



Contents

- The Next Rhodes Scholar
- The UCF EXCEL in STEM Program
- Multicultural Academic and Support Services
- Introducing the Veterans Academic Resource Center
- UCF Libraries: Key Resources for Students
- Impacting Student Success Through Writing
- A Co-Teaching Model for Teacher Preparation
- Can We Maintain Excellence in Education with Increasing Enrollments and Dwindling Resources?

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The Next Rhodes Scholar Alvin Wang and Nicole Gelfert



Alvin Wang is Dean of the Burnett Honors College and Professor of Psychology at UCF. He received his Ph.D. in Psychology from SUNY at Stony Brook and his B.A. from SUNY at Brockport. He is a fellow of the American Psychological Association (Division 2) and in 2010 served as President for Psi Chi (the International Honor Society in Psychology).



Nicole Gelfert is Director of the Office of Prestigious Awards and has served in this role for almost four years. Nicole works with both students and faculty to help identify national and international scholarship and fellowship opportunities for UCF's best and brightest.

The next Rhodes Scholar may be sitting in your class. If so, how would you know? What would you do?

Here at UCF, the Office of Prestigious Awards (OPA) provides UCF students and faculty with information and advising for major national and international fellowships and scholarships. OPA serves as UCF's official campus representative for awards requiring university endorsement or nomination, including (but not limited to) the Rhodes, Marshall, Fulbright, Truman, and Goldwater scholarships. Housed in the Burnett Honors College, OPA can help you identify and cultivate students so they are competitive for national and international recognition. OPA is a campus-wide resource that serves all members of the UCF community and supports any student qualified to compete for a prestigious award.

It is important to note that OPA works closely with students and their faculty mentors throughout all stages of their application process. Because of the competitive nature of these awards, preparation is both intensive and extensive. This is why we recommend that cultivation of student candidates start as early as possible—even during a student's first year. In 2002, Tyler Fisher was recognized as UCF's first Rhodes Scholar. In his first year, Tyler was encouraged by a faculty member to contact OPA and pursue the Rhodes Scholarship. For the

next three years, his faculty mentors and OPA worked with Tyler to develop those qualities that would make him an exemplary candidate. But we don't want to give you the impression that Tyler was somehow a "project" that required an immense amount of effort. On the contrary, he was a joy to work with. Cultivation was more a matter of pointing him in the right direction because his love of learning and well-roundedness would assure exceptional results. In this regard, we think of cultivation as the "polish" for an already brilliant gem. Clearly, had his faculty mentors not taken the time to learn of his interest in the Rhodes Scholarship, Tyler and UCF would have missed an invaluable opportunity.

Faculty members are integral in the identification and cultivation of their student scholars. We have found the following to be key components in this process:

1. Students identified as scholarship candidates demonstrate exceptional talent—not just in the classroom, but in other areas that may not be academic. Look for students who demonstrate a passion in their academic life as well as other interests such as traveling, art or music performance. You may be surprised by the passion displayed by your student in areas beyond academics. For instance, even though Tyler majored in Modern Languages, he produced two CD recordings of his hammered

dulcimer playing.

2. Identifying scholarship recipients should occur as early as possible. Even with exceptional students, their lack of “polish” will place them at a disadvantage compared to candidates who had the opportunity of working with faculty mentors and OPA for an extended period of time.

3. Scholarship candidates display a love of learning. Look for students who are eager to learn more than what can be found in a book or class discussion. Students who have that “spark” and drive to learn are prime candidates for prestigious awards.

4. Become a faculty mentor. Certainly, effective mentorship involves being a guide, role model, and resource for your students. We also think that successful mentors help their students connect with the larger issues within their disciplines and with other members of the academic community. Undergraduate students who participate in research teams and internships, attend conferences, and enroll in seminars are being enculturated into the next generation of scholars and academic leaders.

5. OPA exists to serve you and your students. If you believe that you have identified a student qualified for a prestigious award, please have her or him visit Office of Prestigious Awards in the Burnett Honors College. You do not need to have any particular award in mind—only the belief that the student you recommend is exceptional—in ways that we described above. We also encourage you to contact the Director of OPA, Nicole Gelfert, by telephone (407.823.4019) or by email (Nicole.Gelfert@ucf.edu) if you have any questions about particular awards or the selections process. More information can be found at OPA’s website <<http://www.opa.honors.ucf.edu/>>. Look around: is there a future Rhodes Scholar sitting in your class?

The UCF EXCEL in STEM Program: The Opportunity to Connect Faculty and Students in STEM Disciplines



Chris Parkinson, College of Sciences, Melissa Dagley, College of Engineering and Computer Science, Cynthia Young, College of Sciences, Michael Georgiopoulos, College of Engineering and Computer Science

Context

The “Rising above the Gathering Storm” report delivered to the National Academy of Sciences and written by the Committee on Prospering in the Global Economy of the 21st Century (2007) predicts a national crisis surrounding the shortage of American STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) professionals. The U.S. continues to significantly lag behind China and India in the number of STEM college graduates each year. The federal government has responded with “Race to the Top” initiatives to improve both the quantity and quality of science and math teachers in our K-12 system and the National Science Foundation (NSF) funds programs like STEP (STEM Talent Expansion Program), which focuses on innovative programs that increase the number of Americans earning B.S. degrees in STEM.

Nationally, approximately 45% of the incoming freshmen declaring STEM majors are successful in earning a STEM degree. At last count (2010-2011) of the 47,622 UCF undergraduates only 10,350 were declared STEM majors and of the 10,810 Bachelor degrees awarded at UCF only 1464 of them were in STEM. In other words, 22% of UCF undergraduates are majoring in STEM but only 13.5% of those students are earning STEM degrees. There are two ways to address the national STEM pipeline: *recruit more students into STEM* and *increase the retention rates* (success) of students who declare STEM majors.

Innovation/Implementation

The UCF EXCEL program was based on the following assumption: *success in mathematics is the backbone to success in science and engineering*. In 2005 UCF looked at a

six-year snapshot of FTICs entering with STEM majors and of those about half were successful in earning STEM degrees. The average math SAT score for the group that was successful was significantly higher than the group that was not. Today the EXCEL program looks at the average math SAT score of all incoming FTIC students with declared STEM majors and breaks those scores into four quartiles. The top quartile is left alone (the assumption is they will make it) and the bottom quartile is left alone (they will need more remediation than the pace of the EXCEL program allows). The targeted groups are the 2nd and 3rd quartiles, where EXCEL can have the most impact. Every year the EXCEL program selects roughly 200 students out of over 700 applicants, and these students are put into one of two tracks based on their math placement scores (one track starts with an accelerated semester of Precalculus and the second group starts with Calculus I). These students take their math courses together as a cohort, where four math graduate students are assigned as their mentors and work as tutors in the EXCEL lab. Additionally, EXCEL has a 120-student block of rooms in Academic Village (Nike Bldg). Students are exposed to applications of calculus to science and engineering through the EXCEL Applications of Calculus I and II courses, which are team taught by science and engineering UCF faculty. EXCEL students have the option to apply for an EXCEL-funded sophomore undergraduate research experience with UCF STEM faculty. More than 200 STEM undergraduates annually combined with 10 STEM graduate students and over 60 STEM faculty all constitute the EXCEL Learning Community.

Assessment

The first EXCEL class started in 2006. To date, the EXCEL students experience a 65% success rate whereas UCF non-EXCEL students experience a 45% success rate (graduate with a B.S. degree in STEM). The key program attributes that contribute to these higher retention rates are cohorts in Calculus, the EXCEL tutoring lab (tutoring in math, biology, chemistry, and physics), Housing Block, graduate student mentors, the Applications of Calculus courses, and *early* Undergraduate Research Experiences (UREs). The particular groups who experience even greater gains out of the EXCEL program are Hispanics and African-Americans. Women in EXCEL were not experiencing gains as significant as their male counterparts, so in 2010 the GEMS program (Girls EXCELing in Math and Science) was created. Here, first-year female EXCEL STEM majors are each paired with an upper division EXCEL woman to aid in the transition to college life and the rigorous STEM disciplines. After one year of GEMS women are significantly closing that achievement gap. The early UREs are doing two things: keeping students in STEM (experience even greater than 65% success) as well as enhancing their current STEM experience (making even better STEM professionals).

Reflections/Conclusions

The EXCEL program has developed a national flagship model for learning communities and retention strategies in STEM. At the time of this article, the Workforce Central Florida agency has funded a large grant to support local (Central-Florida-county home residences) UCF STEM students in Undergraduate Research Experiences. The EXCEL team invites any STEM faculty not currently involved with EXCEL to contact us if you are interested in giving talks in Applications of Calculus or at EXCEL networking events, exploring STEM careers, or supervising an EXCEL undergraduate research experience.

Multicultural Academic and Support Services

Wayne Jackson



Wayne Jackson is Director of the Multicultural Academic and Support Services Program where he provides academic support for more than 25,000 multicultural and first generation students on the UCF campus. Mr. Jackson recently was awarded the 2010 NACADA Outstanding Institutional Advising Program Certificate of Merit for his leadership in directing the department's summer bridge program called SOAR (Seizing Opportunities for Achievement and Retention).

MASS has been there as a helping hand revealing aspects of the university that may have never been discovered otherwise. This program has acted like a guiding friend offering opportunities for leadership and success. Sophia A. (First Generation Program Scholar)

Sometimes we get the question, “What does your office do exactly?” The answer is very simple: we do everything in our power to ensure that first-generation college students and multicultural students are successful at UCF and beyond. Multicultural Academic and Support Services (MASS) is an office dedicated to the development and success of students who will be the first in their families to receive a bachelor's degree, as well as students from multicultural backgrounds. One of our main goals is to connect students not only with services that the university offers, but also with faculty, staff, and individuals in their fields of interest. This is crucially important to our students who many times do not have tools or networks necessary to navigate the university system or to move forward successfully towards graduate school and the workforce. The connections they make with staff, faculty, and the community help guide them through that process.

Additionally, we provide students a home base where they can find supportive staff that is always available to meet with them and point them in the right direction. We often have conversations with students about their career interests and the importance of having a strong resume, internship experiences, networks, research experience, and faculty mentors—we serve as a guide and we point them to our many campus resources. We coordinate workshops, speakers, and programs all specifically designed to meet the needs of our students. For example, realizing that many of our first-generation college students do not know individuals in the professional fields they are interested in, we developed the First Generation Speaker Series. Last semester students had the opportunity to meet and network with various local professionals in the STEM fields, for instance, Dr. Jan Garavaglia (“Dr. G”), the Orange and Osceola Counties Medical Examiner. Likewise, when we noticed that many of our promising students were too intimidated to connect with faculty, we developed the MASS Lunch and Learn program which makes the process a little bit easier.

Faculty can be involved with our office in various ways:

1. **Send students our way.** If you have students in your classes who would benefit from our office, please send them our way! Though we focus on first-generation and multicultural students, we love to talk to all students and connect them to the right people.

2. **Become a volunteer with our MASS Lunch and Learn program.** Basically, students can invite a faculty member of their choice out to Lunch and Learn, and MASS will cover the cost of the meal for both the student and faculty. Some students have not yet met faculty in their major or in their area of interest, so we try to connect them to our list of volunteer faculty. If you are interested in participating, please e-mail us at mass@ucf.edu.

3. **Come and speak to our students about your experience.** We are constantly seeking faculty to share their stories, insight, and advice with our students at our first generation, roundtable sessions or our Brother-to-Brother sessions. If you are interested in talking to our students please let us know. We’d love to include you in one of our programs.

4. **Encourage your students to attend our programs.** We are always looking to collaborate with departments and faculty and spread the word about programs that might be beneficial to students. We will expose students to research opportunities, career experiences, professionals in various fields, and other individuals who want to see them succeed.

5. **We want your feedback and insight.** We value your

suggestions—please let us know if you have any ideas regarding ways that we can better serve our students.

If you are interested in learning more about the programs offered by MASS, we encourage you to visit our website <www.mass.ucf.edu>. If you would like to talk to us about our programs or would like to support our initiatives, please feel free to stop by our office located in Howard Phillips Hall Room 102, e-mail me at wayne.jackson@ucf.edu or mass@ucf.edu, or call us at (407)823-2716.

Introducing the Veterans Academic Resource Center Paul Viau and Brian Boyd



Paul Viau (left) is Associate University Registrar and Director of Veterans Academic Resource Center, and Brian Boyd (right) is University Registrar.

The Veterans Academic Resource Center (VARC) is designed to meet the needs of and provide programming for the student veteran community. Under the direction of the Registrar’s Office, the center is a collaboration among the offices of Career Services, the Counseling Center, Student Disabilities Services, and Transfer and Transition Services within the Division of Student Development and Enrollment Services (SDES) and provides a new home for Veteran Services. The VARC has been designated as a Center for Excellence for Veteran Student Success and its programs are partially funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE).

Located at UCF Knights Plaza/Arena, across from Barnes & Noble, the VARC offices are open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. with extended hours until 8:30 p.m. so students may use the study rooms available in the center. The VARC is centrally located, allowing student veterans access to many university offices and resources without having to travel across campus. In addition, the facility provides access to virtual resources which allows staff to communicate through the latest technology with student veterans no matter where they are.

This is a unique and outstanding resource for the academic needs of our student veterans. UCF is now among a small

but growing number of institutions that are reaching out to this deserving student population. The Veterans Academic Resource Center represents UCF's continuing effort to recognize and support student veterans as they make the transition from the military to student life. The goals of the VARC are:

- To help student veterans and their dependents understand and ensure their access to all of the available campus resources.
- To help student veterans and their dependents succeed by providing study space and tutoring services.
- To help the faculty, staff, and UCF community understand the unique needs of student veterans.
- Provide student veterans with the tools needed to stay on track and complete their degrees.

Collaborating Offices located within the Veterans Academic Resource Center:

Career Services: A career counselor from Career Services is available at the VARC and is dedicated to working with student veterans to assist them in declaring a major, preparing for a career after college, and developing the resume to incorporate the rich military experience, as well as the university degree.

Counseling Center: The Counseling Center works with student veterans to reduce or remove personal limitations that are caused by mental health or emotional concerns. In addition to individual appointments, the Counseling Center provides wellness programming in the VARC and is available for faculty outreach and awareness programs.

Student Academic Resource Center (SARC): SARC provides peer tutoring services at the VARC for student veterans and their dependents. Tutoring services are provided in the spacious and private study rooms located in the VARC. In addition, SARC offers VARC-affiliated services within the College of Engineering and Computer Science and within the SARC location.

Student Disability Services (SDS): Student Disability Services is available within the VARC to assist in ensuring equal accessibility to educational opportunities offered at all UCF campuses. The SDS counselor in the VARC is available to assist students with documentation and accommodations. In addition, educational programs are offered to support students with learning strategies and to connect them with the campus. SDS also provides peer mentoring services.

Transfer and Transition Services (TTS): Many student veterans transfer to UCF from Florida's state colleges and community colleges. Transfer and Transition Services has an

advisor on site in the VARC to help student veterans make a seamless transition into the UCF experience. TTS provides pre-admission and transition advising as well as connections to the campus community.

Veterans Services: Veterans Services serves as a campus resource to student veterans with VA Educational Benefits. Through their services, students can learn more about their eligibility for benefits, including how to apply for benefits, and receive assistance with the required paperwork.

For more information about the VARC visit <http://varc.sdes.ucf.edu/>.

UCF Libraries: Key Resources for Students

Renee Montgomery



Renee Cole Montgomery is the Outreach Librarian at the Orlando campus library. She received her M.S. in Library Science from FSU and joined UCF in 2003. Renee also serves as the library liaison for the School of Teaching, Learning & Leadership.

Faculty and students can find a wealth of services and resources to meet their needs at the UCF Libraries, from citation help to assistance finding high quality scholarly sources. Whether students are only using Google for classroom assignments or are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism, librarians are available to steer them in the right direction. This article will cover key services and resources for getting students started with research and important tools for their academic success.

One of the Libraries' most heavily used services is Ask A Librarian. Students and faculty can call, chat, text, instant message, email or drop by the library for help with their research. In 2011, the Ask A Librarian service answered over 4,000 online chats and 4,200 phone calls from students. The library is no longer just a physical building but a virtual presence. Faculty can easily incorporate the library into every academic interaction by including the Ask A Librarian service contact information in all syllabi and all Webcourses content: <http://library.ucf.edu/Ask>.

For students or faculty needing more in-depth help, the library offers research consultations, hour long, one-on-one appointments with a librarian for extensive research assistance. Designed for upper-division students, Honors in the

Majors, graduate students and faculty, research consultations are tailored to the specific needs of the individual: <<http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/ResearchConsultations>>.

Students may also benefit from a library instruction session taught by a librarian. Instruction sessions are customized, interactive sessions with hands-on training when possible, specifically tailored to a class's assigned research. Students learn to find, evaluate, and use electronic and print resources for their research. These face-to-face sessions are integrated into the curriculum at the request of faculty. To schedule a library instruction session, call 407-823-5880 or use this form: <<http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Instruction/LIRequest.asp>>.

For online courses, faculty may request that a librarian be embedded in their Webcourse. The librarian's level of participation is entirely up to the online instructor; librarians can monitor the course for library questions, create a customized research guide, or develop a library assignment. Contact the library for more information about embedding a librarian into your course: <<http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Instruction/LIRequest.asp>>.

Another key service for both faculty and students is Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery. Through Interlibrary Loan (ILL), the UCF Libraries will borrow materials from other libraries. All UCF faculty, staff, and students can request books and articles for free through ILL. Faculty, staff, and graduate students are also eligible for Document Delivery Services, in which books and articles that are owned by UCF Libraries are pulled and scanned: <<http://library.ucf.edu/ILL>>.

Of the many resources the library has available, the information literacy modules are some of the most informative and interactive. Twelve modules teach students how to gather, evaluate and use information. Modules can be integrated into course curriculum and grades can be synchronized with Webcourses. The twelve modules available are:

- Avoiding Plagiarism
- Citing Sources Using MLA Style
- Citing Sources Using APA Style
- Conducting a Literature Review
- Creating a Search Strategy
- Evaluating Web Sites
- Focusing an Information Search
- Managing References with RefWorks
- Maximizing Google Scholar Searches
- Recognizing a Research Study
- Selecting Articles for Academic Assignments
- Understanding the Information Cycle

The Information Literacy web page contains a brief demonstration of the modules and instructions for getting started: <<http://infolit.ucf.edu/faculty>>.

To aid students in navigating all of the print and electronic resources, the librarians have created subject-specific research guides. Each research guide provides a list of books, databases, and internet sites to help students identify the best resources in their disciplines. These guides may also serve as reminders of material covered during a consultation or library instruction session, allowing students to have 24/7 access to electronic resources available through the library. Librarians can also create a customized guide for an academic course. Examples of course subject guides are available: <<http://guides.ucf.edu>>.

After locating resources for assignments, students often need a way to organize citations. The library purchases two citation management programs: RefWorks and Endnote. UCF faculty, staff and students can create a RefWorks account or download EndNote. Both products collect and organize citations from online sources (library catalogs, library databases, Google Scholar, web sites, etc.). Both products also work with Microsoft Word to correctly format in-text citations and create bibliographies according to a chosen output style (APA, MLA, Chicago Style, etc.). Workshops are offered each semester. For more information and a listing of workshops please refer to the following page: <<http://library.ucf.edu/Databases/CitationManagement>>.

Another tool coming soon, OneSearch, will aid students and faculty in locating relevant information from the over 300 databases the library purchases. OneSearch, funded by the student technology fee, will allow students to search most of the library's databases at one time. OneSearch will go live sometime in the spring semester. Be on the lookout or consult your favorite librarian for more information.

We hope your semester is off to a great start and look forward to working with you and your students. For more information about these services and resources, contact the Ask a Librarian service to be directed to the librarian assigned to your program: <<http://library.ucf.edu/CollectionMgmt/CDlibrarians.php>>.

Impacting Student Success Through Writing

Pavel Zemliansky



Pavel Zemliansky is Associate Professor in the Department of Writing and Rhetoric where he teaches composition, rhetoric, and professional writing. He is also the Director of UCF's Writing Across the Curriculum program.

In this piece, I'd like to update the readers of *Faculty Focus* on the activities of the Writing Across the Curriculum program this academic year. I'd also like to share the program's short- and long-term plans and explain ways for UCF faculty to get involved with WAC.

What is WAC@UCF?

The WAC Program at UCF improves student writing and learning by helping faculty members in all disciplines create and sustain discipline-specific approaches to writing instruction. We achieve our goals through workshops, individual and group consultations, and special programs and events. To date, the program has worked with faculty in eight departments from five colleges and two regional campuses to either design new or redesign existing writing assignments. This work has ranged from consultations on the creation or revision of individual writing assignments, to improving the assessment of writing, to designing class exercises in support of larger writing projects.

During the fall semester, WAC Coordinator Lindee Owens and I facilitated six university-wide workshops on topics like managing paper load, maintaining student engagement through peer review, identifying qualities of "good writing" in the disciplines, and others. In addition, we consulted with individual faculty members from such diverse units as the Rosen College of Hospitality Management, the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, the Psychology faculty from the Daytona campus, and others. We also participated in the work of the Common Program Oversight Committee, which is charged with the revision of the GEP requirements. We have also begun to collaborate with the Office of Undergraduate Research and are investigating ways to work with other interdisciplinary entities. Finally, we secured a CAH Research Incentive Grant to develop an assessment instrument for writing in the sciences.

The Development of Writing-Related Learning Outcomes

Our mission is to help create a vertical and logical structure of writing instruction at UCF. Research demonstrates that in order to become better writers, students must have regular

opportunities to write in their disciplines. In addition, students need to practice writing at every level of their academic careers—from first year to senior year.

In order to facilitate the creation of such a system, we engage departments in the creation of specific sets of writing-related learning outcomes and goals. These goal-sets lead to the design of writing-enriched curricula in the disciplines. To stimulate and encourage this work, this spring, we will run the first WAC Fellows Program. Eleven faculty members from the Departments of History and Chemistry, and from the College of Nursing are participating in this semester-long effort. They will work with WAC Coordinator Lindee Owens and me to design writing-related outcomes for their programs and departments and begin creating assignments and activities to support those outcomes. Also this semester, the WAC Program will launch a new interactive website, which will contain information about our work as well as a blog, discussion forum, and a mailing list. We also expect to move into the newly renovated "WAC Space" in Colbourn Hall later this spring. Having the space will enable us to broaden and deepen our activities.

How You Can Get Involved

If you are interested in improving the writing of your students, the WAC Program can offer you the following:

- Customized workshops, seminars and presentations to groups of faculty.
- Individual consultations on assignment and writing-intensive course design, assessment of writing, management of paper load, and other writing-related topics.
- Collaborative pilot projects designed to improve writing instruction in your department, including development of discipline and department-specific assessment tools.
- Occasional presentations to students.

To schedule a consultation, request a customized workshop, or discuss a writing-related project or idea not listed here, please contact WAC Director Pavel Zemliansky at pzemliansky@ucf.edu, or WAC Coordinator Lindee Owens at lindee.owens@ucf.edu. The WAC Program is charged with helping students achieve success. In doing so, we combine your disciplinary expertise with our expertise as writing teachers to create effective ways to teach writing.

The Impact and Visibility of a UCF College of Education Co-Teaching Model for Teacher Preparation

Victoria M. Cardullo



Vicky Cardullo is an instructor for the College of Education on the Daytona Campus. Her research is focused on reading comprehension with digital literacies, adolescent reading comprehension, and teacher preparation. This pilot program is part of a strong community partnership nurtured and fostered by the UCF School and Community Partnership, in which she is serving as current chair elect.

At the Faculty Center's Winter 2011 Conference, impact and visibility were two widely used terms in conversations about programs, students, and even course work. My presentation for this conference described strategies to assess the impact and visibility of a teacher preparation residency program that uses a co-teaching model for internship placement. I developed this program to allow hands-on learning for pre-service teachers (PST's) in the education program at a regional campus. The goal of a teacher preparation internship program is to develop teachers who can effectively prepare students for effective citizenship in a democratic society (Darling-Hammond, 1994). It is critical to prepare our 21st-century pre-service teachers to be collaborative learners and problem solvers. Within the field of teacher preparation, the internship has been the culminating experience for a teacher candidate. All states require some form of clinical experience in the classroom, although length and experience vary dramatically from university to university.

This pilot program has been implemented since August 2011 at a local elementary school in Volusia County and has been used to test a model for a year-long co-taught teacher residency program including an "Early Field Learning" component. An Early Field Learner (EFL) is a student in their junior year who is not in an internship. The purpose of the clinical experience is to link theory and practice in a real world environment. It provides pre-service teacher interns the opportunity to co-teach with a clinically-certified supervising teacher in a public school setting.

A residency program allows pre-service teachers the opportunity to complete academic course work as EFLs with onsite teaching of university classes. Several courses already require a field-learning component in which pre-service teachers find their own site to work, observe, or collect data. This onsite opportunity allows teacher candidates the chance to work with the lowest 10% of the student population who are struggling academically. It also affords them the opportunity

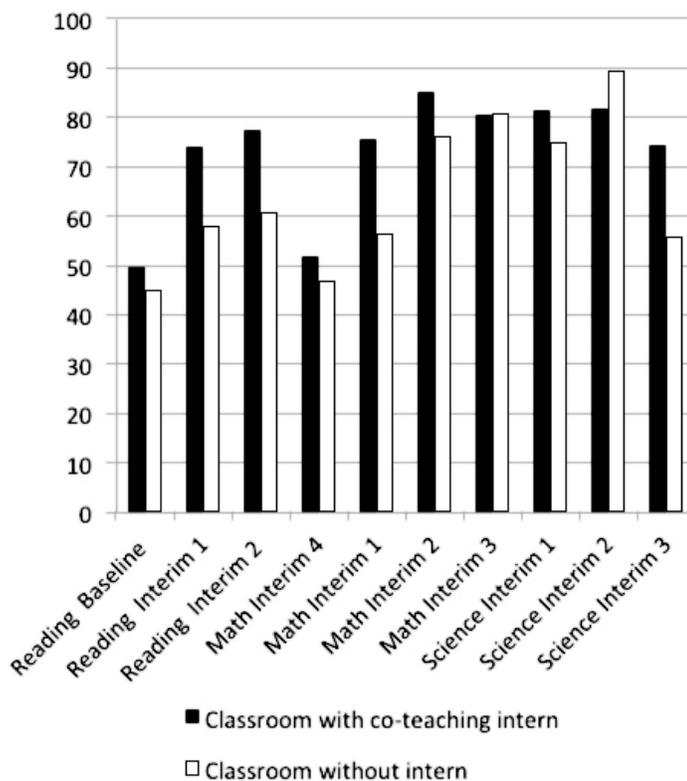
to work with both ESE and ESOL students at this school.

Classes are held on site once a week, for approximately nine weeks. EFLs attend class and immediately have the opportunity to "try out" their new learning in the classroom setting. The remaining five classes are held on the UCF regional campus. These pre-service teachers work with students who are struggling in reading. This collaborative partnership has developed a sense of ownership for our pre-service teachers. Often UCF students continue to visit the classroom on their own after the course or internship placement has ended. This partnership has made UCF faculty and teacher candidates very visible in the school community and classrooms. When asked how "we," the university, have impacted their school, the principal replied, "You are everywhere, morning duty, dismissal, small groups, walkthroughs, behavior monitoring, PLC's (Professional Learning Communities), PST's and parent conferences. There is a greater positive presence of adults; you are a visual element for the parents and a positive influence on the students. A college education is a possibility for the first time for some of these children."

Pre-service teachers who choose this school for their placement are given multiple opportunities to partake in collaborative activities such as vertical articulation, data points, cumulative reviews, professional learning communities, guided reading, and conferences. A fifth grade student stated, "I always notice UCF students on campus. They must be having a lot of fun doing it [interning] because every time I see them they are always smiling and having a good time. They must be having a good time working with us kids!"

The foundation of this co-teaching pilot model is based on the need for pre-service teachers to build many experiences working with diverse student populations. The program focuses on the lowest performing 10% of the school's student population, ESE students, and students in need of intensive remediation. Teachers and the administrative team analyze student data on a regular basis through PLCs and implement intensive interventions to accelerate student achievement. The students identified have not made Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) as mandated by No Child Left Behind (NCLB). These opportunities provide relevant training for pre-service teachers that will prepare them to meet the needs of the future students when in their own classrooms.

Early results of this pilot program have shown substantial gains in one of the first full-year, co-taught internship classrooms. When comparing student performance of a co-taught classroom with a non-co-taught classroom, initial results show substantial differences in test results. Every area tested, with the exception of one, illustrates the impact just one co-taught internship had on a class in this program.



Teacher preparation within the traditional internship model is outdated; candidates observing and gradually assuming classroom responsibilities in isolation is no longer an unquestioned practice (Bacharach, Washut-Heck, & Dahlberg, 2010). The traditional model of teacher preparation programs has not changed significantly since the 1920's (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990). UCF teacher candidates in this pilot program are being highly visible, impacting student achievement. As the principal of this elementary school stated, "I believe the impact will be on higher student achievement, lower discipline referrals along with better student attendance." A co-teaching internship model seems to be a promising model for quality teacher preparation.

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	Classroom with co-teaching intern	Classroom without intern	Difference
Reading Baseline	49.7	45.2	4.5
Reading Interim 1	74.2	58.1	16.1
Reading Interim 2	77.5	60.9	16.6
Math Interim 4	52	47	5
Math Interim 1	75.6	56.5	19.1
Math Interim 2	85.3	76.3	9
Math Interim 3	80.5	81	-0.5
Science Interim 1	81.5	75	6.5
Science Interim 2	81.8	89.6	-7.8
Science Interim 3	74.3	55.9	18.4

Can We Maintain Excellence in Education with Increasing Enrollments and Dwindling Resources?



Linda Walters and Peter Jacques, College of Sciences; Vicki Lavendol, Rosen College of Hospitality Management; Claire Knox, College of Health and Public Affairs; Cynthia Walters and Vicky Cardullo, College of Education; Brett Morrison, Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning; Ann Miller, College of Sciences

In Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha*, Siddhartha is told, "You must do what you've learned and ask for money, clothes, and shoes in return. There is no other way for a poor man to obtain money. What might you be able to do?" Siddhartha responds, "I can think. I can wait. I can fast." He could also write poetry. Indeed, these skills carry Siddhartha through the story. What skills will carry our students through their stories? Surveys of employers across a range of fields repeatedly reveal that communication skills are among their top considerations in hiring decisions. In a survey of public sector human resource directors in 49 states, 80% of respondents stated that writing is taken into consideration when hiring professional employees. In addition to daily business communication (e.g., emails, memos, and letters), human resource directors also ranked knowledge of other forms of communication highly, such as formal reports and oral presentations. Many expressed disappointment that graduates did not leave college with the requisite communication skills: "I wonder how they can get credentials and degrees without being able to write sentences that make sense," mused one respondent (National Commission, 2005, p. 22). So rare are these abilities in the marketplace, in fact, that state governments spend approximately \$221 million annually on remedial writing training courses for their employees. UCF graduates who know how to think, how to write, and how to speak are poised not only for successful entry into the workplace, but also to contribute in larger ways to the health of their communities and of society as a whole.

These oral and written communication competencies are more at risk now than ever as universities across the country respond to severe economic constraints by trimming budgets

and increasing class sizes. Unfortunately, the more class sizes increase, the less time faculty members have to interact with and mentor students individually, and the less capable they feel of grading in-depth written assignments. The frustration with this situation emerged as a central theme in the 2011 FCTL Winter Conference. Our "think tank" group at the conference combed through discussion and presentation notes from the week and distilled the following list of suggestions for ways to retain a focus on communicative competence in an era of scant resources and burgeoning class sizes:

Use or create online modules and other resources for training in grammar and punctuation. The School of Public Administration, for example, has placed multiple writing and editing resources on the school's website and is in the process of developing a writing module for graduate students. Library information fluency modules are available to all faculty for assignment to their students and cover a wide range of topics, from APA formatting to structuring a literature search.

Advise students to take advantage of training resources available through the Office of Undergraduate Research. Students can develop writing, research, and analytic skills by taking advantage of opportunities available through the Office of Undergraduate Research. Applicants can receive stipends for assisting faculty on research projects, grants to cover research costs, funding to present their research at regional or national conferences, and publication opportunities in the *UCF Undergraduate Research Journal*.

Encourage students to enroll in existing general education options. For example, thanks to a grant from the Office of the Provost, the Nicholson School of Communication has reinstated multiple sections of its public speaking classes for non-majors, experimenting with a mixed-mode format in which students receive lecture material online while attending lab sections with graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) each week for speaking practice. Cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes of the online lecture delivery have been found to be as good or better than with face-to-face large lectures. Students can improve their public speaking in the non-threatening environment of the lab sections with the convenience of taking in lecture content at their convenience.

Create discipline-specific writing courses. In several departments and schools feedback from industry and/or accrediting agencies has prompted changes in curricula. The School of Public Administration, for instance, has responded to employer feedback about inadequate student writing skills by instituting a required undergraduate writing course, PAD 3733 (Professional Administrative Writing in the Public Sector). The course reviews grammar and APA style rules and trains students in seven genres of government writing.

Consult with experts in the new UCF Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program. The WAC program is an interdisciplinary program housed in the Department of Writing and Rhetoric that works to strengthen existing writing efforts and requirements. Director Pavel Zemliansky and Coordinator Lindee Owens offer faculty workshops, one-on-one consultations with faculty, and assistance in developing writing-related modules for large, mixed-mode, or web courses.

Consider using several simple techniques to lighten your grading load. Faculty members across the university are employing a range of tools to lighten the grading load that typically results from written assignments. We offer a brief sampling of ideas below:

- Several cloud-based tools are available to facilitate peer critiquing. Dr. Scot French of the History Department recommends NowComment because it allows line-by-line commenting. Important note: peer critiquing will not work unless you provide explicit guidelines for students on how to do it. See WAC personnel for assistance in training students to provide useful feedback.
- Dr. Peter Jacques of the Political Science Department builds student writing capabilities through small “no-regrets” papers that help students develop course concepts, critical thinking skills, and writing ability. By making the stakes small for journal entries and creating a rubric in the grading form tool on Webcourses, he is able to use trained GTAs to assist with grading.
- Dr. Claire Knox of the School of Public Administration provides students with specific editing guidelines and requires them to go through a checklist before turning in any paper. By giving students responsibility for basic editing in this way, she spends less time pointing out easily correctable format and wording errors. She is happy to share her two-page APA-oriented version with interested parties.

Send students to the University Writing Center. Not only is face-to-face writing assistance by trained consultants available, the writing center now offers consultation via Adobe Connect. Students can chat online with consultants, make session notes in Screen Share, and have instant access to handouts and other resources from a distance.

More generally, build mentoring relationships with students to encourage them to think, write, and speak. This takes some innovative thinking if you are teaching intro classes with hundreds of students, but here are a few solutions being implemented across campus:

- The recently launched Lunch & Learn initiative of Multicultural Academic & Support Services provides multicultural and first generation college students with

a pair of lunch coupons to share a meal with a faculty member of their choice. Dr. Linda Walters of the Biology Department recalls drinking a smoothie with a student in her large introductory biology class about halfway through the semester. The student subsequently began dropping by during her office hours on a regular basis to get extra help.

- Faculty members at Rosen College promote student-faculty interaction by using tent cards in classes to learn student names, as well as serving as guest speakers at student associations and participating in events that students plan and produce.
- The College of Education has dedicated a space for student professional enrichment called The HUB. Housed in the Teaching Academy room 103, The HUB is a place where students can meet, learn, innovate, work, and reflect while strengthening relationships with others. The HUB hosts brown-bag lunches and also houses “Educational Outfitters,” a shop stocked with gently used professional clothing for teachers in training. Students can purchase clothing for use in service-learning, internships, and interviews by trading canned goods that are then donated to support a local Title 1 school. Starting this past year an educator in residence is available in the space to reflect, innovate, and critique with students and faculty alike.
- The College of Education also sponsors an annual Student Showcase highlighting undergraduate students as professional presenters in an all-day conference.

Finally, get involved with the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning! Consult with staff, join a teaching circle, or attend the summer or winter conference to get lots more creative ideas from across campus about ways to promote student communication competencies.

Given the economic constraints faced by UCF and other universities, the need to reconfigure teaching methods for increasingly larger classes is here for the foreseeable future. If we are to prepare our students to see their stories through, we must thoughtfully respond to the challenge. Nobody would say that is going to be easy, but the resources listed above can assist faculty members in strategizing how to promote the communication skills our students need.

References

National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools, and Colleges. (2005). Writing: A Powerful Message from State Government. *College Board*. Retrieved from http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/writingcom/powerful-message-from-state.pdf.

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.



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Karen L. Smith Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning
P.O. Box 160066 CL1-207
Orlando, FL 32816-0066
407-823-3544