

24th Annual Institute on Teaching and Mentoring

# Tips for Exemplary Teaching

*from Award-Winning Faculty*



THE  
COMPACT *for*  
FACULTY  
**DIVERSITY**

October 2017

*“Teaching is the one profession that  
creates all other professions.”*

— Unknown

# Inspiring Teachers

Albert Einstein once said, “It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.” For 24 years, the Institute on Teaching and Mentoring, hosted by SREB’s Doctoral Scholars Program, has prepared minority Ph.D. scholars to enter college classrooms and awaken joy in the next generation. Some of these scholars might point out that teaching is a stressful, often thankless job with only intermittent joy along the way. But they are drawn to it nevertheless because the payoffs in student learning are always worth the effort. Part of why the role is difficult is that it requires more than teaching. Good teachers are also role models, innovators, coaches and friends to their students. The really good ones lay the foundation for an educated, active and productive future citizenry.

How to become an effective teacher is a prominent topic at the Institute. Sessions such as “Engaging the Post-Millennial Student” and “Designing a Course for Maximum Student Learning” — ones that address student involvement and pedagogical principles — demonstrate the commitment to today’s college students. Pedagogy is a pivotal part of instruction and empowers teachers to engage students in many other ways: helping them to stand against bullying, introducing underrepresented minority groups to STEM careers, and motivating students to finish the journey and graduate. Effective teachers invest in students.

What does it take to be an effective teacher? What talents must an individual have to influence a classroom of future leaders? Six Institute scholars who earned awards for their exemplary teaching have the best answers to these questions. They are from various programs, universities and states. The pages that follow highlight their stories and include a helpful tip from each scholar on being an effective teacher in today’s classroom.

We hope that their advice empowers you and their stories inspire you.

Dr. Brown's exemplary teaching tip:

## *Always consider the whole person*



### **Dr. Joey Brown**

Graduate Teaching Assistant  
University of Maryland, College Park  
AGEP Fellow  
Winner of the 2016 Behavioral and  
Social Sciences Excellence in  
Teaching Award



It was Joey Brown's first year as a graduate teaching assistant for a Social Research Methods course when a student approached him about the semester-length project. The student had difficulty gathering ideas to create a concept for the assignment. During the conversation, Brown noticed the student devaluing his own skills and experience. As a result, the student was heavily considering cheating as an option. Brown felt compelled to spend the school year working with the student to help him develop the confidence and study tools to excel. Brown's support paid off; the student went on to finish the semester project and successfully pass the course. The experience had a profound impact on Brown. He understood that the inner beliefs of students can have just as much or more to do with success in higher education as the class subject or instructor. Brown used this event to influence his teaching techniques. He engaged students on personal and sociological levels across various learning styles. His work earned him the 2016 Behavioral and Social Sciences Excellence in Teaching Award from the University of Maryland.

Dr. Monteblanco's exemplary teaching tip:

*Do not let the weight of anxiety overwhelm you*



### **Dr. Adelle Monteblanco**

Assistant Professor of Sociology  
University of Colorado Boulder  
CFD-RMI Fellow  
Winner of the 2016 Outstanding  
Graduate Teacher Award



In 2016, Dr. Adelle Monteblanco was awarded the Outstanding Graduate Teacher Award for her exemplary performance in the mentoring and teaching of undergraduate students in the Department of Sociology at the University of Colorado Boulder. Her excitement for instruction came from her earlier experience in teaching environmental science to middle-grades students. This passion for science encouraged her to enter the college classroom to further the knowledge of adult students. Her expert use of teaching methods to bring sociology to life for undergraduates won her the award. While she is grateful for the recognition, Dr. Monteblanco never forgets the exhilaration and jitters she felt the first time she taught a college course. She clearly remembers that Monday morning standing in front of the classroom. The weight of anxiety from realizing that this would likely be the first-ever college course for the incoming undergraduate students was overwhelming. She also knew that sociological topics could produce uncomfortable discussions for freshman college students. However, she told herself the words she still uses today as she guides her students with innovative teaching practices and pedagogical techniques: “Be brave.”

Dr. Ander's exemplary teaching tip:

*Do not be discouraged if the “Aha” moment does not happen*



### Dr. Ariel Anders

Graduate Teaching Assistant  
Massachusetts Institute  
of Technology, Cambridge  
Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Fellow  
Winner of the MIT EECS Frederick C.  
Hennie III Teaching Award



“You can catch up. You can still learn the material, and it may even make you better than the other students. You would be starting with a clean slate.” Ariel Anders’ attempts to convince a female freshman student that she was cut out for computer science were proving unfruitful. The student’s lack of a computer science background made her feel that she would be a class behind her peers. Even with Anders’ encouragement, the student ended up choosing another major. The “aha” moment — when a teacher’s message clicks with a student — never came. Anders’ own epiphany came when she realized that moment may not always come. However, this interaction drove her to be a part of the change that teaches her students that most of them can be in engineering regardless of their educational background. As a result, Anders created hands-on laboratory sessions and a lab-based curriculum for high school and undergraduate students to make engineering accessible and easier to grasp. In 2017, Anders was awarded the MIT EECS Frederick C. Hennie III Teaching Award for her fresh approach to teaching STEM curricula and helping “blank slates” to become engineers.

Dr. Taylor's exemplary teaching tip:

*Never stop putting yourself in the student's shoes*



### Dr. Archie Taylor

Assistant Professor of Molecular  
and Cellular Biology  
Alcorn State University  
Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Fellow  
Winner of the Student Government  
Association Male Faculty Member  
of the Year Award



In 2016, Dr. Archie Taylor did something he hopes many of his current students will do: walk across the stage to graduate. At the 2016 Institute on Teaching and Mentoring, Dr. Taylor took the podium to motivate and inspire. He talked about the twists and turns in his path to the Ph.D. The most memorable quote from his speech was “Increase your expectation for excellence, and decrease your comfort zone.” Regarding teaching, Dr. Taylor has regularly strived for excellence. Through fostering academic relationships and strong connections during his lessons, Dr. Taylor became the professor his students needed. When asked about what qualities make an effective teacher, Dr. Taylor said professors should be “lifelong learners.” When asked what the most defining moment of teaching has been for him, Dr. Taylor replied that a collection of several instances had given his career purpose. Most notable was hearing the names of his students called as they walk across the stage to receive their diplomas. From this, he deepened his passion for creating successful futures for his students so that one day, they can take the same walk he took in 2016.

Dr. Nelson's exemplary teaching tip:

## *Spend time with students outside the classroom*



### **Dr. Terry Nelson**

Graduate Programs Director and  
Assistant Professor of Management  
University of Alaska Anchorage  
SREB-State Doctoral Scholars  
Program Fellow

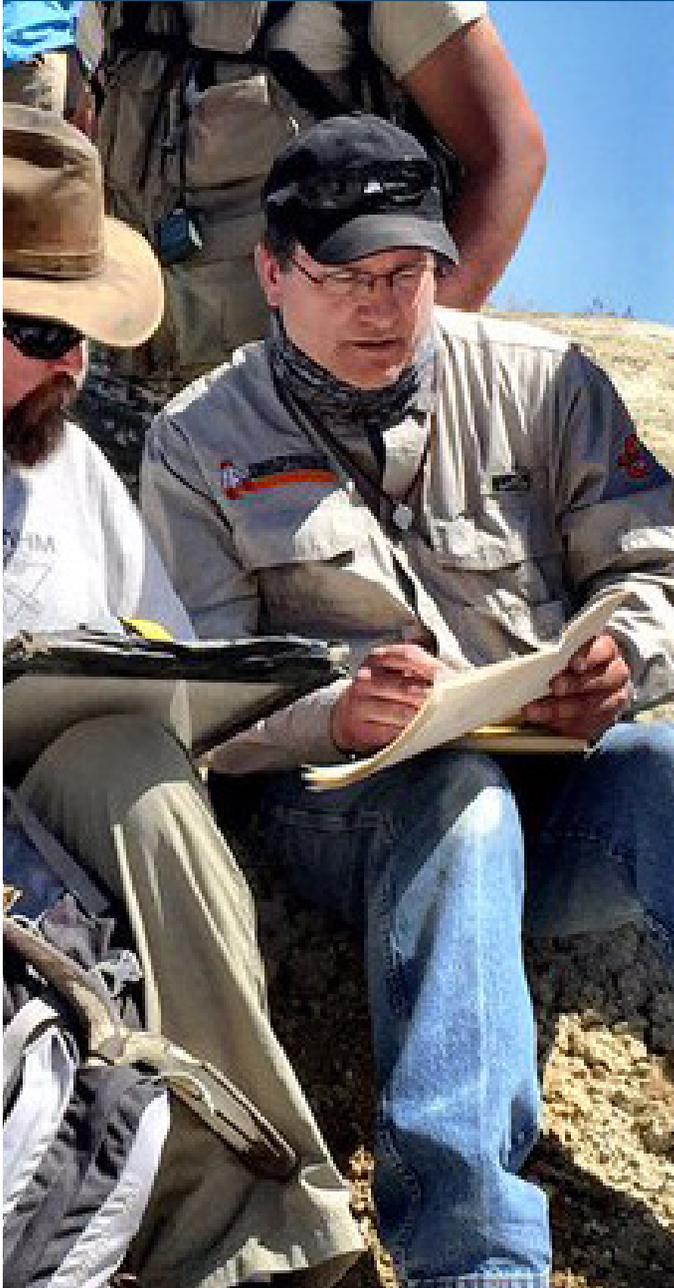
Winner of the 2017 Organizational  
Behavior Teaching Society New Educator Award



Aside from end-of-course evaluations and the occasional comment from a student, professors rarely hear about the impact they have on students. Not so for Dr. Terry Nelson. An eighth-grade student who participated in Dr. Nelson's Leadership Fellows Junior Program — a project that focuses on helping seventh- and eighth-grade students develop leadership skills — reached out with encouraging feedback about the experience. She revealed that the leadership skills she learned from Dr. Nelson's program empowered her to stand up against bullies. Then, Dr. Nelson heard an undergraduate student spread the word to his classmates that Dr. Nelson spent hours outside of class helping him to improve a near failing grade to an "A." Dr. Nelson's passion for service and meeting students where they are helped her win the 2017 Organizational Behavior Teaching Society New Educator Award. Her exceptional classroom instruction, educational innovation, and dedication to service made her a leading contender for the award. But even more than the accolades, Dr. Nelson cherishes the words her students use to describe her: "caring and inspiring."

Dr. Smith's exemplary teaching tip:

*Use your classroom to bring attention  
to a social issue*



**Dr. Kent Smith**

Associate Dean and Professor  
of Anatomy  
Oklahoma State University  
SREB-State Doctoral Scholars  
Program Fellow  
Winner of OSU's Regents'  
Distinguished Teaching Award



Dr. Kent Smith was planning for how he might impact students even before he stepped into the classroom. This mission began when Dr. Smith, a Native American, was an undergraduate student. The absence of Native American students in his STEM classes bothered him, since many traditions in the Native culture intertwine with science. Years later, as a tenure-track assistant professor, Dr. Smith built an outreach program that increased the number of Native American citizens pursuing careers in science and medicine. In 2009, Mr. Reggie Whitten, a friend and mentor who supported Dr. Smith's vision to use paleontology to recruit more Native Americans in STEM, was the co-founder of the Native Explorers Foundation. Whitten funded the first Native explorer's expedition, which kicked off the first Native Explorers Program at Oklahoma State University where Dr. Smith is now an assistant professor. In seven years, 80 Native American undergraduate students from across the United States have come to work with scientists. Dr. Smith has used his passion for students to address a lack of Native American representation in STEM, one student at a time.

# 2016 Institute Statistics

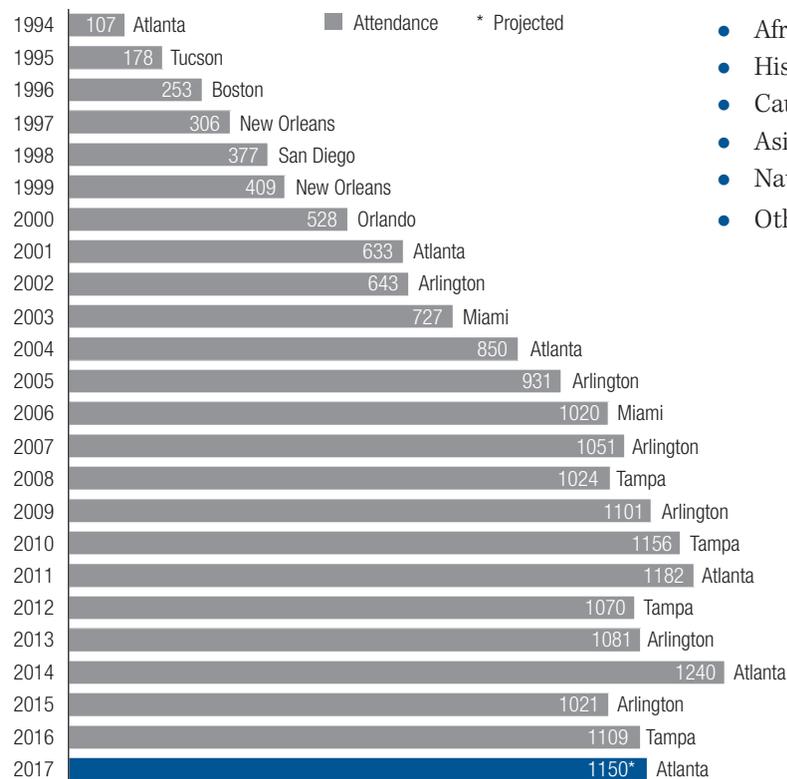
## Attendance by Discipline

- Business and Management - 3%
- Education - 15%
- Health Professions - 4%
- Humanities - 7%
- Mathematics - 3%
- Science & Technology - 33%
- Engineering - 19%
- Social & Behavioral Sciences - 16%

## Institute Data

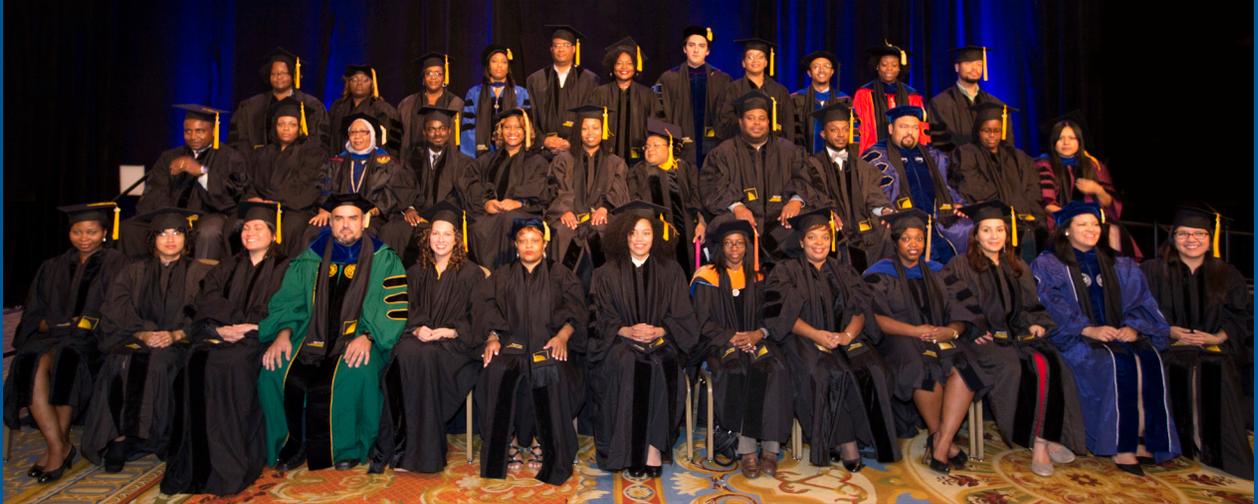
- 1,109 attendees
- first time attendee - 45%
- 48 states represented by participants (includes the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico)
- 35 graduates recognized
- 73 universities represented at Recruitment Fair
- 204 recruiter representatives
- 108 disciplines represented
- female - 62%, male - 38%

## Institute attendance by year



## Race and Ethnicity

- African American - 56%
- Hispanic - 22%
- Caucasian - 13%
- Asian American - 2%
- Native American - 2%
- Other - 5%



The Compact for Faculty Diversity is pleased to recognize these partner organizations:

- Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Minority Ph.D. Program
- Gates Millennium Scholars Program
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration Harriett G. Jenkins Predoctoral Fellowship Project
- National Science Foundation Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate
- Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program
- Southern Regional Education Board
- Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

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