

New Faculty Session #2: How to Have a Successful First Semester Fall Forum, August 22, 2016

Panelists:

Amy Bacon, Psychology

Mollie Adams, Accounting

Jeffrey Bakken, Dean of Graduate School & Research Programs

Kalyani Nair, Mechanical Engineering

Melissa Peterson, Physical Therapy & Health Science

Ali Zohoori, Communication

Tips:

- **Be Yourself.** Let your teaching style reflect your personality, rather than trying to fit into a type you think is expected of you.
- **Devise a strategy for fielding questions.** You won't know the answer to every question students ask. How will you deal with this?
- **Think and plan ahead.** Use Google calendar to your advantage to set a schedule and set up reminders.
 - Relatedly, research tends to have fewer immediate demands than teaching. But your tenure and promotion materials will be due before you know it! Add regular research/scholarly time to your schedule, make plans to attend conferences, set up collaborations with mutual accountability, etc.
- **Practice self-care.** Set boundaries about checking your email, when you're willing and not willing to work (i.e., no evenings; no weekends), get good sleep, exercise, etc.
- **Be conservative** in terms of your goals for the semester. Maybe the first semester isn't the time to implement every single "best practice" you've read or heard about. Try just 1 or 2, while you're still getting your feet wet.
 - *Note.* This advice changes for future semesters. Be willing to experiment and try new things in the classroom! Just not all at once.
- **Assessment.** Remember that assessment not only informs you how your students are doing, but also informs you how you are doing as a teacher. If everyone is doing poorly on your assessments maybe the assessment itself is not appropriate.
- **Feedback.** Consider eliciting feedback from students one-third to one-half way through the class. This could give you an indication of how you are doing, what changes might be warranted, and what you might do to better engage your students.
- **Syllabus.** With the incremental use of technology in our teaching and the popularity of digital learning management systems like Sakai, treat your course syllabus as a business contract and make sure your students fully and clearly understand every details in the syllabus, particularly due dates and requirements. We need to be extremely specific on these details in order to prevent any challenges from students.
- **Consult** with your colleagues. If possible, talk with those who have taught the classes you're preparing. Try to identify a mentor (either official or unofficial). Keep an active dialog with other junior faculty going into the tenure process. Attend CTEL events!