

**The University of Georgia**  
**2012 Academic Affairs Faculty Symposium**  
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*Welcome and Introduction*

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Good morning. I always look forward to being a participant in the Academic Affairs Faculty Symposium. Hosting an event of this scope and depth requires months of careful planning in advance of our arrival. I want to thank Dr. Broder and the entire Symposium Planning Committee for their outstanding work. I also want to thank Stefani Hilley for supervising the arrangements leading up to today's conference.

I have attended twenty of the twenty-two Academic Affairs symposia we have held, and this is my third time to participate as the Provost. One of the things I most enjoy about this time of faculty interaction is that these discussions often lead to measurable change and significant results. Let me mention three positive outcomes that have been enacted since last year's Faculty Symposium, which focused on the First-Year Odyssey and improving teaching effectiveness.

First is the new UGA Teaching Academy Fellows Program, which is designed to support both tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty in the first three years of their careers. The Early Career Fellows are matched with a pair of Teaching Academy Mentors, and they meet with their mentors and a small group of peers to learn from their shared experiences in the classroom. They talk about good teaching and learn about the other resources that are available to them from the Teaching Academy and elsewhere on campus to become more effective teachers.

The Fellows Program is a new way we are addressing a larger concern raised at last year's symposium – which was the challenging adjustment and the isolation that many early-career teachers feel after the new faculty orientation program is over.

Second, the Vice President for Instruction, through funding from my office, has established an Instructional Innovation Grants Initiative to promote and reward innovative teaching through a competitive grants process that will provide summer support to faculty.

At least twenty grants will be awarded to faculty who have developed creative proposals to improve the quality of teaching. More than 80 faculty from 12 different schools and colleges have applied for the grants. And there's a good mix of tenure-track faculty (83%) and non-tenured instructors (17%) who have applied, so the need for this new program is evident.

Finally, my office – under the careful guidance of Vice Provost Morris – has approved the creation of the Office of Online Learning. This initiative also will be placed under the Vice President for Instruction and will become operational later this summer.

The Office of Online Learning is necessary for us to build fully online programs that are of high quality, meet SACS standards, comply with state authorization standards, and are ADA

compliant. This office also will provide training for faculty to teach online because we know that teaching students at a distance requires a shift in pedagogy.

The demand for these online programs is coming from several audiences. Given the flexibility that digital technology allows, our current residential students expect to have access to online courses when they study abroad or are away from campus for an extended period of time. Yet we have very few options for them. Secondly, the current enrollment in independent study courses at UGA demonstrates that the market for online undergraduate courses is very strong.

At the graduate level, there is substantial data showing that adults are increasingly choosing online programs for professional and graduate education, and we are currently behind most of our peers in the number of online programs we offer. All of this points to the fact that we believe the Office of Online Learning will be in high demand and very critical.

The first two initiatives I mentioned – the Teaching Academy Fellows Program and the summer grants for instructional support – came directly out of ideas generated at last year’s retreat. And the Office of Online Learning correlates closely to other ideas that we discussed last year.

To the extent that we are able, in this economic climate, I will continue to direct funding toward recruiting and retaining great faculty, supporting faculty development programs like these, and taking the good ideas from these symposia and turning them into institutional initiatives.

The task in front of this faculty retreat is to explore how we can build bridges between the faculty roles of teaching and research. It’s my view – and I know it’s a widely shared view – that many of our very best teachers are also our very best researchers.

The University motto is “To teach, to serve, and to inquire into the nature of things.” The “inquiry” in the motto refers to the process of academic research. Angela Brew in her 2006 book, *Research and Teaching: Beyond the Divide*, mentions the importance of establishing “inclusive, scholarly, knowledge-building communities.” Her vision of “a new higher education” is a place where both students and academics are engaged in the challenging process of coming to understand the world through systematic investigation and collaborative decision-making in the light of evidence.

Brew argues that “teaching is becoming more like a process of inquiry, and research is becoming more like inquiry-based learning.” One of the questions for you to answer today is: What are the built-in impediments to bringing research and teaching together, and where do we start to build the bridges that will overcome those obstacles? I am confident that when we wrap up our program, we will come away with several terrific ideas that will become the conceptual foundation for new initiatives and programs that will take shape over the next year and beyond.

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 with the faculty. I am very pleased to be with so many dedicated faculty who will ensure the success of the 2012 Academic Affairs Faculty Symposium, and I look forward to our discussions today and tomorrow.