

2015

A Regional Campus Perspective: Remember Who We Are Serving

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Recommended Citation

(2015) "A Regional Campus Perspective: Remember Who We Are Serving," *Illuminations*: Vol. 3 : No. 1 , Article 8.
Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/illuminations/vol3/iss1/8>

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Illuminations

NEWSLETTER FOR NEW FACULTY

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A Regional Campus Perspective: Remember Who We Are Serving

March 9, 2015



An Interview with Dr. Cecelia Rivers, Assistant Vice President for the UCF Western Region Campuses

Dr. Cecelia Rivers is an inclusive, welcoming administrator that strives to make UCF students the center of her and her team's work. She is the Assistant Vice President for the UCF Western Region Campuses which includes the UCF South Lake, UCF Leesburg, and UCF Ocala campuses. This region has partnerships with Lake Sumter State College, College of Central Florida and the Lake County Public Library System.

Interview conducted by Rayla Hanselmann, Western Region Campus Librarian

Can you tell me a little bit about the faculty in the Western Region?

I have great faculty who are committed to the teaching and learning process, and the success of students in our region. The team includes 13 resident instructors/associate lecturers who support more than a dozen live and on-line academic programs taught in the Western Region. About a half dozen adjunct faculty supplement instruction at the three campuses. Faculty areas of specialty range from Coaching, Life-span development, to teacher training.

Besides a commitment to classroom instruction, most of our faculty are engaged in extracurricular activities on the campus and in the community. For example, Dr. Chrysalis Wright has created a Media and Migration Lab on the South Lake campus that provides an opportunity for her students to engage in a variety of research related projects. She also established the Undergraduate (UG) Showcase that encourages regional students' interest, appreciation, and skills in academic research. The UG Showcase, in its third year in the region, attracts approximately 40 student presenters annually. As students engaged in more research, we saw an increase in student use of library resources, study rooms in the library, and other study areas on campus. Dr. Wright also mentors students through our Knight LIGHTS mentoring program and serves as Coordinator for the Western Region Honors in the Major. Among many other areas of involvement, she is a member of the Undergraduate Research Council and the editorial board of the Undergraduate Research Journal.

Associate Lecturer, Jeff Duke serves on the Board of Directors for South Lake Hospital. Dr. Duke also tours the country speaking on the topic of 3-dimensional coaching, an area of specialty. He and instructor Bill Kuminka are also currently working with the City of Clermont's South Lake Sports Tourism initiative that will significantly impact recreation in the South Lake community.

Associate lecturer Jeff Biddle engages the students in his Public Relations class in the coordination of an annual community-wide 5K run that benefits Special Olympics. This year, \$3000 in proceeds from the race, were donated to support the mission of Special Olympics. Dr. Biddle presents at conferences, as well as take time to write local articles of interest. For example, his article entitled "Constructionist Teaching for Student Success" which highlighted instructional scaffolding to improve student learning, was featured in UCF's fall issue of the Faculty Forum newsletter.

How do your campuses assist faculty with student learning?

First, we provide our faculty with conducive learning environments (state of the art technology) in the classroom and on the campus.

Second, faculty assemblies are held each semester at which we encourage the faculty to take advantage of all the resources available at the University to be effective classroom instructors. The assemblies typically feature a guest presenter who addresses a topic that expands faculty knowledge on ways to enhance student learning and achievement. Past presenters have included representatives from areas such as the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, Student Development and Enrollment Services, Disability Services, and Library services. One of our greatest resources is our full-time resident librarian.

What do you feel is the library's role in student learning?

Libraries, while seemingly becoming more and more obsolete for their brick and mortar, are still very critical to student success. Libraries (and librarians!) play a major role in information literacy, and serve as a support beam for classroom learning. Libraries are one of the most essential resources for students for the wealth of information that is readily available at student's fingertips, both literally and figuratively. Besides, they still provide a "quiet place to study".

What are you and your staff doing to improve student learning?

Everyone on our staff plays a role in making our regional campuses a great place to study and learn. Whether it's the warm reception our front desk staff gives to students, the Multi-Cultural Meet and Greet receptions, or the professional advising students receive to guide their academic choices and progress towards graduation, the plethora of support provided to students on every campus impacts student learning in a positive way. One such service offered through Student Services is SuccessIONS, a series of workshops aimed at expanding student knowledge and awareness and helping them achieve academic success. This year, over 25 workshops have been offered on such topics as Business Etiquette, Financial Aid 101, and Resume Writing.

Similarly, our Elementary Education students are offered targeted HAPPY Hour professional development workshops (coordinated by a faculty instructor) right here in the region.

What are some ideas on your "dream accomplishments" list?

I would love to see a broader array of program offerings and innovative modes of delivery that enable more "place-bound" and "time-bound" students to earn a degree from UCF.

A primary reason that regional campuses exist is to make UCF more accessible to students who do not have the resources to commute to the Orlando campus. Students have longed for a shuttle service to provide transportation between Regional Campuses and the Orlando campus. Shuttle service would be a great accomplishment.

Do you have any advice for other administrators at the regional campuses?

My advice is to remember who we are serving and that we are greater than our individual campuses. We are part of one University that serves many different constituents. Our programs, services, methods of delivery, teams, and partnerships should reflect the unique needs of our respective communities, and should complement the University's overall mission and purpose.