

In Review - ATLE Luncheon

November 4th, 2015

Faculty Research Presentation

What happened today?

During our November 4th event, ATLE hosted 2 faculty members to present their research on teaching and learning. For this luncheon, we brought in Dr. Josh Silverstein from the Bowen School of Law to discuss his work on Grading Theory, as well as Dr. Paul Yoder discussing Pedagogy of Discovery. Starting with Dr. Silverstein, each guest presented about 15 minutes on their respective topics, a ten minute question and debrief period following each presentation.

Dr. Silverstein Highlights:

- Argued that lower-ranked Law Schools should have grading policies that require the average grade in each course to fall within a particular range, and that this range should be around a B+ meaning schools should inflate grades to competitive levels with other high-level schools in the discipline.
- Through his research, he noticed students taking specific courses, with specific professors, to get specific grades.
- There was a wide variety of what an “A” student, “B” student, etc. meant across the faculty, and they graded based on their personal grading philosophies
- Two main arguments for grade inflation:
 - (1) lower ranked schools were already disadvantaged going into the working field against higher-ranked schools, their lower GPAs were acting as another strike against them because the higher-ranked schools were giving higher grades.
 - (2) psychological stress was a factor with students. The lower grades were causing unnecessary stress on students, and students were reported to not learn as well under this type of stress that could be addressed with minor grade inflation.

Dr. Yoder Highlights:

- Focus in courses on improvisation and discovery, be willing to hand the reigns of the class over to the students -this based off William Blake’s *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, creating a “Blakean” pedagogy. “Teach students to *identify* what is important”
- This approach is intended to “rouse the faculties” -elicit critical thinking
- He suggests working the problems out with your students, make mistakes together, let the students lead in the classroom
- Teach your students what you don’t know about to share with your students in discovery

For more information about past events, visit our At-A-Glance section on our website at:
<http://ualr.edu/atle/glance-luncheon-reviews/>