



COE professors John Dayton and Juanita Johnson Bailey, both from the department of lifelong education, administration, and policy, have joined an esteemed group of UGA colleagues who spend time reflecting on the teaching, learning process. (Photo by Dot Paul)

The Art of Teaching: Dayton, Johnson-Bailey Latest Selected for UGA Teaching Academy

As the University of Georgia rises among the nation's top-ranked public research universities, what place does teaching have when so much emphasis is placed on faculty bringing in external funding? Plenty, say the College's latest faculty to be selected to UGA's Teaching Academy.

Julie Sartor BSEd '99 | Apr 4, 2007

[✉ Email](#) *"To teach, to serve and to inquire into the nature of things."*

[🖨 Print](#) If that sounds familiar, it should. It's the University of Georgia's official motto. But as UGA rises among the nation's top-ranked public research universities, what place does teaching have when so much emphasis is placed on faculty bringing in external funding?

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The Teaching Academy was founded eight years ago by a group of faculty who wanted to create a community of scholars where they could discuss, celebrate and promote teaching excellence. It is part of the national Teaching Academy Campus Program initiated by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the American Association for Higher Education.

The academy was founded by 13 charter members — two from the College of Education — Jeremy Kilpatrick of mathematics education and Sylvia Hutchinson formerly of reading education. Membership is by invitation only from members of the academy, with a new class inducted every fall. New members are selected based on their demonstration over a period of not less than five years a significant commitment to the teaching-learning enterprise. Since the academy's founding, 27 College of Education faculty members have been inducted.

"One of the roles of [the academy] is to lobby for the place of teaching in a Research I institution," said Hutchinson, now a professor emerita. "Ideally, teaching is not forgotten. You work with your students and you hear their questions, and that informs your research. You take that to the community, which is your service. They react to it and that informs your research. So now you've got a cycle where the teaching and service inform what you investigate. You have the scholarship of teaching, the scholarship of research, and the scholarship of serving the community, so it's not that there's only scholarship in research."

"Being a member of the Teaching Academy validates for me that it is possible to be a good teacher at a research university and have that contribution be valued," said Denise Mewborn, class of 2002 academy member and head of the department of mathematics and science education. "Teaching plays second fiddle to research in many ways at research universities, and the Teaching Academy is one way that UGA shows that good teaching is a significant part of the university's mission."



Professor Emerita Sylvia Hutchinson was a charter member of the UGA Teaching Academy in 1999. (UGA Photo by Paul Efland)

But what makes a teacher excellent? What makes him/her deserving of celebration? To understand this, one must understand the challenges of the field and what teachers do to overcome them, say academy members.

The College of Education's two newest academy inductees, John Dayton and Juanita Johnson-Bailey, said that capturing students' attention is the real challenge of teaching.

"I need to persuade them that what we're going to learn this semester is going to make their life better; it's going to improve the quality of life in their community. If you can't convince them of that, you've lost them," said Dayton, a professor in the department of lifelong education, administration, and policy.

Dayton, who specializes in school law, is exactly the kind of educator the Teaching Academy intends to recognize. His students' comments range from "superior professor" and "perfect role model" to "the epitome of excellence."

His teaching philosophy aligns with the academy's goals to "promote faculty leadership to enhance teaching and learning, to advocate for effective educational environments and to foster a community of scholars."

"The ultimate goal of formal education is to prepare students to become independent learners, so that their personal and professional growth will continue long after the formal education process is completed," he said.

Johnson-Bailey, a professor with joint appointments in adult education and women's studies, said the continual changes in teaching and her students provide her with energy and excitement. "Nothing makes me more anxious or happier than teaching," she said.

Johnson-Bailey said she still gets anxious before and after teaching each class because she's always thinking about, "What could I have done differently? Did this work? Did this not work?" She attributes this anxiety to being actively engaged in her classes. For her, a good class results when her students are also engaged and feel free to participate.

Like all good educators, Johnson-Bailey and Dayton believe the fundamental truth that education is the great equalizer.

They provide examples from the brutal Roman occupation of Israel to American Slavery and Nelson Mandela's years in prison on Robben Island of how people do what they must in times of oppression to give their children and themselves the education and hope they need to find a better future.

"In the midst of being imprisoned, Nelson Madela still understood the importance of how learning frees you and equalizes things," said Johnson-Bailey.

She has adopted Mandela's motto of "each one, teach one" to describe the exchange between teachers and students.

The two professors also noted that students' willingness to participate and challenge their instruction has become more prevalent over the past two decades. Despite research showing that students are reading less these days, her students continually bring her books and ideas for consideration in class, said Johnson-Bailey, graduate coordinator for the adult education program.

"In the area of law, it's rooted in adversarial examination of the issue in order to try to get towards the best

notion of truth, and I used to have to encourage them, challenge them a lot more than I do now,” said Dayton.

Johnson-Bailey was a first-generation college student. Her mother stressed the importance of education, but the professor initially resisted her call into education because she didn't want to be limited to the stereotypical “women's careers” of teaching and nursing. However, she later realized that teaching is what she now calls “the best job in the world.”

Dayton agrees. A former practicing attorney, he describes his former job as taking other people's problems and making them your own. “One of the real blessings about teaching is that you can help people solve their problems,” he said.

Members of the academy receive more benefits than just recognition and validation. Many COE academy members cite campus collaborations, cross-disciplinary work and a sense of belonging as rewarding experiences from their membership in the academy. These advantages also offer ways to improve their teaching.

“Simply having the time and place to talk about teaching with one another is a rewarding experience, one that doesn't happen often enough,” said Mewborn, a Richard B. Russell Undergraduate Teaching Award recipient.

“Being a member of the Teaching Academy allows me to be part of a group of individuals who are significantly engaged in teaching activities, the scholarship of teaching and learning, and who spend time reflecting upon the teaching and learning process,” said Rosemary Phelps, class of 2002 and head of the department of counseling and human development services. “The association with these individuals who have made a lifelong commitment to teaching is stimulating and uplifting.”

Preparing future educators and other school professionals, COE faculty have the opportunity to see their impact extend far beyond their UGA students. Like a ripple effect, a successfully prepared teacher will continue to have an impact on his/her students for years to come.

Dayton compares teachers with Johnny Appleseed. “Every once in a while you get to see some evidence that [your teaching] really grew into something, and that's very rewarding, to see our students succeed and know that you played some part in helping them reach their goals,” he said.

Membership in the academy comes with additional responsibilities such as committee service and teaching/faculty development project participation. The academy sponsors and supports numerous events on campus, including the annual Founders' Day Lecture, Academic Affairs Faculty Symposium, and teaching workshops.

Another way members serve the campus community and foster learning is by mentoring through Project Promote, an online resource site intended to offer active support to early career faculty at UGA. This Senior Teaching Fellows project was designed by 2003 class member and COE professor Lloyd Rieber and Greg Clinton, a doctoral student in instructional technology and a staff member in UGA's Center for Teaching and Learning.

Faculty in the Teaching Academy believe their membership is an honor and that, as stated in the academy's core values, “educating students is a fundamental responsibility of every faculty member of the University of Georgia and that teachers are catalysts for effective learning.”

Inaugural class of 2000 member Denise Glynn takes these values seriously. “Since being in the academy, I've incorporated more classroom discussion and classroom activities into my teaching,” she said. “I've also tried to view my classes not just as preparing my students to teach or to improve their teaching but to prepare them for life in general.”

As a charter member, Hutchinson is quite familiar with the groundwork that was laid for the group. Her idea from the start has been to “lend attention to the importance of teaching on campus and to celebrate those who have a passion and a zeal for teaching.”

See more information on the [UGA Teaching Academy](#).

UGA Teaching Academy members from the College of Education:

Class of 2006:

John Dayton
Juanita Johnson-Bailey

Class of 2005:

none

Class of 2004:

Lynn Bryan*

Class of 2003:

John Dattilo*
Stephen Olejnik
Lloyd Rieber

Class of 2002:

Denise Mewborn
Rosemary Phelps
Thomas Reeves
Deborah Tippins

Class of 2001:

JoBeth Allen
Joan Buttram*
David M. Hayes*
Elizabeth Pate*
Jay Rojewski
Genelle Morain*
Michael Tarrant*

Inaugural Class of 2000:

Donna Alvermann

Denise Glynn
Shawn Glynn
Larry Hatfield
Brenda Manning*
Sharan Merriam
Judith Reiff*
Ronald Simpson*

Charter Members:

Sylvia Hutchinson*
Jeremy Kilpatrick

** These faculty have retired, left UGA or moved to another college on campus.*

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