

The University of Georgia
2013 Academic Affairs Faculty Symposium
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Welcome and Introduction

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President-Elect



Good morning. It is a pleasure to join you as a participant in the 2013 Academic Affairs Faculty Symposium. I know that hosting an event like this involves a significant amount of work on the part of many people, and I'd like to express my appreciation to Dr. Broder and rest of the planning committee for their dedication to making this event a success. I'd also like to thank Stefani Hilley for handling the arrangements for the symposium.

I have attended twenty-one out of the twenty-three symposia that we have held, and I always find them timely and thought provoking. I look forward to participating in significant portions of future symposia as my schedule as President permits.

Perhaps one of the most valuable aspects of this symposium is that it brings faculty from across campus together to collaboratively discuss ways to enhance instruction and learning at the University. Each year, ideas from the faculty symposium are transformed into a set of recommendations, and several campus programs have their origins from previous symposia.

The Teaching Academy Fellows program, which links early-career faculty with seasoned mentors, grew out a recommendation from the 2011 symposium. The Fellows program is now in its second year, and its graduates are excelling in the classroom and have been honored with teaching awards such as the University's Richard B. Russell Award.

The inaugural class of Teaching Academy Fellows has compiled a collection of teaching essays in a book titled "Chalk Talk II" that will be distributed at this year's symposium, and I hope you will enjoy it.

Participants in last year's symposium recommended a better-publicized and expanded role for the University's Center for Teaching and Learning. I am pleased to report that the CTL is increasing opportunities for faculty development under the leadership of its new director, Dr. Eddie Watson, who will be our speaker at lunch today.

The CTL recently assessed campus needs through a survey of more than 800 instructors as well as through meetings with deans and other administrators. Based on the input received, the CTL is in the process of increasing support and programming to help faculty manage large classes and assess and utilize new instructional technologies.

The University of Georgia recognizes exceptional instruction through several school and college-based recognitions, as well as the campus-wide Russell and Meigs Awards that are

administered through the Office of the Provost. But I believe that the instruction we provide is pace setting on a national level, as well.

To help our faculty successfully compete for national recognitions such as the Cherry Award for Great Teaching and the CASE Professor of the Year Award, the CTL will soon allocate staff resources to help our faculty apply for these prestigious national awards and many others.

Last year, Loch Johnson from the School of Public and International Affairs was named SEC Professor of the Year—and I am confident that more external recognitions are in store for our faculty.

The CTL also has launched a speaker series focused on developments in instruction. Last month's lecture on Massive Open Online Courses, or MOOCs, was well attended and fostered a lively discussion.

At this year's symposium, we'll discuss new ways of student learning. This is a particularly timely topic in light of the potentially transformative changes that are affecting higher education. The panel discussion on MOOCs that I mentioned a moment ago was co-sponsored by the University's Office of Online Learning, which was launched in August 2012. Kris Biesinger, who has provided leadership in that office, is here with us today and served on the planning committee for this symposium.

The Office of Online Learning will support faculty efforts to develop high-quality online courses that offer flexibility for students who may not be able to attend a class on campus. This summer, the University will begin offering thirty-six new high-demand undergraduate courses. These classes are the first of what I anticipate will be a significant expansion of opportunities for students and faculty facilitated by the Office of Online Learning. The Office now is focused on launching some graduate programs in this new format.

It's important to note that our new online offerings are cohort-based to encourage interaction not only between the students and the professor, but also among classmates. I believe that regardless of where the learning experience occurs—whether it is online, in large residential classes, in labs and studios or elsewhere—that we need to maintain an environment that allows for the meaningful exchange of ideas among our faculty and our motivated and intellectually curious students.

Before I close, I'd like to express my appreciation to all of you for taking the time out of your schedules to attend this symposium. As you probably know, I'll assume the Presidency of the University effective July 1. Although now is not the time for me to discuss the Presidency in detail, I want it to be clear that I believe that the strength of the University of Georgia—or any university, for that matter—lies in its faculty. With that in mind, I will continue to support programs that enhance academic life at the University.

As a commitment to the annual Academic Affairs Faculty Symposium, I have set aside private funding through the UGA Foundation to ensure its future as we return to Unicoi State Park and Conference Center next spring.

Thank you for being here and for all that you do on behalf of the University of Georgia. I look forward to our discussions.