

4/15/2017

TO: Sarah Easter
FROM: Mark Phillips

RE: Summary of year-end meeting

I enjoyed meeting with you to review your first year as a faculty member at ACU. As we discussed, the first year often feels like a bit of a whirlwind, and you seem to have weathered the storm mostly unharmed ;)

You had a very productive year in research, and at the risk of breezing past this key area of work, I will simply express confidence that you will be one of our most productive researchers. I look forward to seeing where your current projects land, and what future directions you pursue.

Related to your efforts to be part of students' lives, I believe you have identified the reality of this part of the job, which is that a classroom makes a poor setting for deep engagement. Your efforts to have students in your home and your involvement with Enactus are both great ways to facilitate this type of interaction.

In terms of collegiality, your work co-leading a COBA Women's Bible Study is a great application of your gifts, and I am glad you pursuing that.

As you and I have discussed several times, students are both a joy and a challenge, and you are experiencing what I have found, which is that graduating seniors are both equipped for more in-depth learning, and simultaneously challenging to guide (with a few being simply unpleasant to deal with). You have handled the final group with grace and poise, and I hope you will continue to consult me (if that is helpful) as you face similar circumstances in the future. Welcome to faculty life ;)

I'm glad you will be launching your Business and Sustainability class, as this is both an area of interest to you and a current gap in our curriculum. I look forward to hearing how it goes.

In closing I would encourage you to continue seeking that elusive 'balance' that so many of us seek, but so few of us find. As you create your life as a full-time academic you will have more opportunities than you can engage, and I hope you will work toward a personal and professional life that lets you do the things you believe have the most value. Alas, you can expect this balance to be an elusive goal, though still well worth pursuing.

We are so glad to have you here after several years of waiting, and I look forward to many years of productive work together.

Mark