Texas State University
Part-Time Faculty Excellence in Teaching Award
Nomination Form

Name   Laura Foster
Net ID   lf18

Department   C.L.A.S
College   Education

Current TXST teaching appointment FTE%
Spring 2015 Semester: 2 Courses

Number of long semesters of TXST teaching at 50% or more FTE 26

Brief statement (100 – 150 words) of why the nominee is deserving of this award:

Nomination: I am excited to nominate Laura Foster for the Part time Faculty Excellence in Teaching Award. Our Professional Counseling Program in the department of Counseling, Leadership, Adult Education and School Psychology (CLAS) has one undergraduate course: COUN 3320: Introduction to Counseling and Psychotherapy. This course has been a required course for Communications. It is also a ‘feeder’ course into our master’s program.

Ms. Foster has taught this class for us consistently since 2001! This course is taught each long semester, and often in the summer. She consistently receives outstanding teaching evaluations. A graduate of our master’s program, Ms. Foster is a Texas Licensed Professional Counselor and Supervisor and a Registered Play Therapist and has an active clinical private practice. As such, she is able to weave into the classroom her professional experiences offering current, real-life experiences and examples. As well, it keeps her very polished in the skills and information she includes in her lectures and classroom experiences.

Sincerely, Linda

Linda E. Homeyer, PhD, LPC-S, RPT-S
Professor, Professional Counseling
Honorary Professor of International Studies
Texas State University
601 University Dr
ED 4025
San Marcos, Tx 78666
512-245-8677
LHomeyer@txstate.edu
http://www.txstate.edu/clas/Professional-Counseling/Program-Faculty/Linda-Homeyer.html

Association for Play Therapy, Director Emerita
I. Academic/Professional Background

A. Name: Laura Kathleen Foster  Title: Lecturer

B. Educational Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Thesis/Dissertation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M.Ed.</td>
<td>January 1994 – May 1997</td>
<td>Southwest Texas State University</td>
<td>Counseling and Guidance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>August 1989 – May 1993</td>
<td>University of Texas at Austin</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. University Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjunct Instructor</td>
<td>Texas State University</td>
<td>January 2003 – Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjunct Instructor</td>
<td>Texas State University</td>
<td>August 2001 – May 2002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. Relevant Professional Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Entity</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Professional Counselor</td>
<td>Private Practice ~ Full Time</td>
<td>May 2002 – Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract Play Therapist</td>
<td>Marywood Children and Family Services</td>
<td>November 2000–November 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child / Family Therapist</td>
<td>Austin Recovery’s Family House</td>
<td>April 1998 – June 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor</td>
<td>Teen &amp; Family Counseling Center</td>
<td>June 1996 – February 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor Intern</td>
<td>DayGlo Family Treatment Program</td>
<td>June 1997 – April 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor Intern</td>
<td>Communities In Schools / Pebble Project</td>
<td>November 1997 – April 1998</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E. Other Professional Credentials

- Licensed Professional Counselor – Texas
  # 15446 issued March 24, 1999

- Registered Play Therapist
  # T480 issued May 15, 1999

- Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor – Texas
  Certified April 13, 2001
II. TEACHING

A. Teaching Honors and Awards:

2015: Nominated for Part-Time Faculty Awards for Excellence in Teaching

B. Courses Taught:

Coun 3320: Introduction to Counseling and Psychotherapy

C. Graduate Theses/Dissertations or Exit Committees (if supervisor, please indicate):

Not Applicable to Degree Earned

D. Courses Prepared and Curriculum Development:

Coun 3320: Introduction to Counseling and Psychotherapy

E. Funded External Teaching Grants and Contracts:

F. Submitted, but not Funded, External Teaching Grants and Contracts:

G. Funded Internal Teaching Grants and Contracts:

H. Submitted, but not Funded, Internal Teaching Grants and Contracts:

I. Other:

III. SCHOLARLY/CREATIVE

A. Works in Print

1. Books (if not refereed, please indicate)

   a. Scholarly Monographs:

   b. Textbooks:

   c. Edited Books:
d. Chapters in Books:

e. Creative Books:

2. Articles
   a. Refereed Journal Articles:
   b. Non-refereed Articles:

3. Conference Proceedings
   a. Refereed Conference Proceedings:
   b. Non-refereed:

4. Abstracts:

5. Reports:

6. Book Reviews:

7. Other:

B. Works not in Print

1. Papers Presented at Professional Meetings:

2. Invited Talks, Lectures, and Presentations:

3. Consultancies:

4. Workshops:

5. Other: Children’s Books / Manuscripts Submitted for Publication

   *I’m In Charge of How I Feel! Coping Skills For Kids*
   *My Friend, Mi Amiga*
   *Look What I Can Do!*
   *Puppy Kitty*
   *What A Day!*
   *Toy Cars Aren’t Just For Boys and Pink is Just a Color*
   *Sometimes I am a Silly Goose*
C. Grants and Contracts

1. Funded External Grants and Contracts:

2. Submitted, but not Funded, External Grants and Contracts:

3. Funded Internal Grants and Contracts:

4. Submitted, but not Funded, Internal Grants and Contracts:

D. Fellowships, Awards, Honors:

IV. SERVICE

A. University:
   Encourage student career development by writing letters of recommendation for students.

B. Departmental:
   Encourage student career development by writing letters of recommendation for students.

C. Community:

   **Austin Involved / I Live Here, I Give Here**
   2010 – Present
   *Volunteer at organized community projects, attend fundraising opportunities for Austin Pets Alive, AIDS Services of Austin, CASA.*

   **Children’s Mental Health Planning Citizen’s Advisory Committee**
   Austin Travis County Mental Health Mental Retardation Center
   March 2002 – September 2002
   *Volunteer Committee Member:* Assisted in the review the Center’s mission, vision, values, and goals and made recommendations related to further development of the Center’s Strategic Plan.

   **kidSAFE**
   1824 East Oltorf
   Austin, Texas 78741
   January 1998 – April 1998
   *Volunteer Instructor:* Provided in-school abuse prevention training for teachers, parents and children with developmental and / or physical disabilities.

   **KidPower**
   P.O. Box 9802-313
   Austin, Texas 78766
   May 1993 – May 1994
Volunteer Instructor: Taught children ages four through twelve effective skills empowering them to increase their self-confidence, safety, and awareness while preserving and promoting their physical and emotional integrity.

Austin-Travis County Children’s Shelter
P.O. Box 684213
Austin, Texas 78768
May 1993 – September 1993

Volunteer House Parent: Assisted with and enriched children’s play activities, enhanced self-esteem and self-control of the children, and demonstrated appropriate behavior as a positive role model.

D. Professional:

E. Organizations

1. Honorary:

2. Professional:

   International Association for Play Therapy
   Texas Association for Play Therapy
   Hill Country Association For Play Therapy
   Society of Children’s Book Writers & Illustrators

F. Services Honors and Awards:
Course Description:
COUN 3320 is designed for upper-division undergraduates who are considering entering a helping profession or wish to know more about counseling. The course will offer a broad overview of counseling, counseling theories, and interpersonal communication skills that will facilitate a counseling relationship. This class will leave students with a greater knowledge of the field and profession of counseling and psychotherapy, increased self-awareness, and improved listening and communication skills. A combination of in-class lectures, experiential exercises, and discussions and out-of-class homework assignments and counseling sessions (or communication exercises) will be employed to reach these goals.

Goals and Objectives:
Through participation in this class, the student is expected to…
• develop an understanding of professional helping, the counseling process, and the therapeutic relationship
• identify and demonstrate active listening via attending and reflecting communication skills
• gain an understanding of gender and ethnic differences in the counseling relationship
• learn the ethical responsibilities involved in counseling and demonstrate
• an understanding of counseling theory, strategies, and interventions
• an awareness of personal communication patterns, including self-awareness and his/her impact on others
• an understanding of cognitive and affective content and how to choose appropriate responses to both
• an understanding of transference and countertransference and ways to approach these and other issues in a therapeutic relationship
• an understanding of the importance of counseling goals and coping skills.

Required Texts:

Requirements and Evaluation:
50 points Attendance: 10 days at 5 points per day; scattered and unannounced. Attendance will be taken at the beginning, middle, or end of class. You must be in the room at the time of attendance in order to receive credit.
50 Homework: 10 critical thinking homework assignments at 5 points each (posted on TRACS under Assignments)
60 Counseling Project or Communication Project: 6 at 10 points each (written instructions posted on TRACS under Resources)
150 Three exams at 50 points each
310 points total

Grading: A = 310 – 278; B = 277 – 247; C = 246 – 216; D = 215 – 185; F = below 184
An optional Bonus Homework will be assigned at the end of the semester that is worth 10 points. If you choose to complete it, those 10 points will be added to your total points earned.

**Texas State and Class Policies:**

- Texas State University seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all qualified individuals with disabilities. This University will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal educational opportunity. It is the student’s responsibility to register with Disability Support Services and to contact the faculty member in a timely manner to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

- Daily Lecture Outlines will be posted on TRACS under the Resources tab. Please bring these with you (either hard-copy or digitally) to facilitate a smooth running lecture and to aid in your note-taking.

- The course schedule is posted on TRACS. It lists when homework (HW) is assigned and due. HW is due at the very beginning of class. HW turned in after 5 minutes on the day it is due will not be accepted, no exceptions. Once posted, HW may be turned in early. HW may be turned in via email, TRACS attachment, hardcopy in class, or placed in my mailbox in ED 4006 (TRACS submission is preferred). The course schedule also lists reading assignments; please read the material prior to class. You do not have to bring your book with you to class.

- Missing an exam: Points will be deducted if you take the exam on a different day or at a different time than the rest of the class. If you make arrangements with me in advance and/or have a valid excuse, only 4 points will be deducted from your score. If you do not notify me in advance and just do not show up, 8 points will be deducted from your score. This policy is to promote fairness and accountability. You must take the exam in your assigned section unless I have given advanced approval ~ point deduction may still apply.

- I will make decisions regarding other issues when and if they occur. The excuse of “I didn’t know” is unacceptable. Given what I announce in class, the policies described in the syllabus, the information listed on the course schedule and other material posted on TRACS, you will be fully informed. If you miss an announcement due to an absence or choose not to take initiative to view posted material, it may result in the consequence of you not knowing a vital piece of information.

**Guidelines for Taking This Course:**

1. Take Responsibility For Your Own Learning
   - You will get out of this what you put into it. Your grade will most likely reflect your effort.

2. This Is A Beginning Level Course
   - Although you will learn many communication and counseling skills, please keep in mind that this is an introductory counseling course. You will not be a qualified counselor when you complete the class.

3. This Class Is Not The Place To Get Your Mental Health Needs Met
   - Do not use this classroom to process your issues. I am a Licensed Professional Counselor, but I cannot be your counselor. If you find yourself struggling with some issues, seek your own counseling. You can receive counseling services at the Texas State Counseling Center (phone 512-245-2208) or through the Graduate Program Counseling Clinic (phone 512-245-8349) as part of the class project or on your own.
4. Do Not Impose Your Values On Others
   • Avoid making judgments on a person’s lifestyle, life experiences, or philosophy of life. This classroom, like a session room, is a place of acceptance and respect.

5. A Positive Attitude Can Go A Long Way To Make This Class Enjoyable and Interesting
   • Class activities help reinforce learning but can also be fun if you have the right frame of mind.
February 9, 2011

Ms. Laura Foster
Counseling, Leadership, Adult Education and School Psychology
College of Education
Texas State University-San Marcos

Dear Laura:

As part of the Graduating Student Recognition of Campus Support program, an e-mail celebrating the success of our recent December 2010 graduates was sent late last semester. They were congratulated on their accomplishments and were asked to name any faculty or staff member(s) that they felt contributed significantly to their success and development.

Congratulations! You were named by the following graduate as a person at Texas State University-San Marcos who made a contribution to their academic career:

John Kublank’s Comment:

Dear Professor Foster, I have gained so much from your counseling class, and I am so glad that I was able to take it. You are a great teacher, and I have recommended your class to so many people. Thank you for being there to answer my questions, and really explaining the material. I really understood everything that you said. You are a great teacher. I know because of you there will be many students, including me, who will be forever changed. Thank you for being amazing. Enthusiastically. John R. Kublank

There is always a sense of accomplishment in knowing that your efforts during the past year have dramatically influenced the lives of one or more graduates. Throughout the year, you have given your time and talent to many students. It is dedicated individuals such as you that make a real difference in our student’s academic and personal development. It is my pleasure to be able to thank you on behalf of the student(s) whose life/lives you have touched. The students appreciate it, and we in the Vice President for Student Affairs Office offer our thanks for helping make Texas State “The Rising Star of Texas”!

Sincerely,

Ms. Jennifer A. Beck
Director, Retention Management & Planning

cc: Dr. Joanne H. Smith,
Vice President for Student Affairs
July 14, 2010

Laura Foster  
Department of Counseling, Leadership,  
Adult Education, and School Psychology  
Texas State University-San Marcos

Dear Laura:

As part of the Graduating Student Recognition of Campus Support program, an e-mail celebrating the success of our recent May 2010 graduates was sent late last semester. They were congratulated on their accomplishments and were asked to name any faculty or staff member(s) that they felt contributed significantly to their success and development.

Congratulations! You were named by the following graduate as a person at Texas State University-San Marcos who made a contribution to their academic career:

Joy Washburn’s Comment:

Ms. Foster, thank you for sharing your knowledge and genuine heart with all your students. From your introduction class, I gained awareness of my needs, courage to attend counseling, and really valuable help for all my relationships. Through that Christ has led me out of depression and anxiety that was really hindering my life through therapy and medication. Thank you for being gracious and compassionate. I have several memories of activities in your class that truly relaxed my mind and tense feelings. I’m grateful for all that I learned from you. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

There is always a sense of accomplishment in knowing that your efforts during the past year have dramatically influenced the lives of one or more graduates. Throughout the year, you have given your time and talent to many students. It is dedicated individuals such as you that make a real difference in our student’s academic and personal development. It is my pleasure to be able to thank you on behalf of the student(s) whose life/lives you have touched. The students appreciate it, and we in the Vice President for Student Affairs Office offer our thanks for helping make Texas State “The Rising Star of Texas”!

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Ms. Jennifer A. Beck  
Director, Retention Management & Planning

cc: Dr. Joanne H. Smith,  
Vice President for Student Affairs
Qualitative Student Feedback Form

Please provide additional comments to the instructor in the following domains:

1. Organization/Planning/Instruction
   Very well done! The activities were great to teach as well as keep the students' attention. Also very useful & valuable.

2. Interaction with Students/Personal Qualities of the Instructor
   Very engaging! It's obvious she loves what she does and is very knowledgeable about it and does it well.

3. Assessment
   Very fair. The reviews were also very helpful.

4. Something else I would like to say is...
   I really enjoyed this class! It was by far my favorite! Learned a lot of very useful info. Loved the incorporation of stories. Very meaningful! Thank you!
Qualitative Student Feedback Form

Please provide additional comments to the instructor in the following domains:

1. Organization/Planning/Instruction
   Mrs. Foster was really organized & prepared each time for the class. The class just flowed!

2. Interaction with Students/Personal Qualities of the Instructor
   Great Teacher and the interaction with students was better than most Text teachers. She's a super nice & empathetic teacher! The activities she did were a good tool for interaction.

3. Assessment
   Great class, provided us with all material needed to succeed in this class

4. Something else I would like to say is...
   AMAZING teacher! I would take her again in a heartbeat! She just understands.
Qualitative Student Feedback Form

Please provide additional comments to the instructor in the following domains:

1. Organization/Planning/Instruction
   - very organized
   - the outline helped a lot for each section
   - it was very easy to understand what was needed from us

2. Interaction with Students/Personal Qualities of the Instructor
   - loud all the activities we had to do
   - the activities helped us get a hands on experience
   - i wish more of my classes were like this

3. Assessment
   - i enjoyed how some of the assignments were opinion based
   - it was interesting to see how everyone had a different point of view

4. Something else i would like to say is...
   - she was very nice. i enjoyed how she shared personal stories. she helped me understand more about human behavior
Teaching Practice Prompt # 1. What are your personal strengths as a teacher?

Three characteristics jump out to me as I reflect on this prompt.

1) Love of Subject: At the start of each semester, students describe to me their misconceptions regarding counseling. By semester’s end, they view it as a valuable community resource and a healthy coping mechanism. In class, I strive to decrease the negative stigma of counseling by providing accurate information to which they can relate. It is very rewarding when students tell me they have decided to pursue a graduate degree in counseling based on the information they received from me in class. Students also tell me how they are able to apply what they’ve learned to their personal and professional lives. I am in a unique position to share my passion for counseling by introducing new concepts to my students that can have a lasting impact.

2) Organizational Skills: Clear and effective communication is key to a successful educational experience. In addition to verbal communication in class, I utilize TRACS to make available all class requirements, resources, and announcements. Daily outlines are posted under Resources to help facilitate student note-taking, grades are posted within 24 hours of due date, and descriptions of all student responsibilities are listed. Students are empowered to take responsibility for their own learning.

3) Approachability. In both my work as a counselor and a counselor educator, I strive to bring forth a sense of authenticity. I have received positive feedback via student evaluations regarding my sense of humor, my anecdotal style, and my approachability. Two weeks ago, a student approached me to thank me for responding to his email about missing a class. As he shook my hand, he told me that most of his professors give off an attitude of uncaring elitism and that my response showed that I truly care.
Teaching Practice Prompt #2. How has your teaching changed since you began teaching and what have you done to improve it?

Although I have taught the same class since 2001, it has evolved dramatically based on student needs, student evaluations, and new advances in the profession.

I treat each semester as a new entity that deserves updated information. I never want my students to feel like they are receiving an auto-piloted, cookie-cutter learning experience. A colleague once asked me how I am able to repeatedly teach the same course. He feared the boredom of it. My response was that if I’m bored, my students are bored, and that is unacceptable to me. Therefore, I choose to keep it fresh so I may deliver a rewarding experience.

Instead of hiding behind the corner podium as I used to, I now stand front and center so that I may connect with my students. This not only helps me get to know my students better but also encourages class discussion.

Due to negative feedback received, I eliminated group projects and replaced them with more applicable counseling experiences and communication activities. I also changed the way I take attendance and have created opportunities for extra credit as a way to show encouragement to struggling students. I welcome both positive and negative feedback and take student evaluations very seriously.

The main way my teaching has changed since I began is my confidence level and comfort with public speaking. Whereas my lecturing style was once rigid, I now see it as structured yet flexible. I encourage class discussions and understand the value of knowing when to stay on task and when to meet more immediate needs. I see teaching as an area in which there is always room for growth, and I welcome the challenge!
Teaching Practice Prompt #3. Give an example of a teaching challenge you have encountered and explain how you’ve dealt with it.

The September 11, 2001 attacks occurred during my first semester of teaching. Teaching during that time was a great challenge because of the raw emotion felt by all. I met that challenge by introducing information in class that was not previously stated on the syllabus. To this day, I discuss crisis intervention and coping skills so that my students are empowered to help others as well as themselves. Although I tackle my subject matter from an educational standpoint, I encourage my students to take what they are learning and apply those counseling skills to their own mental health needs.

Another teaching challenge I have encountered falls under the category of student manipulation. Although most students take responsibility for their learning, some do not. I have had to confront students who forged doctor’s notes to excuse absences, students who blow-off the semester and then panic at the end because they are failing, and students who believe they are above the rules and demand special treatment. In most cases, I am able to handle these challenges by outlining in advance my class policies and holding students accountable. In other cases, I have utilized the support of my department by asking advice and following through on University policies and procedures. It is here that my counseling background is beneficial. I am able to provide empathy combined with accountability, consequences without judgment, and empowering support instead of enabling ineffectiveness.

A current challenge I face is inconsistent attendance in my 12:30 section. Although this frustrates and disappoints me, I do my best to not let my personal feelings distract me from my purpose. Those who attend get my A-game. Those who choose not to attend experience the consequences of their actions by not earning their attendance points for those days and missing opportunities to learn.
Teaching Practice Prompt #4. Please give examples of innovative assignments and course design components that promote active learning / engagement.

It is in this category that I believe my teaching style shines. In nearly every class period, there is an activity that encourages group interaction. I find that incorporating activities into lectures not only keeps the students engaged and entertained but also drives home the material. Here are some of my favorites: Feeling Charades, Case Conceptualization (as a treatment team, discuss your client’s cognitive / affective content and possible counseling goals), stress management activities (scribbling, blowing bubbles, sculpting with Play-Doh), and art therapy activities (Feeling Color Chart, They Remind Me Of, and Pass The Picture). Last semester, a group of students thanked me for my class; they had formed a strong friendship because of the small group work.

The homework I assign targets critical thinking as opposed to memorization of terminology. Here are question examples: 1. How would you react to a client who believed that you were helping them only because you were being paid to (even though there is some truth to that)? 2. Under what conditions do you feel safe and trusting with other people? How can you help your clients feel safe and trusting with you? 3. Self-criticism and self-doubt limit our willingness to reach our potential and to connect with others. How can you help your clients transform self-criticism into self-encouragement? In what ways can you do that for yourself? I see homework assignments as an opportunity to help students expand their minds and explore their opinions.

And finally, each student completes a semester project. They have the choice of attending six counseling sessions and describing their experience as a client (without disclosing their personal information) or completing a communication project with the objective of identifying how certain behaviors negatively impact a conversation. Both projects have received positive feedback from students.