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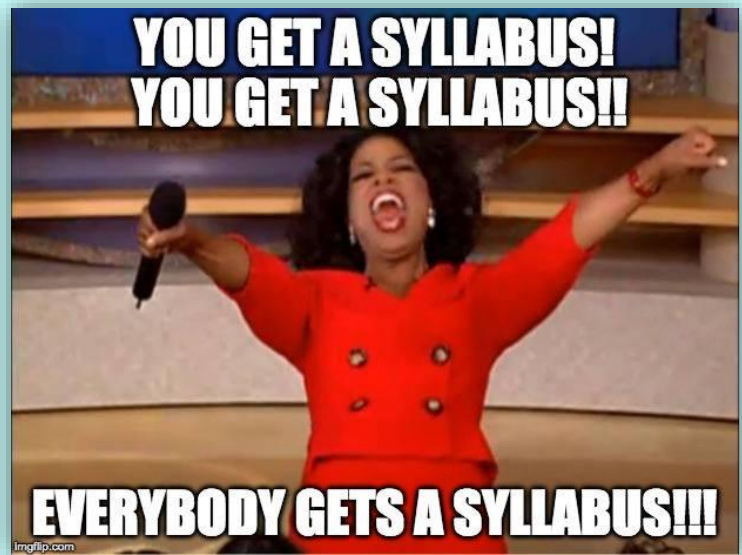
Fall 2016, Issue 1

SETTING THE STAGE: FIRST DAY FORWARD ENGAGEMENT

I was *that* college student who frequently missed the first day of class. We never did anything anyway. Most professors just passed out the syllabus and dismissed class, so I might as well catch up on my sleep! Now I work hard not to be *that* professor. First impressions matter and the first class day sets the tone for the rest of the semester. Earlier this week I presented to Galveston College's adjunct faculty, some ways that we can work to engage the students starting on the first class day. Below is the handout I used, along with a list of resources that elaborate on these activities and provide additional ideas. I hope this helps you as you plan for our returning students next week. Me? I'll be trying syllabus speed dating for the first time. 😊

First Day Goals and Activities:

- **Goal #1: Establish a rapport**
 - Greet students as they enter.
 - Have the students interview you and/or each other. Get students to generate the interview questions.
 - Ask students to create a list of their expectations for the instructor and each other. Post the list in the classroom or Canvas and review it periodically throughout the semester.
 - Create a gallery walk. Write on flipcharts around the room statements like, "I learn best in class where the teacher..." or "I am most likely to participate in classes when..." Let students walk around the room and fill in their answers.
 - Provide clear contact information. How can students reach you outside of class?
 - Get their opinions with a poll (e.g. getkahoot.com, socrative.com, polleverywhere.com).
 - Start learning names the first day.
 - Do an icebreaker within the context of your course content.
- **Goal #2: Review course content**
 - Create a syllabus scavenger hunt.
 - Do syllabus speed dating. Put students in two rows. Ask a question about the syllabus, and a get-to-know-you question, and have them answer it in pairs. Then one row stays put and the other shifts, switching partners. Rinse and repeat.
 - Have student groups generate questions about what they think they need to know about your class/syllabus, and then let them interview you.



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- Find out what your students know about your subject (e.g. mini-quiz or essay).
- Do a short class reading the first day, and use it generate discussion. Pique their curiosity!
- Review the ways students can access course content (texts, online, Canvas, library)
- **Goal #3: Set course expectations**
 - “Today we will...” Set class goals each day in writing, starting on day 1.
 - Do representative course work the very first day (e.g. mini lecture, group activity, hands-on demonstration)
 - Show them how to read your course materials. Review the anatomy of a text.
 - Assess writing/reading with a short essay (e.g. about themselves, what they know about your subject or what they want to learn).
 - Assign homework the FIRST DAY! Hold them accountable for it the very next class.

These ideas and many more can be found here:

http://www.trcc.commnet.edu/div_academics/idea/documents/first_day_of_class.pdf

<http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/effective-classroom-management/advice-for-the-first-day-of-class-today-we-will/>

<https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/teach/firstday.html>

<https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/first-day-of-class/>

<http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-professor-blog/first-day-of-class-activities-that-create-a-climate-for-learning/>

<http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tsfdc>