

Creating a Student-Centered Campus

Professor David Laude presents an argument that the collaborative partnership between administrators, faculty and students to improve student success on a college campus should have as its starting point the expectation that every student will succeed in the classroom. Nowhere is this effort more important than in the teaching of STEM majors who historically have struggled to thrive at the same rates achieved in other fields of study. Toward this goal, an initiative to employ pedagogical advances in technology and community building in large UT Austin gateway classes has resulted in a reduction in non-passing rates in chemistry, biology and statistics courses from the 20 to 30% range to below 10%. In turn, persistence and four year-graduation rates for engineering and science majors are at an all time high in large part because of these successes in the classroom.

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Professor Laude has been a member of the faculty in the College of Natural Sciences at The University of Texas at Austin since 1987. During the first ten years of his tenure at UT Austin, he ran a large research program in mass spectrometry. From 1996-2012, he held various administrative positions in the Dean's Office of the College of Natural Sciences and served as interim dean. Professor Laude has an established reputation for teaching excellence and curriculum innovation at The University of Texas at Austin and has received many awards for his teaching, including membership in the Academy of Distinguished Teachers. For the past 18 years, Professor Laude has taught general chemistry in what has become one of the most popular courses on campus, and has the largest enrollment of any course taught in the College of Natural Sciences.

Professor Laude has been a leader in program reform at the undergraduate level at UT Austin for the past 27 years. In 2012, he joined the Provost's Office to champion four-year graduation rates. His efforts have contributed to what are now the highest persistence and graduation rates in the university's history.