

**Things I Wish I had Known in my First Year. August 29, 2012**  
**Presenters Dr. Takiyah Amin, Assistant Professor of World Dance and Dr.**  
**Mark Ezell, Interim Chair of the Department of Social Work**

Drs. Takiyah Amin who just completed her first year at UNC Charlotte, and Mark Ezell, who has been at UNC Charlotte for two years, shared their thoughts about what they wish they had known during their first years here.

Below is a list, in no particular order, summarizing their opinions on the matter...  
***Make relationships outside your department, in addition to in your home department***

Find out what is going on in the university, see things from a different perspective, build interdisciplinary collaborations.

***Sit down with your chair early in the year to talk about RPT procedures***

Be proactive in getting clarity around RPT procedures.

What are the expectations? What do you need to do to be successful? Get a general idea about what needs to be in your portfolio. Start putting stuff together EARLY.

***Do not believe everything you hear about the tenure process (except what your hear from your chair, dean or ADVANCE)***

There are many urban myths out there regarding the tenure process. Do not assume that if you talk to somebody who just got tenure, they know what in their portfolio was 'good' and what could have used more work.

***YOU are responsible for your career***

READ about the RPT policy for your college. If policy is not clear, or appears to be contradictory, go to your chair to get it figured out. It is the chair's job to tell you explain this to you. Even if the departmental chair is replaced, the college policy around RPT will not change.

***Academia requires self-promotion***

Think of yourself as an individual entrepreneur, but, be humble in this culture of self-promotion. Present yourself as somebody who wants to learn, not as somebody who knows everything. Hone your people skills. Be interested in what your colleagues are doing, and they will be interested in what you are doing.

***Protect your Time, but do it in a congenial manner***

Learn the difference between a student/faculty emergency and a REAL emergency. All the issues are important, but not all of them are urgent. Students, in particular, want everything fixed NOW.

***Learn to say no, succinctly, but politely***

If individuals are attempting to set up meetings, and the time is not convenient to you, learn to say, "Sorry, I'm not available", or "Sorry, I have a commitment at that

time." You DON'T have to come up with an excuse. Do, however, be polite. DO NOT come across as defensive.

### ***Get yourself a Mentor***

Maybe you need a different mentor for different aspects of your career: teaching, research, personal development, work life balance. The ADVANCE Office can set you up with a mentor outside your home department. Critical if you have an issue within your department that you would feel uncomfortable discussing with a mentor from your own department. Value your mentor, use them (respectfully). Your mentor has been where you are and wants to help/support you. If it's not working for you, find another mentor

### ***Find Resources within the university that can help make your job easier***

The university is here to support you. They have expended a lot of time, effort and money to get you to this position. They want you to succeed. Find out about all the resources that are available to assist you. Visit the ADVANCE website, or contact Yvette. ADVANCE is a rich source of information and they will know who can help you. The library is a wonderful resource that will provide many services that will save you a lot of time and effort: scan articles, books; deal with copyright issues; post stuff to Moodle. Check out their website.

### ***The Center for Teaching and Learning (CLT) is an excellent resource for teaching***

Teaching is valued at this institution. The CLT is there for you. It is their job to help you to become a better teacher. Check out their website to see what they have available. All workshops are listed. They offer a variety of services: one on one consultation; Tech support; Moodle support. Check out their website.

### ***Learn that the amount of time you put into preparing a lecture does NOT directly correlate with the quality of the lecture***

Less time spent on preparation does not always translate into less quality. Do not over-prepare. Plan, plan plan. Also remember, it is hard to be a good teacher. It takes time to hone those skills. Being more efficient in your time management around teaching translates into more time for you to spend on your research

### ***Useful Resources for Teaching***

Ken Bane. What the Best College Professors Do.

Therese Huston. How to Teach What you Don't Know.

Barbara Gross Davis. Tools for Teaching 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.

### ***Resource for Writing and Life***

Ann Lamott. Bird by Bird

***You can put money on your ID to purchase food in the cafeteria (declining balance), and it's Tax-free!***

You put money on to purchase items out of vending machines and the bookstore too. You can get discounts around campus eg. at the bookstore when you use the card