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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. Monique Harrington, Professor of Humanities.



Dr. Monique Harrington
Professor of Humanities

Where are you from?

I have lived in Massachusetts and Connecticut at different times in my life, but my very favorite place to be before coming to Florida was Middlebury, Vermont.

Which college or university did you attend?

I received my B.A. in Education from Anna Maria College in Paxton, Massachusetts, my Master's Degree with a focus in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Connecticut, and my certificate in Administration from St. Michael's College in Colchester, Vermont. My Ph.D. in the Humanities and Technology will be officially conferred on December 31, 2020 through Salve Regina University.

When did you begin teaching at FSW?

I was hired as an adjunct for the Fall semester of 2018, and was then hired as full-time faculty just this past spring.

What made you become interested in your academic discipline?

My liberal arts background exposed me to a great many wonderful things, all of which I found fascinating. Art, music, theology, philosophy, history, literature, culture all spoke to me of celebrating the human spirit. The Humanities, as a discipline, allows me to immerse my thoughts and energies in the things that bring me joy.

What is your favorite food and favorite local restaurant?

Coming from a family of chefs and great home cooks, narrowing down my favorite food is a difficult task. However, I truly love great seafood and I'd have to say that my current favorite restaurant is Connor's Steak & Seafood in Fort Myers. My husband, Rick, and I have made some lovely memories there with family and friends.

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

Maya Angelou has always been a person whose wisdom I have admired. I would love to be able to ask her about the adventures she had during her lifetime and how it became the inspiration for her poetry.

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

2020 has truly been a whirlwind year, even under normal circumstances, for many of the people that I love. To stay connected, I've had to immerse myself in much more technology in order to nurture the relationships that are important to me—including the relationships I have with my students. So, I guess I'm a little more brave, a little more self-confident in this area, and a little more likely to explore further the potential of digital technology.

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?

Inclusivity is about feeling connected. We all have an abiding need to belong, and any way that we can come to let students know that we see them—not just their physical body, but their spirit, their potential—only works to the good.

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

I love to cook and I love to quilt and cross-stitch. The creative process is very nurturing. I also try to get in a daily walk. I'm not burning off the pounds (I love to cook with butter), but I start each day with a sense of peace and energy.

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

It's been my experience that humanity can do anything if we know it's not forever—and we do it better if we can pull together in the same direction. During tough times, when life presents us with challenges, we should remember to be tender and merciful with ourselves first, because we can't give what we don't have. I used to tell my teachers that the kicker to this idea was that the converse was also true—we will give what we do have. So, if we have fostered a sense of anxiety, or resentment, or self-battery, we will then pass that on to our students and the people who share our lives, which only compounds things.

We should never focus on the problem. We should always focus on the solution with as much joy as we can muster.

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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