

# Future Faculty Focus

**VCU** Graduate School Preparing Future Faculty Program  
Virginia Commonwealth University

Fall, 2011

## *The Preparing Future Faculty Program*

The Graduate School is committed to preparing the next generation of the professoriate. In its Preparing Future Faculty Program, the Graduate School works with the Center for Teaching Excellence and VCU graduate faculty to promote and encourage a culture of excellence in teaching

([www.graduate.vcu.edu/programs/pff/index/html](http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/programs/pff/index/html)).

Through a series of short courses, the PFF Program introduces graduate students to faculty roles and responsibilities, addresses teaching and learning issues in the college classroom and provides

supervised internship experiences for graduate students interested in careers in academe. PFF courses may be taken individually or as part of the PFF Certificate of Achievement program.

Eighty-seven students participated in the PFF program by taking “GRAD” courses during the 2010-2011 academic year or participating in a PFF mentorship experience. Four students completed this capstone requirement last year. Two students completed all program requirements and received the PFF Certificate of Achievement. Rebecca Foco, one of our PFF gradu-

ates, is featured in the Alumni Spotlight this month.

Sharon Foreman Kready, Ph.D., Social Work, served as PFF Program Coordinator from May, 2007 to June, 2011. Dr. Foreman Kready graduated in May, 2011 and accepted a tenure-track faculty position at Lynchburg College. Best wishes to her, and welcome to K. Stone, M.F.A., who transitioned into the Program Coordinator position, and to Sara Booker, M.S.W./M.P.H candidate, who joined the PFF Program staff as Program Assistant.

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## *Council on Graduate Schools Highlights PFF Programs*

In May, 2011 the Council on Graduate Schools, CGS, released a report on “*Preparing Future Faculty to Assess Student Learning*,” which highlighted the need to prepare graduate students to engage in assessment of undergraduate student learning. While pressures from regional accrediting bodies, state boards, federal agencies, and senior college and university leaders have increase the emphasis placed on having well-defined learning outcomes and evaluation to ensure those outcomes are being met, many graduate programs do not prepare their

students to engage in assessment activities.

CGS President, Dr. Debra Stewart states, “This project has identified where the biggest opportunities lie in the graduate community for enhancing the quality of undergraduate education. If we can coordinate and scale up enhancements of effort already underway, Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) and PFF-type programs provide a great opportunity to improve the quality of undergraduate learning through the enhanced training of

graduate students.”

The CGS also hopes to discover how to stimulate change within universities through the support of graduate students, highlighting assessment as integral to the role of being faculty and scholars.

The full report is available at the CGS website, <http://www.cgsnet.org/Default.aspx?tabid=424>. There is also a copy available for review in the PFF Office.

# *PFF Program Advisory Faculty Committee*

VCU faculty represent the finest American and international institutions and enhance the university's position among important institutions of higher learning through their work in the classroom, laboratory, studio, clinic and as published in scholarly journals. Central to the success of the VCU PFF Program is the participation of a number of highly qualified and experienced graduate faculty who are deeply committed to the preparation of the next generation of the professoriate. The PFF Program would like to thank the following faculty who serve on the PFF Program Advisory Faculty Committee. Their contributions to the continued success of the program are innumerable and greatly appreciated.

[Noreen C. Barnes, Ph.D.](#)

Director of Graduate  
Studies-Theatre,  
VCU School of the Arts

[Jan F. Chlebowski, Ph.D.](#)

Associate Dean for Graduate  
Education; Professor of  
Biochemistry and Molecular  
Biology,  
VCU School of Medicine

[J. James \(Jim\) Cotter, Ph.D.](#)

Assistant Dean,  
Distance Education and  
Director,  
VCU School of Allied Health  
Professions

[Cecil Drain, Ph.D.](#)

Dean,  
VCU School of Allied Health  
Professions

[Zachary G. Goodell, Ph.D.](#)

Associate Director for the VCU  
Center for Teaching Excellence

[Rosalyn Hobson, Ph.D.](#)

Associate Dean for Graduate  
Studies,  
VCU School of Engineering

[Ann Nichols-Casebolt, Ph.D.](#)

Professor and Associate Vice  
President for Research  
Development,  
VCU Office of Research  
Professor,  
VCU School of Social Work

[Jeff Nugent, Ed.S.](#)

Associate Director for the VCU  
Center for Teaching Excellence

[Maike Philippsen, Ph.D.](#)

Associate Professor,  
VCU School of Education

[Sherry T. Sandkam, Ph.D.](#)

Associate Dean,  
VCU Graduate School;  
Director, PFF Program

## *GRAD 606 Faculty Mentors*

A special thanks is also given to the faculty who mentored students in PFF Internships during the 2010-2011 academic year.

[Dr. Maike Philippsen](#), Ph.D., Associate Professor, VCU School of Education

Mentored Rebecca Foco, VCU School of Education, Ph.D., Education

[Dr. James Farmer](#), Ph.D., Associate Professor, and [Dr. Paula Winn Ph.D.](#), Adjunct Faculty, VCU School of the Arts, Department of Art History

Mentored Amy Marshman, VCU School of the Arts, Ph.D., Art History

[Dr. Charles Byles](#), Associate Professor, Department of Management, VCU School of Business

Mentored Otis Jarvis, VCU School of Business, Ph.D., Business

[Jeff Nugent](#), Ed.S, Associate Director for the VCU Center for Teaching Excellence

Mentored Lorie Coker, Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, Ph.D. candidate, Public Policy and Administration

## *VCU Resources*

### *The Center for Teaching Excellence*

The VCU Center for Teaching Excellence is committed to the promotion, enhancement, and assessment of teaching effectiveness and student learning through faculty development. CTE staff members teach the PFF GRAD 602 class, Teaching, Learning and Technology in Higher Education, and encourage all graduate students to participate in a variety of CTE activities for faculty development. A complete list of all CTE events and registration information is available on the CTE website at <http://www.vcu.edu/cte/>.

### *VCU Libraries*

[VCU Libraries](#) offer a variety of workshops of interest to graduate students. Visit [VCU Library Events and Classes](#) or the [VCU Training website](#) for a complete listing of VCU Libraries events and registration information.

## ***PFF Program Alumni Spotlight: Rebecca Foco, Ph.D.***



Rebecca recently received her Ph.D. in Education with a concentration in Health Promotion and Education. Her dissertation is titled, “The Role of Faith Leaders in Partnerships among Health Promotion Researchers and Faith Communities.” Rebecca holds a Bachelors of Arts in Political Science and a Master of Arts in Industrial Relations, both from the University of Minnesota. She served as a Graduate Research Assistant and adjunct instructor in the Department of Health and Human Performance. She has also been a research assistant for the Community Partnership for Ethical Research in the School of Medicine. This fall Rebecca joined the faculty of Curry College in Milton, Massachusetts as an Assistant Professor in the Community Health and Wellness Program.

### **What does “Preparing Future Faculty Program” mean to you?**

The PFF Program provided an incredible opportunity to explore the ramifications of entering the academy as a faculty member. The PFF Program gave us an opportunity to reflect on what it means to teach in a higher education setting in the company of a diverse set of fellow graduate students. I was challenged—actually dragged kicking and screaming—out of my comfort zone and came to embrace new methods and ideas for using technology in teaching.

### **The mission of the PFF Program is to examine the question “What does it really mean to be faculty?” How did your experiences in the PFF Program enhance your understanding of what it means to be faculty and impact your plans for a career in academia?**

We spent a significant amount of time discussing the three pillars of academic life—teaching, scholarship, and service. It created a space to reflect on where my abilities and interests lie and how I could craft a career that fit with those interests and abilities. I particularly appreciated the discussions of the various types of institutions of higher education and the various opportunities within each.

### **How did experiences with the PFF Program and receipt of the PFF Program Certificate of Achievement give you an ‘edge’ in your career?**

My experiences with the PFF Program and the PFF Program Certificate of Achievement were cited as an influential factor in the decision to interview me for the position that I eventually accepted. Curry College, where I will be working, is a student-centered environment that values innovative

teaching. PFF’s national reputation, I believe, demonstrated that I take teaching seriously and have been prepared for the classroom.

### **The capstone experience of the PFF Program is the internship/externship in which the student is mentored by a senior faculty member. Tell us a little bit about your internship/externship experience, and share with us the impact that the project and the mentoring relationship had on you.**

For my internship experience, I taught HPEX 354, School and Community Health Resources. I had the distinct privilege of having Dr. Maiké Philipsen as my mentor for my internship experience. While I had taught several classes prior to this experience, the time we spent reviewing the syllabus and course materials was invaluable. Moreover, the mentoring relationship has continued as Dr. Philipsen is my dissertation advisor.

### **What is the most crucial piece of advice that you would give to students currently enrolled in the PFF Program coursework?**

Take full advantage of all that is available to you through the PFF Program. The faculty members are extremely knowledgeable and are more than willing to share their collective wisdom. Find opportunities to put into practice as much of what you are learning as possible and develop relationship with your colleagues.

### **Go to the PFF Program’s “Resources” page:**

**<http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/programs/pff/resources.html> to read previous Alumni Spotlights.**

*“My experiences with the PFF Program and the PFF Program Certificate of Achievement were cited as an influential factor in the decision to interview me for the position that I eventually accepted.”*

# “Tomorrow’s Professor” Postings

Each month we showcase postings on four diverse topics related to faculty issues, teaching and learning, and scholarship from the multi-organization sponsored “Tomorrow’s Professor” postings program. Each posting is listed with Dr. Rick Reis’s selected quotation introduction as well as his own introduction and the title. This introduction will provide you with background necessary to decide if you want to read the whole posting. To read the full posting, simply follow the link provided. To learn more about “Tomorrow’s Professor” in general, visit <http://cgi.stanford.edu/~dept-ctl/cgi-bin/tomprof/postings.php>. There are almost 1,000 postings. To learn more about Dr. Reis, visit his website: <http://ctl.stanford.edu/Tomprof/reis.html>.

## Tomorrow’s Professor Msg. #1055: Preparing Professors to Teach

*But certificates are particularly beneficial because they are often formally recognized or denoted on a student's transcript, providing a better documentation of the steps a student has gone through to become a better instructor."*

This posting by Allie Grasgreen looks at the increasing popularity of teaching certificate programs for Ph.D., graduate students interested in academic careers. It is from the October 15, 2010 issue of INSIDE HIGHER ED, an excellent - and free - online source for news, opinion and jobs for all of higher education. You can subscribe by going to: <http://insidehighered.com/>. Also for a free daily update from Inside Higher Ed, e-mail [[scott.jaschik@insidehighered.com](mailto:scott.jaschik@insidehighered.com)]. Copyright © 2009 Inside Higher Ed

Reprinted with permission. Link to this posting: <http://cgi.stanford.edu/~dept-ctl/cgi-bin/tomprof/posting.php?ID=1055>

## Tomorrow’s Professor Msg. #1108: Writing Good Multiple-Choice Items

*Use intrinsically true or at least plausible statements. Test-wise students recognize ridiculous statements as wrong. To see if your test has such statements, ask a friend who has never studied the subject to take the test. His or her score should be roughly what would be earned from guessing randomly on every item (25 percent for a four-option multiple-choice test). "*

This posting, as the title indicates, gives some excellent advice on writing good multiple-choice questions. It is from Chapter 11, Writing a Traditional Test in the book, Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide by Linda Suskie. Published by Jossey-Bass, A Wiley Imprint 989 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94103-1741 - [www.josseybass.com](http://www.josseybass.com) Copyright © 2009 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission. Link to this posting: <http://cgi.stanford.edu/~dept-ctl/cgi-bin/tomprof/posting.php?ID=1108>

## Tomorrow’s Professor Msg. #1106: Asking Students to Health Each Other Understand Ideas or Concepts

*Students helping each other learn mimics humans' innate learning process, a process for which we are genetically and environmentally engineered. This is enough of an explanation, and a powerful one, to help your students understand why peer learning is suitable in the college classroom: their brains are built to learn via collaboration."*

The posting gives some good suggestions on how to make the case for collaborative learning to your students and your colleagues. It is IDEA Item #18 by Jeff King of the Art Institute of Dallas and is from POD-IDEA Center Notes on Instruction series. Michael Theall, Youngston State University, series editor. POD is the Professional and Organizational Development Network, <http://www.podnetwork.org/>, and the iDEA Center is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to serve colleges and universities committed to improving learning, teaching, and leadership performance, <http://www.theideacenter.org/>, July, 2004. ©2005 The IDEA Center. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission. Link to this posting: <http://cgi.stanford.edu/~dept-ctl/cgi-bin/tomprof/posting.php?ID=1106>

## Tomorrow’s Professor Msg. #1096: Lose the Lectures

*Students helping each other learn mimics humans' innate learning process, a process for which we are genetically and environmentally engineered. This is enough of an explanation, and a powerful one, to help your students understand why peer learning is suitable in the college classroom: their brains are built to learn via collaboration."*

This posting looks at the work of the innovator of "peer instruction" and the huge impact this approach is having on student learning. It is by Thomas K. Grose and is from Prism, February, 2011. Copyright 2011© American Society for Engineering Education, 1818 N Street, N.W., Suite 600 Washington, DC 20036-2479 Web: [www.asee.org](http://www.asee.org) Telephone: (202) 331-3500. Reprinted with permission. Link to this posting: <http://cgi.stanford.edu/~dept-ctl/cgi-bin/tomprof/posting.php?ID=11096>

# Spring Course Offerings

## **GRAD 602: Teaching, Learning and Technology in Higher Education**

Instructor: Jeffery Nugent  
Thursday, 4:00-5:40 p.m.  
Room 5182 Harris Hall

## **GRAD 605: 901: Professional Specialty Seminar: Physical Science**

Instructors: Dr. Rosalyn Hobson & Dr. Jan Chlebowski  
Wednesday, 5:00-6:40 p.m.  
Room 5167 Harris Hall

## **GRAD 605: 905: Professional Specialty Seminar: Social Science**

Instructors: Dr. Maike Philipsen & Dr. Ann Nichols-Casebolt  
Wednesday, 5:00-6:40 p.m.  
Room TBD Harris Hall

If you plan to register for GRAD 605 but are unsure about which section, or have any other questions, please contact our office at [pffprogram@vcu.edu](mailto:pffprogram@vcu.edu) or (804)827-4545.

*"I feel empowered to do better than what is currently being done, as far as quality of teaching. I now have more tools at my disposal than what I have seen used in the classroom"*

- Anonymous student on GRAD 602 spring 2011 course evaluation

## **Information on the PFF Certificate of Achievement**

In order to receive the PFF Certificate of Achievement, students must successfully complete the nine credit hours of PFF Program coursework (detailed below) and submit the electronic portfolio for evaluation.

- Successful completion of the core PFF Program courses
  - GRAD 601 The Academic Profession  
Two-credit hour lecture course (offered in the fall semester, students who entered the program during or prior to the Fall 2009 semester will substitute the one-credit hour GRAD 601 and one-credit hour GRAD 604 course for this requirement)
  - GRAD 602 Teaching, Learning and Technology in Higher Education  
Two-credit hour lecture course (offered in the spring semester)
  - GRAD 603 Responsible Conduct of Research\* (Course designation for GRAD 603 will change to OVPR 603 effective Spring 2012)  
One-credit hour lecture course (8-week short course, offered in the fall semester)
  - GRAD 605 Professional Specialty Seminar  
One-credit hour seminar course (8-week short course, offered in the spring semester)  
Prerequisites are GRAD 601 and GRAD 602.
- Successful completion of a three-credit hour mentored capstone experience
  - GRAD 606 Internship/Externship in Professional Teaching (offered in fall, spring and summer semesters)  
Prerequisites are GRAD 601, GRAD 602, GRAD 603, and GRAD 605.
- Submission and evaluation of the electronic portfolio (see details on the PFF website: <http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/programs/pff/courses.html>)

\*GRAD 603 course requirement - Substitutions are available for postdoctoral scholars and medical students who have completed a comparable credit-bearing course. Contact the PFF Program Office for specific details at [pffprogram@vcu.edu](mailto:pffprogram@vcu.edu).

Upon completion of these requirements, a text comment will be recorded on the student's academic transcript to document that the student has successfully completed the Preparing Future Faculty Program. Students and their faculty mentors will be recognized for this accomplishment at a Graduate School event, usually held in the spring semester at the annual Graduate Research Symposium.

For additional information on the PFF Program, visit the PFF [website](#) or [blog](#), email us at [pffprogram@vcu.edu](mailto:pffprogram@vcu.edu), call (804) 827-4545, or stop by the PFF Office at Moseley House, 1001 Grove Ave. Richmond, VA 23284