking to learn how they could get started in undergraduate research, representing a 28% increase. Over this same time, almost 2000 unique undergraduate students logged in to our Research Positions Database hoping to connect with faculty looking for undergraduate researchers. With the consistent increase in applications across our various learning, funding,

and dissemination opportunities, we know the mentoring need for undergraduate researchers is only going to grow.

While undergraduate research has traditionally been strong in most STEM majors as well as the social sciences, it is our goal to grow involvement in undergraduate research in other areas such as the humanities and Interdisciplinary Studies. With exciting new degrees and tracks such as the Bachelor of Science in Environmental Studies and the Transnational Gender, Race and Sexuality Studies track offered through UCF's Office of Interdisciplinary Studies, we know there is fertile ground for enriching the diversity and integrative quality of research taking place here at UCF.

In the next year, I will be implementing an aggressive plan to reach more faculty and bring them into the fold of undergraduate research. This outreach will include facilitating new faculty-facing workshops covering opportunities and best practices for undergraduate research faculty mentors, as well as embedding research into the curriculum, which more and more faculty are already doing. In addition to these scheduled workshops, departmental leadership and individual faculty will be invited to request similar faculty-facing presentations in-house, which all highlight undergraduate research opportunities and involvement. In the meantime, if you have questions or would like to be kept in the loop about all the exciting campus-wide events and opportunities associated with undergraduate research that are taking place throughout the academic year, please contact me directly to be added to our mailing list and potentially even become a member of UCF's Undergraduate Research Council (URC).

Online Grade Submission—Protect Your Records... and Your Identity

Brian Boyd



process.

Brian Boyd is the University Registrar and Executive Director for the Registrar's Office at the University of Central Florida. Brian came to UCF and joined the Registrar's Office in 2006. He was part of the team that converted the paper, manual grading process to the current online grade submission

At the conclusion of every semester, we have the pleasure of working with departments, colleges, and instructors during the grades collection and submission process. In the course of only a few days, over 230,000 individual grades are

entered by UCF's dedicated instructors for a single semester. It is an incredible task when you think about the number of records that are processed in such a short time. The success of the process is a result of the dedicated instructors who are busy calculating and entering final grades and the support staff in each of the departments and colleges that aid in the communication and troubleshooting.

In 2008, when the university moved from paper grade rosters to online grading, we were excited not only to offer a more efficient method of reporting grades by instructors, but also to have a more secure way of maintaining grade rosters. Concerns about lost grade rosters or having grade rosters get into the wrong hands were eliminated. Gone were the days when an individual grade roster would literally go through dozens of hands that exist in multiple buildings across the campus. System validation helped to ensure that the correct grading basis was used and that incomplete grades were supported with proper paperwork. While online grade submission has certainly introduced a more secure method of reporting grades, it is not entirely risk-free.

Despite the security we all feel now that grade rosters only exist in an electronic form, faculty and staff who handle grade rosters or other sensitive data should remain on high alert in protecting the integrity of the records as well as their own identities. There have been cases in the recent past where malware attacks have compromised user accounts that led to unauthorized and illegal use of those accounts. When these "hackers" gain access to a user's account, it isn't just a student and FERPA issue. Attackers may have gained access to see and change grades, but they are also given access to the user's personal information. Here are some lessons learned and best practices to follow when handling grade rosters that will help to ensure the security of the process as well as the security of the user's identity:

1. **Make note of confirmation emails you receive after approving your grade roster(s).** After setting the grade roster status to "approved", an email will be sent to the instructor's UCF email account from rogrades@mail.ucf.edu confirming that the Registrar's Office has received that approval. Please read and keep these emails. This should serve a warning sign if the roster had previously been approved or if it is received at a time that the instructor was not approving grades.
2. **Change your password right before you begin entering your first grades for the term.** By changing your password before entering grades, if your credentials have been compromised, you will prevent perpetrators from accessing your grading information.

3. **Change your password frequently and NEVER recycle the same password.**

4. **Do not maintain unencrypted sensitive data on flash drives, mobile devices, or computer desktops.** Using UCF network drives will not only help to ensure that you can access your documents from multiple devices, but it will also protect them in the event that your device is lost or stolen.

5. **Maintain compliance with the UCF Policies on Information Technology.** <https://it.ucf.edu/policies-and-standards/it-policies-and-governance/>. Adherence to these policies will help to ensure that you are maintaining the best information security practices.

Additional resources:

<http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/TeachingAndLearningResources/technology/grades/>

<https://it.ucf.edu/policies-and-standards/it-policies-and-governance/>

Supporting and Strengthening Our Faculty: New Programs and Updates

Jana Jasinski



Dr. Jana Jasinski is Interim Vice Provost for Faculty Excellence. A Pegasus Professor of Sociology, Jasinski focuses on further developing retention and recognition efforts to better serve our faculty. Always an advocate for faculty, staff and student success, Jasinski has served in multiple leadership roles in the College of Sciences, including the first program director of UCF's Sociology doctorate program, where she helped create new curricula and departmental culture.

UCF faculty deserve the very best—in recognition, development and professional support. That's why Faculty Excellence is working with colleges and departments across the university to strengthen and support our collective faculty in advancing UCF's mission of discovery, learning and engagement. Our office promotes the growth of academic leaders through professional development opportunities, recognition initiatives and a commitment to inclusivity and partnership. We believe that harnessing the power of scale to have the greatest impact means ensuring our faculty have the tools, resources and support they need to pursue excellence in research, teaching and service.

Because of UCF's ambitious Collective Impact strategic goals to increase our tenured and tenure-track faculty to 1,200 by 2021, we pride ourselves in serving our growing faculty. This year, Faculty Excellence is offering professional development programs for faculty at every rank and stage in their career, along with new mentoring communities and streamlined electronic systems to measure faculty international and national recognition and assist faculty in applying for promotion and tenure or incentive awards.

New Faculty Development Programs

Programs are tailored to faculty in their early and mid-career and those seeking leadership opportunities. Included this year is a reimagined **Assistant Professor Excellence Program** for faculty in their first three years in academia that pairs junior and senior faculty members and provides college-based development series focused on issues relevant to their discipline and role.

Also new this year are three new mentoring communities focused on developing support networks and engaging faculty in career planning. The **Center for Success of Women Faculty Mentoring Community** helps foster a proactive and supportive network for women across disciplines and academic ranks, with applications due on Aug. 25. The **Non-Tenure Earning Communities** provide professional development for faculty members who have been in a non-tenure earning position at UCF for at least three years, with applications due on Sept. 1. Finally, the **Associate Professor Mentoring Communities** are small, peer-directed groups of tenured and associate professors designed to engage participants in career planning and advancement, with applications due on Sept. 8. More information about the programs and applications are available on our website at <<http://facultyexcellence.ucf.edu>>.

A new **Faculty Excellence Leadership Series** introduces faculty to relevant topics for developing or enhancing their leadership skills and gaining peer and leadership mentoring relationships across the university. Participants in this year's series will be encouraged to continue developing their leadership skills in the **Academic Leadership Academy**, offered again in 2018-19.

New Recognition Deadlines and Guidelines

The **Scroll and Quill Society** recognizes outstanding achievement in research and creative activities. The 2017-18 application period is open until Sept. 22 for all faculty members who have maintained continuous full-time faculty appointment at UCF since August 2007.

New this academic year, applications for **Teaching Incentive Program (TIP)** awards will be due in December, not March. The new deadline allows faculty committees in the large col-

leges to thoroughly review each of the applications, instead of rushing to complete within a few weeks' time. This year—thanks to the tireless efforts of Institutional Knowledge Management—TIP eligibility will be finalized and the Faculty Excellence online application system will open by Nov. 15, with a submission deadline on Dec. 21. The application process also has been streamlined this year, shortening the time it will take faculty to apply.

The Faculty Excellence online awards system will open for **Research Incentive Award (RIA)** and **Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)** award applications on Jan. 2. RIA applications will be due on Feb. 8, and SoTL applications will be due on March 8. Assistance with application development is available through Faculty Excellence, the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning and the Faculty Multimedia Center. **Above deadline dates are subject to change.**

To help us do a better job of measuring faculty national and international recognition, UCF has purchased **Academic Analytics**. This program is just one of a variety of methods planned to improve the recording of accomplishments. Individual data will be kept confidential, and only aggregate data will be shared. This means that chairs, deans and others in academic leadership will be able to view department- or unit-level data, and will not use Academic Analytics to evaluate individual faculty. Questions about the new system can be directed to academicanalytics@ucf.edu.

New Faculty Success Initiatives

Joining our team this year is Ana Leon, who as Interim Director for **Faculty Success Initiatives** is responsible for coordinating faculty development programming and initiatives for faculty, chairs and directors, and assistant and associate deans. A tenured professor in the School of Social Work, Leon also will work on UCF's efforts to attract and retain underrepresented faculty. Included in UCF's Collective Impact Strategic Plan is a goal to achieve 25 percent in employment of underrepresented groups among full-time faculty who are retained five or more years.

Finally, we know that only together will we build a culture of inclusivity, support and pride in our faculty—for the work that you do every day, in and out of the classroom and research lab. Know that Faculty Excellence is here for you, and wants to hear from you. We wish you the very best this academic year, and look forward to celebrating and supporting you every step of the way.

You can reach us in Millican Hall 351, online at <<http://facultyexcellence.ucf.edu>>, or by calling 407-823-1113.



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Campus Quick References

Who is my first contact for teaching and learning questions? Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning http://www.fctl.ucf.edu 407-823-3544	Where do I go for help with multimedia resources for my teaching? Office of Instructional Resources http://oir.ucf.edu 407-823-2571	How do I buy tickets for UCF athletic events? Athletic Ticket Office http://www.ucfnights.com 407-823-1000
How can I find my way around the UCF campus? Campus Map http://map.ucf.edu	Where do I go to develop online materials for a course, or to learn how to use Webcourses? Center for Distributed Learning http://cdl.ucf.edu Teaching Online http://cdl.ucf.edu/teach 407-823-4910	Where can I send my students when they need help with their writing for my course? University Writing Center http://uwc.cah.ucf.edu 407-823-2197
How do I know when the semester starts? Ends? When do I give my final exams? Academic Calendar: http://calendar.ucf.edu Final Exam Calendar: http://exams.sdes.ucf.edu	How do I place books on reserve for my class? Library http://library.ucf.edu/about/policies/materials/course-reserves-placing-and-removing-policy/	Where can my students go for tutoring or supplemental instruction? Student Academic Resource Center http://sarc.sdes.ucf.edu 407-823-5130
Where do I get my UCF ID card? UCF Card Office http://ucfcard.ucf.edu 407-823-2100	Whom can I call for help with Internet or email? Service Desk http://it.ucf.edu/ 407-823-5117	Where can students go to find a job after graduation? Career Services http://career.ucf.edu 407-823-2361
Where do I get a parking decal? Parking Services http://parking.ucf.edu 407-823-5812	How can I access my Outlook email from any computer with an Internet connection? Log in at http://outlook.com/ucf.edu with your NID and password.	With whom do I work to help accommodate students with disabilities? Student Accessibility Services http://sas.sdes.ucf.edu 407-823-2371
What do I do regarding seriously disruptive students or emergencies? Police Department http://police.ucf.edu 407-823-5555	How do I make sure the bookstore carries my textbook? UCF Bookstore http://ucf.bncollege.com 407-823-2665	Where can I refer a student who is having emotional difficulties for counseling? Counseling & Psychological Services http://caps.sdes.ucf.edu 407-823-2811
What is the Faculty Union? United Faculty of Florida-UCF Chapter http://www.uflucf.org	Does UCF have a gym for faculty to use? Wellness Research Center http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~wrcenter 407-823-3509	Where can I refer a student who needs medical care? Student Health Services http://shs.sdes.ucf.edu 407-823-2701

Submissions

The *Faculty Focus* is a publication for all instructors at the University of Central Florida. This includes full-time and part-time faculty and teaching assistants at all UCF campuses. Its purpose is to provide an exchange of ideas on teaching and learning for the university's community of teachers and scholars. It is envisioned that this publication will inspire more dialogue among faculty whether in hallway discussions, departmental meetings, or in written articles. This represents an opportunity for faculty members to reach their peers throughout the growing UCF community. The *Faculty Focus* invites you to contribute your ideas on teaching and learning in a short essay. See the guidelines for submission online at <<http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/Publications/FacultyFocus/submission.php>>. Please send your submissions to fctl@ucf.edu.

The ideas and opinions expressed in the articles featured in the *Faculty Focus* belong to the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Faculty Center or of UCF.



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Division of Teaching and Learning



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