A LETTER FROM THE ASSISTANT DIRECTORS

It has been a busy spring for everyone, especially here at the TLPDC! We have been working with faculty and graduate students through classroom observations, student evaluations, consultations, and workshops, and we hosted our 10th annual Advancing Teaching and Learning Conference at the end of February. The conference focused on the theme “Engaging and Retaining our Students,” and featured keynote speaker the esteemed Dr. George Kuh, founding director of the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE). Dr. Kuh spoke about the value of high impact practices such as service learning, active engagement, and undergraduate research, just to name a few, and the very real benefits such practices can afford our students. These concepts were further emphasized through excellent concurrent sessions offered by faculty members from Texas Tech and other institutions. We hope you will look forward to and join us for more wonderful sessions, programs, and services that we will continue to offer here at the TLPDC throughout the spring and summer!

Allison P. Boye and Micah M. Logan

TLPDC 2014 FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

The TLPDC is excited to highlight 5 faculty members for the 2014 calendar year who have demonstrated good teaching as well as involvement with and support for our center. In each issue of our newsletter, a few of them will share some of their favorite teaching ideas with readers. Stay tuned for more in our Fall/Winter 2014 issue!

Our faculty spotlight honorees for 2014 are pictured here. Clockwise from the top left, they are: Dr. Mary Frances Agnello (Curriculum & Instruction); Dr. Malinda Colwell (Human Development & Family Studies); Dr. Scott Holaday (Biological Sciences); Dr. Matt Stock (Health, Exercise, & Sport Science); & Dr. Erica Irlbeck (Agricultural Education & Communication), center.
With all of the distractions that students have available to them, keeping them focused on education becomes increasingly difficult. However, all parties involved in the process of education must understand that education is a two-way street. Students and instructors must both perform their jobs to the best of their abilities if education is to be successful. All of the approaches at the disposal of the instructor to clarify topics for the students are of no value if the students are unmotivated. Hence, the development of techniques to stir student interest in subjects has often been as important as the development of techniques to help them learn and comprehend the concepts. However, the success of a student often simply depends on discipline, and a diligent educator reminds them of that fact. Challenge the students to participate in their education. Dare them to learn.

**Accessibility Matters: Things to Know about ADA Compliance and Your Course Materials**

While we are all aware of the existence of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), many of us may not fully understand the ADA and how it impacts our teaching in both face-to-face and distance classes. “The ADA is an ‘equal opportunity’ law for people with disabilities” and while it does NOT require special treatment of students with disabilities, it does require that students be given the opportunity for equal participation in the University’s programs (www.ada.gov). This is done by providing eligible and qualified students with the appropriate academic adjustments and auxiliary aids necessary to facilitate the students’ fullest possible participation in the University’s academic programs.

Therefore, regardless of whether or not you have a student who requires accommodation, it is very important that faculty members work to ensure that all of their course materials are provided in accessible formats. To make your course materials accessible, please check the following:

- Any video used in class, either face-to-face or online, must be closed captioned.
- All electronic files, handouts, and notes must be in an accessible format such as MS Word or PDF to allow for screen reader compatibility. (*Please note that documents scanned as a picture – i.e. using a copier instead of a scanner – are not compatible as they cannot be read by a screen reader.*)
- Supplemental content used from the internet must also be accessible to screen readers and all video content must be captioned.

When teaching online, everything you post must be screen reader friendly and/or captioned. In other words, everything MUST be accessible. Courses must be designed so that students with disabilities have the same access to the same materials at the same time as students without disabilities. In the same way that ADA requires that all buildings must be designed and built so that they can be accessed by anyone at any time, so must our online courses and online materials.

While this is understandably intimidating and potentially overwhelming, Texas Tech offers many resources and options to assist you in your efforts towards compliance. We encourage you to visit the online resource from the Accessibility Compliance Team at [www.ttu.edu/accessibility](http://www.ttu.edu/accessibility). For questions related to students with disabilities, please contact Student Disability Services ([http://www.depts.ttu.edu/students/sds/](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/students/sds/)) at 806-742-2405. For questions related to online compliance, please contact the Instructional Design Team at the Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development Center ([http://www.tlpd.ttu.edu/content/asp/Distance_Learning/index.asp](http://www.tlpd.ttu.edu/content/asp/Distance_Learning/index.asp)) at 806-742-0133.

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**Strategies for Building Rapport**

- Learn & use your students’ names in class.
- Provide students with timely and constructive feedback.
- Visit with students informally before and after class.
- Share things about yourself – research interests, personal experiences, hobbies, etc.
- Communication is key! Be clear about classroom policies and expectations. Also be mindful about making efforts to address students’ questions and concerns.
- Be transparent about your expectations for students and explain why you do things the way you do.
- Smile!
Teaching Tips from Dr. Malinda Colwell  
(Human Development and Family Studies)  

1. I think it’s important to always be prepared and have a plan for class, but also to be willing to scrap the plan if the students’ discussion or questions take us in a different direction. Flexibility often yields wonderful learning experiences.

2. I like to connect with my students and let them see me as a real person – who admits when I don’t know something or when a mistake is made. These connections create sincerity and openness in the classroom.

3. I have high expectations for myself and my students and most importantly, equip students to meet my expectations. I believe students often achieve much more than they think is possible when they are challenged and equipped to do so.

4. Maybe even more important than the particular course content, I want my students to learn to be thinkers and innovators and to be able to apply what is learned in everyday settings. To accomplish this, I challenge students to be aware of their own beliefs and ideas and why they have them and to recognize why thinking about their own thinking is important and useful.

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VISIT US IN PERSON AT THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, FIRST FLOOR, NORTH WING

Graduate Student Programming News

Spring is a busy time around the TLPDC, especially for our graduate student programs! Both the TEACH Program and the Groundwork Program are in the process of accepting applications for their next cohorts.

The TEACH ((Teaching Effectiveness And Career enhancement) Program is an intensive and highly selective year-long program that assists doctoral students in further developing teaching skills and preparing for faculty roles; eligibility for the program requires an official teaching appointment at Texas Tech University. Program activities include one-on-one consultation, instructor videotaping, comprehensive class feedback, peer observations, workshop attendance, and the development of a professional teaching portfolio teaching and learning project. Fellows selected for this program are paid a $500 stipend per semester for their active participation. Applications for the 2014-2015 cohort are due Friday, April 11th, 2014. Applicants are asked to submit a completed application form, a CV, a personal statement, and two faculty recommendations using the online recommendation form. Applicants with complete applications will also be invited to participate in one of several group interviews. Please visit the TEACH website for more details about the personal statement and other application elements (www.tlpd.ttu.edu/teach), or email Dr. Allison Boye with additional questions (allison.p.boye@ttu.edu).

The Groundwork Program is likewise preparing for its 3rd cohort this coming May 28th – 30th. Groundwork is a 2 ½-day program for graduate students of all disciplines, degrees, and experiences, and is geared towards helping new teachers prepare for the classroom. Elements include workshops on foundational teaching elements like syllabi development and classroom management, reading discussions, and a microteaching activity. Applications for this upcoming Groundwork cohort are due Friday, April 25th, 2014. The application form can be downloaded from the website (http://www.tlpd.ttu.edu/home/GroundworkProgram) and emailed to Dr. Micah Logan at micah.m.logan@ttu.edu.

If you have further questions about either of these programs, please contact Dr. Allison Boye, Dr. Micah Logan, or Troy Lescher at the TLPDC by calling 742-0133. Faculty members, please spread the word about these successful programs to your graduate students!
**Teaching Tips from Dr. Matt Stock**

*(Health, Exercise, and Sport Science)*

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**About Service Learning**

Are you interested in providing your students with real-world, experiential learning? If so, you should consider incorporating service learning into your curriculum. Service learning links course content with civic engagement through thoughtfully organized service initiatives that meet the needs of the community as well as the student. This form of experiential learning has the capacity to make a significant impact on your students’ learning as well as their retention. The Texas Tech University Service Learning Program is supported by initiatives at the TLPDC as well as the Center for Active Learning and Undergraduate Engagement (CALUE) and is practiced across the university at both the undergraduate and graduate level.

If you think you might be interested in incorporating service learning into one of your courses, please think about applying for the Service Learning Faculty Fellows (SLFF). The SLFF is a one-year program which provides faculty members with personalized support and resources to design and implement a service learning course. Participants in the program receive a $1500 stipend as well as funding for a graduate assistant during the semester in which the course is taught. Applications for the 2014-2015 cohort are due May 30th, 2014. For more information visit [http://bit.ly/aboutSLFF](http://bit.ly/aboutSLFF) or contact Micah Logan at 834-0093 or micah.m.logan@ttu.edu.

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**Teaching Tips from Dr. Matt Stock**

- **Preparation is key!** There will never be a substitute for good old-fashioned preparation. I believe that being an effective teacher takes a tremendous amount of time no matter how long you’ve been doing it. When I first started teaching I used to say to myself “I can’t wait until I’ve prepped this course and taught it once or twice so I don’t need to worry about it anymore.” After seven years of teaching the same course (and some OK evals), I admit that I still question many of my methods, tweak with things here or there, and find myself needing to prepare for each lecture. On occasion I will go into an empty classroom the night before a class and lecture to the walls. I am fairly certain that my department’s custodian thinks I am insane.

- **Students want to see that you care before they want to know how much you know.** I have found that an important part of teaching is being able to communicate the fact that I genuinely do care about each of my students and their future success. All relationships are built on trust and communication. The teacher/student relationship is no different.

- **“Adapt what is useful, reject what is useless, and add what is specifically your own.”** Bruce Lee When deciding what content to cover in a class, I constantly question why I cover the material that I do, and I’m not afraid to skip things that I don’t think will benefit my students. The area of Health, Exercise, and Sport Sciences lends itself to a lot of hands on material. Thus, I try to emphasize the importance of the ability to master practical tasks while also not doing a disservice to the science associated with the content. There is only so much about research techniques, exercise, and training that you can learn from reading a book. At a certain point you have to be able to “do!”

- **Research = Teaching.** I find that the majority of faculty members think of research and teaching as mutually exclusive entities. I do not perceive them in this manner. Without question, my research in the laboratory has a profound influence on my teaching. As time goes by, I find it harder and harder to “hide” my passion for research while in the classroom setting, and I believe I’ve done a decent job meshing the two together (particularly at the graduate level). As much as anything, research keeps me humble because it seems as though every time I’m able to answer a question, 5 or 10 more arise. I realize now that I don’t have the solution to infinitely more questions than which I do have. In addition, in fields that are young and still evolving (such as many of the subtopics within Health, Exercise, and Sport Sciences), it is imperative to keep track of the latest science. I recognize now that many of the things I taught about 5 years ago were incorrect or perhaps overstated (To these former students, my sincerest apologies!). In summary, research reminds me that “We don’t know yet” is a perfectly acceptable answer. In fact, it is this very response that keeps me moving forward!