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Panel II. Faculty Support

Introductory Comments

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A faculty member needs to have a well-developed plan for professional development that engages her/his situation and one that matches available resources. Twenty-four years ago, when I arrived at UGA, I did not have such a plan for instruction. Soon after my arrival, I discovered that if I did not develop one I was not going to survive in the classroom. My presentation touched on a few methods that I have used to improve my pedagogical knowledge and how I was able to do this without having to secure substantial funding.

Any instruction professional development plan that you develop should take advantage of the multiple opportunities that UGA offers. For example, I learned to take advantage of a college-wide faculty meeting that focused solely on teaching issues. At these meetings, I discovered how common my challenges were and that solutions existed. In addition, colleagues from other departments were willing to mentor who helped me learn how to emphasize instruction in my promotion and tenure documents.

At the University level, I attend many of the workshops sponsored by the Teaching Academy and the workshops sponsored by the Center for Teaching and Learning. These workshops help me to learn about the latest research on learning and to connect with faculty who have similar classroom challenges and successes. The bottom line is I have found that professional development can be as easy as attending the right faculty meeting, listening to what others have to say and willing to have an open discussion.