

## **University at Albany Future Faculty and Teaching Development Program**

Modeled after the Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) program started in the early 1990s by the American Association of Colleges and Universities and the Council of Graduate Schools, the Future Faculty and Teaching Development Program is designed to prepare graduate students for all aspects of their future roles as faculty members.

Under the auspices of the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Institute for Teaching, Learning and Academic Leadership (ITLAL) has developed a program for University at Albany graduate students modeled on the original PFF program. The national PFF program shared three core features:

1. Collaboration among institutions, anchored by a doctoral-degree granting institution.
2. Curriculum of study to familiarize graduate students with “the full scope of faculty roles and responsibilities.”
3. Multiple mentors—each graduate student will have guidance “not only for their research activities, but also for their teaching and service activities.”<sup>1</sup>

The UAlbany program targets these same components but is modified to serve the needs of UAlbany students, given the resources available to us. In particular the modified version places the graduate student experience in the context of engagement in the scholarship of teaching and learning.

This program allows UAlbany graduates to convey their teaching expertise to potential employers by formally documenting students’ fulfillment of program requirements. Courses in the program may be taken for credit or for non-credit and appear on the students’ transcripts.

This program is designed to complement existing departmental professionalization programs on campus, while at the same time making it possible for students in departments that do not have such programs to prepare for the role of college or university faculty member.

### **Admission**

Admission to the program is based on a number of factors:

- 1) Proof of admission to a terminal degree program
- 2) Availability of space in the program
- 3) Teaching experience (preference is given to those who have taught)
- 4) Diversity, both of the participants and disciplines represented
- 5) Evaluation of the Statement of Interest by program administrators  
(The statement should address teaching interests, teaching experience, related background, and career goals.)

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<sup>1</sup> Association of American Colleges and Universities, Washington, and Washington Council of Graduate Schools. *Program Description: A National Program of the Association of American Colleges and Universities & the Council of Graduate Schools. Preparing Future Faculty.* January 1, 1998.

## **Elements of the Program**

### **1. Coursework**

#### **a) First Course: Seminar in College Teaching. 0-1 hr, variable**

This course is required of all participants in the program and made available to non-participants on a “space available” basis. This course provides an overview of the scholarship of teaching and learning and emphasizes the skills and knowledge necessary to design and teach a course that effectively facilitates student learning.

Topics:

Student Cognitive Development	How to Implement Classroom Activities Effectively
Course Goals and Beginning Course Design	Setting and Communicating Expectations Effectively
Encouraging Critical Thinking in Students	Managing the Classroom Effectively
Student Assessment and Grading	
Making Decisions about How to Spend Your Time in the Classroom	

#### **b) Second Course: Future Professoriate Seminar. 0-1 hr, variable**

This course is required of all participants and made available to non-participants on a “space available” basis. Students develop a working knowledge of the typical expectations made of the new faculty member, what it means to be a professional academic, the American system of higher education, and the processes common to tenure-track academic positions. Topics:

Transitioning From Student to Professional	Navigating Academic Power Structures
Understanding Institution Types	Getting to Tenure
What Successful New Faculty Know	Balancing Commitments: Research, Teaching and Service
The Academic Job Market	Beyond R/T/S: Broader Issues in Faculty Life

#### **c) Third Course: Becoming a Reflective Teacher: The Teaching Portfolio, 0-1 hr, variable**

The course is required of all participants and made available to non-participants on a “space available” basis. Students develop a familiarity with scholarship and techniques to help them develop as reflective teachers. Students learn how to construct a teaching portfolio that can be used as part of a job search and as the foundation of a professional portfolio. Topics:

The Teaching Portfolio and Teaching Statement as Formative and Summative Document	Feedback as a Basis for Reflection
Peer Observation as a Reflective Exercise	Considering the Role of Assessment, Grading, and Feedback
Reflecting on and Documenting Your Course Design	Feedback on Full Portfolio Drafts
Reflecting on Assignments and Activities	Looking Forward: From Teaching Portfolio to Tenure File

### **2. Workshops**

Attendance at eight hours of workshops on teaching, learning or the profession is required for successful completion of the program. This requirement can be fulfilled by attendance at ITLAL workshops, Office of Graduate Student Diversity Brown Bag lunch series, the College Teaching Symposium, the Lilly conferences, the Professional and Organizational Developers (POD) conference, etc. Students wishing to use departmental seminars or workshops on teaching, sessions from professional meetings, or other experience should confirm with the Future Faculty Program administrators that these will count toward the workshop requirement. (Please note that events such as dissertation defenses and non-teaching related discipline-specific colloquia do *not* count toward this requirement.) Students are expected to fill out a reflection form for their program file for each event they attend in order to fulfill this requirement. No more than three hours of workshops should come from the same topic area.

### **3. Formal Mentoring**

The surveys of PFF graduates routinely note that one of the most useful aspects of PFF programs is the interaction with faculty members at partner institutions. As part of the FFTD program, each student locates a mentor at the type of institution where they would like to work (outside of UAlbany). The mentoring relationship is designed to show mentees what faculty life is like, help them learn to prepare their job search materials, and give them feedback on their teaching. These people can mentor students about teaching, the profession or both, and ITLAL staff work with students to assist in setting these goals before the relationship begins. The mentoring relationship should consist of 6-9 synchronous meetings (in person, phone, Skype, FaceTime, or other synchronous communication is allowed—not email).

### **4. Evaluation of Teaching**

For completion of the program, students will need to have at least one formal review of their teaching, e.g. video recording or observation and consultation with ITLAL staff or in-person observation by mentor or departmental representative. For students in programs in which they do not have an opportunity to have primary responsibility for teaching a course, alternate means of fulfilling this requirement can be arranged. One option might be guest teaching in another's course (possibly their mentor's course).

### **5. Service**

Since one of the aspects of faculty life that new faculty members struggle with is learning to balance research, teaching and service duties, we believe that learning this balance early will be helpful. We require that students participate in some sort of service to their department or the university as part of their program requirements. Students are required to complete a minimum of ten hours' commitment to serving their department, other graduate students, or the university. Examples of acceptable service include: assisting in the organization of a departmental graduate student conference or colloquial series; holding an office or position with the Graduate Student Organization or a Recognized Graduate Student Organization, serving as a student representative on a search committee; helping with the preparation of, or presenting at the College Teaching Symposium or College Teaching Boot Camp (run by the Future Faculty Leadership Council). Other service obligations will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **6. Teaching Portfolio**

In addition to successfully completing the course on the teaching portfolio (in which a draft of the portfolio will be completed), students need to have their portfolio approved by a committee consisting of no less than three people, including ITLAL representatives and no less than one qualified teaching faculty member. When possible, a faculty member from the students' home department will be one of the committee members. This is the capstone experience of the program.

### **Conclusion of the Program**

At the conclusion of the program, students receive an internal document as well as a transcript notation attesting to their successful completion of the program requirements.