Welcoming New Faculty to UNO

The end of August ushers in the return of students, faculty, and staff to the UNO Campus. As some of us are settling back into the routine, other new faces are just beginning to learn what UNO has to offer. For the 2015-2016 academic year, the Center for Faculty Excellence welcomed thirty-eight new full-time faculty and sixty-two adjunct faculty to campus at our fall orientations.

Although orientations included a new break-out session format and new full-time faculty orientation switched to an all-day format, everything went smoothly thanks to the preparation of our presenters. We appreciate all of those who contributed their time and effort to making our new faculty feel welcomed and informed as they begin their first year here at UNO!
Calendar of Events: October and November

October 1: Communities of Practice Application Deadline
        Faculty Leadership Forum Application Deadline

October 5: Sticky Business: Book Discussion of Make It Stick and Faculty Appreciation Luncheon, 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. (Roskens Hall, Room 214)

October 15: Burning Bright: Mentoring High-Achieving Students In and Out of the Classroom, 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. (Criss Library Faculty Study Area)

October 16: UCAT Speaker Grant Application Deadline

October 22: International Issues and Global Engagement Faculty Reception, 5:00-7:00 p.m. (Community Engagement Center)

October 23: UCAT Speaker Grant Decision Date

October 27: Beyond the Window: How We Can Mentor, Help, and Encourage Students Outside the Classroom, 3:00-4:00 p.m. (Criss Library Faculty Study Area)

October 28: API/Teaching with Technology Session: Building a Bigger Tackle Box: Office Mix, 12:00-1:00 p.m. (Kayser Hall, 538)

November 2: Tai Chi Wellness Workshop, 2:30-3:30 p.m. (HPER 239)

November 13: API/Teaching with Technology Session: Building a Bigger Tackle Box: Voice-Over Power Point, 12:00-1:00 p.m. (Kayser Hall 538)

November 17: Students in Charge: How Group Work and Flipping the Focus of Your Classroom Creates Better Learners, 11:00-12:00 p.m. (Mammel Hall 228H)

November 19: API/Teaching with Technology Session: This Time It's Personal: Creating Better Images for Your Online Students, 1:00-3:00 p.m. (Kayser Hall 543)

Creating Global Focus

The International Studies Program Committee, Center for Faculty Excellence, and the Global Engagement Task Force invite faculty to a wine and cheese reception on Thursday October 22 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. in the Community Engagement Center. The reception is designed to spark a conversation on possibilities for developing greater global involvement both socially and academically on the UNO campus. Come prepared to share your ideas with fellow faculty.
UNO Excellence in Teaching Award 2015

Congratulations to William Mahoney in the School of Interdisciplinary Informatics.

Distinguished Research or Creative Activity Award 2015

Congratulations to John Crank from the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice.

Outstanding Graduate Mentor Award 2015

Congratulations to Jeffrey French from the Psychology Department.

Outstanding Service Learning Faculty Award 2015

Congratulations to Arturo Miranda from the Foreign Languages Department.

Communities of Practice—The deadline for Communities of Practice is approaching (October 1). As you consider applying for a CoP, think about announcing your topic on our Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/facex.unomaha.edu?ref=hl to recruit new members and to explore topics of discussion. We are also pleased to announce that the Community Engagement Center is offering research space for CoPs that address the scholarship of community engagement. If you are interested, please make note on your application of how your community addresses the topic.

The European Studies Conference will be held on October 8-10 on the UNO campus. For more information contact the Foreign Languages Department.

The Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU) will be sponsored by UNO on October 11-13. Faculty are encouraged to attend.

Digital Commons Workshop presented by Criss Library Institutional repository will be held on October 22 at 4:00 p.m. in the Criss Library.

The Klutznik-Harris-Schwalb Symposium sponsored by the Schwalb Center for Israel and Jewish Studies will be held on October 26-27. The event will kick off on the 26th in the Community Engagement Center from 9:30-11:30 a.m.

The State of the University Address will be Held on November 9 from 4:00-6:00 p.m. in the SPAC Strauss Recital Hall.

Dialogue with Muslim Communities in Omaha will be held on November 13 from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. in the Community Engagement Center Rooms 230/231.
Student Learning Outcome Assessment at UNO

The assessment of student learning outcomes (SLO) requires programs to consider the general question, “How are students different as a result of their education?” The UNO Assessment Committee works with every academic program on campus to assure that SLOs and a process for assessment are in place. The following four questions are central to the process of SLO assessment:

- What are the program’s key SLOs? SLOs should be specific and possible to measure.
- How is student performance on the SLOs measured? Measures should be directly aligned with the SLOs, and at least some direct measures should be employed.
- What results have been obtained? Results (data) should be sufficient for meaningful analysis and collected regularly.
- How has the program used the results to inform decisions and actions? Data-informed decisions and actions taken should be documented.

Academic units are required to provide information on the SLOs for each degree program within the unit to Academic Affairs. They are also asked to indicate how the end-of-program SLOs are assessed in terms of three broad domains: product, performance, and/or examination. The end-of-program assessment asks the basic question, “How do we know if students have achieved the learning objectives the program has outlined?” Finally, academic units are asked to describe how faculty use the assessment data to inform or make decisions about the program and curriculum.

We’d Like to Say Thanks: Faculty Luncheon sponsored by CFE

It’s nice to know that the work you do both in and outside the classroom is appreciated. The Center for Faculty Excellence would like to say we recognize your efforts, and, to say thanks, we are sponsoring a faculty appreciation luncheon on Monday, October 5 from 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. as part of our Book Discussion of Make It Stick. Please join us in Roskens Hall Room 214 for free food and good conversation on a book that we hope will prompt new avenues of teaching. We need an accurate head count, so please be sure to RSVP to facdev@unomaha.edu no later than September 30, 2015.
Tai Chi

Tai Chi is a Chinese martial art that dates back to the 14th century. Today Tai Chi has evolved into a graceful, low-impact form of exercise that focuses on breathing and fluent motion. Tai chi builds strength through gentle movement and promotes balance and flexibility. Practitioners of Tai Chi find that the meditative movements of the form promote stress-relief and a sense of well-being.

Master Frank Fong is from China (Hong Kong) where he studied under three grandmasters. He has been practicing Tai Chi for over 45 years and teaching it for 30 years. He has traveled the U.S., Canada, and China both sharing his art with and learning from other masters and teachers. He offers full Tai Chi classes through the Wellness program at HPER. The Center for Faculty Excellence invites you to join us for a demonstration of Tai Chi and a chance to try the form on Monday, November 2 from 2:30-3:30 p.m. in HPER 239.

Faculty Leadership Programs

The Center for Faculty Excellence mission statement says that part of our goal is “to foster faculty leadership.” We thus seek ways not only to provide opportunities for pedagogical growth, but also to nourish leadership among UNO’s faculty. To aid in encouraging leadership, we have launched a new initiative this semester called Faculty Leadership Forums. Based on the concept of Communities of Practice but with somewhat different parameters and focus, Faculty Leadership Forums are intended to connect faculty from across campus who either serve in similar leadership roles or are developing similar professional interests that lead toward leadership on campus. If you are a faculty leader on campus or are interested in moving into leadership, find out more about how you can join by visiting http://www.unomaha.edu/center-for-faculty-excellence/programs/faculty-leadership-forums.php.

We are also pleased to announce that the CFE will sponsor a group of Chairs and Directors to attend the Academic Chairpersons Conference this year in Charleston, South Carolina.
To Group or Not to Group

Recent studies suggest that flipping the focus of your classroom creates students who are more engaged, who master material more quickly, and who test better on learned material. One of the strategies often used in shifting classroom focus is to assign group work to students. However, we have all probably dealt with group-work situations where eager students take on more work while quieter students are pushed aside or where some students choose to do nothing while the other group members have to take up the slack. These struggles don’t mean that group work is ineffective; it means we have to find new approaches to group work and new strategies for assessing it.

Group work can come in different forms. Consider the following basic approaches:

- A building block approach—putting students in pairs to discuss a topic or perform a task that they then share results and analysis with the whole class.
- A forum approach—creating groups who have to work collectively to research, organize, and produce a paper, a project, a presentation, or a combination of these. Members must delegate responsibilities and coordinate progress toward the goal.
- The apprentice approach—assigning students topics that they become responsible for mastering and then sharing with the group as a whole. This is the graduate student method of allowing the student to be the teacher for a given class or portion of the class.
- The puzzle approach—assigning groups who focus on a piece of a larger task. The groups then come together at some point to unite the pieces they’ve created into a larger picture.

Some things to keep in mind as you consider group work are:

- What learning goals do you want students to achieve and which approach is most likely to help them be successful?
- What expectations do you have of students and have you clearly conveyed them?
- How will you assess outcomes in a manner that is equitable to all members of the group and that encourages overall involvement?
- How can you facilitate group cohesion by providing class time for organization, by using digital space for outside-class meetings, by promoting clearly delineated tasks and assignments, etc.

If you are interested in learning more about “flipping the classroom” or about incorporating group work into your curriculum, please join us on November 17 from 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. in Mammel Hall for “Students in Charge: How Group Work and Flipping the Focus of Your Classroom Creates Better Learners.” The discussion will be led by faculty who have found innovative ways to make students the masters of their own classroom experiences. We hope you’ll share your own experiences with student-focused learning and bring your questions and concerns about the process to the discussion.