



U.S. Professors of the Year

Passion. Care. Respect. Connect. Authentic. Those were some of the recurring words used by the four 2012 U.S. Professors of the Year at USF's Third Annual Student Success Conference held earlier this month. The four professors, USF's Autar Kaw, Christy Price from Dalton State College in Georgia, Lois Roma-Deeley from Paradise Valley Community College in Arizona, and Todd Pagano from Rochester Institute of Technology in New York, were invited to USF to share the classroom philosophies and experiences that earned them recognition by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) as the nation's top undergraduate instructors.

"We were treated to a thought-provoking, engaging discussion that ranged from the role of millennial student expectations right down to the heart of the teaching enterprise and our first priorities. Many USF faculty were in attendance and commented that the conversation was enlightening and inspiring," commented Kevin Yee, director of the Academy of Teaching and Learning Excellence.

The award winners started off the conference sharing their own compelling stories that led them on their paths to becoming professors. Provost Ralph Wilcox, moderator for the event, also asked the panel a few questions before inviting the audience to pose their own questions about teaching methodologies.

Connect with your students, convince them you care, involve them in guiding the class' direction, and set high expectations were just some of the recommendations the professors offered.

Each Professor of the Year honoree spoke, as well, about his/her approach to assessment in the classroom. Roma-Deeley said, "I have a very simple way of beginning to do assessment. I like to ask, 'How is it going?'"

"When students come to class expecting to learn, it is our duty to make sure they do learn," said Kaw. "When I look at assessing students there are four steps. The first is: Have they acquired the knowledge? The second is: Can they apply that knowledge? The third is: Do they know when to apply the knowledge? And the last one is: Why are they applying the knowledge?"

Price evaluates herself and her students by looking at how they have each developed. She believes she is doing a good job if her students are creating, producing, thinking, acting, and behaving differently.

When asked what the classroom of the future will look like, she said that "the future is here and it's over there in your SMART Lab."

Dr. Kaw predicted that the future classroom will be characterized by a variety of modalities. One modality he currently is using is a technique called "flipping" the classroom, which involves students being assigned to watch a YouTube video at home, followed by writing 25 words summarizing what they did not understand. Class time is then used for clarification on questions and building on what the students did understand.

"This was the first time any institution ever brought together all four Carnegie/CASE Professors of the Year for a conference dedicated to student success," explained Dr. Paul Dosal, USF vice provost for student success.

"They were inspiring and engaging, and they reinforced the message that student success begins in the classroom."

Witnessing the professors' energy, passion, commitment, and desire for creating learning environments in which students thrive was very exciting for administrators, faculty, and staff alike.

At the close of the conference, Iraida Carrion, assistant professor of Social Work said, "This was inspiring and motivating, and I feel validated for the classroom environment I create."

If you missed the conference, you can view it [here](#).

