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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 Kim Hilton, Professor of Chemistry.



**Kim Hilton**  
**Professor, Chemistry**

***Where are you from?***

I was born and raised in Michigan and lived there most of my life. I lived in almost every part of the state,

including Detroit, Saginaw, Houghton (the UP, eh), and Kalamazoo.

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

I attended Michigan Technological University for my bachelor's in chemistry and secondary education certification and Central Michigan University for my master's degree in chemistry and education.

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

I began teaching at FSW in 2017. Previously I was teaching at Kalamazoo Valley Community College for 15 years and before that I taught high school.

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

I credit my love of chemistry to two experiences: My childhood and my high school chemistry class. I am a Gen Xer, the generation that was thrown outside all day to either work or play. If we had questions we were told, "figure it out." I have three older brothers and we were constantly exploring and making experiments with radios, bikes, frogs, and bonfires. I was incredibly curious and would tinker constantly trying to figure out how things worked or behaved. I credit my high school chemistry teacher because it was in her class that I started to see how science can provide many answers to my many curiosities.

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

I would say my student teaching experience. I received my secondary education certification from Michigan Technological University. In my last semester I taught at a high school. I passed student teaching and was secondary ed certified, but the professor that evaluated my teaching experience said, "Kim, I can see you love chemistry, but I would recommend you work in a lab and not teach." It's a long story of how I went from being a horrible teacher to the teacher I am today. But I will share it as one of those "I will prove you wrong" moments that lead me to working hard to learn how to teach and to falling in love with chemical education!

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

A Mesoamerican scientist (Aztec, Inca, or Maya) and their knowledge and studies about materials in the world. My wife is from Guatemala and because of our relationship I've developed an interest in learning the science discoveries in Central and South America, much of which has been lost or destroyed.

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

I've always been good with technology and online learning so the transition to remote learning wasn't too difficult for me. The big changes occurred in my chemistry lab as I did a huge reorganization to make it safer and more sanitized for our students. I've also become part of TikTok's creator fund that encourages educators to provide educational content on their platform. This has connected my volunteer science outreach with many organizations such as the Frost museum in Miami and a home for women with autism in New York City.

***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?***

As a member of the LGBTQ community, my number one recommendation is to encourage students to share their pronouns. My number two recommendation is to allow students to use a first name that might not be on their student registration.

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

My advice is to keep yourself feeling accomplished. The extra time spent at home has caused me to do a lot of mechanical work on my old Jeep Wrangler, the ball joints, u joints, tie rods, radiator, thermostat, and shocks. I also built an outdoor patio that includes a kitchen and bathroom with toilet, sink, and shower. No hired work, all projects done by yours truly!

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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