

# In their Own Words: Doctoral Student Experience

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## **Future Faculty Fellows: New Professor Training and So Much More**

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This August I participated in the Future Faculty Fellows (F3), a program organized by the [Graduate School](#) at the University of Houston to help prepare graduate students for a career in academia. The [F3 program](#) follows a best practices framework developed by the Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL), a coalition of 23 research universities that strives to enhance the quality of undergraduate education. The Fellowship is comprised of a series of workshops, discussions and seminars designed to improve teaching and assessment skills. Following a full day boot camp that covers the nuts and bolts of being a college professor, participants choose from a variety of two or three-hour workshops offered over a three-week period. The workshops include topics like Engaging Students, Managing a Classroom, and Teaching Online, and each session is taught by a member of the UH faculty recognized for teaching excellence.

The material was great, and I came away with many new and innovative ideas for spicing up the student experience in the classroom. However, in addition to value of the material, I found the program to be a wonderful way to make new connections with faculty and students outside of Bauer. I believe I was the only Bauer representative among 40 graduate students from a wide variety of disciplines. This afforded me the chance to learn not only about differences in teaching philosophies and styles, but to gain an appreciation for research methods and topics never previously considered. Discussions with Kinesiologists made me wonder about how nutrition might factor into business decision-making and chats with students in English and Philosophy made me ponder the importance of a liberal education to creativity in the workplace. The Fellowship is a wonderful platform to share ideas and it reinforced my understanding of how all disciplines are linked in one way or another.

The Fellowship also opened my eyes to the vast array of resources available to faculty at UH, and helped me understand how the university functions in general. We were introduced to the Police Chief, who provided clarity about the Campus Carry Law and how to handle situations related to it. We also heard from the department of Academic Affairs and learned how to appropriately deal with cases of academic dishonesty and students who perhaps pose a danger to themselves or others; things I had previously never considered. It was reassuring to learn that there is a vast support system of people and resources available to help with potential administrative issues as well as provide support for improved student learning. That support includes the department of Faculty and Departmental Instructional Support, also known as FDIS. FDIS offers workshops about how to maximize the benefits of technology such as Blackboard and the use of clickers and they also

provide individual consultation to help teachers apply their trade more effectively. It is a comfort just knowing that such a support system is out there and ready to help.

In short, I highly recommend future Bauer Ph.D. students apply to the F3 program. In addition to the roughly 40 hour requirement in August, the program requires that you teach in the Fall semester and offers a series of Brown Bag events throughout the year that affords participants the opportunity to discuss what is going on in the classroom and share stories of success and failure. As an added benefit, it includes a \$500 stipend. The application can be found on the Graduate School website and is due at the end of May. It requires nomination and a letter of recommendation from an advisor, but based on my discussions with the staff, they aim to accommodate all interested applicants. As most of us aim to enter the world of academia upon graduation, the F3 program is a great opportunity for us to get a head start.