The John Stuart Rogers Faculty Development Center is home to the CSU Stanislaus Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, which is "dedicated to building a learning-centered community, and to improving student learning by supporting faculty in ways that make teaching a more satisfying, and productive activity."

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Faculty Voices
Volume X

Special Edition Celebrating the Tenth Anniversary of the John Stuart Rogers Faculty Development Center

California State University Stanislaus
2011 - 2012
Traditionally, Faculty Voices is an anthology of teaching narratives gathered from faculty across the disciplines, each exploring an aspect of teaching, learning, and/or assessment. For nine years we gathered in the John Stuart Rogers Faculty Development Center to share drafts of our essays, developing a faculty writing community engaged in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. These gatherings have enhanced our ability to discuss and write about teaching and learning, and helped to build a community of faculty engaged in critical reflection about various aspects of faculty life. We’ve also built relationships through the sharing of our teaching narratives and informal conversations over meals. The outcomes of our writing community have reached far beyond the production of an anthology, and were made possible because of the fantastic facility in which we could engage in writing, conversations, meals, and presentations of our final essays.

May 2012 marks the 10th anniversary of the dedication of the John Stuart Rogers Faculty Development Center, and we have decided to create a special edition of Faculty Voices that pays tribute to John Stuart Rogers and reflects upon the importance of this facility to the faculty and our campus. The essays, letters and statements contained in this edition recognize how important the Center is to faculty, and by extension to all members of the campus community. The Center is an amazing place for learning and community building as faculty, students, staff, administrators and community members visit to attend New Faculty Orientation and ongoing faculty development workshops, connect with service-learning partners, engage in shared governance activities, meet with department or College colleagues, visit with California Faculty Association leaders, attend lectures and conferences, celebrate student and faculty accomplishments, honor retirees, mourn the passing of a colleague, discuss books and current events, engage in grading and assessment activities, feed the ducks and enjoy the lake, and so much more.

We will return in 2013 with a more traditional edition of Faculty Voices, but we wanted this year to make explicit our appreciation for the physical space that helps to support the work that we do. The generous donation by John Stuart Rogers has already meant so much to the campus community, and we couldn’t let this anniversary pass without telling some of our stories and offering thanks to Mr. Rogers.

Dr. Betsy Eudey
Director, Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning
Associate Professor, Gender Studies
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What Did You Make of This Book?

Dr. Cathlin M. Davis
Liberal Studies

The Faculty Development Center is my favorite building on campus. It has a peaceful feel, and I have more good memories there than bad ones (despite many contentious Faculty Senate meetings). Some semesters, when I have a lot of committee meetings, I feel like I almost live there. In fact, during the semester, I come to the FDC every other week. It starts with fiction book club, then two weeks later is non-fiction book club, and so it goes. The book clubs started in the fall semester of 2003. I can’t remember the first books we read. I know that the total is coming close to 100, if not past it – most of them books I never would have read on my own, and a few I’m still talking about, years after we read them.

The book clubs were started by Armin Shultz, the first director of the Faculty Development Center. The groups started small. The non-fiction book club had three members the first year. The core groups have slowly grown, and with additional people who come for one book in the semester, most meetings have between four and eight people. Some people come for just one book, some for a whole semester, and some have become part of the core group.

Sometimes when I’m telling someone about our book clubs, I find myself wanting to defend them. How is a book club part of faculty development? We aren’t there to learn about teaching, or increase our scholarship, or do the important work of faculty governance. The book clubs lack the formality of committee meetings. They are social gatherings, and thus there is room for sharing stories, asking questions, and venting for a few minutes before starting the discussion. There is no agenda to get through, so the conversation can go wherever it may go. People have a chance to get to know others from across campus, building connections and support systems.

I find myself wishing that we had more opportunities like book club to interact informally on a regular basis. I have thought about a game group, or a card group, or a bowling team. Faculty need the chance to interact outside of our regular workday. The book clubs have an advantage over other social gatherings we might do. Faculty are in academia for a reason – we like to learn and study. In the fiction book club we have an opportunity for intellectual discussion, sharing the different viewpoints of our various disciplines (literature, psychology, ethnic studies, etc.). In the non-fiction bookclub we’re introduced to something new: how people can train their intuition, the life of the woman who first photographed DNA, or the events that led to the Dust Bowl. Even if we learn nothing new from the book itself, we learn from the conversation, especially when one of us is already knowledgeable about the subject.

Some books we’ve read were challenging. Some were a nice escape. All provided a chance for good conversation. When Armin retired, I wrote a poem about the first years of the book clubs. I asked various group members to tell me a phrase or sentence that they have heard more than once in a book club meeting. The poem was published in a collection of reflections in Armin’s honor. Last year, I asked several group members to join me in reading the poem at Armin’s funeral. It is the best way I can describe what a book club meeting is like.
67 Books

What did you make of this book?

I loved it, I hated it, I’ll read it again,
I ran out of time, I didn’t finish.
Should we tell the ending, or do you want to be surprised?

I’ve been wanting to read this book.
It drew me in, I couldn’t put it down.
It was hard to get into, I kept falling asleep.
I read it so quickly it’s hard to remember.
I just finished it today.

It’s okay to not like the book.
(Even if the rest of the group thinks it’s the best book ever?)
Who picked this one?
I couldn’t stand this book.
Why is someone’s pet always killed?

I like to learn something when I read a book.
I desperately wanted something different to happen.
I missed that. I’ll have to go back and read it again.
I felt like I was really visiting this place.
I read it years ago, but reading it again I saw new things.

I really like this first question, because...
Do you think the author meant...
On page 23 when the author writes...

What did you make of this book?
I titled the poem “67 Books” because that was how many books we had read up to that point. In most semesters we read three to four books in each group. Yes, I read a lot, and yes, I read quickly. Sometimes I have to skim through parts to finish on time, and one or two I haven’t finished. Other books I read in just a few days, because they are so compelling. We read Barack Obama’s *Dreams of My Father* when he was just a senator, newly arrived in the national spot-light. We read *The Secret Life of Bees* and *The Help* before they were made into movies. Some books are still on my bookshelves. Others have been sold to used book stores, or donated to book sales. Some I hated, some I loved. A few have stuck with me.

Malcolm Gladwell, in *Blink*, explains how people are able to tap into their subconscious observations. An expert can analyze something without being able to articulate the steps that led to the analysis. This is called “thin slicing,” a term that has been added to my vocabulary. The *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* is a story told from the perspective of an autistic teenager. This fictional story gave us insight into how autistic people think, and led us into a discussion of the education of people with special needs. *Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* was difficult for some members to grasp, until I pointed out that most of the original readers were teenagers. That framework put everything into perspective. I went to see *The Help* because I wanted to see how it would be interpreted for the screen. I found myself wishing that we could talk about it again, to continue our conversation with the added material of the film.

In 1916, there was a molasses flood in Boston. An improperly built 2.3 million gallon tank of molasses collapsed in a working-class neighborhood. The resulting 30 foot high wave of molasses toppled a train trestle and pushed buildings off their foundations. 20 people died. Our discussion of *Dark Tide* ranged from the details of the disaster, to the sociological aspects, to the detective work of the author, who tracked down court documents that hadn’t been seen for 80 years.

Part of faculty development is intellectual stimulation. If all we ever do is teach and publish in our disciplines, we are in danger of falling into a rut. Learning new things from reading allows us to remember what it’s like to be students. Our students read challenging texts every day. Even those of us who find time to read extensively in our own fields can forget what it is like to read something we don’t have a background in. Book club helps faculty experience that. New thoughts, new neural pathways, new knowledge are important to keep us motivated. I have come to appreciate the authors who can teach me about biology or history, who don’t talk down to the general audience while still making the concepts clear. I have always loved literature – I was an English major – and I still appreciate the way good literature can teach about culture and place. I will always be grateful to Armin for starting the book clubs, and I hope they last for another 10 years.

Just last month, we read *Hellhound on His Trail*, the story of Martin Luther King’s assassination and the manhunt for James Earl Ray. We learned that Ray was caught because of a laundry tag. I would have enjoyed learning that even if I’d read the book on my own. Having a conversation about it was much better.
Building Community

Dr. Betsy Eudey
Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

I first visited the John Stuart Rogers Faculty Development Center – the FDC – when I came to campus in Spring 2003 for an on-site interview. I had already been impressed by the overall beauty of the campus, the kindness of the faculty I had met, and the mission of the University and the hopes for the Gender Studies program, but the FDC really helped to sell me on the campus. The building signaled an institutional commitment to teaching excellence, and to fostering a community among the campus faculty. The building was beautiful, comfortable, and welcoming – a mix between a conference center and a mountain lodge. While visiting the Center I met faculty from many different disciplines who were sharing stories about teaching, discussing university matters, and simply enjoying one another’s company. I wanted to stay and continue to be part of these conversations, and was thrilled to be offered a position at CSU Stanislaus.

My next visit to campus was in August 2003, and my first stop was the FDC for New Faculty Orientation. Armin Schulz and Ximena Garcia welcomed me warmly, and along with the members of the Faculty Development Committee ensured that I felt connected to other colleagues, prepared and supported as a new faculty member, and encouraged to return regularly to the Center for professional development and relationship building. And return I did. I learned about educational technologies, participated in reading groups, attended sessions about pedagogical practices, learned more about service learning and global education, gained insight into ways to support my progress toward tenure and promotion, and attended Academic Senate meetings. Because of time spent in the FDC, I learned about university culture, enhanced the quality of my teaching, and developed connections to faculty of all ranks and across all disciplines. I felt like a member of the campus community, not simply a part of my department or my college. The FDC as a site of connection and growth became so important to me that I was inspired to join the Faculty Development Committee.

As a second year faculty member and newly-elected member of the Faculty Development Committee I had the opportunity to help to welcome to the campus the next group of new faculty, and to help to host events at the FDC, serving not only as a participant but also a leader of development activities. A year later I was chair of the Committee and continued to expand the hours spent each week in the FDC. I averaged six events a month at the FDC during my first five years on campus, and am convinced that the knowledge and skills I developed, and the relationships I built, improved the quality of my teaching and scholarship, and ensured my success within the tenure and promotion process.

In 2009 I was honored with the opportunity to serve as the Director of the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, and now have an official office in the building which always felt like a second office and home to me. I am part of the “FDC family,” for those who work in this building truly treat one another as family, and welcome all comers to our beautiful home. And we do a lot of welcoming. From Monday morning thru Friday afternoon, and most Saturdays as well, the FDC is a building full of activity. While 2-8 faculty development sessions are held each week throughout the year, many more faculty visit for one-on-one support for their teaching, scholarship, and personal growth. The Office of Service Learning staff interacts daily with faculty, students, and community partners, and often hosts meetings and events in the FDC. The building hosts the Senate offices, all Academic Senate meetings, and meetings of all committees and subcommittees of the Senate, with over 100 faculty, staff, students, and administrators visiting the building each week for these activities. And the California Faculty Association (CFA) office is here as well, allowing a private space for consultation with union representatives in addition to fostering collaborations between CFA, Senate, and...
Faculty development activities. Departments and colleges hold meetings in the Center on a regular basis, and periodically we are host to special conferences and events.

And it’s not all work and no play. The Center is a fantastic site for parties and celebrations. In this building we have celebrated new hires, the awarding of tenure and promotion, faculty achievements, student and faculty research, retirements, birthdays and pregnancies, holidays, reaccreditation, and so much more. Many departments host faculty, and student-faculty dinners and picnics that allow for deeper connections to develop that foster academic excellence and connection to the University. And while this is primarily a joyful place, it’s also a place where faculty can comfortably express a range of emotions. The Center is a safe space where, away from their offices and classrooms, faculty and staff can come to mourn the death of a campus colleague, discuss concerns about issues occurring in any aspect of the campus community, strategize appropriate responses to perceived wrong-doings, and receive support and resources for whatever issues arise.

It’s important to recognize that faculty development activities occur at many campuses throughout the country, and are certainly the norm within the CSU. But CSU Stanislaus has the unique benefit of this special physical space, made possible by John Stuart Rogers. The Center is a “faculty space” – a place for faculty to engage in vital work in support of student learning, scholarly excellence, service to campus and community, and personal and professional development. The space fosters the type of campus community that is a core component of CSU Stanislaus. Faculty members at Stanislaus are connected across departments and colleges, and these connections help us to better support student learning and development. What occurs during individual activities within the Center is important to professional development, shared governance, teaching and learning, university functioning, campus-community relations, etc. But what happens when these activities occur in proximity to one another is greater than the sum of the parts.

It is not uncommon for a faculty member to arrive at the FDC a few minutes early for a committee meeting. On the way in s/he stops by to say hi to Ximena and to grab a cup of coffee or tea (provided for free by the CFA). Perhaps then s/he’ll pop into my office and we’ll talk for a few minutes about something happening in our courses, or about a campus issue – this may trigger for me an idea for a new workshop, or prompt me to send resources out to other faculty. Perhaps Brett Forray and Julie Fox are meeting with a community partner, and the faculty member has an opportunity for a quick introduction and the stage gets set for a future service-learning collaboration. When the committee meeting is over, conversations occur with other faculty who are waiting to use the room, and more cross-disciplinary connections are made. If questions arise regarding a policy or issue, the faculty can walk down the hall to the Academic Senate and CFA offices and get their questions answered. And before leaving the building, they may run into Glenn Pillsbury or Bob Koehler as they’re setting up for another of their wonderful technology workshops, and a quick (or not so quick) question is answered that can advance their ability to engage their students or complete their faculty work. While most of the conversations that occur are tied to university matters, there is also lots of interest in one another as people with experiences and commitments beyond the university. The building helps to foster this interconnection and care in matters institutional and personal, infusing it in the culture and structure of a faculty members’ day. We thrive as a community because we have a space that promotes and celebrates the value of the community.

As I am completing this essay, I am also completing my application to be considered for a second term as Director of the Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. While I would have likely enjoyed providing leadership in faculty development at any campus, getting to do this work at CSU Stanislaus within the John Stuart Rogers Faculty Development Center makes this job a joy to engage in each and every day. My work is easier to engage in because of the resources we have available to us in this building, and the comfort faculty have coming to the Center. I get to spend parts of every day on campus interacting with faculty, staff
and students who have come to the Center to expand their own knowledge and skills, and to participate in activities that will enhance the quality of life on the campus. I can’t believe how fortunate I am to daily witness and participate in these activities, and that I get to work in this amazing space in which it is all fostered. The Faculty Development Center is the foundation of campus to me, for what occurs here supports all other aspects of the campus community and my work within it.

**Midnight Musings of a Faculty Governance Aficionada**

Ms. Renae M. Floyd
Psychological Counseling Services

When choosing my title today, I struggled for some time with finding a term that suited me regarding my interest in faculty governance. Mark Thompson really has the best term—that of faculty governance “hack”—described by Webster as “one who works hard at boring tasks”. But I settled on the term aficionada (feminine version) because it sounds a bit more elegant and the definition is actually “a fan of bull fighting”. I think it suits!

I also talk of midnight musing, because if anything besides family dramas bother me in the night, its governance issues. I think they must exacerbate my tendency to be compulsive about achieving order and right outcomes. Certainly faculty governance activities challenge anyone who tries to put things in order. I have often felt that dealing with the faculty and their concerns is akin to herding cats!

I actually had my first lesson in shared governance as an approximately eight year old girl sitting in a pew in a Mennonite church in south central Kansas. When my father stood up and spoke out at congregational meetings, what I remember is that my mother would always desperately try to shush him. At home, they fought bitterly about my father opining in front of the congregants. My mother was concerned that others would view my father’s words as radical, which they probably were at that time and place. But what I have learned since those days is that it was not my father’s words or opinions that were significant. It was important that in his world at that time and place he actually had the courage to speak and a venue in which it was entirely appropriate to voice his perspective—whatever it was. Because in spite of many of their more conservative beliefs, the religious/ethnic culture in which I grew up provided me with an important piece of my subsequent worldview—that of shared governance or shared responsibility for how a community functions and hopefully thrives. The Mennonite church in my neck of the Midwest woods held fast to their conviction that their church leaders were beholden to their parishioners. Leaders led only with the input and permission of the congregation and quite simply, that made it all work out quite well. They even asked the congregation for tenure and this had to be reviewed, discussed and then votes cast. Congregational meetings were a very serious matter in my home.

There were certainly other formative factors that influenced my interest in governance activities in my present academic appointment, but in my tenure here at CSUS, I have been greatly influenced by some colleagues I want to mention now, partly because in the midst of the complexities of our present circumstances, they can be...
First let me say that I have been unspeakably honored to be a faculty member at CSUS. I said in my remarks at the award ceremony that my membership in and relationship to the faculty here has been the most significant of my career life. And my work here, both in my clinical practice and in my service to the university, has been enhanced by (pause) the wisdom and articulation of Ray Zarling, the relentlessness of Sam Oppenheim, the integrity and gentility of Hobart Hamilton, the humor and zest of Armin Schulz, the policy and protocol clarification of Al Pandell and the overwhelming faculty advocacy and pure dedication of Tom Young. In addition, my present day colleagues inspire me daily. I have worked closely with many of you, but have been privileged to be exposed to and work with (pause) the equanimity and forthrightness of Lynn Johnson, the fiery activism of Steven Filling, the impeccable word and rhetoric of Mark Thompson and the “always willing to serve” attitude and necessary irreverence of Al Petrosky. Thanks to you all!

Many colleagues ask me often about why I serve in faculty governance. I realize that when observed from another vantage point, the tedious and conflict-ridden nature of governance can seem quite thankless. Then there are many who believe, and find adequate justification for that belief, that the structure of faculty governance is a “paper tiger”. The hierarchical structure of the higher education system makes many feel like any task accomplished in the arena of faculty committee work is not of any value or easily discounted or overridden. I will cite the expertise of our colleague and FG award winner, Dr. Thompson, because this is important for us to know and remember. “Faculty governance on our campus is a model where representatives—appointed or elected—vote on behalf of a relatively small constituency (the department) that has ready access to and likely regular interaction with that representative. So the representative function of those engaged in faculty governance at the campus is close to the idea of a direct democracy (one human one vote). That is, faculty representatives are very answerable to those they represent. At the same time, however, those representatives function in a campus system where final authority is exercised by a president with no check on his or her authority—in effect the president functions as a monarch. This is why tenure is important to shared governance—because tenure makes it very difficult to kill the peasants.” So I can really see, as you also can, that feeling like what we may do in our governance positions seems ineffectual. But that the same time, my thinking is this structure makes what the faculty does in governance seem so much more important. Many colleagues say to me—it won’t make any difference anyway. I propose to you that possibly the goal of making a difference should be abandoned and then the work will flow more easily.

I surmise also that my training and chosen profession is largely responsible for my interest in governance work. I am, by the very nature of what I have been trained to do for a living, adept at interpersonal interaction and assessing interpersonal and process dynamics. I have been trained to communicate effectively and also trained to analyze and dissect the stuff of individual and group psyches. In addition, I have been fortunate enough (I was in the right place at the right time) to receive advanced training in personality development and structure. Thus, when some co-workers and colleagues come to me groaning about the dialogue and diatribes in the Academic Senate or on facnet, I can certainly understand where they are coming from, but for me, this discourse is a veritable petri dish of case studies!

You, I’m sure, know that some of your own acquaintances, relatives and friends may wonder why you would ever be interested in your own particular disciplines. But you also know that you can’t get enough of your topics of interest—that’s why you are here! And so it is for me—I have a fantastic venue in which to do what I love to do. I love listening to and speculating on various opinions and discerning ways of encoding problems and issues. I am fascinated by how an economist might spin a discussion on workload differently than an artist or a chemist. So I’ve dived in. But I am admitting to you today that there have also been wounds along the way. So here is what I have learned as a result of the hard knocks.
I’ve learned that at times, in our present climate, you can’t be too visible or outspoken in governance without it affecting you or your own discipline. I am assiduously trying to follow the advice of Margaret Sanger who encourages me not to be awed by what has been built around me and that my voice bears expressing, no matter what I or anyone else might think about what I have to say. I’ve learned that, as my title states, governance frustrations can disturb one’s sleep and health and that as a result, I’ve had to pay much more exquisite attention to self-care. I’ve learned how to manage dinnertime conversation so as not to alienate my dear Charles. I’ve learned that my own colleagues don’t see governance activities the way I do, nor are they interested in them—and that that is OK. And I learned that it’s quite possible that a counselor should never chair the University Educational Policies Committee. This was evidenced by my time spent in the Emanuel Hospital ER following my last meeting as chair of said committee. Fred Hilpert warned me—he said that UEPC was “the gorilla” of faculty governance assignments.

I really didn’t want this talk to be merely an exercise in trying once again to convince you that we have to stay involved in governance. I certainly believe that but we have heard those arguments many times and if you are here I probably don’t have to convince you. I’ve run virtually out of ways to convince colleagues to run for governance positions. I’ve realized that most of the time I’m asking folks to walk into nightmare scenarios and get virtually nothing in return. I have had many midnight musings and been discouraged about something else I’ve heard over and over again from my respected colleagues more often over the last six years. It is this—Renae—here’s the deal. I just want to do my job, keep my head down and make it to retirement healthy and without being bitter.

So, OK, point well taken. We certainly should take into account self-care in our jobs. Yet most of us also feel as if we want to make a difference, even leave a legacy. That’s what we all trained for—making a difference in student’s lives. So how do we reconcile this dilemma? I’ll come back to this later and hopefully connect the dots somehow.

I want to mention another aspect of governance service that has been part of my midnight musings—it has to do with the concept of community mentioned earlier. I’ve come to the conclusion that it is a reality that we LIVE AND WORK IN A COMMUNITY THAT NEEDS OUR INVOLVEMENT IF IT IS TO THRIVE. Ours is not just any job, but a job/vocation in a community—a community of scholars and learners. I also realize that you really can take or leave the notion that in a community, we have a responsibility—some of my colleagues don’t feel this way and that is their right. But my thinking has evolved to believing that not only do we have a responsibility to each other, but also to ourselves as members of this community. This is why I’ve said that faculty governance service can actually be an exquisite form of self-care. It is that because my father (without knowing it) found the best of both worlds. He was not only serving his congregation when he made his opinions known. He was helping himself. He was helping his own personal expansion as a member of his community and the result of that was that he felt more at ease with himself, more aware, less isolated and more confident—a commodity that is at a premium these days. It’s my belief that it is confidence that generates happiness, not vice versa. His congregational colleagues knew where he stood and they could call on him when they needed him. I can truly say that that is what has happened to me. It is something that I actually see as truly nothing short of remarkable, considering my roots and what I was conditioned to believe about myself and my contributions to any workplace. Service in governance has indeed weighed heavy on me and caused me more stress than I would want at times. But it has also increased my confidence, expanded my perspective, given me access to opinions and belief systems and knowledge that I never would have had otherwise. It has made me feel part of a community and I don’t believe that is just a personal need. I really believe that need is within us all. And that community has given back to me richly, in spite of the despair we have all felt of late and continue to feel. Also, it is certainly a reality that if we abdicate the faculty voice and just “keep our heads down and do our jobs”, because of the higher educational structure, we will certainly leave ourselves
tremendously vulnerable. We see evidence of this every day. Those of you who were in the room for the WASC exit interview felt it. And more recently, we felt it when faculty rights were breathtakingly abrogated with the change of RPT policy and procedure.

So back to the question of how we care for ourselves and our respective disciplines and still find ways to make a difference—especially in the complex, conflict-ridden, contentious environment in which we find ourselves. Actually, I came here today to say this—my work in governance has been made more joyful and effortless because I have tried on a daily basis to attempt to CONTAIN the paradox in which we live—not react to it in habitual ways, such as retreating or giving up.

This is the paradox of which I speak. I think we would agree that at times recently and even at present, our work lives here have felt and have really been absolutely wretched. I don’t even think I need to elaborate here because we all know the stories about erosion of morale, unfair treatment, colleagues fleeing, fear of programs being discontinued, and fear of loss or of dramatic changes in the way we live our lives and do our jobs. But AT THE SAME TIME, we can choose to experience our lives here as also glorious. We all can attest to experiencing those moments. For example, standing with colleagues in the amphitheater on the first Friday and Saturday in June watching the faces and listening to the joy. Hearing from a former student who calls or e-mails just to say they found that job and if it wasn’t for you, they wouldn’t be where they are. And just the simple privilege of standing in front of the classroom, in the stacks of the library, sitting in the counseling office and in the locker room to impart to our students what we have been so fortunate to have the chance to learn ourselves. We have had the supreme opportunity to become highly educated and then every day we have the chance to pass that on to those who see us as quite literally, rock stars. We also get to freely interact with each other about our respective crafts. That kind of engagement has kept me inspired regularly and expands me, both as a person and as a professional.

So, in closing, to do this work, we have to be able to be present with and contain both—the wretchedness and the wonderment. I’m here to tell you that **they are not mutually exclusive, nor do we eradicate one with the other**. They actually NEED each other, they normally co-exist and we ARE all (yes, all of us) able to contain them both. One inspires us and one softens us. Taken together, taking many deep, cleansing breaths and being open and present to it all, they make us even wiser and sharper and more patient and less fearful. Taken together, they give us a perspective we can live with. We rejoice in the wonderful moments and we console each other and keep working despite the wretchedness. There is no futility in this—every faculty action is an intervention and we do important work. Certainly both despair and inspiration are present in faculty governance work. It is an opportunity to again (as Margaret Sanger says) “not be awed by what has been built around us, but to honor the voice in all of us that struggles for expression”. In addition, this has helped me also—(from Frank Herbert)—

**I must not fear. Fear is the mind killer. Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration.**

**I must and will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me.**

**And when it has gone past I will turn the inner eye to see its path. Where the fears have gone there will be nothing.**

**Only I will remain.**

Because of you all and because simply the work is there for us to do, I will always remain available to serve and am always honored to serve alongside you.
All the Things I Never Do at the Faculty Development Center

Dr. Marina M. Gerson
Zoology

My life as a new faculty member was pretty busy. As you well know, that’s an understatement. I spent almost every waking minute outside of class in preparation for the next session. It worked out more or less okay, because I didn’t know anybody and had no social life anyways.

The flood of announcements for workshops and book clubs and presentations and events at the John Stuart Rogers Faculty Development Center used to arrive by campus mail. These fliers promised professional and personal growth through participation in technical workshops, discussions of teaching, and attendance at seminars. They made really nice scratch paper when working with students in office hours. My calendar was full; making time for another activity would mean sacrificing yet another hour of sleep. To my great regret, I am not a very good teacher when I haven’t slept.

Moving forward six and a half years, I have to find my own scratch paper; the announcements from the Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning arrive in e-mail. I know that on Wednesdays I am missing out on the chance to coordinate body and mind and improve my posture through Yoga. On Mondays and Thursdays, I am failing to quiet my thoughts when I skip Meditation Practice. I just missed the opportunity to explore ideas of shared governance in the context of the book Academic Repression. My curiosity about how VoiceThread could facilitate interaction in my larger lecture classes will go unanswered. I think about Affordable Learning Solutions, and I wonder how I would find the time to develop my own content materials for students, when I barely have time to update my existing courses.

The Faculty Center offers too many options! Clearly, I must pick and choose.

What have I done at the Faculty Development Center? Even disregarding the faculty governance meetings I attend several times each month, I actually visit the faculty center quite regularly.

I have read seven different books that enhanced my own pedagogy and shared ideas in lively discussions with colleagues from across campus. These discussions resulted in me trying crazy new approaches in my classes, which I continue to modify each time I teach them. I also learned to admire that bundle of contradictions (with whom I unknowingly overlapped at UC Santa Cruz, by the way) who goes by “bell hooks” without capital letters. It’s reassuring to know that I’m not the only one who must handle internal contradictions and conflict.

When asked, I stepped up to lead a discussion of Darwin’s Armada, a book whose contrivance to make every journey a sea battle I found tiresome. Even so, it retold the stories of the naturalists I already admire, and I was pleased to read their stories again. I also learned about the history and social impact of the rubber trade and discussed the modern repercussions as recounted in Devil’s Milk. I took the book on cancer, but I didn’t attend the discussion (shhhhh!).
I have participated in seven Instructional Institute Days with my colleagues, one for every January I have been on campus. Each Institute has restored my enthusiasm to approach the new semester with a fresh perspective. Each one is unique and unpredictable: the outcomes are in part determined by which of my colleagues come out to play.

With four colleagues from four disciplines, I was a member of a faculty community to bring universal design for learning into our classrooms. UDL practice enhances the experiences of all of our students. My experience is reflected not only in my class activities but also in my syllabi. As show in Figure 1, the length of my “average” syllabus has varied through time, but there has been a recent dramatic increase in the quality as estimated by value per page. Now, in addition to providing a course schedule and list of where the “points” come from, I offers lots of study suggestions and links to resources, explanations of how the materials and assignments relate to the course objectives and student learning outcomes, and multiple ways of making contact with me, the instructor.

I have participated in workshops to learn about BlackBoard and Collaborate and distance learning techniques. I presented my own experiences with “clickers,” a tool that can give everyone, even a shy student who struggles to present in a group situation, a safe way to participate and contribute to the classroom experience. I have listened to webinars on high impact practices in teaching and on the experiences of underrepresented groups. I find that I love webinars. I enjoy being the listener, and I love that, since I am not on camera myself, I can gaze out the window. I watch the birds while the presenter educates me. Thank goodness we don’t have windows in our classrooms, eh?

I have learned about the scholarly activities taking place on campus through the seminars presented by faculty in the Faculty Lecture Series, and through hosting the RSCA Week event in the JSRFDC. I have supported my students as they presented their first formal research talks at the Student Research Competition in the faculty center.

I have honored my colleagues as they have received awards or tenure or promotion, and I have celebrated with them as they announced their retirements. Last year, I dashed out of class just in the nick of time to receive an award, myself. I have also celebrated our outstanding students, at the Biology department’s Spring Barbeque and departmental award ceremony, held at the faculty center.

In summary, at the John Stuart Rogers Faculty Development Center, I have forged deep and lasting connections with my colleagues from across the disciplines. We have shared our thinking on the issues that matter to us: teaching, learning, discovery, and creativity. The Faculty Development Center is the place
where we come together, share our ideas, and emerge renewed and hopeful. With so many varied offerings for engagement, the Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning provides every faculty member the opportunity for professional and personal enrichment and a meaningful connection to the campus community, our home.

How Teacher–Students Can Learn from CSU Stanislaus

Dr. Keith Nainby
Communication Studies

I believe, following Paulo Freire, that we teach most effectively when we acknowledge that we are in process with students in the learning relationship. Teachers, like students, are not yet who we will become on the other side of a learning activity. We, together with students, redefine ourselves and our world when we enter into a learning partnership. I like to use Freire’s term “teacher–student,” rather than teacher, to describe myself, because using that term helps me remind myself and others of this commitment.

The trouble is that merely “using” the term does not mean I am always living this commitment. Doing so is difficult because we are immersed in sociocultural conditions that persistently reinforce the dichotomy between teacher (as “expert”) and student (as “novice”). Building a career studying pedagogy, I have been encouraged by mentors and colleagues to get better at living as a teacher–student by exploring assumptions grounding the teacher/student dichotomy. But in keeping with the notion of teacher–student, I find that I’m still learning. I find I can most effectively recognize these pernicious assumptions when students (student–teachers, in Freire’s language) challenge them within our daily learning activities. Two such assumptions are challenged for me by the special community of students here at Stanislaus: education as a specific entitlement we have as citizens, and intelligence as a specific ability some people possess more than others.

Students here at Stanislaus work much, much harder, as a rule, than I had to work to secure an undergraduate education. I attended a private university a thousand miles from my home, on full scholarship with very little financial support from my family, working 20-30 hours at a separate job each week during my entire undergraduate career—and these qualities defined me as someone who was “putting myself through school” among my peers. But my efforts do not begin to compare to those of our typical Stanislaus student. This semester, I can count at least thirty students who I know are primary caregivers for other family members; there are likely many more than thirty whose circumstances I do not know. Moreover, nearly every student I know at Stanislaus works at least as many hours per week at a separate job as I did. Many students take on significant commutes each day they travel to our campus for a class. All of these practices become even more admirable given the economic pressures students face as jobs become more scarce and tuition and fees increase. These choices teach me that Stanislaus students are dedicated to achieving their degrees through struggle, through concerted effort over time. Stanislaus students are reshaping how we conceive of public education in California, actively taking up the challenge of the CSU mission statement in ways from which all of us charged with shepherding that mission can learn.
Perhaps because of their breadth of professional and personal activities, Stanislaus students teach me how many exciting modes of intelligence can inform our learning together. The most cogent example in my recent work stems from *The Signal* student newspaper, where this year the two editors most responsible for making the look of the paper fresh, dynamic and contemporary with their layout and design expertise are majoring in neither communication nor art, but biological sciences. Each semester, I am struck anew by a student such as the one this semester who shaped an in-class performance assignment by showing us how effective sales pitches depend on reciprocal giving among seller and buyer—not *that* this is how sales work, but *how* they work this way. My own meager speaking and listening skills in Spanish, which I strive to improve by eavesdropping during casual moments around class meetings, are always most sharpened not by students studying communication, language, or even TESOL, but by local Latinas planning to teach early primary grades. Though I have been intellectually persuaded long ago that intelligence is a social construct, takes on multiple forms and changes over time, I am much more capable of making sense of that truth in learning environments when working with students like these.

Reflecting on what I have learned so far from Stanislaus students’ effort and intelligence, I consider again how I might, with their help, become a different teacher–student in the future. We all, teachers and students alike, need a vision of the future to compel our application of will and wisdom in the ways exemplified by Stanislaus students. That vision, for me, is one of hope: hope that within the larger context of public debate about why, how and for whom this university should exist, I can become a more complicated, more committed member of it. In this way, together with students, I will help redefine our university through learning.

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**Management Strategies for Mentoring Pedagogical Based Research**

Mr. Joel Hawkings, Ms. Evangelia Damaskou, and Dr. Panagiotis Petratos

In this paper we summarize our research experience during a period more than a full academic year in a University learning focused environment with a mission dedicated to teaching and pedagogical based research. Our team is composed of two experienced researchers and two novice researchers to approach this research project (Labaree, 2011). Our efforts have produced a fruitful publication result at one of the leading world economic organizations responsible for research and development to advise and guide world governments to adopt policies which will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world.

From the perspective of the neophyte researcher it is not easy making the transition from the mindset of a novice learner to the demands and the rigors of a research career. One of our team members started at California State University, Stanislaus as an undergraduate learner and after our collaboration is now well on his way to a research career and a Ph.D. program. This fruitful development is due to the focused research project based learning, the fostering environment, good will and advice of the people at California State University, Stanislaus (Markham, 2011).
Faculty at California State University, Stanislaus has significantly benefited by the plethora of training programs offered at the Faculty Development Center and they are focused on strategies for productive research in a pedagogical environment, educational information technology for effective pedagogy and strategies for effective teaching and learning (Imai, Tingley, 2012). Following is a detailed account of the experience of one of our colleagues in our research team.

Starting at CSU Stanislaus I had a goal of completing a Bachelor degree. Leaving CSU Stanislaus, my goal is to complete a Ph.D. degree. The journey has been a trial of personality. CSU Stanislaus has the qualities necessary for this transformation. I would like to thank the faculty and staff of this accumulation.

As a returning student, self-discipline learned in the private sector started as a measure of how to spend my time. Despite the time my classes started I would be on campus at 8:00 in the morning ready for work. To me being on campus was the same as work. However, I learned that self-discipline was only the beginning of my education. After my first semester, I began to take excessive units to fill my time and hunger for learning. Soon it became apparent that I would continue my education towards a research career. In search of a plan, I interviewed different campus personnel.

After attending a faculty lecture in the Faculty Development Center my eyes opened to the world of research. Faculty Development Center Professors and Staff including Betsy Eudey and Ximena Garcia were very accommodating and provided valuable advice. They suggested that I find a mentor if I intended to do quality research by listing names of professors that actively do research and suggested I inquire at the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs for further assistance.

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs personnel were very helpful. Heather Adams and Nancy Lewis both asked about the types of research that I was interested in. They gave me suggestions on which professors may have similar research interests and possible mentorship. Heather Adams offered encouragement to make contact and pursue research. Motivated by Nancy Lewis’s personal accounts of research experiences with on campus research Professors I continued my pursuit.

Finally, I had a meeting with Professor Panagiotis Petratos. We were both interested in similar research and by the end of the meeting we agreed to begin working on our research project whilst mentoring me through the research process. I was excited and eager to be able to utilize the Gallo computer laboratory for research. The computer hardware and software and laboratory hours offered great flexibility to accomplishing quality research. In our research team we collaborated on the research project for 3 semesters.

As I have now graduated and am in search of a graduate school, I would like to thank my mentor, faculty and staff for their guidance and cultivation of my research skills. It was interesting to witness the synergetic nature between the Faculty Development Center, the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, and Research Faculty. I look forward to continuing my scholastic career. In closing I will add, it will be an honor to join the ranks of Faculty Researchers and mentor students when I become a Professor. Thank you CSU Faculty and Staff.

In conclusion our team research effort and mentoring process has led to the fruitful result of a publication at a leading world economic organization and has given the opportunity to young researchers at a pedagogical focused University to further pursue their research careers.

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If It’s Tuesday, This Must be the Senate

Dr. Koni Stone
Speaker of the Faculty
Chemistry

When I became Speaker of the Faculty Senate, my life became a swirling bowl of alphabet soup: AS, FDC, SEC, FBAC, FAC, RSCAPC, TRPC, SPWG, COC, EMMGC, UEPC, add a grant: STEM and a collaboration with Disney World: PIOBR, mix well and try to avoid confusion. Thankfully, the office of speaker comes with two essential ingredients: a superbly organized staff run by Isabel Pierce and an office located in the JSRFDC. This allows for the chemist to leave the PIOBR (Prevention of Iron Overload in Black Rhinos) (STEM, Science Technology Engineering Math) student research workers at the last possible moment to arrive in time for a quick consult with the Service Learning Office (could either Brett or Julie help me schlep equipment for the Science Olympiad?), a minute to confirm the next Faculty Development Committee event with Ximena, and then have Isabel hand me the correct folder (all color coded) for the right meeting that is most likely happening in the JSRFDC.

The John Stuart Rogers Faculty Development Center is an integral part of our faculty governance operation. I wonder how previous speakers managed in the days of yore that predate our JSRFDC. I was but a young pup in those days, but it seemed like meetings were spread out all over campus and I have no clue as to where the Speaker’s office was located. (Did the Speaker have an office?) So, having the FDC with its kitchen for readily storing and preparing snacks (SEC would revolt without our goodies), its comfy chairs and well lit rooms all in one building has greatly enhanced the productivity (and moods!) of the faculty. Its one stop hopping for all our meeting needs!

Faculty Governance at CSU Stanislaus

Across
3. Need to add units to a major? Proposing a new undergraduate program? Send your materials to this committee.
5. Work group that is analyzing data related to the strategic plan
6. 46 (±) Representatives come together every other Tuesday to move, debate and vote (now with clickers!)
8. Like UEPC, for advanced degrees
10. New faculty orientation, Instructional Institute, mini grants, receptions and more!
11. Send your Committee preference forms to this committee. Hurry, the good ones will go fast

Down
1. This group was organized to work on issues identified by WASC
2. Policies related to research and creative activities originate in this committee
3. This committee reads the binders that their colleagues submit
4. If $ are involved, this faculty committee will work on it
7. This group meets every other Tuesday to eat yummy snacks and contemplate the upcoming AS agenda
9. Need a sabbatical? An RSCA award? Want to nominate an Outstanding Professor? Apply here!
10. Committee that addresses all issues related to faculty
Reflections About the Faculty Development Center on this Special Occasion
For the past ten years, the Stanislaus Chapter of the California Faculty Association has proudly called the John Stuart Rogers Faculty Development Center its home. The “place” is clearly used for the benefit of the faculty. On the simplest level, the CFA utilizes the office as a center for the executive officers and other activists to complete their work. However, the FDC is more than office space – it has become a place that reflects and contributes to the vibrant faculty community. For instance, the CFA and other faculty groups frequently hold a wide range of academic, professional, and social activities. For years, the local CFA co-sponsored a beginning of the academic year picnic at the Faculty Development Center. At these events, the FDC’s warm feel helped build the faculty community as old relationships were renewed and new ones were spawned.

The Faculty Development Center is the one place on campus that enables faculty to pursue their interests – this is the site of the Research Week Poster Competition and the place of many lectures, meetings, and other events – as well as the single place for faculty as a whole to come together to enhance the art and craft of teaching. These activities, too, build the faculty networks that strengthen the ability to meet student needs, develop closer bonds between the university and the community, and enable the accumulation of knowledge which advance our academic disciplines. The FDC is truly special in that it enables all of these activities to be done in a way that is of the faculty, by the faculty, and for the faculty. Not many universities have a place like the FDC.

The CFA and its members have an extra special relationship with the Faculty Development Center. We are a union – as such we sometimes deal with difficult, controversial, and personal issues. Perhaps the most valuable aspect of the FDC to the CFA is that it offers an environment in which faculty feel comfortable expressing their concerns without professional consequences. The CFA needs a place where its members feel secure – for the past ten years the FDC has been that place.
Mr. Bob Koehler
Educational Technologist and Adjunct Lecturer

When I arrived at CSU Stanislaus in March 2002, little did I realize I’d be one of the initial inhabitants of the John Stuart Rogers Faculty Center. The Center became the place for me to assist, meet, and consult with faculty in their pedagogical pursuits with our campus learning management system and related educational technology. Initially we had the Faculty Multimedia Lab at the Center, which was later repurposed to a faculty drop-in, consultation, and training space. My consultation and work with faculty at the Center continues with the regular workshop series.

I have very fond memories of the time I spent as part of the Faculty Center family. We worked closely together, even though we were doing different tasks in different departments and areas. Our life together helped all of us focus on the mission of the Center because we understood the goals of the Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and supported each other in helping build a learning community. Our teamwork kept us directed to meet the goals and uphold the mission and vision of the Center.

Many very positive memories come from the time that Dr. Armin Schulz served as the Center director. His leadership provided guidance for all of us to keep the vision alive and vibrant. His input to the Center will be felt for a long time to come. His insights and guidance were always positive and focused on providing the best service and support the Center could offer.

The John Stuart Rogers Faculty Development Center will always have a special place in my heart and mind. I learned and grew as I helped and was helped by others. The people at the Center are a major part of that special feeling. Our group spirit and support of each other were outgrowths of what the Center was created to offer, a place for “coordinating, consolidating, enhancing, and expanding existing faculty development services and CSU Stanislaus.” (Our Goals, https://www.csustan.edu/facultycenter/)
Dr. Elaine Peterson
Economics

A Place of Learning, Collegial Sharing, Growth and Celebration

Thank you John Stuart Rogers for creating a wonderful place for faculty and staff learning, collegial sharing, growth and celebration! I know the John Stuart Rogers Faculty Development Center (JSRFDC) has been a fabulous resource for many, many faculty and staff members and want you to know some of the ways that the JSRFDC has been a tremendous asset for me. For example, with the availability of the lab rooms I have been able to get technical training in software like Blackboard, Peoplesoft, Turnitin, and video creation that has enhanced my teaching. I have learned new teaching techniques in workshops, Instructional Institute Day each year, and pedagogical book club meetings throughout the year. Other workshops and informal chats with colleagues at receptions there have led to shared research ideas. The JSRFDC is a beautiful place and has helped clear cobwebs from my head and put my mind in a more creative state. In my experience the JSRFDC has been very valuable for faculty governance, particularly the faculty senate which benefits significantly from the largest and very open meeting room, with its good acoustics and setup for sharing technical presentations too. I have also benefited by being allowed to use the JSRFDC for an Economics Alumni Forum with Students, Economics Department picnic/end of year and scholarship awards celebration, faculty and staff picnic, Faculty Awards and other celebrations. When showing new faculty we are trying to recruit around campus they are always impressed that we have such a terrific place to get together and build on our skills.

With Sincere Thanks,
Dr. Elaine J. Peterson,
Dept. of Economics, CSU Stanislaus.
Ms. Isabel Silveira Pierce and Ms. Whitney Ragsdale

Even though I was not a part of the beginnings of the John Stuart Rogers Faculty Development Center which was dedicated on May 9, 2002, I was aware of this beautiful building and what it meant to the faculty, staff and students on our campus. I’ve attended many events in the Faculty Development Center including department picnics, meetings, meditation sittings, yoga classes, faculty celebrations of promotion and tenure, and even wedding and baby showers. The Faculty Development Center draws people from the campus and the community, including our emeritus faculty who regularly attend meetings in the Center.

I am happy to say that I am now part of the FDC family, serving as the Executive Assistant to the Speaker of the Faculty. This is my third year in this position, and I have grown very fond of everyone that works in this building. My office is located in FDC 109 and the Speaker’s office is located in FDC 110. Everyone working in the FDC is dedicated to serving the campus community and the CSU Stanislaus mission and vision. I attend weekly meetings in the conference rooms in the FDC along with our dedicated faculty, administration, staff and students.

The Academic Senate office recently held a staff training session in FDC 118 which was very successful. We received many complimentary remarks about the conference room and the building in general. Everyone who visits this building comments on the beautiful patio and the view of the Warrior Lake.

Ms. Whitney Ragsdale is the Administrative Assistant for the Academic Senate and she has been working in the FDC for five years. She serves as staff support for four UEPC Subcommittees and uses the conference rooms on a regular basis.

We want to personally thank the John Stuart Rogers family for dedicating this building for faculty development and community engagement. We love working in this building and are honored to be a part of the FDC Family.
The John Stuart Rogers Faculty Development Center provides the Stanislaus Chapter of the California Faculty Association with office, file, and storage space. CFA utilizes rooms and facilities in the FDC for committee and membership meetings, at which there are often speakers and media presentations. CFA also makes use of kitchen and dining facilities for gatherings of faculty and other university employees.

The chapter engages in quite a range of activities: contract development, bargaining, organizing, membership recruiting, consultation on university policies, resolution of personnel issues, political and legislative action in behalf of faculty/university interests, unity building, and benevolence to our communities.

The FDC is integral to supporting the work of CFA.
The Faculty Development Center – A Service Learning Perspective

The Office of Service Learning has been an occupant of the John Stuart Rogers Faculty Development Center, or the FDC, since its opening in January, 2003. As it was being constructed, we were proud and excited that we would be able to share space in this important campus facility, and 10 years later we are still proud and still excited about the work that occurs within its walls.

The Office of Service Learning in the FDC has been an amazing place to connect with faculty, students and community members. We have developed projects that have helped faculty to connect with our surrounding community in remarkable ways. Students and faculty have helped the community on projects too numerous to list. Some innovative projects that faculty and students have developed include building data bases to track feeding the hungry, creation of assets maps to help communities in need gain support, working with community groups to fight homelessness, and mentoring youth struggling with academic success.

The FDC has been and continues to be a place we can explore ideas for service, research, and curriculum that expands the classroom into the community. It is a place where we work with faculty from diverse disciplines, each strengthening and supporting the educational opportunities offered to CSU Stanislaus students.

Many minds can dream of inventive possibilities at the FDC to improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods and the greater region. It has become a second home to Service Learning and many comment on the wonderful and welcoming feeling that is present in the building.

Service Learning is grateful to be part of the innovative and exciting efforts that occur at the FDC. We are thankful to have been a member of this wonderful team for the past 10 years. We hope to continue being a productive and collaborative resident of this important facility that serves CSU Stanislaus and, thereby, our surrounding communities.
Department of Sociology, Gerontology, and Gender Studies

The FDC is a very special place for the sociology department. Each year we hold a celebration for our graduating seniors and for our newest inductees into the Alpha Kappa Delta International Sociology Honor Society. The building is warm and inviting to our students and their families – the space makes the families of our graduates (many of whom are the first in their families to attend college) feel welcomed. We gather in the FDC because we want to spend the last few moments with these wonderful people in a facility that inspires a feeling of accomplishment and value.

The Department of Sociology sincerely thanks the generous donation of John Stuart Rogers, and we thank the people who staff the FDC and who facilitate the building’s schedule – without it, we believe, our celebrations would be a little less inspired.

Warmly,

The Faculty of the Department of Sociology, Gerontology, and Gender Studies

Walter Doraz
Kristopher Kohler
Rhoda Macdonald
Esther McKoon
Paul O’Brien
James Payne
Agnes Riedmann
Tomás Rodríguez
Angel Sanchez
Stephen Schoenthaler
Tamara Sniezek
Ann Strahm
Jennifer Strangfeld
Cathy Wong
Dr. Jim Youngblom
Biology

As a molecular geneticist I had career opportunities in industry but I choose academia because I want to stay engaged with educated colleagues of many disciplines and interests. For this reason, I look forward to the release of the JSRFDC monthly list of activities. The faculty lectures, whether it is a summary of someone’s research or travel or political insights, are activities that I find especially enjoyable. I attend every one that my schedule permits. For the similar reasons, I travel to the FDC for the faculty non-fiction book club.