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## *The Brown Wheaton Faculty Fellows Program*

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Turing their time at Brown, graduate students are immersed in the culture of a research university, yet a considerable number of those who go on to academic careers – at least in the humanities and social sciences – do not actually land at comparable institutions.<sup>1</sup> All Brown doctoral students are expected to gain teaching experience as part of their graduate training, but few have the chance to experience what it means to be a faculty member at other kinds of institutions of higher education, such as liberal arts colleges or community colleges, or even at secondary schools. While in graduate school, their immediate role models are naturally departmental faculty, whose professional responsibilities reflect the values of a research university but may not actually represent the kinds of academic experiences many graduate students will themselves actually go on to have. The Brown/Wheaton Faculty Fellows Program, a collaborative program between Brown's Graduate School and nearby Wheaton College, was established in 2004 to provide Brown doctoral students from across the academic divisions with an opportunity to experience being a faculty member at a distinctly different kind of institution, namely a four-year, liberal arts college.

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<sup>1</sup> The Career Development Center's annual exit-survey reports contain detailed information about the kinds of jobs Brown Ph.D.s land.

Each year, as many as four advanced graduate students at Brown are selected to serve as Faculty Fellows at Wheaton, where they teach a course of their own design. The mentoring these Fellows receive from Wheaton faculty makes this program unique. Each Faculty Fellow is assigned two Wheaton faculty mentors, one from his or her home department and one from another department. Each Faculty Fellow designs his or her own syllabus with guidance from a departmental mentor familiar with institutional norms and expectations. During the semester, Fellows consult regularly with their mentors, who serve as sounding boards about the progress of the Fellows' courses, observe their classes and make recommendations, and help acculturate them to the four-year college environment. Fellows report that they particularly appreciate the faculty feedback on their teaching, as well as the opportunity to have regular, collegial conversations about both teaching and research. They also enjoy the chance to teach small classes. Fellows can expect a maximum of 25 students, but enrollments are typically much lower.

In addition to their teaching responsibilities, Faculty Fellows are expected to participate fully in the intellectual life of the college. They attend department and faculty meetings, and participate in professional development activities such as the monthly teaching and learning workshops organized by Wheaton's Kollett Center for Collaborative Learning. Each Faculty Fellow also gives a presentation on his or her ongoing research to Wheaton colleagues and students. Fellows consistently report that being included in the college community as a faculty member makes them feel well prepared and eager to assume full faculty responsibilities after leaving Brown.

To date, ten graduate students have participated in the program. Their names and departments are included below, as are the titles of the courses they taught and their departmental affiliations at Wheaton.

Teresa Celada (*Philosophy*), "Applied Ethics" (Philosophy department)

Pilipa Esara (*Anthropology*), "Globalization in Southeast Asia" (Anthropology/  
Asian Studies departments)

Claudia Esposito (French Studies), "Introduction to Modern French Literature"  
(French  
department)

Jennifer Feather (*English*), "First-Year Seminar: Self-Fashioning, Then and Now -  
Gender and

Race in Renaissance Literature and Popular Culture" (English department)

Shawn Greenlee (*Music*), "Computers and Music" (Music department)

Benjamin Hutz (*Mathematics*), “Multivariable Calculus” (Mathematics & Computer Science

department)

Keeley Schell (*Classics*), “Epic in Translation” (Classics department)

Celeste Sullivan (*Anthropology*), “Islam: Faith and Practice” (Religion department)

Amy Vines (*English*), “Heroes in Medieval Romance” (English department)

Susanne Wiedemann (*American Civilization*), “The Holocaust in American Literature and

Culture” (English department)

They were uniformly enthusiastic about their experiences at Wheaton, with one even going as far as to assert that *all* graduate students interested in teaching should participate in the Faculty Fellows Program. A number of participants have commented that the program has bolstered their confidence and heightened their excitement about becoming a faculty member.

Brown graduate students, as well as Wheaton faculty and undergraduates, benefit from the Faculty Fellows Program. Brown graduate students have the opportunity to teach and be mentored within the context of a liberal arts college. Wheaton values the enthusiasm and cutting-edge disciplinary knowledge the Faculty Fellows bring to campus, and expresses this by paying Fellows at the level of a Brown Teaching Fellow. The terms of the program agreement also allow Wheaton students to enroll in Brown courses not offered on their own campus.

#### *Who should apply?*

Graduate students who have completed their coursework, advanced to candidacy (i.e., are at the dissertation-writing stage), and have at least two semesters of college-level teaching experience are eligible to apply. All applicants must have the approval of their department's or program's Director of Graduate Study (DGS). Successful candidates will have a strong commitment to teaching, as demonstrated by their participation in departmental teaching seminars and/or the Sheridan Center's teaching certificate programs. Ideally, applicants will have completed the Sheridan Center's Certificate I and Certificate III programs.

#### *How does one apply?*

Applicants should read the information on the Graduate School's website (<http://gradschool.brown.edu/go/brownwheatonfellows>). They must submit a cover letter, CV and course proposal. The cover letter should describe the applicant's credentials and

teaching experience, as well as his or her research agenda and intellectual interests; the proposal should include a description of the course, its goals and objectives, and a summary of topics to be covered. Applicants may propose courses that meet curricular needs identified by Wheaton departments/programs (as described on the Graduate School's website) or they may propose to teach courses in any area appropriate to the Wheaton curriculum. As part of the application, students must also provide evidence of departmental support for the application from their DGS. Applications for the 2007-8 academic year are due on February 1, 2007.

*What is the selection process?*

The Graduate School, with assistance from the Sheridan Center, reviews candidates and forwards general recommendations to Wheaton. Based on its curricular needs, Wheaton then asks a select group of candidates to submit complete syllabi for their proposed courses and come to campus for interviews. Once selected, each Faculty Fellow is assigned two Wheaton mentors and begins the process of refining his or her syllabus to ensure that it promotes student learning in a liberal arts environment.

To support the Graduate School in making sure the Faculty Fellows Program provides Brown graduate students with a substantive experience, the Sheridan Center offers a variety of programs. Its certificate programs give participants the opportunity to develop a reflective teaching practice. The *Sheridan Teaching Seminar: Certificate I Program* helps graduate students prepare for their roles as instructors; the *Classroom Tools Seminar: Certificate II Program* introduces and explores a variety of tools instructors may use in their classrooms in order to reach the broadest possible learning population; and the *Professional Development Seminar for Advanced Graduate Students: Certificate III Program* is designed to help participants create teaching portfolios and prepare for the academic job market. Further information about these certificate programs can be found online at [http://www.brown.edu/sheridan\\_center/programs/teach\\_cert.html](http://www.brown.edu/sheridan_center/programs/teach_cert.html). To support the Brown/Wheaton Program, each fall the Sheridan Center offers a seminar on "Teaching in a Liberal Arts College," which explores the difference between teaching at a research university like Brown and a liberal arts college such as Wheaton, and also gives participants an opportunity to learn about the Faculty Fellows Program. Each January, the Sheridan Center offers a workshop to help applicants prepare course proposals for the program.

Brown Ph.D.'s who served as Faculty Fellows have described their experiences at Wheaton in the following ways:

“It is nice to realize at this advanced stage that I am absolutely ready for my first ‘real’ teaching job and its demands....I realized, again, how much I enjoy teaching, and that it is indeed my calling and what I want to be doing in the future....It is very gratifying at this point...to have gotten a glimpse of how a future job could look like, and to look forward to the next stage.”

“This was by far one of the most valuable things about teaching at Wheaton last semester – I began with a completely new class, teaching texts I had never taught before. Now, I feel like I will be able to offer a much better course to my future students and I will be a better teacher of the material.”

“I found this teaching experience invaluable to my continued growth as an instructor....Getting to know a different institutional environment in such a direct way has not only made me a better job candidate, it has enabled me to reflect on my own teaching practice. Not only have I gained a true sense that certain strategies that work well at one type of institution must be modified to work at a different institution, I have gotten to practice making such modifications.”

*More information about the Brown/Wheaton Faculty Fellows Program can be found on the Graduate School’s website (<http://gradschool.brown.edu/go/brownwheatonfellows>). If you have questions, please contact Sheridan Center Associate Director Laura Hess, who is the Sheridan Center Coordinator for the Brown/Wheaton Program, at [Sheridan\\_humss@brown.edu](mailto:Sheridan_humss@brown.edu) or 863-9193.*