

Professor Vivian Faustino-Pulliam Brings Home an Educator of the Year Award

Published in The Guardsman

November 6, 2020

http://theguardian.com/06_news_canvas-educator-of-the-year_peckens/

By Sadie Peckens

City College's own Professor and Program Lead of the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (CEI), Vivian Faustino-Pulliam, was awarded one of this year's six Canvas Educator of the Year Awards.

Each year, Canvas awards six educators from across the country, three in higher education and three in K-12, with this honor. According to the INSTRUCTURE blog, this year's criteria focused on educators who excel at remote teaching, preparing students for the workforce, and supporting student success in our ever-changing world. In interviews with The Guardsman, Faustino-Pulliam's students and a colleague share what makes her an award-winning educator.

A Teacher at Heart

Across interviews, students described Faustino-Pulliam as patient, positive, open to all questions, and engaging. Students noted her ability to make lessons come alive with stories from her real-world professional experience in banking and entrepreneurship.

When City College student Shelby Song saw a posting for educator of the year nominations, she immediately thought of Faustino-Pulliam and completed the lengthy nomination process.

Song describes Faustino-Pulliam as a teacher who includes all students in her diverse classes. "She's really a role model for City college students, especially minority students, especially immigrant minority students. She coaches us a lot. We thought if she could do it we could do it. She's an immigrant herself, so she is really an inspiration," Song said.

Faustino-Pulliam said she always loved teaching. Even as a child, when she played with her siblings, she would pretend to be their teacher. As an adult, she began her career as a banker in finance. Over the years, as she continued to work in banking and as an entrepreneur, she still felt the calling to teach, and responded by beginning as a part-time teacher 20 years ago. Today, she teaches at both City College and the University of San Francisco (USF).

Business Department Instructor Susan Berston, a colleague of Faustino-Pulliam's, said the award is "really well deserved. She's very passionate and she really has her heart in everything that she does. She's also very multi-faceted and she is engaged in a lot of different projects," Berston said.

Online Teaching

Berston described Faustino-Pulliam as an “early adopter” of teaching virtually. Faustino-Pulliam began on-line teaching as a volunteer with Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL), in 2010. JWL’s mission is to deliver higher education for people at the margins. With online tools, Faustino-Pulliam is able to teach people living in refugee camps in Kenya, Malawi, Afghanistan, Sudan, and Syria.

City College student Darzelle Elivia B. Oliveros, who is currently enrolled in Faustino-Pulliam’s entrepreneurship course, described how Faustino-Pulliam connects with students even on-line, by checking in with students during Zoom classes and on Canvas. “She goes an extra step. She’s actively asking for feedback and that’s what I truly appreciate, and I think in that regard, she makes it very inclusive,” Oliveros said.

Faustino-Pulliam believes on-line education is the way of the future. “I’m doing research now, a paper on the platform model of education, because we’re breaking away from traditional learning models, and instead of pipelines it’s going to be really a platform model,” Faustino-Pulliam said. She envisions a model that creates a connection between classes and career opportunities.

Entrepreneurship

Faustino-Pulliam’s teaching philosophy, Berston said, involves getting students to think outside of the box, to embrace change, to step out of their comfort zone, and to have confidence. Faustino-Pulliam isn’t just teaching from a textbook, Berston went on to explain, she is teaching students to think like an entrepreneur.

Faustino-Pulliam is originally from the Philippines and traveled extensively during her banking career. As a teacher at USF and at City College Faustino-Pulliam sees schools with different resources and regulations around the use of funds. Through these experiences in her life, career, and teaching, Faustino-Pulliam identified a gap in opportunity for people based on economic circumstances and networks. To address this gap, she began the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, (CEI) at City College.

Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation

The center creates a network across academic departments and with community partners. Workshops, events, and certificate programs provide students with training in entrepreneurship across a variety of disciplines. The goal is to create support for entrepreneurship at City College.

Donald Bennett, a current student in Faustino-Pulliam’s entrepreneurship course, said of CEI “I’m switching my major. It’s an awesome, awesome program. I can’t believe it’s available at City College. All these companies come to speak to us for free, on an almost weekly basis.”

CEI reaches across academic disciplines. “Entrepreneurship is beyond small business, it’s beyond just for-profit companies,” Faustino-Pulliam said. Later, she added “Entrepreneurship is not only for economic impact. A lot of social entrepreneurs out there are driven by a mission, and that is social change.”

Faustino-Pulliam is continuing to forge ahead. She is currently completing a doctoral program in adult learning. "I really just want to understand how can I make a difference, especially for older adults," Faustino-Pulliam said.

An Oct. 13 Press Release quotes Interim Chancellor Dr. Rajen Vurdien stating, "She is a shining example of the exceptionally talented and dedicated faculty CCSF employs across all disciplines, and we are extremely proud of this national recognition of Vivian's work at the College."

"She's definitely changed lives. She's so humble and she deserves this. And we should celebrate her," Berston said.