

**The University of Georgia**  
**2011 Academic Affairs Faculty Symposium**  
Unicoi Conference Center  
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*Welcome and Introduction*

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Good morning. It is a pleasure to be a participant in the 2011 Academic Affairs Faculty Symposium.

This is an annual event that I look forward to each year. I have attended nineteen of the twenty-one symposia we have held, and I know first-hand how much faculty and administrators benefit from this annual gathering.

Staging an event of this scope and consequence requires many months of careful thought and planning. I want to thank Dr. Joe Broder, Dr. Trish Kalivoda, and the entire Symposium planning committee for their outstanding work, and I am appreciative that the Symposium planning committee was receptive to my suggestion that the general theme of this year's Symposium focus on a topic that will help prepare UGA faculty for the First Year Odyssey.

At this point in time, I can think of no subject more relevant to the University's faculty than this year's topic – "Understanding Our Students: Ethos, Experience, and Expectations."

I anticipate that this Faculty Symposium will build upon the work being undertaken by Vice President of Instruction Dr. Laura Jolly and First Year Odyssey Director Dr. Tim Foutz. Laura and Tim have laid the groundwork for launching the First Year Odyssey by putting in place a program that will allow every first-year student to be taught by tenured and tenure-track faculty in a small-group academic seminar setting.

It is my expectation that lessons learned during this Faculty Symposium will be disseminated across campus. If we leave here and share the insights we have gained during our day-and-a-half of discussions, I am certain that our efforts will advance the First Year Odyssey program and help us realize our potential for shaping the academic future of UGA's entering class.

Several years ago, I was particularly taken by an observation in Richard Light's book, *Making the Most of College: Students Speak Their Minds*. Many of you may recall when he visited our campus.

Light writes about the importance of the connection between the faculty member and the undergraduate student. He advances the thought-provoking premise that if during a student's undergraduate career, he or she makes a strong connection with one faculty member each

semester, that student will leave the university with eight mentors who can have a life-changing impact on that young person.

Like Richard Light, I believe that every faculty member has the ability to be a change agent in the academic life and future career of a student. Yet, as each year passes, it becomes more evident that, as faculty, we must ask ourselves how well we really understand our students. What does the student bring to the learning process and what do they expect from it? In short, if we want to effectively teach today's young people, we must put forward an effort to better understand them. We actually have several students with us today for this symposium.

Before we begin our discussions, we will have the opportunity to hear from an expert on students. We are fortunate to have as the Faculty Symposium's keynote speaker, Dr. Jean Twenge, a highly regarded scholar and author, whose research and scholarly work address our symposium topic.

Dr. Twenge's recent book, *Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive – and More Miserable Than Ever Before*, has received much attention from the higher education community. It is important to note that Dr. Twenge's earlier well-received book, *The Narcissism Epidemic: Living in the Age of Entitlement*, was co-authored with Dr. Keith Campbell, Head of the UGA Department of Psychology ---and my next-door neighbor in Five Points. I am pleased to report that other members of the University Community will have an opportunity to hear Dr. Twenge's message. Later today, she will be on the UGA campus to speak at the Teaching Academy's Spring Seminar.

Before I conclude I want to mention three of the positive steps that have been taken to advance the University's academic mission since last year's Academic Affairs Faculty Symposium. First, let me give you an update on the President's Faculty Hiring Initiative:

During the first Faculty Hiring Initiative:

- 24 tenured and tenure-track faculty positions were approved.
- The positions were awarded to 13 of 15 Colleges and Schools.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Presidential Faculty Hiring Initiative:

- 36 tenured or tenure-track faculty positions were approved.
- The positions were awarded to 15 of 16 Colleges and Schools.

In total - thus far – funding has been allocated for 60 new tenure and tenure-track positions. Awards went to every college, including the Faculty of Engineering.

Next, is the Ph.D. Scholars of Excellence - UGA's new graduate assistantship initiative.

There will be \$1 million in awards given in each of 3 years: that is for FY 12, FY13, and FY14.

13 of 15 colleges received assistantships. Each assistantship is worth \$19,000 annually.

- 5 interdisciplinary programs received assistantships.
- All were awarded based on proposed programs of excellence.
- The maximum number of awards will be between 47 and 50.

The Award types:

- 2 assistantships awarded for 2 years.
- 1 assistantship awarded for 2 years.
- 1 assistantship for 1 year.

Approximately \$100,000 of the million was awarded as top-off awards (\$3000 each) to the various colleges to improve existing assistantships.

Finally, I want to speak briefly about institutional efforts to encourage and enhance interdisciplinary collaborations. Dr. Libby Morris has led this effort and has included many faculty and students in a variety of working groups. She has given me a draft report that tackles many key issues that she and I will try to advance in the coming year.

Before I turn the podium over to Dr. Broder to introduce our keynote speaker, I want you to know that UGA's senior leadership understands that our institution's strength lies in its faculty.

To the extent possible in this economic climate, as Provost, I will continue to direct funding toward recruiting and retaining quality faculty. ...and I will continue my support of faculty development programs like the annual Academic Affairs Faculty Symposium, State of the Art Conferences, Study in a Second Discipline, and other faculty awards programs.

I am delighted at the excellent turnout for the 2011 Academic Affairs Symposium, and I look forward to our discussions.