Contemplate “Why I Teach”
Learning IS What It’s All About

By Beth Paul, Ph.D.

One of my favorite quips is, “What if doing the hokey-pokey really IS what it’s all about!” In reflecting on our purpose in higher education, I have adapted this saying over the years to, “What if learning really IS what it’s all about?”

At Stetson, learning really is what it is all about, in large part because of the faculty role as teacher-scholar.

As teachers, our primary mission is to help students learn and develop. We work side by side with students, in and out of the classroom, to not only learn today, but to develop the skill, passion and perspective that will fuel a lifetime of learning.

As scholars, creative artists and professionals, we are lifelong learners. We are passionate about learning, questioning and innovating, so that we can contribute to the advancement of knowledge, fields of study, and society.

It is at the intersection of the roles of teacher and scholar — when students and faculty work together genuinely as learners — that the magic happens. This is why learning really IS what it is all about at Stetson.

Learning is more than passively listening to lectures, memorizing facts and passing a test. Learning is a relationship. Learning happens when curious minds connect with one another, and when all learners — students and faculty alike — support each other in mustering up the courage to ask hard questions and try out new ideas.

As Stetson teacher-scholars, we are working toward a higher aim than just helping our students learn the content knowledge they need to pass a test. Rather, we strive to learn together with students, developing the character and habits of mind that are needed for their lifetime of learning, fulfillment and impact. Our passion for learning is infectious. It is exciting for students to hear and see their mentors wrestle with a thorny question or work through complex challenges.

Even more powerful are the frequent opportunities Stetson students have to collaborate with faculty on scholarship, professional and creative activities, working together to make an original contribution to the profession or to society.

As mentors, Stetson teacher-scholars model this passionate engagement and courage for our students. Learning is what it is all about.

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