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Subject: Ten Questions for Faculty Series
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Ten Questions for Faculty Series

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 Jason Calabrese, Professor of English.



Jason Calabrese
Professor of English

Where are you from?

I'm originally from Western New York. I was born and raised an hour outside Buffalo in a small village called Attica. Attica's claim to fame is a rodeo and a maximum-security prison. I'm from the village, not the maximum-security prison. The high school and prison were separated by a small creek and railroad tracks. In the morning while walking to school, I could hear Snortin Ed Norton playing music on 97 Rock from the loudspeakers in the prison yard. There was a ravine between my home and school. I walked

up
hill both ways!

Which college or university did you attend?

I have a BA in Philosophy from SUNY Fredonia, a MS in Higher Education Administration from SUNY Buffalo, a MA in Literature from LIU CW Post, and graduate courses in Philosophy and English from the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, UCF, and FGCU. I paid for my graduate degrees and housing by working in student affairs as a resident hall director at several of the colleges. It was a great job and much like being a glorified landlord and camp counselor.

When did you begin teaching at FSW?

I began teaching English as an adjunct at FSW 10 years ago. I was hired on full time 2 years ago. I'm not a Math Professor but by my calculations, that means I've been full time for 8 years now. It feels like the blink of an eye.

What made you become interested in your academic discipline?

My father died when I was very young. My family became financially destitute and I became enamored with Mark Twain, Louis L'amour, and other authors who wrote stories of adventure and escape. I also connected with the lyrical aspect of music. Perhaps it was all those songs from the prison yard.

What is your favorite food?

Grilled cheese and Ramon noodles

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

As a devout Catholic, I'm obliged to go with Jesus for this one. I'd ask him what he thought about Kris Kristofferson's song, "To Beat the Devil."

What is your favorite local restaurant?

During football season, I love taking my family to Stevie Tomatoes to watch several of the games at once. As a Bears fan, I'm usually disappointed with the outcome of the game, but happy with the food and service.

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

When life gives me lemons, I try to make lemonade. Besides the whole world pandemic thing, I have focused on what is within my control during these trying times. I have placed an emphasis on enjoying every moment with my family in isolation. We have been playing board games, cooking, hiking, biking, learning to sail, and just focusing on enjoying each other's company. Life won't be on hiatus forever, so I think it's important to enjoy the family time while we have it. Soon enough, we'll be back to the normal grind of life and I want to know I didn't let this time slip away worrying about things I couldn't change.

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

For my mental health, I try to avoid the news and shelter myself from social media. For my physical health, I like to forget things on my wife's grocery list so I can make multiple trips through the grocery store parking lot before returning home.

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

People are like rubber bands. We never realize how elastic we are until we're stretched beyond our comfort zones. My advice is to stretch but not snap.

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



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