

THE TEACHING EXCHANGE

BROWN UNIVERSITY • VOLUME 4 / NUMBER 1 • SEPTEMBER 1999



The Professional Development Seminar for Advanced Graduate Students 1998 - 1999

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The Professional Development Seminar for Advanced Graduate Students was developed by the Sheridan Center during 1998-99 as a means for those graduate students who have completed a Teaching Certificate to prepare for their first academic jobs. The program provides a forum for the participants to discuss in greater depth their commitment to the classroom. In short, the seminar focuses on preparing the next generation of professors.

During the 1998-1999 school year, ten senior graduate students from across the disciplines met once a month for a total of six sessions. Each session was organized around a theme with an associated activity that the participants prepared beforehand. The assignments served to focus and stimulate the group discussion.

The seminar began and ended with a session on the Teaching Portfolio as a means of documenting teaching performance. The session concentrating on syllabus construction allowed participants to draft potential syllabi and obtain feedback on those syllabi. The group studied course web page design in order to understand better the use of the web in their teaching and to consider the creation of a web page to augment their draft syllabi. Professors Karen Fischer (Geological Sciences) and Joe Pucci (Classics) shared with the seminar their views on the

academic job search process: things to consider in the cover letter, tips with regard to the interview process and advice on the job talk. The group then convened to critique and evaluate each other's cover letters and *curriculum vitae*. Ultimately, the year-long seminar topics provided the necessary guidance for the participants to draft their teaching portfolios which they presented to each other and Deans Peder Estrup and Joan Lusk at the conclusion of the seminar.

For the participants, the most useful result of the seminar was the drafting of their teaching portfolio. The portfolio allowed each participant to begin documenting his/her qualifications for the academic job market. The inclusion of faculty perspectives in academic searches was also quite successful in providing participants with an "inside" look at the process from the other side.

The Sheridan Center will be offering this seminar for advanced graduate students again during the 1999-2000 academic year. The dates are Sept. 14, October 19, November 9, February 8, March 7 and April 4. All sessions will be held from 4-6 PM at the Sheridan Center offices in the Graduate Center. To participate, you must have completed your Sheridan Center Teaching Certificate and be close to completion of your doctoral degree. In order to sign up, contact the Center by e-mail (Sheridan_Center@Brown.EDU) or by phone x 31219.