

# *Center for Teaching Excellence*

*This is the twenty-second of a series of newsletters encouraging faculty enrichment and excellence in teaching by announcing opportunities, sharing ideas, and promoting collaboration.*

Volume 12

June 2009

*I hope you are having a rewarding summer!*

*The Second Teaching Writing Workshop*

*was very successful. It was conducted by*

*Theresa Flynn,*

*Director of the Writing Center,*

*Thursday, May 14, 2009.*

*The impetus for this Writing Workshop came out of the General Education Assessment Committee work that has been ongoing for the past three years. Don Thompson's Institutional Research and Assessment Office funded the workshop.*

*Those who participated were:*

*Carin Chapin*

*Jennifer Christy*

*Katrina Davy*

*Sunnie DeLano*

*Andrei Duta*

*Elizabeth Essary*

*Brian Fisher*

*Lorie Goodman*

*Larisa Hamada*

*Hong Kha*

*Robert Lloyd*

*Richard Mann*

*Graciela Perez-Boruszko*

*Milt Shatzer*

*Nancy Shatzer*

*Sarah Stone Watt*

*Travis Weber*

*Michael Zakian*



*On Thursday, June 25, 2009, there will be a Workshop for First-Year Seminar Instructors.*

*Please let me know if you are interested in attending—even if you do not presently teach a First-year Seminar.*

*Those who are teaching seminars will share our best practices and most effective methods and learn from one another.*

## *Broadening Perspectives of Diversity in the Classroom*

*Date: Thursday, July 16, 2009*

*Place: Kresge Reading Room, Payson Library*

*Time: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.*

*Facilitator: Jaye Goosby Smith, Associate Professor of Management, California State University, Channel Islands*

*Dr. Smith received her Ph.D. in Organizational Behavior from Case Western Reserve University in 2002 and her M.B.A. in 1996 from Case Western Reserve. She graduated from Spelman College in Atlanta, GA in 1986. She taught in the Business Division at Seaver from 2002 to 2006.*

*She is highly respected in the fields of Organizational Development and Teaching and Learning about Diversity and has published an impressive number of scholarly articles related to Campus Diversity. She also led Pepperdine through several successful diversity initiatives from the James Irvine Foundation. While co-chairing the University Diversity Council, she designed the University's first comprehensive diversity strategic plan which is still a major reference for our University planning and management committees.*

*Goals: The Workshop is designed to*

- *help you understand your students better,*
- *provide tangible tools for teaching diverse students more effectively,*
- *suggest practical ways to help our students to develop a broader perspective of diversity issues, and*
- *help you develop a broader multicultural perspective.*

*Lunch will be provided in the Faculty Dining Room.*

*Let me know if you are able to attend!*

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*This article from [Faculty Focus](#) addresses the things we all like about teaching as well as many of the specific things which I hope to improve in my work with the Center for Teaching Excellence. Let me know your thoughts—even if you are not retiring!*

*June 1, 2009*

**Retirement Reflections: Things I Will and Won't Miss After 33 Years of Teaching**

By: [Maryellen Weimer](#) in [Teaching Careers](#)

*Editor's note: [Maryellen Weimer](#), editor of [The Teaching Professor](#) penned the following column upon her retirement in 2007.*

I am just about to retire from Penn State and leave my faculty position teaching undergraduates. I'll still be working; there's this newsletter to edit and a world of faculty who still need advice, ideas, and encouragement to do their very best in the classroom. But you don't end 33 years of [college teaching](#) without thinking about those things that will and won't be missed on campus. Here's my list.

**Things I'll miss:**

- The nervous anticipation of going to class, rehearsing my lines as I drive to campus, thinking about all that's possible, believing that I just might be able to make some of it happen.
- Those days in class when students get it. Sometimes that new understanding shines from their faces, sometimes they make a comment that attests to how well they've got it, and sometimes they report the details in a paper. Sometimes they give you credit. Even if they don't, it's still an event worthy of witness.
- Those days in class when I get it. When I see how to connect content to students; efforts to learn to appropriate

processes; and students to the insights, ideas, and motivation of other students.

- Seeing seniors at graduation and remembering how they looked that first day of their first semester in college.
  - Watching students who started out failing or doing poorly learning to succeed.
- Colleagues whose passion for teaching spreads enough hot coals to light new fires and rekindle others when their embers burn low or die out.
- Colleagues who use their fine minds, keen intellects, and inquisitive sensibilities to tackle teaching and learning with intellectual robustness.

### **Things I won't miss**

- Those bright, capable students who don't care and won't make an effort. Those students full of potential who happily do work just barely above the line that marks acceptable.
- Colleagues who have given up on teaching and are doing time in the classroom—the ones who've locked themselves out of meaningful, trusting relationships by using policies and practices that render all encounters with students adversarial.
  - Colleagues who blame students for what they aren't accomplishing as teachers.
- End-of-course student evaluations that ask irrelevant questions and give administrators data from which to draw dubious conclusions.
  - Peer reviews where the Lake Wobegon effect devalues any teaching that is truly above average.
  - Grading papers so full of grammatical errors that it's difficult to see beyond them to the ideas behind them.
    - Students so full of excuses there's no room left for learning.

Students with whom conversations never get past the points—those taken off, missed, totaled, awarded for extra credit, given, earned, offered as bonus, secured surreptitiously, or bought on the black market.

- Those days in class when I can't make it happen, when my best efforts don't make a difference. Those days when passivity, like fog, settles over the classroom, when students yawn and nod off and no amount of enthusiasm cuts through the chill of complacency—those days when only the cold signifies that this place isn't teaching hell.

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*Enjoy the summer!*

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