

AcademiCast Transcript
Texas Tech University
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Holdsworth: This is AcademiCast—Texas Tech University’s podcast series from the Office of the Provost. I’m Meredith Holdsworth, and I’ll be covering the top academic and research stories on campus. Later in the program, Provost Bob Smith will spotlight Integrated Scholar Dominick Casadonte.

First, the news...

Texas Tech has relaunched its iTunes U site. The enhanced site features new and familiar educational content covering a range of academic interests. Faculty and administrators from the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Visual and Performing Arts, University Libraries, and the Provost’s Office are among the contributors of multimedia content to the site. Past commencement addresses and materials from the Vietnam Center and Archive are also available. As an active contributor to iTunes U, TTU Provost Bob Smith shares his thoughts about the relaunch.

Smith: The iTunes Store has partnered with hundreds of colleges, universities, and affiliated units in the United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and countries throughout Europe to provide access to a host of educational materials, including entire sets of course materials posted to the iTunes U website by faculty members from around the world. Many of the offerings are complete courses, lectures that can be downloaded for sequential viewing and study. There are also videos on research and outreach (study abroad) ventures, along with materials that are just plain fun. The opportunities for learning through related digital source material are endless. TTU has recently reinvested efforts to ensure our active contribution to the iTunes U and expanding learning opportunities for our faculty, students, and staff. We think you’ll be impressed.

Holdsworth: The multimedia content on Texas Tech’s iTunes U site can be accessed via Apple’s iTunes store.

In other academics news, the Rawls College of Business is offering a course that aims to engage enterprising minds. This one-credit-hour course is titled Perspectives on Entrepreneurship and is open to all students at Texas Tech. As part of the course, students will get to learn valuable perspectives and experiences from successful entrepreneurs.

The Center for Undergraduate Research has chosen its first recipients of the Dr. Sarah Kulkofsky Scholarship. The scholarship will fund the research efforts of psychology senior Erica Barhorst and chemistry senior Daniel Stroud. The students will present their findings at Texas Tech’s Undergraduate Research Conference next April. The scholarship

program was named in memory of Kulkofksy, who had served as a human sciences professor.

A Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist is the newest inductee to the College of Media and Communication's hall of fame. Journalist Robert Montemayor graduated with a bachelor's degree in journalism from Texas Tech in 1975. In the years that have followed, Montemayor earned national acclaim for his work, and today he serves as a journalism instructor and director of the Latino Information Network at Rutgers University.

Integrated Scholars dedicate themselves to a course of lifelong learning. Their emphasis on teaching, research, and service helps to promote scholarly engagement. And in doing so, Integrated Scholars advance Texas Tech's role in educating, serving, and inspiring others to pursue a path of lifelong learning. In this edition of AcademiCast, Provost Bob Smith spotlights Integrated Scholar Dominick Casadonte, Jr.

Smith: An appreciation for music has helped to drive the integrated scholarship of Professor Dominick Casadonte. As a student of both chemistry and classical trombone, Casadonte combines elements from those areas in the study of what is known as sonochemistry. His research involves using high-intensity sounds to affect chemical reactions in nanomaterials, alternative fuels, & environmental remediation processes. Additionally, Casadonte carries out research and scholarship in supra-molecular photochemistry and chemical education. His studies, especially in chemical education, have carried over into laboratories & lecture halls. Casadonte's interests in chemical education have led him to "flip" the traditional lecture-homework paradigm in his chemistry classes.

Casadonte: So in this flipping mechanism now, the homework is actually to watch a prerecorded lecture. So all of my lectures for my classes have been prerecorded. The students, they're on Blackboard here at Texas Tech. So the students can watch them from any remote device through the Web, so iPhones, iPads, computers, whatever. They can watch them whenever they want, at 3 o'clock in the morning. They can watch them 10 times if they want. I also have a set of notes with strategic blanks, and as I lecture, they fill in the blanks, so it keeps them engaged. Then they do an online Web learning assessment, so I know that they (a) watched the lecture, and (b) that they understand what's really going on. So when they come to class, instead of having a lecture, what I'll do is spend the first half of the class going through and sort of reviewing the material that we've already seen, so it helps to reinforce what they're doing. We try to clear up any muddied points or any misconceptions they might have during that time. And then the second half of the class, we work advanced problems.

Smith: Additionally, Casadonte's commitment to chemical education has enabled him to ignite the scientific interests of both young & old through chemistry demonstration shows. Over the course of two decades, he has led more than 250 such shows for

audiences in schools, teacher groups & senior citizens centers, as well as via radio & television.

Casadonte: So I've done demo shows from age 3 to age 93, very literally. So over 250 shows to over 30,000 people. And so, once again, the idea is to reach as broad an audience as possible and try to convince them that chemistry is really fun, exciting, and it's something they can do, it's accessible. And so to me that's one of the joys of being a faculty member—is that I can share my enthusiasm for what I like to do with a broader audience and maybe show them “yeah, that's why, that's why it should be cool for me, too.”

Smith: Outside the classroom, Casadonte serves as an adviser for more than half a dozen student organizations, including Habitat for Humanity, the Catholic Student Association & Iota Tau Alpha. Having achieved so much, Casadonte takes a moment to discuss his inspiration.

Casadonte: I really like what the philosopher Eric Hoffer had to say. He said in the most humblest of jobs, you can find interesting things to do and interesting things to think about. And so, I find my inspiration every day just by living, by observing people, by being in the place that I'm in and the moment and thinking about what I'm doing.

Smith: Casadonte believes that it is important for faculty members to balance their personal lives, along with the components of integrated scholarship, in order to maintain their productivity & sustain their spirits. For him, family and friends are first & foremost in an academician's support system.

Casadonte: Family comes first. I mean, jobs come and go; your family is with you forever. So it's important that you keep that in balance, and you keep it in perspective. It's not about working 18-hour days and neglecting your family. And you'll find that if you don't neglect your friends, your family that the support that they'll give you back will allow you to put in those 16- and 18-hour days. And if you don't have family in the area, I think it's important to develop a network of friends. Because there will always be times when you just want to share an experience with someone, or you just need to get out of the lab, or need to get out of doing whatever you're doing and just have a cup of coffee or something like that—and it's important to have people to share life with and share experiences with.

Smith: The notable Johns Hopkins University Professor of Chemistry, E. Emmet Reid, offered advice on our commitments & understanding of subjects that at first seem arcane or seemingly uninteresting. Reid said, "It has been my experience that the most unattractive problem becomes absorbingly interesting when one digs into it . . . when you really get acquainted with a problem, you are apt to fall in love with it."

Through his understanding of chemistry via research, through his dedication to great teaching & his engagement of people from school age to retirement age, Professor Dominick Casadonte's has made chemistry live in the hearts & minds of those who take some time to listen & learn. His personal path to understanding has come through his quest for integrated scholarship & we are all the richer for his efforts. Now, he is continuing to inspire others through his new position as interim dean of the Texas Tech University Graduate School. Academicast commends Professor Casadonte for his efforts & wishes him the best on his professional journey!
Thanks for listening! I'm Bob Smith.

Holdsworth: Thanks, Dr. Smith! If you would like to learn more about Texas Tech's Integrated Scholars or the other stories featured here, please visit our website at **academicast.ttu.edu**.

Thanks for listening! And join us again in two more weeks for the latest academic and research news from Texas Tech University.