

## Teaching Online for JCPH: An Introduction for Prospective Instructors

In 2017 the Jefferson College of Population Health (JCPH) introduced a series of online introductions for educators interested in teaching for our online degree programs. The sessions were created to respond to the many inquiries generated by our growing reputation and to allow us to draw from a national talent pool to systematically recruit faculty likely to meet our unique needs.

Offered three times throughout the year, these sessions have now attracted a total of 55 registrants seeking to learn more about our mission, our students, and the expectations we have for our adjunct faculty. The introductory sessions begin with a 1-hour live webinar co-presented by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Director of Online Learning. The webinar is followed a week later by a set of online activities designed to expose participants to JCPH students, faculty, learning models, and curriculum.

During the webinar, we share profiles of our current students and faculty, review JCPH program offerings, and introduce our teaching and learning model. Most importantly, attendees are oriented to their prospective roles as 'practitioner faculty'—industry experts with strong academic backgrounds who guide our students through discussion-centered, application focused course work.

At the same time, we aim to set realistic expectations about the rewards of working with our students—most of whom are already in leadership roles in health care—and the corresponding demands on instructor time and attention. Because

our adjunct faculty are a vital part of the intellectual bench strength of the College, they are screened, vetted, trained, and evaluated like other faculty on campus. Not everyone who attends the opening webinar finds that they are ready for the commitments involved.

For attendees who elect to proceed to the following week's online activities, access is provided to our online course management system, Blackboard. The introductory 'mini-course' housed there is completed online over the span of a week to ten days. The experience allows for participants to get hands-on exposure to our course materials while also demonstrating their own interests and aptitudes in three critical areas: designing a lesson, delivering instruction, and assessing student learning. Special emphasis is placed on lesson structure, moderating online discussion, and understanding the role of capstone projects in our Masters programs.

Once participants have completed this set of activities, their *curriculum vitae* are provided to the Academic Program Directors for further review. When the Directors see potential alignment between participants and Program needs, they arrange for an online teaching demonstration conducted together with the Director, Online Learning. Candidates who continue beyond a successful teaching demonstration are then assigned to shadow an experienced instructor during course delivery. In preparation for shadowing the candidate is also contracted to complete formal training and to author a 'guest lecture' for the course being

shadowed. A series of conversations between the hosting instructor and the candidate are also built into the structure of the shadowing experience.

After successful completion of the shadowing step, candidates are scheduled to teach courses. They receive special support during their first delivery, and participate afterward in the on-going support and professional development provided to all College faculty.

Our national outreach, driven by active recruiting of candidates from the Academic Program Directors, results in a wide range of qualified applicants participating in the Introduction experience. A representative cohort might include, for example, an experienced instructor already teaching part-time at the Yale University School of Medicine, a recent participant in our [Population Health Academy](#), a registered nurse with an MBA working for a large US commercial payer, a public health physician trained in Teaching/Learning at Oxford, the Chief Medical Information Officer at a Jefferson-affiliated health system, and our own graduates from both PhD and Masters programs.

As of this writing, several prospective faculty attending the Introduction early this year are now shadowing courses. We expect to begin adding them to teaching schedules for 2018.

---

### Juan Leon, PhD

Director of Online Learning  
Jefferson College of Population Health  
[Juan.Leon@Jefferson.edu](mailto:Juan.Leon@Jefferson.edu)