

2018

DAVINCI FELLOW



NORTHEASTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

THE DAVINCI INSTITUTE

is organized exclusively for charitable, scientific and educational purposes, more specifically to serve as an Oklahoma think tank whose mission is to promote a statewide creative renaissance through lectures, workshops, professional development, research and advocacy.

The DaVinci Institute funds creative projects among Oklahoma's higher education faculty. A \$1,000 grant is awarded to each DaVinci fellow to assist in completing their DaVinci proposal.



I love teaching. Period. I love the interaction with my students, and I love those “light bulb moments” when something really makes sense for a student. I love introducing new ideas and concepts, different perspectives and ways of thinking, and quality literature and resources.

~Dr. Tobi Thompson

DR. TOBI THOMPSON

NSU Associate Professor, College of Education, Director of the Cappi Wadley Reading & Technology Center at NSU

DaVinci Fellow Proposal:

Dyslexia, Reading Best-Practices

Overview:

Over the last two years, the Wadley Clinic has seen an increase in the number of children who, parents or teachers believe, are dyslexic. However, there are a number of misconceptions about what dyslexia truly is. Dr. Thompson’s DaVinci proposal focuses on best practices—research-based and field-tested—for teaching children with dyslexia and ways to help parents and teacher candidates to assist their children and students.

At NSU, I am able to instill in my students a passion for teaching, the knowledge that children are more important than test scores and content, the belief that if a teacher teaches effectively, all students can learn, and the insight that not all children learn the same way.

How the grant will be used:

Dr. Thompson will purchase materials such as apps, books, manipulatives, etc., that Wadley Center tutors can use to more effectively tutor children who struggle with reading. She also plans to attend the International Dyslexia Association conference to see what other educators are doing that is making a positive impact on their students.



DR. RATNAKAR DEOLE

NSU Associate Professor,
Gregg Wadley College of Science
& Health Professions

DaVinci Fellow Proposal:

Inquiry-based Lab Projects

Overview:

Dr. Deole's research in the field of extremophile biochemistry focuses on work with extremophilic microorganisms. Accumulating what are called organic osmolytes is a central component of bacterial response to extreme environments. Identifying and characterizing these organic molecules, key genes involved in biosynthesis/uptake of these organic molecules and identifying metabolites involved in stress perception and signaling is the goal of Dr. Deole's research.

I have discovered the truly dichotomous nature of what I view as “good teaching.” In my opinion, a good teacher is one who is (a) supremely organized yet flexible enough to recognize and take advantage of “teachable moments” in the classroom; (b) firm, yet approachable and accessible to the students, and (c) exceedingly knowledgeable yet constantly learning and seeking new knowledge and techniques to bring into the classroom.

How the grant will be used:

Due to developments in genome sequencing in the last decade, various disciplines in biology such as microbiology, biochemistry, cellular biology and molecular biology have now become a melting pot of hypothesis-driven and discovery-driven approaches. Dr. Deole’s DaVinci proposal focuses on creating inquiry based lab projects using a model system that more accurately reflects the current melding of approaches in biology.



I have been in academics all my life, be it as a student, a teaching assistant or now a faculty member. Each stage has had a tremendous impact on my teaching. I have developed the following tenets for myself:

- » *If you don't care about them, they won't care what you say.*
- » *Don't expect them to be students like you were.*
- » *The main correlation with success is frequent detailed feedback.*
- » *Respect them as people, even if they don't earn respect from their results.*
- » *Fear is not respect.*
- » *Teach to individuals, but grade anonymously.*
- » *Don't apologize for doing the right thing, but always apologize for mistakes.*
- » *If you don't know the answer, help them find who does.*
- » *If they think you want them to learn, they will learn more.*

~Dr. Ratnakar Deole



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