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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 Jameson Gresens, Professor of Technical Theatre.



Jameson Gresens
Professor, Technical Theatre

Where are you from?

I'm from Charleston, South Carolina

What is your educational background?

I attended the College of Charleston for my undergraduate studies, and the University of Memphis for graduate school.

When did you begin teaching at FSW?

Fall 2020! This is my first year teaching here.

What made you become interested in your academic discipline?

Honestly, I took my first theatre class in high school because I thought it would be an easy elective credit; I had no idea that it would turn out to be both my passion and my career. I quickly learned that

being on stage was not for me, but I enjoyed working as a stagehand. When I had my first technical rehearsal, I found myself absolutely mesmerized at how the costumes and scenery transformed under stage lighting, and how the design elements brought out a hidden energy in the performers.

What jobs or positions have you held that were formative for you and from which you draw experience that shapes your approach to teaching?

My years freelancing as a lighting and stage technician in Washington, DC helped me understand the importance of breaking down large, expansive tasks into smaller ones, and this extends into the classroom. You can't foster a comprehensive understanding of a subject without first teaching the fundamentals. My time teaching younger children at a theatre summer camp also greatly shaped my approach to education. If you can't explain your lesson to a group of eight-year olds, you probably don't understand it well enough yet.

What is your favorite food and local restaurant?

I don't get out much due to COVID, but the crepes at Mon Paris are delicious!

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

Definitely Jean Rosenthal—a pioneer in the field of theatre lighting design who helped develop the profession. I would just love to hear about her life and her approaches to design and creativity.

What new things have you learned or done as a result of COVID/ working remotely and how has it changed your outlook on life?

I've used it as an opportunity to brush up on software skills and certifications in my field. I've re-upped my CPR/First Aid Certifications. I also picked my guitar up for the first time in months as a means to pass the time during shutdowns. Living through COVID has taught me not to take anything for granted, even simple things like spending time with friends or going to public events.

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?

I try to run my online lessons as less of a lecturer and more of a moderator. The wonderful thing about design is that so much of it is subjective, which is great for sparking discussions. I try to pull from a wide variety of examples across history and culture to spark engaging conversations and give each student an opportunity to be heard.

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

Try to be compassionate and understanding to both your students and colleagues—remember that even though we're all living through the same pandemic, it affects each of us differently. Try to carve out time to relax and do things you enjoy. Finding a fulfilling hobby can be very helpful in coping with changes from COVID-19.

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

9051; Jana.sabo@fsw.edu. FSW online anonymous reporting www.fsw.edu/report. Inquiries/complaints can be filed with the Title IX Coordinator/Equity Officer online, in person, via mail, via email, or with the US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, Atlanta Office: 61 Forsyth St. SW Suite 19T70, Atlanta, GA 30303-8927.