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## **The Importance of Faculty Development**

*One who dares to teach must never cease to learn~ Dana*

One of the roles the Office of Adjunct Faculty Support Programs is to produce professional development activities for SVSU's adjunct faculty. Completion of such activities by adjunct faculty is important because of the essential role we play at the University. Most of the courses taught by adjunct faculty are first and second year courses. This means that as faculty we have vital contact with first and second year students, these being the most vulnerable. The success of these students and thereby their retention hinges on good teaching practices. What professional development accomplishes, as related to teaching, is to help faculty understand the teaching and learning process, learn methods to increase student engagement (thereby increasing student retention) and increase the ability to manage classroom practices. Other features of professional development are:

- Professional development provides the opportunity for faculty to meet with a cross-section of other faculty members from varying disciplines allowing for the creation of a pedagogical community. Adjunct faculty who, therefore, participate in professional development activities no longer suffer from feelings of isolation.
- Professional development provides opportunities for faculty to learn about learning, about teaching and about students.
- Professional development creates greater mindfulness regarding the teaching and learning process, which helps to create more intentional teaching processes.
- Professional development is integral in faculty becoming more effective in the classroom.

Many departments on campus provide professional development activities. These include the Library, the Writing Center, the Instructional Design Office and, also, this office...Adjunct Faculty Support Programs. All of the professional development opportunities are listed on the blue workshop schedule which is distributed at the start of each semester (check your office). Alternatively, you may consult the workshop schedule located at [www.svsu.edu/workshops](http://www.svsu.edu/workshops).

The University finds that professional development is so essential to adjunct faculty that compensation is provided for participating in the various workshops and training sessions offered throughout campus. Please consider availing yourself of these professional development opportunities.

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### **Adjunct Faculty Needs Assessment**

We have decided to extend the date for our needs assessment survey so that our response rate can equal that of past years (25%). If you haven't already completed this assessment please do so. This assessment helps our office plan the services and supports which are necessary to make your experience at SVSU a positive one. You may access the survey by following this address: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/AdjunctFaculty2011-12Assessment>

As the Nike ad suggests, Just Do It! Please.

### **Adjunct Faculty Awards Reception**

Invitations for the Adjunct Faculty Awards Reception went out last week. The Reception will be held on Friday, April 27<sup>th</sup> beginning at 5:00 in the Seminar rooms in Curtiss Hall. At the reception, adjunct faculty will receive service awards and the winner of the Anderson Award for Excellence in Adjunct Faculty Teaching will be presented. Please RSVP for the reception by calling our office at 989-964-4050 or emailing us at [adjunctfaculty@svsu.edu](mailto:adjunctfaculty@svsu.edu).

## Student Engagement

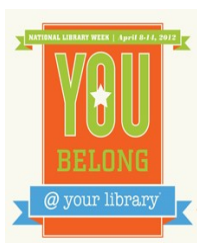
Student engagement may be defined as, “students’ cognitive investment in, active participation in, and emotional commitment to their learning” (Zepke and Leach, 2010. p. 168). Engagement occurs when students are involved in activities and conditions that are likely to generate high-quality learning. The following are a few ways that you might consider promoting student engagement in your courses.

- Students engage when they act as their own learning agents enabling their ability to believe that they can learn. Fostering self-belief can be facilitated by allowing students to have some control over the learning process. This increases their confidence, their commitment to learning and their own self-belief.
- Cultivation of intrinsic motivation which fosters self-determination that leads to engagement. This can be done by enabling students to work autonomously as well as with others so that the students develop their sense of competence.
- Create challenging and enriching assignments and activities that motivate students. When students are stretching, reflecting and making connections between ideas they are engaged.
- To become engaged, students must feel safe, accepted and affirmed.
- Teachers are at the heart of engagement. Zepke and Leach (2010) found that, “ if the teacher is perceived to be approachable, well prepared, and sensitive to student needs, students are committed to work harder, get more out of the session, and are more willing to express their opinions” (p. 170).

In sum, students will respond to good teaching and challenging assignments. Such responses are what student engagement is all about.

Reference:

Zepke, N., and Leach, L. (2010). Improving student engagement: Ten proposals for action. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 11 (3), 167-177.



## *Celebrate National Library Week with Zahnow Library!*

Come celebrate *National Library Week* (NLW) with Zahnow Library staff! Starting at 11:30am on Tuesday, April 10th free ice cream will be available at the 1st floor library entrance. Answer questions about Zahnow Library to win prizes! This year NLW will be celebrated Sun., April 8th – Sat., 14th. Since 1958 National Library Week has been celebrated annually across the country. Sponsored by the American Library Association, it is a time to celebrate the contributions of our nation's libraries and librarians. The winners of the annual ***Student Book Contest*** will be announced at 5 pm on Tuesday April 10th. Students are invited to enter an essay in the contest describing the theme of their book collection. The top three collections, judged by members of the SVSU Library Committee, are awarded monetary prizes. Stop by during the afternoon when contestants will display their book collections in the 1st floor library lobby area. For past winners, visit: <http://www.svsu.edu/library/student-book-contest.html>.