

TEACHING YOUR FIRST COURSE: BALANCING TEACHING AND RESEARCH*

Susan Cates

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Abstract

2006 presentation in the Rice University NSF Advance Conference entitled “Negotiating the Ideal Faculty Position”. This workshop focuses on balancing teaching and research, and was authored by Richard Baraniuk (ELEC), Mike Gustin (BCB), Jane Grande-Allen (BIOE), and Yousif Shamoo (BCB).

Workshop Authors: Richard Baraniuk, Mike Gustin, Jane Grande-Allen, and Yousif Shamoo.[3]

1 Slide 1: Discussion Topics

- How to be a good teacher
- How to balance teaching and getting a research program off the ground

2 Slide 2: Why do we teach?

- So that people learn

3 Slide 3: Who do we teach?

- students
- colleagues
- your chair, your dean
- the public
- program managers
- patent office
- ...

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4 Slide 4: Teaching Tips

- Developing a good course takes time
 - learn good time management
- What students learn is less than what you teach
 - don't just try to "cover" the material
- Learning styles [*Richard Felder, NCSU*][2]
 - don't "teach yourself"
- Active learning [*Richard Felder, NCSU*][2]
 - "I hear, I forget; I see, I remember; I do, I understand"
 - 2 minute paper

5 Slide 5: Jane Grande Allen, Dept. of Bioengineering, Assistant Professor

- Started teaching Spring 2004

6 Slide 6: Your First Year Teaching

- Plan 6-8 hours of prep time per lecture
- Don't expect perfection
- Do get feedback throughout the semester
- Don't expect eager listening faces
- Do make the time to get to know your students or at least learn names
- Assignment tips
 - Textbooks have typos
 - Work the exams yourself
 - Extra credit: not all that

7 Slide 7: After - Recap and Revise

- Fix the lectures that needed the most work first
- Every few lectures, work in up to date data to keep things current
- Get a mentor and meet monthly. Go over how EVERYTHING has been for you
- Do attend teaching workshops

8 Slide 8: Evaluations

Don't take the evaluations too harshly

- "This professor actually discouraged independent thought..."
- "Dr. Grande-Allen is the most fair and considerate teacher I've had at Rice..."
- "Not enough engineering – too much biology"
- "The name of the course should surely be changed to Mechanical Properties of ECM because little or no chemistry or biology was discussed"

9 Slide 9: Time Management / Balance

- Set office hours and keep to them
- Give the same course lecture you gave last year
- Don't say yes to every undergrad that wants to work with you
- Focus your time on learning what you need for the research you will be strongest at
- Do early
 - Write IRB and IACUC
 - Attend regional training seminars by NIH and NSF
 - Sign up for grants mailing lists

10 Slide 10: Maintain Perspective

- Get a mentor and meet monthly!
 - Colleagues, other young faculty
- Get to know some people and faculty outside the department
- Read *At the Helm* [1]
- Check out a few blogs of other women in this position

11 Slide 11: Points for Discussion

- How to deal with absent or failing students
- The students are not like you were/are
- Should you recycle quizzes/exams?
- How accommodating should you be to student requests?
- Where did the day go? Protecting your time
- What is important and not important?

References

- [1] Kathy Barker. *At The Helm: A Laboratory Navigator*. Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press, New York, 2002.
- [2] Richard Felder. Index of learning styles. <http://www4.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/>.
- [3] Jane Grande-Allen Richard Baraniuk, Mike Gustin and Yousif Shamoo. Teaching your first course: Balancing teaching and research, October 2006. <http://www.advance.rice.edu/negotiatingtheidealfacultyposition/agenda.html>.