

## **SU Emeritus Faculty Newsletter, Volume 3, October 2021**

Welcome to the third edition of the SU Emeritus Faculty Newsletter! The purpose of the Emeritus Faculty Newsletter is four-fold:

1. To facilitate on-going connection and support among emeritus faculty.
2. To inform emeritus faculty and those nearing retirement about Southwestern's institutional priorities, decisions, and policies, particularly those that affect retirement.
3. To actively involve retired faculty in events (whether virtual or in person) at the university. This includes celebrations in which individual emeritus faculty members may host events, such as Homecoming and Charter Day.
4. To keep emeritus faculty informed about the calendar of the university, thus facilitating their involvement in the historical traditions of the university.

### **USEFUL LINKS**

Here are some links that we think may be helpful to emeritus faculty.

Coronavirus facts:

<https://www.aarp.org/health/conditions-treatments/info-2020/coronavirus-facts.html>

Weblink to the current SU retirement benefits provider:

<https://my.viabenefits.com/southwestern>

Please send us links that you think would be helpful to your fellow Emeritus faculty members.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

This Committee will be looking for NEW members. There are 2 positions for retired faculty, preferably for those who are in the Georgetown area. It's a great way to help others and requires very few hours. Please let one of the current members know if you would be interested in assuming one of these positions in the future. Our emails are at the end of the Newsletter.

### **INFORMATION REQUEST FOR EMERITUS FACULTY**

This Committee is interested in the experiences that retiring and retired faculty have had with the Human Resources Department. Have they been available and helpful? It is our wish to facilitate the process of retirement and HR plays a key part. Please let us know your thoughts.

## PICTURES AND WISDOM FROM EMERITUS FACULTY

This month we have submissions from **Emily Northrup**, **Katherine Juhl**, **Sherry Adrian**, **Thom McClendon**, and **Kerry Bruns**.

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First, we find that the unstoppable **Emily Northrup** continues the fight to save the world from climate change and, at the same time, lets the sun shine in through her hand made stained-glass windows!

Greetings from Birmingham, Alabama!

I moved here, really on impulse, after learning that my mother would be relocating to this area, where my older brother also lives. Mother is 89 and still getting her 10,000 steps almost every day!

I've continued my work with the [Citizens' Climate Lobby](#) that I began in Georgetown. With the pandemic, my public presentations and our team lobbying were moved onto zoom.



Zoom is also where I'm teaching ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages). Throw in some golf, book groups, a Friends Meeting, and a few stained-glass pieces, including this sunflower.

Good luck, everyone!

Emily

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Second, we have some truly great advice from **Katherine Juhl**.

For a new a faculty member:

- 1) Balance your life with friends, activities, hobbies, and family. Be determined not to be a workaholic.
- 2) Have fun, be silly, enjoy everything you do...even meetings. Approach work as play. Laugh A LOT!!!

3) Enjoy your students (even their foibles) and develop close, meaningful, and productive relationships with colleagues. Human support is SO important!



Juhl and super special friend!

For colleagues planning their retirements:

1. Plan the logistics of your life after retirement...especially income and health care.
  - a. Meet with your financial advisor.
  - b. Check out Medicare and Social Security procedures ahead of time. (I found this to be very cumbersome and time-consuming.)
  - c. Call Via Benefits, the SU sponsored organization that can advise you on Medicare supplemental insurance. Via is great...knowledgeable advisors with tons of information.
2. Really think about how you will spend your time in retirement and make sure you will have plenty of time for just hanging out, goofing off and having fun!
3. Know that retirement is really great no matter what you do with your time. Living free of constraints and stress is absolutely joyful!

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Third, we have definitive proof that great teachers can never really retire! From **Sherry Adrian** we have her transition to retirement story.

My retirement was official as of June 2021. Honestly, I felt similarly to what I know many seniors in high school and college expressed about how the pandemic affected their last year and graduation. Teaching remotely for my last year was definitely not how I had imagined the 28th year of my career. I desperately missed the person-to-person engagement with my students. My phased retirement was structured so that I didn't teach at all during spring 2021 so the academic year just simply fizzled out. I spent that spring helping family members a lot with various needs. I continued with a needlework project that involved over 35,000 stitches. Fortunately, I spent some time visiting with friends out of doors. It wasn't enough.

At the beginning of August, I took a long-term substitute job in a local high school. The position began September 3rd and lasted until October 15. Well before the summer, I had had the vaccine and the district was committed to faculty and students wearing masks so I was willing to be around teens and teachers.

I didn't have time to plan instruction but had some resources from the other teachers. The courses were to help high-school students, with learning disabilities, dyslexia, ADHD, and



Energetic and positive Sherry Adrian!

autism, to refine their organizational, self-advocacy, and strategic learning skills toward the goals of college and/or career/job preparation. These students were taking full course loads: English, languages other than English, physics, geometry, algebra, chemistry, biology, world history, U.S. history, world geography, art, choir. Some were also involved in athletics.

Those of you who taught in spring and fall 2020 when the transition from in-person to remote took place and those of you who can remember your very first teaching gig can identify with me when I say that the learning curve was steep, exciting, intimidating, challenging, and extremely fulfilling. You'll be able to identify some of the things that I had to learn in the first week based on

your work at SU: using the Google classroom platform (thank goodness for my time teaching remotely for SU); using the grading platform that parents and students can check any hour of any day (delayed grading doesn't work); using the platform for special education individualized education documents to read assessments, goals, and accommodations; learning to use a credit recovery platform for students who are making up for failed courses; developing my own progress monitoring forms to track IEP goals, accommodations, assignments, and grades on a weekly basis; developing instruction and assignment guidelines; and reporting procedures for educational meetings on students. This list does not reflect getting to know the students, the other teachers, the policies and practices, bell schedules and on and on.

I learned a great deal about the profession that I've been teaching for 28 years and practicing for about 40. I'm happy to know that my philosophy about teaching and learning continues to be relevant. I have always believed that teachers and students are co-learners. I continue to believe that content expertise is critical but that knowledge/skill can quickly be diminished if you can't connect with students. Students want to connect even when they don't always meet you halfway. A student has four (if not more) selves: the classroom around peers self, the one-to-one with a teacher self, the I'm with family self, and the in the halls and out in public self. Each one of these plays a part in how you reach them.

Today's students have a lot of pressure and need a lot of support to navigate the demands placed on them. Today's students have access to so much more information, immediately, through social media that they know things when they don't yet have the social-emotional-mental development to know the impact of what they know. Teachers have always been more than "instructors of knowledge and skills," but their roles as social workers, case managers, mentors, facilitators, supporters, cheerleaders, etc., are expected and needed for so many more students than when I began teaching in 1979. I'm talking about your typical learners, too, not the students

I taught at the beginning of my career who were identified as having serious emotional and behavioral disorders.

The final lesson of teaching in high school that I've learned is: As a parent, I didn't know sh\*\* about who my own children really were in high school. (They laughed for a long time when I told them this.)

Needless to say, I'm subbing again at the end of October and I am excited to know that I can do this successfully.

Sherry Adrian

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Fourth, we learn that **Thom McClendon** is furthering his personal education by pursuing his goal of becoming proficient at Spanish.

One of my goals in retirement was to finally learn Spanish sufficiently well to travel with relative ease in Spanish-speaking countries, especially Mexico, and to be able to communicate better with those in the US who primarily speak Spanish. I had a bit of background, but with efforts spaced apart by decades. After I left SU, I took a couple of classes locally, including a very helpful semester at SU. But like many learners, I found my speaking ability and oral comprehension were still pretty limited, and I needed a lot more practice, more regularly, in every area. Eventually I found an online program called BaseLang. Their main offering, for a monthly subscription, is unlimited one-on-one Zoom classes. It has a structured but pared-down curriculum that goes up to something like intermediate level, but it is also possible simply to have conversations or to read or watch videos or the like with the instructors. (You can also access their program to prepare for DELE exams.) The instructors are mostly Venezuelans, mostly living in other countries of Latin America, especially Colombia. Many are trained in other professions like engineering or law, but I have found all to be good teachers and it easy to pick and choose until you find one(s) you enjoy spending time with and learning from. The classes are in half-hour or one-hour blocks, spread across 18 hours. I've had a lot of fun doing this nearly every day (with a couple of instructors in particular) for the last couple of years, and have learned a lot. One side benefit was that when the pandemic arrived, I was already used to spending time talking to acquaintances via Zoom. For those looking to make progress with Spanish and to get to know some interesting young people in other countries, I recommend it.

Thom McClendon

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Finally, from **Kerry Bruns** we have the good advice for building your future as well as he builds his beautiful handmade wooden furniture. The three images below show his beautiful craftsmanship.

Dr. Ore and members of the Emeritus Faculty Committee requested that I identify three points of advice for new faculty members and another three points for faculty members who are considering retirement sometime soon.

For new faculty members, I do not want to reiterate what you have heard in the fall faculty conference or what has been provided to you on the university's web site. I will say that after having visited the Dean of the Faculty page there is much important information to be found there, including the Faculty Handbook. I know learning about the organizational structure and system of governance of the university is necessary and somewhat daunting at first. As your department chair and colleagues welcome you to the university, you can ask questions of them if you have questions about various aspects of serving on the faculty, and they can be great sources of other information you might want to know.

That brings me to the first point of advice, and I know it may seem obvious, but I found it to be important to me as a new faculty member.

1. Build friendly, professional relationships with colleagues and students: Begin developing courses that you will be teaching regularly. These courses are often intended to help students build a foundation for further studies in your academic discipline, and others in your department may have been teaching those courses, too. Talk with those people about their experiences teaching the course(s), and become familiar with their special interests that they may teach in upper-level courses. Much goes into planning a course, and by "development" I mean improvement of the course over semesters and years. You will be able to discuss with your department chair the course evaluations, and by having good relations with your departmental colleagues, you can talk about ideas to develop other courses you will teach.



Small end table (American black cherry)

My second point is somewhat related to the first, but also distinct:

2. Identify some faculty members, perhaps in other closely allied departments in your academic area, whose research you find to be interesting. It is good to have friendly relations with people who have similar interests but who may not be departmental colleagues. Having lunch or coffee with these persons does not need to be all business, but you may have common concerns about

issues facing the university that involve other departments as well as your own, and it is good to get other faculty members' perspectives on some of those concerns. These discussions can help you construct a "bigger picture" of the institution, and may help you to contribute to the university community through your increasing responsibilities on committees and within your department. Sometimes these kinds of interactions can help to inform your own professional interests, too.

3. Be good to yourself: My third point is to be sure to schedule some time for your self. Although much of this time to think and re-set may be spent in your office, I found that at some times it was very good for me to not be looking at the same walls and computer screen that I had been for hours. I liked to take a walk outside, listen to different sounds, focus on distant objects, and breathe the outdoor air. I would sometimes take lunch outside in a quiet space. Other faculty members I knew would go to the Robertson Center to use the facilities there. When the weather was inclement, I would sometimes go to the library or The Cove for a bit of a break from the work I had been doing in my office. It was easy to just keep working on something to try to get done with the task, and sometimes that was necessary. However, I found that taking a break was refreshing and I felt my time in the office was being used more effectively following a bit of a break. I would often keep the task I was working on in the back of my mind during a break, and I might think of a different way to word a phrase or think of a new way to approach a problem. Therefore, I could rationalize that my "self-time" was actually productive. Saving a little time every day for yourself can be a good thing for you. Often, the faculty members who would take advantage of the facilities at the Robertson Center would schedule a time of day that they would go every day. I kept the time for myself to be flexible (due to time commitments for lengthy laboratory courses and research with students, departmental and committee chair duties), but it was important all the same.

For faculty members who are considering retirement in the near future, there are a few points I can make regarding your decision.

1. My first point is based on a question I heard being posed to a retired colleague about how he spends "all his time". He responded: "I do whatever I want to do and it takes me all day to do it." I, too, have been asked that type of question, and I certainly thought about his response. I have concluded that it is important to have interests strong enough to make you want to occupy your time thinking or doing things related to your interests. I am interested in current scientific work and discoveries, but I also like observing nature in the garden and working with my hands. Since I no longer have a laboratory, I enjoy woodworking and creating pieces of furniture rather than synthesizing new molecules. Gardening and woodworking are interests I have cultivated (a pun?) for years...ever since I worked with my grandparents in a large garden and helped my grandfather and father on construction projects. These were great learning experiences: my grandfather taught me the Pythagorean Theorem, Ohm's Law, a little about soil chemistry, photosynthesis, beneficial insects and pests, etc., (as well as the safe use of power tools!). Now, trying to keep up with research in chemistry and biochemistry and other topics such as ways to generate, store and transmit electrical power in environmentally responsible ways, the wise use of natural resources in the US and other countries, the effects of a changing climate on our coastal environments and agriculturally important regions of the US (and other parts of the

world) that may lead to great movements of human populations, there is plenty to keep myself occupied. In fact, trying to keep current on these topics can seem overwhelming; the second and third points are related to this.

2. Plan your retirement activities based on your strong interests and how you might contribute to a social good:

I made plans for years before I retired to be able to do the gardening and woodworking I knew I would like to do in retirement, and I am able to do so. I also planned to travel outside and within the US. I retired in 2019, and not long after that, the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic shook up the world. My plans to visit several biological research stations in Costa Rica in early April of 2020 were dashed, and have been postponed twice since then. Plans to visit Portugal with a group were postponed until 2023. My plans to travel within the US to visit family members and good friends have also been affected, as many of you have probably experienced. So, sometimes plans work out, and other times they don't. I am looking forward to the day we will all be able to travel outside the US, and in anticipation of that time, I renewed my passport. I still think that planning ahead for what you might want to do in retirement is a good thing to do, even if plans will sometimes need to be modified. Since my post-retirement interests include learning more about ways people have been able to preserve or help restore the natural beauty and ecological systems in different parts of the world, I decided to give support, although quite modestly, to a few organizations that carry out the research in those areas and that help to educate people about the work they do. The size of my gifts cannot be considered transformative by any measure, but I am relying on others with similar interests to help make the important work the organizations do sustainable. I include the US as a part of the world where much needs to be done in terms of education and action toward good stewardship of our environment.



Large table (reclaimed black walnut)



Buffet (sapele and Spanish cedar)

3. It is still important to support education:

Because I consider the formal education I was fortunate enough to receive as being very important in my own personal life, and recognizing that many bright, talented young people may



not have the resources or opportunities that I enjoyed, I have decided that I should try to help make a difference in their lives by supporting scholarships so that they might be able to complete their college educations. I do that directly through donations to the colleges where I received my degrees, and also to where I taught students. These are not huge donations, but I give fairly regularly. This is not something I started doing after retirement, but since retiring, I have given a bit more generously. I also belong to some professional societies that have great publications that help me keep abreast of what is happening in scientific research; they also sponsor undergraduate and graduate scholarship programs. I support those programs, too. Perhaps the professional societies in your academic areas have similar types of programs. I know that giving in this way may actually be an act of selfishness, since I believe that having a more highly educated society will be beneficial to me and those people I love the most, and that an improved scientific understanding of, and actions taken, to help protect the environment in which we live will be better for me and others. I hope it can help future generations, too.

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### **SEND US YOUR STORIES!**

We want this to be *your* newsletter! We would love to hear some of your stories, and we would like to include your email if you are open to responding to those who have questions that they would like to ask you. Also, are you comfortable with minor editing that may be done as a part of assembling the Newsletter? Just let us know.

Best wishes for a great holiday season from the Emeritus Faculty Committee!

[John Ore](#)

[Mark Bottorff](#)

[Alicia Moore](#)

[Sharon Johnson](#)

[Mary Young](#)