

UF Entrepreneurship Faculty Fellows

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Featured Fellow

Edward Schaefer



Ed Schaefer is professor of music and associate dean of the College of Fine Arts. His research focuses on semiology, the study of ancient musical notation, and its impact on contemporary performance of chant. In addition, he is an advocate for the improvement of education through technology. Combining these two interests, Dr. Schaefer's entrepreneurial project has been to create open source interactive software and videos that aid student learning, drills, and skill development with early chant notation systems.

In a recent conversation, he talk about the value of being a faculty fellow:

"There are three main benefits of being an entrepreneurship faculty fellow. First, the networking around the university. Second, being able to see the type of projects that people are working on, helps spur ideas and projects for myself. Finally, being around a group of people with an entrepreneurial mindset that questions and probes, helps in developing and building ideas."

Ed also shared some of the challenges in completing his entrepreneurial project:

"The biggest challenge was learning how to communicate across disciplines. I worked with a computer programmer and we had completely different ways of communicating. It took about six months of trial and error before we finally figured out how to communicate. In the end, it was completely worth the struggle and the outcome was far superior than either of us could have accomplished."

In terms of his plans to share the outcome of his work, Ed explains:

"To disseminate the digitization of the chant music, I plan on using it in my own courses, creating outreach online programs, and taking it to Church Music Association of America. Next Fall, I am visiting the Gregorian Chant of Paris to attempt to create a relationship. To track the users, we are creating a login page so we can see who is interested."

Recent Fellows Activities

- Fellows were featured on a panel discussion at the Gator 100 in February
- Fellows Jill Sonke and **Marko Suvajdzic** were part of a UF session at South by Southwest (SxSW) in Austin, TX in March
- Ann Christiano and team led a successful frank 2017 conference in Gainesville, Feb 28- March 3
- Jill Sonke was recognized as UF Cross-campus Faculty Entrepreneur of the Year at the Celebration of Entrepreneurship Awards Banquet on April 21
- Poverty and Entrepreneurship Initiative won a grant as part of the UF-City of Gainesville research projects

Coming Up...

- Disabled Veterans' Entrepreneurship Program – May 6th to May 13th
- Entrepreneurship and Empowerment in South Africa – June 11th to July 21st

Dream > Believe > Create

The Fellows Program was created to foster and celebrate interdisciplinary collaboration around creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. We are focused on the role of entrepreneurial thinking and acting within any discipline or academic area on the University of Florida campus.

Our focus is the "entrepreneurial mindset", and how the talents, ingenuity and passion of faculty members can be used to affect innovative change. We see faculty innovations as a vehicle for transforming campuses, communities, disciplines and societies. The Fellows Program is a home for the "academic entrepreneur."

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Teaching the Unreasonable

If we want students to see themselves as agents of change, innovators, and entrepreneurial in how they approach their careers and lives, then it is important to recognize the disruptive nature of change, innovation and entrepreneurial behavior. Things that ultimately make a difference often appear unreasonable at first, and disruption is usually uncomfortable.

But to what extent do we teach unreasonableness and disruption? Do we encourage students to challenge norms or question convention? If something appears to work, is that good enough, or do we want students to develop a kind of 'healthy dissatisfaction', where they recognize there is always a better way to solve something or do anything?

Universities are meant to be places of reason. They seek to bring logic, structure and discipline to the ways students think and approach problem-solving. They herald the importance of research, analysis and evidence-based decision-making. They celebrate knowledge and discovery.

Yet, we live in an increasingly entrepreneurial world—a time and place when the newcomer, the small and the novel are able to more quickly overcome or make obsolete the established, the large, and the conventional. Our graduates inherit a world where windows of opportunity are shorter, the pace of change and innovation are faster, and the potential to effect an outcome in a distant part of the globe is more immediate and direct.

In such a world, as educators, we find ourselves in a race to remain atop the dramatic new developments and expanding knowledge base in our disciplines, while contributing to this expansion. Meanwhile, we find much of this knowledge is more quickly disseminated and readily available at a student's finger tips. All of this suggests that what we teach and how we teach must be subject to change. But how?

It would seem that we must become more ambidextrous as educators. The contemporary environments into which our graduates are thrust suggests that our teaching should reflect a balancing act, where we simultaneously are able to stress:

- the theoretical and the experiential
- the individual and the team
- exploration (of the unknown) and exploitation (of the known)
- convergence and divergence in thinking
- ambiguity and clarity
- failure and success
- continuous and discontinuous change
- discipline and unreasonable thinking

We must provide the tools and perspectives that enable students to challenge assumptions, think in bold and innovative terms, do more with less, leverage resources they do not control, and persist in creatively overcoming obstacles --- just as we teach them to approach problems from a perspective of structure, rigor, logic and realism. At the center of it all, we must encourage students to take themselves out of their comfort zones through the kinds of learning opportunities we create.

In the end, preparing a generation of difference-makers may require that we re-think the self-concept of the modern faculty member. Perhaps we should view ourselves more as promoters of dreams, facilitators of opportunity, generators of empowerment and promulgators of the new and different --- all achieved through our students.



Elif Akcali, *Engineering*; Anita Anantharam, *Women's Studies*; Shirley Baker, *Forest Resources & Conservation*; Ann Christiano, *Journalism & Communications*; Warren Dixon, *Engineering*; Rafael Guzman, *Astronomy*; Nancy Hardt, *Medicine*; Susan Jacobson, *Wildlife and Conservation*; Delores James, *Health Education*; Griff Jones, *Education*; Kristin Joos, *Social Entrepreneurship*; William Marsiglio, *Sociology*; Forrest Masters, *Engineering*; Edward Schaefer, *Fine Arts*; Daniel Sokol, *Law*; Jill Sonke, *Fine Arts*; Catherine Striley, *Public Health/Medicine*; Marko Suvajdzic, *Digital Worlds Institute*; Michael F. Weigold, *Journalism and Communications*; Kristin Weitzel, *Pharmacy*; William Winter, *Medicine*

“IF YOU CAN IMAGINE IT,
YOU CAN ACHIEVE IT.
IF YOU CAN DREAM IT,
YOU CAN BECOME IT.”

~ WILLIAM ARTHUR WARD