



## Inspiration and Support for Teaching

# The Wakonse Conferences on Teaching

Wakonse is a word from the Lakota Indian language meaning to teach, to inspire. The Wakonse Foundation brings together people who find inspiring and influencing others is what they do for a living. We create a climate where it is important and appropriate to display and discuss teaching talents . . . where colleagues learn about themselves as teachers . . . where they see and consider the tasks and issues of creative teaching in a manner characterized as enjoyable. . . where providing feedback to one another is a norm and where that feedback is outside of any institutional mandate to improve or to evaluate teaching.

### The Program

Take everyone away from campus, from their phones, from offices and professional obligations. Prepare them for full days of workshop activities exploring teaching through highly interactive large and small group presentations, discussion groups and hands-on experiential sessions. Promote many informal opportunities for support and networking to occur as participants become acquainted and share their talents and experiences with each other.

### Your Role

- Identify faculty known for good teaching or those wanting to improve their teaching.
- Solicit nominations from the chancellor, deans, department chairs, or principal.
- Choose a diverse team — different as to disciplines, ages, stages of their careers, ethnicity, gender, etc.
- Send them as a team to a Wakonse Conference on Teaching.

### Our Role

- Identify the talents and concerns of the participants.
- Make everyone a participant: presenter, master teacher, reactant, writer, consultant, discussion leader, musician, photographer, entertainer, role model.
- Make teaching the focus of the program. Explore it, model it, practice it, critique it, promote it, refine it.

### Outcomes

- A more supportive campus climate for those concerned with teaching.
- A collaborative exchange of talent, ideas and resources within and among participating institutions.
- Increased concern for the general issues of the academy.
- Renewed interest, support and understanding for what it means to be a teacher.
- Better teaching!

Call, write or fax for more information:

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**P**articipants at Wakonse Conferences on Teaching return to their campuses to share and promote the excitement of teaching. They call themselves Wakonse Fellows.

A fellows program can help a campus focus and enhance its teaching mission. Here are what some conference participants have said:

*"I found myself getting excited about teaching again . . . it bordered on a paradigm shift about the entire educational process for me."*

*"I cannot think of a more positive professional experience I have had since beginning my academic career . . ."*

A team from one college:  
*"We found the conference to be one of the most enlightening that we have ever attended!"*

*"For me, one of the real highlights was the opportunity to really get to know superb folks on my own campus with whom I share a number of interests, but with whom I would otherwise likely never cross paths . . . these connections are the sort that will cause the term scholarship to reclaim its real meaning."*

*"What a week! Wakonse still burns bright! Teaching is magic stuff . . . neither I nor my classes will ever be quite the same again."*

### The Wakonse Conference

- providing recognition for those who inspire others in the classroom
- building a campus community of scholars who care about teaching
- promoting collaboration with others in being creative about teaching

*Come be a part of it!*