



COUNCIL TO ADVANCE TWO-YEAR  
COLLEGES

# Trailblazer Teaching Academy: Helping Faculty Succeed in Their First Year

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## **A Larger Commitment to Onboarding**

- University-wide initiative led by the Provost's Office (first cohort 2019)
- Larger initiative focused on improving onboarding for faculty, students, and staff
- Aimed to create consistent, timely, and coordinated support for new faculty





# Why Trailblazer Teaching Academy Was Created

- Faculty onboarding varied across colleges
- Key information often arrived too late to be helpful
- TTA established to give new faculty early access to resources and mentoring
- Directly supports faculty success → student success





# Participants

<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>2024-2025</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>



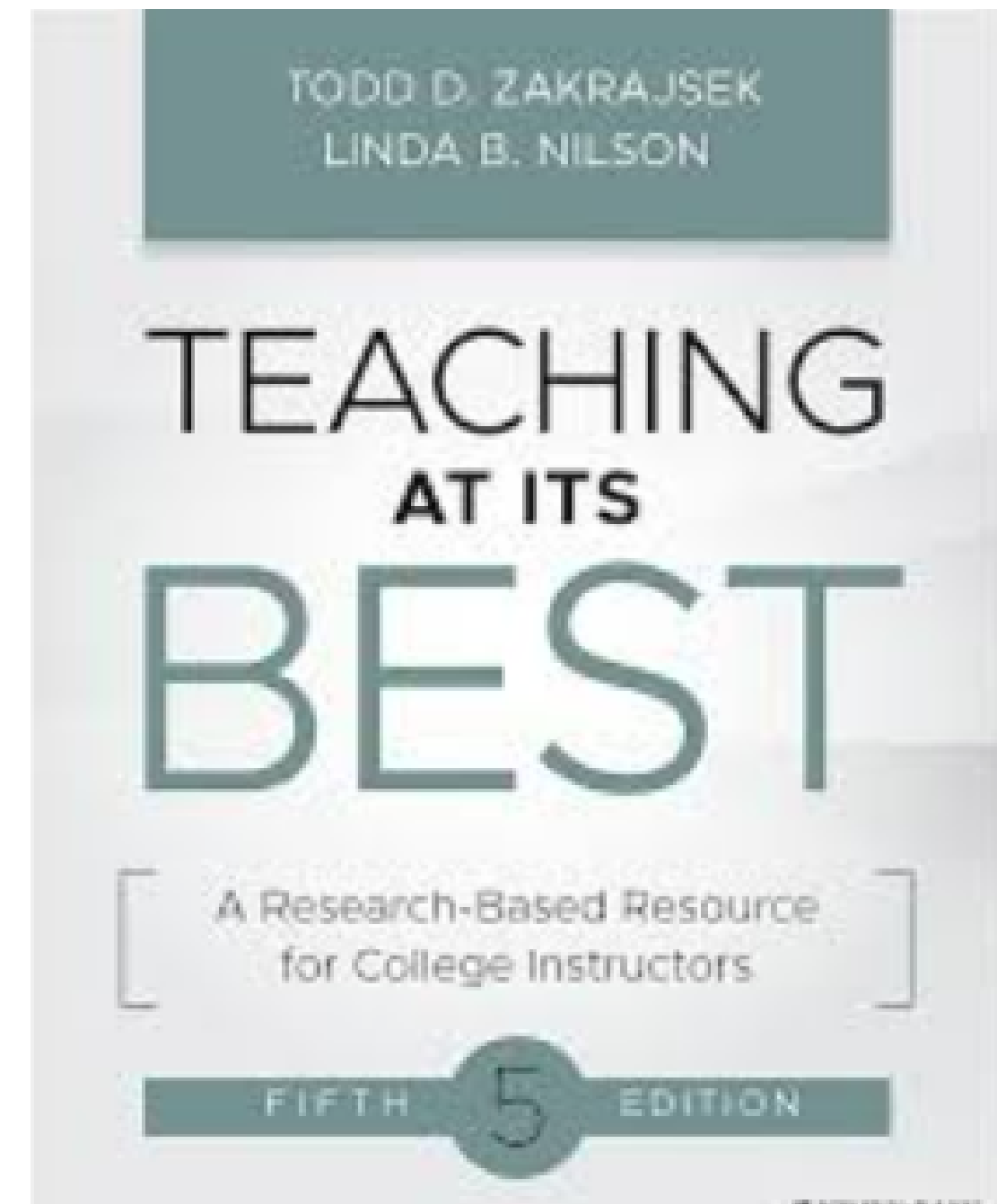
- Create **cohort connections** and **dialogues** to foster cross-campus relationships.
- Provide **overview and connections to campus resources** that assist faculty/students.
- Create open dialogue around **research-based practices** as it relates to each faculty member discipline, content, and roles.
- **Model active-learning** teaching practice.
- Help faculty **apply and synthesize** pedagogical principles in their own teaching





# Program Details

- Year-long program (two semesters)
- Monthly meetings
  - 8-10 AM
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday
  - No December meeting
  - May “graduation” luncheon
- Previous Structure
  - First hour--discussion
  - Second hour--guest speakers







## Trailblazer Teaching Academy is designed to help new faculty develop

1. A clear understanding of expectations, roles and responsibilities
2. The skills, knowledge and behaviors necessary for success in the classroom
3. Meaningful discussion about research-based effective teaching practices
4. Ongoing and meaningful support, training and development
5. Important resources and contacts that are essential for personal satisfaction
6. Cross campus connections with colleagues and offices
7. Confidence



# Foundation for Success

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## Goal Focus

Understanding expectations, roles, and classroom readiness

## Why It Matters

- Reduces uncertainty and builds early confidence
- Establishes a shared understanding of “effective teaching”

## What Participants Gain

- Learn about key expectations in teaching, service, and professional development
  - Hear directly from second-year faculty about lessons learned
  - Gain clarity on faculty evaluation, advising, and assessment processes
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## From the Workforce to Academia

*The TTA program was a great support for my transition into academia from the corporate world. The program gave me building blocks for leading a student versus an employee. TTA helped me learn how to utilize my experiences and share them in an academic setting. I've grown as an educator working through my first year with the skills acquired through this new instructor program and building my understanding of the academic environment. The collaborative environment and expert-led sessions truly elevated my practice.*

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~Dawn, Assistant Professor of Nursing



# Teaching That Works

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## Goal Focus

Research-based, student-centered teaching practices

## Why It Matters

- Helps faculty move beyond intuition to evidence-based decisions
- Encourages reflection and experimentation

## What Participants Gain

- Discussion of high-impact practices
  - Connection between theory and day-to-day teaching
  - Opportunities to observe and model active learning
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# Building Confidence as a New Faculty





# Sustaining Growth and Connection

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## Goal Focus

Ongoing support, resources, and confidence through community

## Why It Matters

- Professional growth thrives in connection
- Faculty who feel supported are more likely to persist and engage deeply

## What Participants Gain

- Continued mentoring and development opportunities
  - Awareness of essential campus resources
  - Cross-campus relationships and lasting confidence as educators
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## Continued Growth Through Reflection and Renewal

When I began my tenure at Vincennes University, I had already taught for twenty-five years in higher education as a lecturer and part-time faculty at a number of institutions. My only real training as an educator was a short seminar when I was a graduate student. Although I felt I was a fairly adept teacher in the classroom, the Trailblazer Teaching Academy was a game-changer in formalizing my understanding of pedagogical approaches.

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~Chris, Assistant Professor of Photography



# Connecting Faculty with Campus Resources

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## **Goal Focus**

Building awareness of campus offices that support teaching, advising, and faculty well-being

## **Why It Matters**

- Helps new faculty navigate campus systems
- Encourages collaboration across departments
- Creates personal connections that strengthen student success

## **What Participants Gain**

- Meet campus partners through guest sessions
  - Learn about key resources and referral processes
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# Topics and Guest Speakers

**Welcome** President, Provost, and Assist Provost of Curriculum and Instruction

**How Students Learn** Counseling Center and Diverse Abilities

**Academic Integrity and Classroom Management** Dean of Students, Assist Provost Student Affairs

**Helping Students Prepare for Exams** Registrar's Office

**Teaching Methods and Learning Outcomes** Assessment

**Documenting Teaching Effectiveness** Provost, Faculty Senate  
President





## Becoming a Member of the VU Community

My involvement in TTA was invaluable! I not only learned very practical information, such as how to complete TAPS reports and Counseling Center or Care Team referrals, but I also enjoyed sharing best-practice teaching methods and discussing pedagogy. My number one take-away, though, was developing a sense of community with amazing VU colleagues. I truly feel like an important part of the VU team and mission.

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~Kathy, Assistant Professor of Communication





2022-2023 Cohort



2023-2024 Cohort



2024-2025 Cohort



# Sarah Alderfer

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Excellence



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