

History of the Wakonse South Conference on College Teaching

Wakonse is a word from the Lakota Indian language meaning "to teach, to inspire". The Wakonse Foundation brings together people who find inspiring and influencing others is what they do for a living. We create a climate where:

- it is important and appropriate to display and discuss teaching talents.
- colleagues learn about themselves as teachers.
- colleagues see and consider the tasks and issues of creative teaching in an enjoyable manner.
- providing feedback is outside of any institutional mandate to improve or to evaluate teaching.

Participants become Wakonse Fellows. That means, in the simplest of terms, to support, to promote and share the excitement and satisfaction of teaching--to inspire others and themselves.

The first Wakonse Conference on College Teaching took place at Camp Miniwanca on the shores of Lake Michigan in 1989. As more and more faculty have been inspired and energized by the conferences, regional Wakonse conferences have evolved.

In April 1998, the first Wakonse South brought together faculty from the University of Texas, Baylor University, Texas Tech University, and Texas A&M University for a weekend focused on teaching and learning. Recent conferences have included faculty from Oklahoma State University, University of Oklahoma, University of Houston, Texas Christian University, and Texas Woman's University.

Outcomes of Wakonse South Conference on College Teaching

- Take participants away from campus, from their phones, from offices, and from professional obligations.
- Explore teaching through highly-interactive, large and small group presentations, discussion groups, and hands-on experiential sessions.
- Provide informal opportunities for support and networking
- Create supportive campus climate for those concerned with teaching.
- Promote a collaborative exchange of talent, ideas, and resources within and among participating institutions.
- Renew interest, support, and understanding for what it means to be a college or university teacher.
- Better teaching!