

TLCExchange

The Newsletter of the Teaching and Learning Center of Wake Forest University ▲ Volume 9, Number 2 ▲ Spring 2006

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Spring 2006

Dear Colleagues,

While participating in workshops and brownbag discussions last semester and planning others this semester, I discovered how committed Wake Forest faculty members are to excellence in teaching. At the TLC this year, hosts have shared or will share their expertise on various topics, such as how to encourage classroom discussion; how to prepare and deliver better lectures; how to use technology well in class and avoid its overuse; how to combine a mini-research project with an oral presentation; how to tackle the unique challenges of a First-Year Seminar; how to be more mindful of first-year students' needs, and how to promote better understanding of multicultural diversity among students of all backgrounds.

Yet, as we all know, there is much to teaching that takes place outside the classroom. The Teaching and Learning Center also focuses on such teaching-related duties as mentoring, writing recommendation letters, advising, and combining research and teaching. As teachers, we are committed to mentoring both our students and our junior colleagues. A TLC workshop this semester addresses how to write letters of recommendation to help our students gain admittance into graduate and professional schools. For our junior colleagues, the TLC adopted and revised the Wake Forest University Mentoring Program this past semester, and this semester Dean Bridges will lead a brownbag discussion on mentoring, both formal and informal, of junior faculty at the

departmental level and across campus. Last semester, we also held faculty luncheons and a reception to honor new faculty, and we hope to continue the practice of welcoming and mentoring our new colleagues.

I hope that you will join us sometime this semester for one of the workshops or luncheons and come to the second annual Ice Cream Social, a big hit last year. I also hope that you will support Bernadine Barnes as she returns as Director of the Teaching and Learning Center in fall 2006 while I am in France directing the Dijon program.

With best regards,
Judy Kem

Winners of the Teaching Innovation Award Announced

Jacquelyn S. Fetrow, Reynolds Professor of Computational Biophysics, and David J. John, Associate Professor of Computer Science, have been selected as the joint recipients of this year's Teaching Innovation Award. Their course, "Bioinformatics," was offered in fall 2004 and cross-listed in Computer Science, Physics, and Biochemistry.

In making our decision, the Committee for the Teaching and Learning Center was impressed with the way the course meets a specific need identified in the biotechnology industry and trains our students to become future "employees with depth of knowledge in one discipline and the ability to communicate and contribute in a team setting" with another. We applaud their efforts to cross discipline boundaries, address a changing career environment, and provide a real-life, practical work-related experience for Wake Forest students.

We received other excellent applications for the award, and we urge those applicants to re-apply next year. We also ask chairs and others to encourage innovative teachers in their departments to apply as well.

Opportunities for Classroom Visits and Mentoring

If you would like to get feedback on your teaching from one of your peers, there are now several ways to do so.

Peer Classroom Visits

Inspired by a suggestion by Alyssa Lonner in the Department of German and Russian, the Teaching and Learning Center coordinates voluntary faculty classroom visits. These are friendly visits, meant to help newer faculty members without pressure; generally the observer will be a colleague of similar rank, but from a different department. Unlike the classroom visits that your department may require as part of your yearly review, feedback will be very informal, as agreed upon by the participants.

If you would like to have a faculty member from another department visit your class, or if you would like to visit someone else's class, please send an e-mail to Deborah Snyder. (snyderdw@wfu.edu). Let her know your department preference and teaching schedule.

Mid-Term Evaluations and Videotaping

If you prefer a more structured evaluation of a particular class, the TLC can arrange a mid-term evaluation. A faculty member visits your class during the semester and interviews students about their expectations and experiences, without the instructor present.

Afterwards the course instructor and colleague meet to discuss the students' responses.

The TLC can also videotape your classes, or you may borrow our camera to do it yourself.

If you would like more information about either of these options, please see our web page <http://www.wfu.edu/organizations/tlc>, and click on Evaluation Services.

Allow two weeks' notice for mid-term evaluations.

TLC EVENTS

Spring 2006

If you do not already receive e-mail reminders about TLC programs and would like to, please e-mail your request to snyderdw@wfu.edu

All programs take place in the TLC (Room 330, ZSR Library) unless otherwise indicated.

DELIVERING AN EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM LECTURE: AN OPEN DISCUSSION

Date: Tuesday, January 17, 2006
Time: 11:00 A.M.

Location: The Teaching and Learning Center (Room 330, ZSR Library)
Host: James Powell
(Classical Languages)

THE LECTURE can seem the old-fashioned, slightly disreputable member of the educational family, at least as compared with the more upstanding seminar and tutorial. But faculty members do sometimes need to deliver a classroom lecture and experience indicates that a good lecture can lead to good learning. This TLC session is intended as an opportunity to exchange ideas about what does and does not work. If we are going to deliver a classroom lecture, how can we do it as effectively as possible?

Lunch will be provided for faculty who RSVP (extension 4587 or snyderdw@wfu.edu) by Thursday, January 12--be sure to indicate your choice of a vegetarian, chicken, or beef sandwich, or a fruit plate, when you RSVP. Drop-ins are welcome.

INCLUDING DIVERSITY IN OUR COURSES: SUGGESTIONS ON WHY AND HOW

Date: Tuesday, February 7, 2006
Time: 11:00 A.M.

Location: The Teaching and Learning Center (Room 330, ZSR Library)
Host: Charles Richman (Psychology)

HUMANKIND has been blessed with diverse peoples, yet this blessing often turns to a curse where dominant cultures oppress/exploit less empowered ones. Overcoming the 'isms' is a major task that requires individuals knowing they are prejudiced and that at times they discriminate based on race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, etc. How can we encourage our students to better know themselves and to recognize the positive contributions of all groups of people? This mini-exposure will generate more questions than answers.

Lunch will be provided for faculty who RSVP (extension 4587 or snyderdw@wfu.edu) by Thursday, February 2--be sure to indicate your choice of a portabello mushroom, Deacon Club, or turkey sandwich, or a fruit plate, when you RSVP. Drop-ins are welcome.

WORKSHOP ON WRITING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION FOR PROFESSIONAL AND GRADUATE SCHOOLS

Date: Tuesday, February 14, 2006
Time: 3:00 P.M.

Location: Benson 401-C
Co-Hosts: Professor Hugo Lane, Director of the WFU Health Professions Program, and Stacy Poindexter Owen, Director of Admissions and Financial Aid, Babcock Graduate School of Management

PART OF OUR JOB as teachers and mentors is to write letters of recommendation for our students for entry into graduate and professional schools. What are graduate and professional schools' admission committees looking for? How can we increase our good students' chances of gaining admittance? What should one avoid in such letters? When and how should you say "no" to writing a letter of recommendation? Professor Hugo Lane, Director of the WFU Health Professions Program, and Stacy Poindexter Owen, Director of Admissions and Financial Aid for the Babcock Graduate School of Management, will answer these questions—and yours—during this workshop. Light refreshments will be offered.

Please note that this event will take place in Benson 401-C. Please RSVP to Deborah Snyder at x4587 or snyderdw@wfu.edu by Friday, February 10. Drop-ins are always welcome.

OPEN FORUM ON THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

Date: Thursday, February 23, 2006
Time: 12:00 P.M.

Location: The Teaching and Learning Center (Room 330, ZSR Library)
Host: Alycia Silman (Psychology)

FACULTY often agree that technology can either improve or distract from teaching. How can you tell whether it's working for you? We will look at what the research tells us about the effectiveness of technology during lectures and students' perceptions of their learning experience. We will also discuss the unintended consequences of technology in the classroom, such as how faculty should deal with students surfing the Internet (IM, etc.) during lectures and other related issues. Come prepared to discuss your experiences and to share your concerns and remedies.

Lunch will be provided for faculty who RSVP (extension 4587 or snyderdw@wfu.edu) by Monday, February 20--be sure to indicate your choice of a vegetarian, beef, or turkey sandwich, or a fruit plate, when you RSVP. Drop-ins are welcome.

THE MINI-RESEARCH PROJECT

Date: Wednesday, March 1, 2006

Time: 12:00 P.M.

Location: The Teaching and Learning Center (Room 330, ZSR Library)

Host: Tom McGohey (English, and the Writing Center)

THE TRADITIONAL research paper is often viewed as the concluding point of knowledge for a course; the place where students apply skills and knowledge gained earlier in the semester to a big topic beyond the daily syllabus. One problem with this approach is that typically the information acquired through research remains unread or unheard by anyone but the student and the professor. It is an end in itself that closes off instead of opening up further discussion about a topic. The mini-research project, assigned throughout the semester and combined with oral presentation, provides opportunity for students to extend class discussions that deepen their thinking about course material. This talk will describe a mini-research assignment that involves practice in the kind of intellectual activities fundamental to a liberal arts education: research, writing, presentation and discussion. This assignment is designed for, but not limited to, the First Year Seminar.

Please RSVP to snyderdw@wfu.edu or x4587 by Friday, February 24, and include your sandwich choice of vegetarian, chicken, or ham/cheese, or of a fruit plate when you RSVP. Drop-ins are always welcome.

MENTORING: CREATING A PLACE OF HOSPITALITY FOR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Date: Monday, March 20, 2006

Time: 12:00 P.M.

Location: The Teaching and Learning Center (Room 330, ZSR Library)

Host: Linda McKinnish Bridges (Associate Dean of the College), and friends

IN THIS DISCUSSION we will explore the role of mentoring as a way to meet the challenges of faculty recruitment and retention. How does a department create a place of hospitality for personal and professional growth? How do we create positive learning communities within departments, where new faculty are encouraged and challenged and senior faculty are appreciated and productive? Creating a collegial atmosphere takes intentionality and hard work. We will discuss the various ways that collegiality can be developed through mentoring.

Please RSVP to snyderdw@wfu.edu or x4587 by Wednesday, March 15 to enjoy a lunch provided by the TLC, and include your sandwich choice of vegetarian, chicken, or beef, or of a fruit plate when you RSVP. Drop-ins are always welcome.

THE ENGAGED CAMPUS: EXTENDING THE CONVERSATION

Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Time: 11:00 A.M.

Location: The Teaching and Learning Center (Room 330, ZSR Library)

Hosts: Christy Buchanan and Betsy Taylor (Co-Chairs, Pro Humanitate Fund for Service-Learning Planning Board)

ON FEB. 29, Dr. Andrew Furco from the University of California at Berkeley met with a number of faculty and

administrative staff to discuss the concept of the engaged campus and its application to Wake Forest and higher education in general. You are invited to attend this brownbag lunch to extend these conversations as we examine issues such as campus-community collaboration, service-learning, community-based research, faculty roles and rewards for community engagement, and institutionalizing these efforts on our campus.

Please RSVP to snyderdw@wfu.edu or x4587 by Thursday, March 23 to enjoy a lunch provided by the TLC, and include your sandwich choice of vegetarian, chicken, or beef, or of a fruit plate when you RSVP. Drop-ins are always welcome.

TEACHING AND LEARNING CENTER END-OF-YEAR BLOWOUT/FACULTY APPRECIATION ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Date: Monday, April 3, 2006

Time: 3:00-4:30 P.M.

Location: The Teaching and Learning Center (Room 330, ZSR Library)

Hosts: Judy Kem and Deborah Snyder (TLC).

JOIN Judy Kem and Deborah Snyder for our second annual Ice Cream Social. No program, no speeches, just an informal reception to enjoy scintillating conversation and a delicious cold treat with fellow Wake Forest faculty! Please feel free to arrive and depart as your schedule dictates. We look forward to seeing you there! Please RSVP by Thursday, March 30, to snyderdw@wfu.edu or x4587.

WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY TEACHING AND LEARNING CENTER

The Teaching and Learning Center was established in 1997 with a dual purpose: meeting faculty-identified needs for teaching support and promoting dialogue about teaching. Faculty are encouraged to fill out a Faculty Information Form available from the Center designed to help us target specific needs and concerns which are then the topics for brown bag lunch discussions and workshops throughout the academic year.

The Teaching and Learning Center also offers a number of voluntary and confidential evaluation services outside the traditional departmental evaluation process. These have included mid-term evaluations, video-taping, and peer class visitations, and a faculty-mentoring program.

To learn more about the Teaching and Learning Center, and/or to discuss the programs and services the TLC offers, please contact TLC Director Judy Kem at Ext. 4559 (kem@wfu.edu) or TLC Coordinator Deborah Snyder at Ext. 4587 (snyderdw@wfu.edu). The Teaching and Learning Center is open Monday through Thursday from 8 A.M. until 4:00 P.M., and Friday until 10:00 A.M. and is located in 330 Z. Smith Reynolds Library.

The TLC faculty advisory committee is elected annually. Committee members for the 2005-2006 academic year are:

Sharon Andrews (*Theatre*)

Patricia Cunningham (*Education*)

John Duchac (*Calloway*)

Angela King (*Chemistry*)

Teresa Sanhueza (*Romance Languages*)

Peter Siavelis (*Political Science*)

RESOURCES

THE TLC has many resources available to the campus community, including books and journals promoting teaching excellence. These items are available for use in the Center and/or can be checked out at the circulation desk of the Z. Smith Reynolds Library. If you need to consult or check out TLC resources when the center is closed, you may obtain admittance by showing your faculty ID card to staff at the circulation desk.

The Teaching and Learning Center also maintains a vertical file and notebooks of teaching-related articles. Subjects include, but are not limited to:

- Active learning
- Assessment
- Collaborative learning
- Critical thinking
- Generating discussion
- Interdisciplinary teaching
- Syllabus construction
- Teaching portfolios
- Testing and grading
- Writing across disciplines

We are pleased to offer several excellent articles within the "Course Documents" section of the TLC Blackboard site (<http://blackboard.wfu.edu/>) that may enhance your classroom teaching experience. Contact the Coordinator at snyderdw@wfu.edu to receive access. Information on WFU grants for faculty is also included on this site.

The Teaching and Learning Center is available for departmental and committee meetings. Please call extension 4587 or e-mail snyderdw@wfu.edu to reserve the space.

For information about other TLC services and upcoming events, see the TLC website. In addition, information about First-Year Seminars and FYS proposals from several faculty members is now available. FYS materials as well as other web-based information are accessible by going to the TLC homepage and clicking on "Teaching Resources."