



Cura Personalis,
Caribbean Style

Who I am...

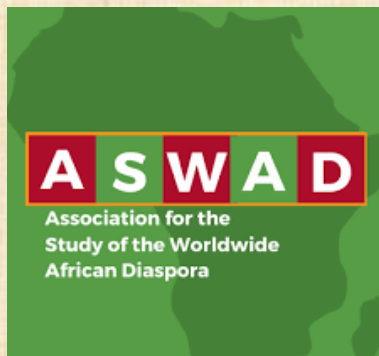
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Good morning! Also means...

I see you

I recognize your value as a person

I know you are present

I value your presence in this moment we are sharing

Research- “thriving”

Student belief that their professors know them has measurable impacts on 1) attendance, 2) academic success, 3) student retention, and...

50+% of Students want a closer/mentor relationship with professors, yet...

32% of public college students never meet a professor outside the classroom.

50+% of public college students feel isolated, alone, and unvalued.

Roadblocks to a “thriving” Prof-Student mentorship

Why won't students take the first step?

Anxiety- “my professor will think I'm stupid”

Power dynamics- age/position/education/imposter syndrome/race/life experience, etc., etc., etc.

Rugged Individualist Mindset- ashamed to ask for help

Cura Personalis

- **“Care for the Whole Person”** (Fordham, Georgetown, Loyola Chicago)
- **“Looking Out and Reaching Out”** (Marquette, St. Louis U)
- **“A Jesuit Educational Philosophy emphasizing the education of the whole person, not just the mind.”** (Boston College)

At Illinois State?

- **Wait a Minute! Illinois State is a secular, public university in the Midwest!**



**Live Well
with Eight
at State=**

Thriving

Cura Personalis, Secularized:

- Emotional
- Environmental
- Intellectual
- Financial
- Physical
- Social
- Spiritual
- Vocational



Caribbean Connections

Every single person-to-person encounter...

- Can move the spirit
- Can improve morale
- Can make a difference
- Can foster relationships
- Can impact performance
- Has intrinsic value
- Is a “way of knowing”



Problem Factors: Beliefs

Entrenched Student Beliefs:

- My professors do not know my name
- My professors do not care about me at all
- My professor hates me
- Students do not know what office hours are for; or
- Students are unwilling to visit professors during office hours; or
- Office hours conflict with student jobs, classes, etc.
- It's easier to cheat.

Problem Factors: Personal

- **“You don’t look like me”**
- **“You are too old to understand me”**

Teaching Philosophy Solutions?

- Take the first step for students so they don't have to.
- Office space geared for student comfort
- *Cura Personalis* mindset drawn from my own undergraduate experience
- “Island Time” relaxed approach to meeting students

How I approach this issue:

- **The Dreaded Office Visit.**
- **Dynamic teaching style.**
- **Carefully Constructed Atmosphere for Trust Building.**
- **Curated Approachability.**

Quirks in my Teaching Schedule

- **Syllabus Day**
- **Assignment 1/Testifying Day**
- **Writing Workshop**
- **Testing Workshop**
- **Scaffolded Content**
- **“Ken Burns” Time/Griot Time**
- **Artifact Days**
- **Cap and Gown Day**
- **“Big Reveal” Textbook Assignment**

My approach, Part 1: pre-class

- **Meet all students on an individual basis.**
- **Address a new student by name in each class every day.**
- **Praise students' work by name**
- **Email high achievers with specific recognition of their work, allowing class time to recognize quiet students.**

My approach, Part 2

- **Acknowledge “at-risk” students within the first two weeks of class.**
- **Recognize and engage students I meet outside the classroom and check up on their academics and personal life**
- **Practice active listening when I meet with students**
- **Be Unafraid to say “I don’t know”**
- **Never, ever lose my cool in front of a student**

My approach, Part 3: post-class

- **Reach out to all students MIA, then use Redbird Cares**
- **Weekly “social” office hours at Bone Starbucks. If an enrolled student catches me in the line, I buy for them.**
- **Respond to every email**
- **Email each student after I receive absence notifications from the Dean of Students office**

Results: Quantifiable

- **Students Enrolled in my courses, August 2023 to December 2023: 510**
- **Average attendance at week 14: 90+%**
- **Students who have come back to meet with me from 2022-2023 academic year: 88**
- **Enrolled student office visits to date: 493**
- **Number of students who demonstrated measurable, significant academic improvement from office visit to end of course: 61**
- **Students who have failed or dropped my classes despite all efforts: 27**

Findings- thriving

- **Students who know I know them/value their presence are usually cured of “skip fever.”**
- **Students whose work is praised specifically willingly work harder.**
- **Students who trust me come to see me for real-world problems unrelated to coursework (personal, economic, mental health, etc.)**
- **Students who fall into “at risk” categories less afraid to ask for help.**

Questions?



Citations

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