

## SPRING BREAK is almost here! Next Meeting: This Friday! 10am TRC 122

### Last month's highlights and a brief look ahead to Friday...

We had a productive meeting last month spending a great deal of time talking about "demonstrable competency". As a group we determined the term is inherently subjective, that a proven track should not be nailed down, degrees and experience should be taken into consideration, and a separate conversation on mentorship needs to take place with consideration given to adjuncts, and more.

Then we talked about the Full-Time Faculty Annual Forms. This is a professional development fund form and several questions came up in regards to calendar, committees,

adjunct needs, and time of year in which you submit the form.

The Faculty Senate Survey was next regarding IP Video and Zoom. We heard what you had to say and we appreciate your feedback. Honestly, it was all over the place and didn't really narrow down how we should or shouldn't conduct our meetings. So we decided to keep doing what we're doing and then revisit for next school year.

As for the Next Meeting:

We'll need to talk about the In-Service Breakout Sessions we get, how to solicit the proposals, how to decide on the presenters, etcetera. It's super exciting and it's our first one, so we need to make sure we're doing this right.

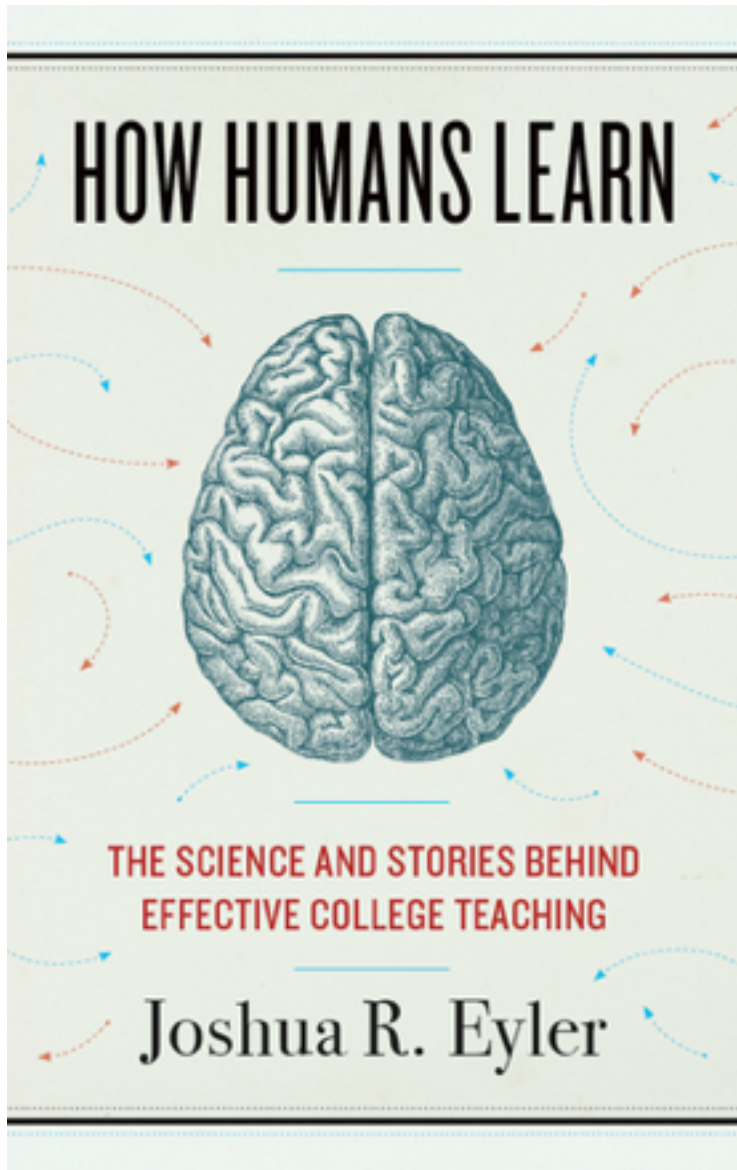
We also need to talk about a CoChair for next year, the Luncheon Awards, and any other announcements.

For more information go to our website or contact [mwhitchurch@roquecc.edu](mailto:mwhitchurch@roquecc.edu)

Enjoy your Spring Break...hike, bike, yoga, walk, mani, pedi, laugh, love, eat

**EXCITING NEWS!!** Faculty Senate will sponsor 2 breakout sessions at the Spring In-Service Day. We will be accepting proposals for G.I.F.T.'s (Great Ideas For Teaching) that fall under this season's theme (TBA). More to be discussed at the meeting or you may email [mwhitchurch@roquecc.edu](mailto:mwhitchurch@roquecc.edu) for more information.

From Tina Weyland, Reference and Instruction Librarian. An amazing book review for your intellectual spring-ulation!!



### **How Humans Learn: The Science and Stories Behind Effective College Teaching**

This book generated so much buzz ahead of publication last year that its release date was bumped up. Joshua Eyer, Director of Rice University's Center for Teaching Excellence, combines teacher interviews and classroom visits with evidence from anthropology, evolutionary biology, cognitive neuroscience, and developmental psychology to discover how students learn. Learning is something instructors can foster or interfere with, in ways that Eyer organizes into five themes: curiosity, sociality, emotion, authenticity, and failure. For each of these, he reviews the research and then explores successful teaching practices. The book is sprinkled with "Getting Started" hints, making it easy to use the insights in your own instruction.

- **Curiosity:** When students are intimidated, they're less able to learn. "Anxiety of any kind reduces levels of student curiosity." We humans are built for curiosity, and an instructor's first job is to avoid getting in the way. Work at lowering barriers, and let students know you've faced your own obstacles.
- **Sociality:** We're social creatures, and research on collaborative learning and peer instruction demonstrates that sociality benefits learning. Students learn more when they're generating knowledge together. (Eyer feels the science has distressing implications for online instruction, but an exploration of how these ideas could improve online models might have been useful.)
- **Emotion:** "Thinking and feeling need one another." Learning is seen as an intellectual activity, but making space for emotions can help students succeed. Positive emotions facilitate cognitive functioning, while negative or overwhelming emotions disrupt it. Of course, students come to the classroom with their own emotional histories, and the book has good ideas for creating an empathetic classroom while maintaining structure.
- **Authenticity:** Activities and projects that model authentic experience work better than teaching decontextualized skills and concepts. And unbroken lecturing will cause even the most diligent student to tune out, because our "ruthlessly pragmatic" brains understand that learning mostly happens in doing, and read the situation as an inauthentic learning opportunity.
- **Failure:** We know failure is a necessary part of learning, but students "are trying to succeed in a system that prizes success over development." It can be difficult to structure a course in a way that allows students to fail without penalty. Eyer suggests building an "error-positive climate" by separating feedback from evaluation where possible and grading for both persistence and risk-taking.