

AcademiCast Transcript
Texas Tech University
November 29, 2012

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

First, the news...

Ever thought about turning your dissertation into a book? The director of Texas Tech University Press has some words of wisdom for scholarly scribes.

Dr. Robert Mandel has worked in publishing for more than three decades, and he’s spent the past four years leading TTU Press. Mandel says he’s seen his fair share of academic publications. He recently offered his thoughts on transforming a doctoral dissertation into a book manuscript.

Mandel:

Pierce: To hear more of Dr. Mandel’s presentation, visit our website as **academicast.ttu.edu**.

In other academics news, the Rawls College of Business is applauding its standout faculty and students in the accounting department. The Public Accounting Report showed improved rankings for Rawls’ undergraduate and master’s accounting programs, placing them both among the top 40 in the nation. The distinction adds to Rawls’ recognition for its high pass rate on the CPA examination.

On the research side of news, the Whitacre College of Engineering has tapped a \$2 million donation for its Petroleum Engineering Research Building. The funds come from oil and gas explorer Apache Corporation. The donation will enable the Houston-based firm to establish a research center in the building, which is set to open next fall.

Now we turn to our Integrated Scholars, who 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 Genevieve Durham DeCesaro.

Smith: A true artist in academia, dance Professor Genevieve Durham DeCesaro (Dee Sessaro) has made performing arts front and center in her integrated scholarship.

Central to her efforts has been her love of teaching dance. DeCesaro (Dee Sessaro) taught theater and dance in public secondary schools for a number of years, however, she left with an aim of strengthening her field at the higher education level.

DeCesaro: Teaching is great! I'm enamored with the reciprocity of what happens. You know, you can't teach in a vacuum. And I probably wouldn't like teaching online very much because I'm really keyed into the way that I learn from my students. I'm really keyed into how I can facilitate their growth and development. That's really important to me. So that's another reason I do what I do in higher education. Because I thought I would have a better chance of being an effective spokeswoman for dance in this environment.

Smith: DeCesaro's (Dee Sessaro's) knowledge of dance choreography and performance are not reserved just for the studio and classroom, but is ever-present in her research, as well. One of DeCesaro's research interests involves blending performing arts with traditional written scholarship. She is interested in examining ideas that are typically expressed through prose but may be reinterpreted through esthetic movements, in an effort to reach a more diverse audience. For example, through her collaboration with Human Sciences Professor Elizabeth Sharp, DeCesaro is choreographing a performance based on American women's ideologies of marriage and motherhood.

DeCesaro: "Ideologies of Marriage and Motherhood" is really, really critical if we're talking about—if we as societies and cultures want to talk about—real gender equity we've got to have these conversations. They have to emerge in a variety of ways. And I think what my colleague and I are hoping to do is build a model that can be replicated by other researchers and other artists within and without of the academy.

Smith: In a separate effort, DeCesaro (Dee Sessaro) is examining how the arts are understood and valued by colleagues and administrators in higher education, as their points of view can further cultural understanding. Elevating the role of the arts in society also extends through DeCesaro's (Dee Sessaro's) service projects. She advises several student organizations on campus, but chief among them is Chi Tau Epsilon, an honors dance society that promotes community service.

DeCesaro: Over the course of every academic year we do outreach projects with local educational institutions. And then we also produce a community concert benefitting an organization in the community. This is really important in terms of service because it's on a local level. Sometimes I think we, me included, forget how important service to our own communities really is. This is where we foster real growth.

Smith: DeCesaro (Dee Sessaro) notes that in addition to her colleagues and community, she is inspired as a professor by her students. Their enthusiasm and commitment to the practice helps to sustain her and guide her integrated scholarship.

DeCesaro: There are students who are thrilled to be simultaneously working on obtaining their teacher certification in dance. It's wonderful. They're going to go back out, and they are going to teach. It's hard! It's really, really, really hard. And to do it in the arts in Texas is very, very difficult. And they're going to go do it. They're up for that challenge. I have other students who are looking to have professional careers performing and choreographing. And that's really thrilling—to see them so excited to go out and work as artists. There's a lot that I get from my students. There's a lot that I get from my students.

Smith: DeCesaro (Dee Sessaro) advises new faculty to integrate themselves into the university community. Central to this thought is going beyond one's own scholarship. In other words, an academician should promote the work of others in their field as well as explore the academic contributions made outside their chosen disciplines.

DeCesaro: We as a community are only as good as all of our respective parts. And it's really important for all of us to be as supportive as we possibly can of each other. So that means that as an artist working in higher education, I need to make sure that I'm not only supporting and promoting my own art but also the art of other people. And also the projects of those faculty and students who are working outside of my discipline. The more aware we are of each other, the more we can support our endeavors.

Smith: Each fall, when I address the new faculty arrivals and talk about integrated faculty scholarship, I draw analogy to triply talented theater stars that can sing, act and dance with aplomb. Professor Genevieve DeCesaro's (Dee Sessaro's) talents in teaching, research and service—intertwined and used to contribute to our academic community in special ways—makes her a special person—or, what we refer to as a integrated scholar faculty member. When coupled with her work as the Head of Dance and Associate Chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance, there is no doubt that her positive influence will continue—far and wide.

Thanks for listening! I'm Bob Smith.

Pierce: 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 next time for the latest academic and research news from Texas Tech University.