

## **University at Albany Future Faculty Preparation Program**

Title of Program: Certificate in College Teaching

### **Introduction**

This will be an internal certificate program (not one that is registered with the State Board of Education). We chose to make it a certificate program because that will allow our graduates to quickly convey their training to potential employers by saying that they fulfilled the requirements of this program (many other schools offer similar certificate programs). We chose to create courses with actual course numbers (instead of only holding workshops on the topic) so that students' engagement with the certificate program would appear on their transcript. Indeed, even students who do not complete the entire certificate program but choose to enroll in one of the courses will demonstrate to prospective employers at least that much interest in their preparation as future faculty members. To enroll in the certificate program, a student must already be enrolled in a terminal degree program (PhD, MFA, etc.) at the University at Albany. This is the crucial feature that makes this an internal certificate, not a degree program. Although this internal certificate would have a course of study, it is not a degree program in the usual sense.

We anticipate that this program would complement existing departmental professionalization programs that already give us some "best practices" on campus, while at the same time make it possible for students in departments that do not have such programs to prepare for the role of college or university faculty member. We are currently "piloting" the first course in the sequence—UNI 600—and in this course, as in the other aspects of the planned certificate, we are working closely with departmental faculty and have consulted with faculty in relevant disciplinary units. We anticipate tapping into faculty expertise across campus for this "Preparing Future Faculty" program—whether this will mean inviting faculty to address students within the context of the formally-offered courses or encouraging them to share their expertise with students via the ITLAL workshop mechanism (or both) will evolve as the program becomes established.

We understand that the Committee on Curriculum and Instruction of GAC will be addressing only the course action forms for UNI 601 and UNI 602 (UNI 600 has already been approved by GAC), since CC&I does not have the authority to approve the certificate itself. We also understand that there are some members of CC&I who are not members of GAC and were not present for the initial discussion of UNI 600. We hope that CC&I will discuss the course action forms within the context of the larger program and make a positive recommendation to GAC, so that GAC can take up the question of the certificate approval informed by the CC&I discussion.

### **Rationale**

The rationale for this program comes from the national Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) program started in the early 1990s by the American Association of Colleges and Universities and the Council of Graduate Schools (funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts). This program was designed to fulfill a need to prepare graduate students for all aspects of their future roles as faculty

members. Traditionally, departments have focused on preparing students as researchers. While this is still an important part of a graduate student's training, these organizations found that this was often inadequate to fully prepare students to succeed in their faculty careers. In the early 2000s, a number of reports assessing graduate student preparation were released. These studies found that while most students were still not being prepared in the best practices of teaching and were not aware of the sorts of responsibilities that are typical of faculty positions at different institutions, students graduating from PFF programs were reporting much better experiences in getting jobs and proceeding toward tenure.

In light of the information provided by these reports, the Dean of Graduate Studies, working in conjunction with the Institute for Teaching, Learning and Academic Leadership, has proposed a certificate program to prepare University at Albany that was modeled on the original PFF program. The national PFF program shared three core features:

1. A “cluster” of institutions—collaborating institutions anchored by a doctoral-degree granting institution.
2. The program is directed toward familiarizing graduate students with “the full scope of faculty roles and responsibilities.”
3. Multiple mentors—each graduate student will have guidance “not only for their research activities, but also for their teaching and service activities.”<sup>1</sup>

It is our intention to retain these parts of the program, but modified in a manner to best serve the needs of UAlbany students with the resources available to us. In particular we intend to imbue students with a solid understanding of the scholarship of teaching and learning.

### **1. Coursework**

The coursework component is designed to give students a familiarity with important aspects of teaching and learning, the profession, and to guide them in preparing the teaching portfolio.

The courses that make up the proposed certificate program carry variable credit—0-1 credit each. Our thinking behind this variable credit is to allow students to work out, with their graduate program directors, what makes the best sense. Some graduate programs might not want students to accrue actual credit for this program, but would support the 0 credit model. Others might see an advantage for students to accrue a slight amount of elective credit. We are also aware that, for students who have been advanced to candidacy and are required to take only a one-credit “load” 899 course, the 0 credit model may work best for them. In any event, there are numerous precedents for 0 credit courses; this becomes a mechanism, above all, to grant students some kind of credit—even if 0 credit—if they achieve a Satisfactory in course performance.

#### **a) UNI 600: Seminar in College Teaching. 0-1 hr, variable**

The course would be required of all participants in the certificate and closed to non-participants. This course provides an overview of the scholarship of teaching and learning and emphasizes the skills and knowledge necessary to design and teach a course that effectively facilitates student learning. Topics include: student learning styles, encouraging critical thinking, assessing student

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<sup>1</sup> PFF Program Brochure.

learning, effective use of technology, designing assignments, active learning & group work, course design, efficient grading, how to run a lecture, and the use of writing in the classroom.

Topics:

Student Learning Styles	Active Learning & Group Work
Encouraging Critical Thinking	Course Design
Designing Assignments	Efficient Grading
Assessing Student Learning	How to Run a Lecture
Effective Use of Technology	The Use of Writing in the Classroom

Text:

Davis, *Tools for Teaching*  
Handouts from Instructors, including  
Bean, *Engaging Ideas*  
Grasha, *Teaching with Style*

**b) Proposed UNI 601: Future Professoriate Seminar. 0-1 hr, variable**

The course would be required of all participants and closed to participants. Students will develop a working knowledge of the American system of higher education, an understanding of what it means to be a professional academic, and the processes common to tenure-track academic positions.

Topics:

Transitioning From Student to Professional	Balancing Faculty Commitments: Research, Teaching and Service
Understanding Institution Types	Movements in Institutional Change to Improve Learning
The Academic Job Market	Department and Institutional Assessment
What Successful New Faculty Know	
Understanding the Tenure Process	

Texts:

DeNeef and Goodwin, *The Academic's Handbook*  
Schoenfeld & Magnan, *Mentor in a Manual: Climbing the Academic Ladder to Tenure*  
Handouts from instructors, including:  
Bok, *Our Underperforming Colleges*  
Lang, *Life on the Tenure Track*  
Toth, *Ms. Mentor's Impeccable Advice for Women in Academia* (Toth)  
Wulff, Austin, *Paths to the Professoriate* (Wulff, Austin)

**c) Proposed UNI 602: Becoming a Reflective Teacher: The Teaching Portfolio, 0-1 hr, variable**

The course would be required of all participants and closed to participants. Students will develop a familiarity with the scholarship and techniques to help them develop as reflective teachers. Students will learn how to construct a teaching portfolio that can be used as part of a job search and as the foundation of a professional portfolio.

Topics:

The Teaching Portfolio and Teaching Statement as Formative and Summative Document  
Peer Evaluation Training  
Designing Courses for Significant Learning

Teaching Materials—Activities and Assignments  
Coaching Students as Learners  
The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning  
Teaching Evaluations  
From Teaching Portfolio to Tenure File

Texts:

Seldin, *The Teaching Portfolio*  
Handouts from instructors, including:

## **2. Workshops**

Attendance at eight hours of workshops on teaching, learning or the profession will be required for successful completion of the certificate. This requirement can be fulfilled by such events as ITLAL workshops, Office of Graduate Student Diversity Brown Bag lunch series, departmental seminars or workshops on teaching, the SKILL (Sharing Knowledge, Insights and Lessons Learned) conference, the Professional and Organizational Developers (POD) conference, the Lilly conferences, etc. (Events such as dissertation defenses, non-teaching related discipline-specific colloquia will not count toward this requirement.) Students will be expected to fill out a reflection form for their certificate file for each event they attend in order to fulfill this requirement. Workshops attended prior to admission to program will not count toward requirement. No more than three hours of workshops should come from the same topic area.

## **3. Formal Mentoring**

The surveys of PFF graduates routinely note that one of the most useful aspects of PFF programs is the interaction with faculty members at partner institutions. As part of the certificate program, we will pair students with mentors, ideally at other institutions, who will help to teach them what faculty life is like, how to prepare their job search materials and to give them feedback on their teaching. These people can mentor students about teaching, the profession or both. The mentor allows student to shadow him or her—exposing the student to life balancing teaching, research and service. As the program develops, we will provide guidance to the mentor pairs to encourage fruitful exchange.

Some nearby colleges we hope to develop mentor relationships with include:

Saint Rose  
Siena  
Skidmore  
Union  
RPI (First-year Studies  
program)  
Maria College

Empire State College  
(online only)  
Excelsior  
HVCC  
SCCC  
ACC  
Bennington Coll. (VT)

Green Mountain College (VT)  
Bard College  
Hartwick College  
Simon's Rock (MA, Jr-BA)  
Smith College (MA)  
Castleton State (VT)  
Middlebury College (VT)  
Southern VT College

#### **4. Evaluation of Teaching**

For completion of the certificate, the student will need to have a formal review of their teaching, e.g. videotape consultation by ITLAL or in-person observation by mentor or departmental representative. For students in programs in which they do not have an opportunity to have primary responsibility for teaching a course, alternate means of fulfilling this requirement will be arranged. One option might be guest teaching in another's course (possibly their mentor's course). Partnering with local institutions to provide teaching opportunities as adjunct faculty could also provide fruitful professional experience.

#### **5. Service**

Since one of the aspects of faculty life that new faculty members struggle with is learning to balance research, teaching and service duties, we believe that learning this balance early will be helpful. We will require that students participate in some sort of service to their department or the university as part of their certificate requirements. Students will be required to complete a minimum of ten hours' commitment to serving their department, other graduate students, or the university. Examples of acceptable service include: help in the preparation of, or with presentations within the SKILL Conference, Graduate Student Orientation, or a similar program within their department (Departmental Graduate Student Conference, Departmental colloquial series, being a student representative on a search committee, etc.). Other service obligations will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

#### **6. Teaching Portfolio**

In addition to successfully taking the course on the teaching portfolio (in which a draft of the portfolio will be completed), students will need to have their portfolio approved by a committee consisting of ITLAL representatives and qualified teaching faculty (ideally their teaching mentor will participate in this process). This will count as the capstone experience of the program.

#### **Conclusion of the Program**

At the conclusion of the program, students will receive an internal document attesting to their successful completion of the requirements for the certificate. The description of the program and its requirements will appear on the ITLAL/Graduate Studies web sites. The primary evidence for successful completion of the program will be the transcript notations for successful completion of UNI 600, UNI 601, and UNI 602 (teaching portfolio).