

Professor: One Title, Many Jobs

Professors teach, and at the University of Denver (DU) they take teaching very seriously. They assemble course syllabi, prepare and deliver lectures, guide class discussions, and organize labs. They hold office hours and return students' phone calls and e-mails. They grade exams, research papers, and other assignments. They provide detailed feedback on undergraduates' honors theses and graduate students' Masters- and Ph.D.-level work.

But DU professors do more than teach. They are also scholars and scientists who conduct research and create new knowledge. They present this new knowledge at scholarly conferences and publish it in journals and books. A significant portion of the research conducted at the University of Denver is supported by internal and external funding, and professors spend many hours writing grant proposals.

Many of your professors are gifted artists and performers. They write poetry, plays, and novels. They act and direct theatrical productions. They draw, paint, and sculpt, and their work is displayed in galleries and shows around the globe. They are extraordinarily talented musicians, and their performances elicit rave reviews.

Professors publish research and produce art partly because they must do these things to keep their jobs and earn promotions. But that's not the principal reason. For DU faculty, research and art are consuming passions fueled by a powerful desire to know, understand, and create.

Professors serve on committees that address issues vital to their departments and the university community. They write letters of recommendation. They evaluate the work of colleagues seeking promotion. They review manuscripts submitted to professional journals or university presses and grant proposals under consideration at various funding agencies.

Professors are consultants. In addition, they provide expert testimony in court cases or to policy-makers, and publish commentary on newsworthy events in local and national periodicals. Reporters routinely call on DU faculty for insight and perspective about the news they write and broadcast.

Professors serve the public good by participating on community (and national) boards, commissions, and agencies. Professors' cutting-edge research frequently informs public policy.

Professors are volunteers who work with at-risk youth, grapple with complex environmental issues, and donate their time and talent to political causes (left and right) they believe in.

University of Denver professors are committed to providing you with a first-rate education, but it is useful to remember that teaching is only one of the many things professors do. So, if a faculty member glances at the clock and fidgets nervously after answering your questions or looks a bit peeved when you arrive fifteen minutes late for an appointment, it is not because he or she doesn't want to help you or thinks you're unimportant. It's because your professor has more jobs to do than time to do them.

Adapted from: Mott Greene, "Some Things You Should Know about a University." Puget Sound University 2002 Orientation Anthology.

*Dialogues
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