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Subject: Ten Questions for Faculty Series
Date: Wednesday, August 12, 2020 1:06:05 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)



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 Daniel Marulanda, Professor of Mathematics.



Daniel Marulanda
Professor of Mathematics

Where are you from?

I'm originally from Medellin, Colombia. I moved to Naples, Florida in 1995 and completed all of my schooling in Central Florida. I then moved back to Fort Myers, Florida.

Which college or university did you attend?

I completed my bachelors at Stetson University and my master's degree at the University of Central Florida.

When did you begin teaching at FSW?

I began teaching at FSW in the Fall of 2019.

What made you become interested in your academic discipline?

When I was at Stetson, I started out being interested in engineering. My first two years were concentrated on math and physics. Even though I did better in physics, my love for mathematics grew after each class I completed. To make a long story short, I ended up switching my major from engineering to mathematics and completed a minor in physics. I think that what really convinced me to stick to mathematics was the “why.” I enjoyed learning how to derive equations and create mathematical models.

What is your favorite food?

Peruvian! My favorite Peruvian plate is “Pescado a lo Macho.” It is a combination of seafood with a somewhat spicy sauce on top and white rice as a side. It is delicious and truly authentic.

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

If I could have dinner with any historical figure, it would be Nelson Mandela. I would ask him how he was able to keep his mind in peace after being in jail for a quarter of his life. I would then ask him what kept him motivated while he was in jail. I feel that we can all learn from Nelson Mandela. At his point, we can simply read about him or watch documentaries but it would have been priceless to have met him in person and have had the opportunity to exchange a couple of words with him about life in general.

What is your favorite local restaurant?

Buffalo Chips in Bonita off Old 41. My family and I have been going to this restaurant since we got to this United States. The wings are some of the best I have ever had, and the environment is awesome. There is live music on the weekends and the customer service is always great. It also brings back childhood memories with my family.

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

As a result of COVID, I have learned many things to help me grow as a professional, but I will concentrate on the opportunity I have had of learning how to create video quizzes using Kaltura. Over the past months, I have created multiple videos using Kaltura within Canvas but I have also taken it a step further and implemented quizzes within the videos. The Kaltura quiz creator is easy to use and I truly think that it helps you understand which students have understood the material being covered. You have the option to create multiple choice, true/false, or free response questions. This transition to online has helped me understand that our world has forever changed. As instructors we have to now start thinking of ways of engaging our students to help them feel as they would in the seated classroom environment. I think that now more than ever, we need to help each other grow by sharing information that we think could make a difference in other people’s lives. We can’t keep assuming that something we know is not useful to someone else. We need to become vocal, reach out to others, and create a difference by helping.

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

To take care of my mental and physical health during social isolation, I have started listening to more books and working more on a regular basis.

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

I think that during these difficult times it is important to have someone you can talk to. The conversations do not have to be done in person; it could be phone, facetime, or zoom, but we need to have the possibility to discuss our day with someone. Additionally, we need to take this a step further and talk to someone about how we will structure the following day. I think that this is important because it helps us keep track of what we are completing and what we need to complete. For me, living isolated and working causes my time to pass quickly and I lose track of personal time. Therefore, I started to discuss my days with my wife and plan my tomorrow while completing walks at the end of the day. This helped me keep organized and have time for work, family, and myself.

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

