

LUCAS FELLOW YEAR 2 REPORT (2019-2020)

This report serves to document and summarize the goals and the progress towards them during the inaugural year of the Lucas Faculty Fellows Program.

Purpose and Goals: My goal as a Lucas fellow is to ignite a passion for undergraduate research among interested faculty that are new to FGCU or may have been inactive in scholarship for a series of years. I believed this was an important issue as I have witnessed a sense of trepidation among some faculty about the increasing level of research done at FGCU and the new administration has indicated that research will continue to take a pivotal role in the evolution of our university. My hope was to use my background in scholarship to prepare workshops, meet one-on-one with interested faculty, and to work within larger support structures such as FLCs to help reframe scholarship as a positive and productive mentorship activity for students and faculty.

Reflection: While I am pleased with the success of the FLC on Undergraduate Research Mentoring, I do feel like I could have done more. In particular, I am disappointed that I didn't manage to continue the FLC in the Spring due to a busier teaching schedule than I anticipated. With respect to the FLC, I very much enjoyed interacting with faculty and planning the agenda and focus of each meeting and feel like we accomplished a lot. I genuinely believe that several faculty gained significant insight or left with a new outlook on how to successfully work with undergraduates. I had several faculty e-mail me to ask for assistance finding resources, funding opportunities, or helping them with promotion portfolios so I do think the engagement with me as a Lucas Fellow was up significantly from the first year even without the FLC.

As I progress in my career at FGCU, I've found mentoring faculty to be a particularly rewarding activity and something that I hope to continue in the future. As the fellowship ends, I hope to be able to remain involved and engaged in the Lucas Center if possible and continuing to provide some of these opportunities to our faculty. Undergraduate research can seem overwhelming to new and more seasoned faculty alike and the chance to receive feedback, talk about issues/roadblock, or learn from other faculty I think would be a valuable part of the continuing mission for faculty development.

DESCRIPTION OF YEAR TWO ACTIVITIES

Faculty Learning Community (FLC) on Exploring Undergraduate Research as a Mentoring Opportunity (Fall 2019). I facilitated my first independent FLC focusing on how to use undergraduate research as a mentoring experience. The solicitation included the statement that "Research is broadly defined as seeking new knowledge and all disciplines (including art, business, engineering, entrepreneurship, humanities, nursing, sciences) are welcome and encouraged to participate" to make it inclusive to all disciplines. I was pleased with the diversity we had in the group from the 14 participants that ranged from biology, visual art, psychology, communication/philosophy, education, and math. I was pleased with the activities we did during the FLC that included guest speakers like Billy Gunnels and Jackie Chastain to discuss on-campus funding opportunities and a student Q&A panel where three students active in undergraduate research were able to tell the group about how that experience influenced their undergraduate education. Each meeting began with a tweet that was meant to start a discussion about the material covered that day. The Agenda, Minutes and Supplemental Reading documents are all provided in the appendices. I think the registration, the good attendance, and the lively discussion at these meetings highlight a desire for a sustained opportunity for faculty to discuss and attend these types of events. Engaging in meaningful undergraduate research is a confusing undertaking for faculty. The

opportunity to talk out their frustrations and get tips from other faculty on topics like student recruitment, funding (internal and external), grant writing, and other topics I think would be useful for many faculty. I was hoping to continue this in the Spring, but things were a bit too busy and it sadly didn't work out. Hopefully, I would be able to continue this after the fellowship ends.

Presentation at the Provost's Promotion Workshop Day (11/4/2019). I was asked to prepare a powerpoint for the Provost's workshop on the "Effective Representation of Scholarship in Promotion Portfolios." From the feedback I received afterwards this was useful to several audience members. I also developed a handout as a further guide to assist application. The presentation and handout were both provided to the Lucas Center Promotion Workshop as well. While this wasn't directly related to the Lucas Center fellowship, it did provide an opportunity to plug the initiative and hopefully generate faculty interest.

One-On-One Consultation. While this was still an underutilized option like it was in the first year of the fellowship, I did have a one-on-one meeting with nursing faculty to discuss scholarship and brainstorm the structure of her promotion portfolio. Most interaction came in the way of e-mails with faculty asking if I was aware of any funding opportunities, asking my advice on a grant they were writing, or if I had specific resources that could help them. I think these e-mail interactions were still valuable to the faculty and I think it highlights the need for a program like there *where faculty can turn to other faculty* for advice instead of to their supervisors or to a non-faculty run office.

Lucas Promotion Portfolio Workshop Mentor (Summer 2019). I am currently serving as a mentor for the Lucas Center Workshop for faculty preparing their promotion portfolio and provided several documents including my complete promotion portfolio to the Lucas Center to aid the participants. I have two mentees who I met with today to go over their goals and brainstorm some themes for their narratives. This is something I would like to continue doing after the fellowship ends as I very much enjoy mentoring faculty.

Deliverables. Documentation and Resources are provided as appendices to this document.

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

As the center for faculty development on campus, the Lucas Center holds a unique role in the cultivation of our faculty and the culture of our campus. While faculty development can be a bit amorphous, the Center has done an excellent job on assisting faculty become better teachers through Faculty Learning Communities, funding opportunities, special events, and (my particular favorite) the New Faculty Academy. While the Center, in my view, appears appropriately focused on the development of better teachers as that is the core of an undergraduate institution, I think a small but sustained focus on helping faculty develop scholarship initiatives that incorporate undergraduate students could be beneficial to the faculty as well as the student body.

While it certainly varies by discipline, the incorporation of research experiences into undergraduate education provides students the opportunity to have a more interactive learning experience with the material, better direction for what career they wish to pursue, and can significantly improve their post-graduate opportunities. As personal example of the effect undergraduate research can have, a student of mine who started research with a GPA under 3.0 just graduated while making Dean's list for the first time and will be pursuing a Ph.D. in chemistry from a top 20 graduate institution. Additionally, there appears to be some trepidation from faculty when research is brought up at a teaching school, but perhaps demonstrating that the research is a vehicle for student learning and success and not about your h-index number or citations, might alleviate some of these feelings. This is something I tried to work on through this fellowship and while I believe I could have done more; I think the initial feedback from the faculty

particularly with the FLC illustrates that this type of aid to faculty development was worthwhile. Particularly, having faculty in attendance ranging from being in their first semester on campus to being here since the university began over 20 years ago provided an interesting dialogue across diverse disciplines that I think could be useful to continue after my fellowship ends.

Consultations or Office Hours on Undergraduate Research Mentoring. I think having a permanent resource for faculty to receive help with undergraduate research could be very useful. Much like classroom observations are useful for faculty to develop their teaching perhaps research reviews or even observations could be useful for faculty in developing the mentoring and research program. Perhaps something like “office hours” that would allow faculty to come by in an impromptu fashion instead of needing to set appointments might allow for a more inviting atmosphere. Also, incorporation of undergraduate research posts in the Lucas Center blog could be useful for getting out information and letting faculty know that resources are available.

Fellows’ Blog. I am glad to see that the Lucas Center blog is quite active and providing great information to the faculty. My biggest concern is that it is not seen as much as it should be. I would recommend starting a Lucas Center twitter that can highlight events of the center and share new blog posts when they are up. I understand that it might just seem like a “this platform vs. that platform” argument, but I doubt most faculty will independently check the Lucas blog for new content whereas using twitter would allow faculty at FGCU and worldwide to follow and access the information. I believe this would substantially increase traffic. If you would like to discuss this further, I would always be happy to do so and would be willing to set it up for the center. Here’s my professional lab twitter as an example of the type of promotion that’s possible. <https://twitter.com/boycesynlab?lang=en>

“Guest” Blog Posts. I think there is a lot of potential in the Lucas blog posts. I was hoping to possibly be allowed to provide additional blog posts after my fellowship ends. As I am likely (fingers crossed) going on sabbatical next year, I was thinking posts about doing a sabbatical away from FGCU could be useful to the faculty. These require quite a bit of planning and a “how to” might be useful to faculty. Additionally, I think the blog could be used for “guest interviews” with faculty on topics in their specialty. For instance, Prof. Derek Buzasi had an incredibly interesting sabbatical where he spent time at UK universities as a guest research and at Harvard if I recall our conversation correctly. Providing an opportunity for faculty to share their unique stories may inspire and instruct faculty on how to follow their example. This would be different from FGCU360, or other media posts on campus because it would focus on *faculty engaging other faculty* in an instructive manner instead of students or the broader community.

Thank you for the opportunity to be a Lucas Center Fellow, I’ve very much enjoyed it and hope for the opportunity to continue working with the Lucas Center in the future.

Sincerely,



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