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**Subject:** Ten Questions for Faculty Series  
**Date:** Wednesday, December 2, 2020 10:25:27 AM  
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The Teaching and Learning Center is pleased to present the *Ten Questions for Faculty Series*. The series is dedicated to helping faculty to stay connected with one another while working remotely. Every week, a faculty member will have the opportunity to answer ten questions about themselves and about navigating the changes brought about by COVID-19. This week, we are pleased to feature Dr. Brandi George, Professor of English.



**Dr. Brandi George**  
**Professor of English**

***Where are you from?***

I grew up in Ovid, Michigan. Ovid is also the name of the poet who wrote one of my favorite books, *Metamorphoses*.

***Which college or university did you attend?***

My B.A. in English is from Michigan State. I got my M.A. in Literature from Northern Michigan University, and my Ph.D. from Florida State University in Literature and Creative Writing.

***When did you begin teaching at FSW?***

I began teaching at FSW in the Fall of 2018. I love the students and faculty here. It's a great place to work.

***What made you become interested in your academic discipline?***

I've been writing poetry since I was twelve or thirteen. We wrote poems in my Junior High English class because we had a student teacher who liked poetry. No one before or after that semester got to write poetry at my school. I wonder if I would have become a poet without that class. I love the way poetry opens up each moment, stops time, invites us to connect with sound and image, and dissolves our identities so that we merge with the poet and the language itself.

***What is your favorite food?***

I love pizza. I'm one of those people who could eat pizza every day. I try to follow a vegan diet (note the word "try"!), so it is tough for me to find good dairy-free pizza, but Nice Guys in Cape Coral is fantastic.

***If you could have dinner with any historical figure, who would it be and what would you ask them?***

I would have dinner with French writer Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891), one of the few poet prodigies in history (he retired from writing poetry when he was twenty). I would say, "Rimbaud, what did you mean when you said that the only way to write poems is through a "long, immense and rational derangement of all the senses"? Why did you quit writing, and why did your lover, the poet Paul Verlaine, try to shoot you?" I expect that he would throw his wine in my face and turn the table over. He might also steal my purse.

***What new things have you learned or done as a result of COVID-19 & working remotely?***

I realize how much I value my relationships with my students. Every class is a collaboration between the teacher and the students, and they give me so much energy and hope for the future. Even teaching via Zoom allows me to connect with them in powerful ways.

***COVID-19 has increased online learning, and as a result, the need for promoting inclusivity in virtual learning environments. What ideas can you share with your colleagues about how to ensure inclusivity in the virtual classroom?***

THE CHAT!!! There are so many students who are too shy to speak in person, but they are comfortable texting and sharing their thoughts using Zoom's chat feature. My current students love the chat, and they are far more willing to share their writing this way than reading aloud. They also enjoy the emojis. I wish there was a way to bring these features into in-person classes.

***What are you doing (exercise, cooking, reading, etc.) to take care of your mental and physical health during social isolation?***

Walking is really important. We don't walk as much when we work from home. Also, I do two hours of Ashtanga yoga every morning. It's an intensely physical and meditative style of yoga, and it keeps me grounded. Also, gardening.

***What advice do you have for your colleagues on how to navigate social isolation and changes from COVID-19?***

First of all, I miss you guys. Like, a lot. I miss those magical, unplanned conversations that happen in the halls and in each other's offices. Zoom helps. I'm grateful that I get to meet with a few of my colleagues outdoors (with social distancing, of course). Let's go for a hike—call me.

If you would like to be featured in the *Ten Questions for Faculty Series*, please contact Kelly Westfield, Coordinator of Marketing & Technology for the Teaching and Learning Center: [kwestfield@fsw.edu](mailto:kwestfield@fsw.edu)



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