



“Who dares to teach must never cease to learn.” • John Cotton Dana

Class Acts

Fall 2011

Supporting Teachers

Enhancing Learning

Building Community

The Teaching Academy website is your online guide to Teaching Academy Offerings and Registration

teaching.nmsu.edu

An interview with Provost Wendy K. Wilkins



photo courtesy of University Communications

Provost Wendy K. Wilkins addresses Teaching Academy members at the 2011 Gala.

What is your favorite part of your job?

Faculty development is the favorite part of my job because, on a personal level, it's where I get to know people best. Another part is that the biggest and most important investment the University makes is in its faculty, and we need to find ways to ensure that the faculty flourish in their work environment. We have to make sure that faculty can succeed.

What is the importance of faculty development?

I think faculty development assures that faculty can succeed in their careers in the work environment in which they find themselves. And that means knowing what faculty need to succeed. There are some general things that we know all faculty need. Then there are the things that faculty need in a certain department, or a certain discipline, or at a certain stage of their work careers. Sometimes that means helping them learn what they need. With pre-tenure faculty—and we're also finding sometimes with mid-career faculty—they want to work successfully toward career advancement, but they don't know exactly what in their environment can facilitate that.

How does faculty development assist faculty?

The most important thing that looms large for pre-tenure faculty is gaining tenure. There's a very brief moment of exhaling when they receive their PhDs—then it's virtually immediately that they start worrying about tenure. In the higher ed environment, the institution needs to provide clearly articulated guidelines for how tenure is to be achieved, for faculty in tenure-track positions. On the faculty member side, each individual needs to really understand what those guidelines mean. Just because the institution has done its part and written a document and adopted it—and we hope it's done a good job—doesn't mean that the individual faculty members really know how to achieve what the document says. And they often don't know what they have the right to expect. So we're helping pre-tenure faculty members realize that they can be more empowered in the process than they think.

What is the value of the Teaching Academy?

There are two parts to the value of the Teaching Academy. One is the actual information the workshops provide, the real content. Faculty participate in workshops and learn how to work in certain environments and document their work. The other thing I think faculty use the Teaching Academy for is a safe place to be. There are things you can talk to others about at the Academy that you might feel less free to talk about in the corridors of your own department. Everybody needs a place where they can ask questions.

Why do you give to the Teaching Academy?

I try to target my giving at my university to projects that serve a broad spectrum of individuals. I also like to invest in success, and I definitely see giving to the Teaching Academy as giving to a successful unit. Finally, I give in ways that make me feel good, and giving to a unit that supports faculty feels good!



The Teaching Academy MSC 3TA
New Mexico State University
PO Box 30001
Las Cruces NM 88001
Milton Hall Room 50
575.646.2204
575.646.1330 fax
teaching@nmsu.edu
teaching.nmsu.edu



Spring 2011 Teaching Academy Gala & Awards

The eighth annual Teaching Academy Gala was held on Wednesday, April 27, at the Stan Fulton Center to honor some 270 Teaching Academy members. Provost Wendy K. Wilkins and Associate Provost Roberta Derlin made remarks and presented awards. More than 100 Teaching Academy members and donors attended.

Teaching Academy members participate in at least 10 hours of events each year. A total of 100 met this criteria. An additional 87 Sustaining Members engaged in at least 20 hours. Eighty-five Distinguished Members dedicated 40 hours or more to faculty development at the Academy.

The Most Distinguished Graduate Member Award goes to the graduate student who participates in the most hours of training at the Teaching Academy. David Teal, in the Department of Astronomy, won this award.

The Most Distinguished Faculty Member Award goes to the faculty member who participates in the most hours of training at the Teaching Academy. The award was won by Yu-Feng "Winnie" Lee, an associate professor in the Department of Economics and International Business.

The Most Distinguished Department has the highest average participation at the Teaching Academy. The Department of Industrial Engineering won this award.

The Outstanding Workshop Award is won by the workshop presenter who gives the highest rated workshop, as judged by participants. David E. Smith, associate professor in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, won the award. David's winning workshop was *Clickers in the Classroom: Involving Students and Informing Teachers*.

The Innovation Award is an honor presented to the applicant who puts a Teaching Academy idea to the best use. The award was won by Michael DeMers, professor in the Department of Geography. Mike was selected by the Teaching Academy advisory board for his innovative implementation of learning in a virtual environment.

New Benefactors to the Teaching Academy were honored, including Alyne Fulte, Martha Mitchell, Pam Hunt, Jean Conway, and Mark Hohnstreiter. They join eight others who have made exceptional gifts, as well as 130 others who support the Teaching Academy financially.

Champagne and Chocolate, a Teaching Academy tradition, followed the short recognition ceremony.



photo courtesy of University Communications
David E. Smith received the Outstanding Workshop Award from Provost Wendy K. Wilkins

Backers, Builders, and Founders!

About 130 members and friends are helping to support the Academy financially. These gifts will assist the Academy as it provides scholarships to teaching conferences, purchases new materials for the Library, and brings nationally known speakers to our campus.

Supporters say:

The reason I support the Teaching Academy is because I value the community of scholars the Teaching Academy has created. NMSU faculty are passionate about helping our students learn, and the Teaching Academy provides valuable resources to help faculty grow as educators and as scholars.

- Martha Mitchell, Bob Davis Professor and Head, Chemical Engineering

I support the Teaching Academy because teaching is one of those rare careers that allows one to influence the course of other people's lives. The information and support provided by the Teaching Academy contribute to making that influence as positive as it can be.

- Michael Collier, Graduate Student, Psychology

Department Head Academy

What is the role of an academic department head? "That person is a leader, a manager, a faculty developer and a teacher/scholar," said Pam Hunt, associate director for ADVANCE at the Teaching Academy. "The Department Head Academy aims to foster the department head as a leader."

"This academy allows department heads to stand back and look at their own departments in the context of other departments, and the University as a whole," Hunt said. "It emphasizes their need to mentor their faculty, make sure the climate of their department is conducive to equity and help promote diversity in our faculty ranks."

The Department Head Academy was established by Provost Wendy K. Wilkins in 2010. All department heads are encouraged to participate in the program and can sign up at any time to start attending sessions. For more information about the Department Head Academy, call 646-2204 or visit *teaching.nmsu.edu*.

