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Suzie Goodell PhD, RDN to Receive the 2021 SNEB Scholarship of Teaching & Learning Nutrition in Higher Education Award

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (August 1, 2021) – The Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior (SNEB) will honor Suzie Goodell PhD, RDN with the 2021 Scholarship of Teaching & Learning Nutrition in Higher Education Award at the 2021 SNEB Annual Conference, held virtually August 8-10. The award is evaluated and presented by the SNEB Higher Education Division.

Suzie Goodell is an Associate Professor and Director of the Interdepartmental Graduate Program in Nutrition at North Carolina State University. Her research focuses on childhood obesity prevention and intervention and the relationships between preschool-aged children and the adults in their lives.

Currently, Dr. Goodell teaches the Senior Capstone in Nutrition for all graduating undergraduates in the major and the Nutrition Seminar for all graduate students in the major. Both courses have integrated professional development into the learning objectives. While not an official class objective, Dr. Goodell emphasizes learning time management and self-care as part of professional development. She tells students, “Practice what you want to do in future now. If you say, ‘I’ll learn how to balance my work and personal life when I graduate (or when I get a job),’ you’ll always be pushing it off. There is no time like the present to learn to balance your priorities and set up professional boundaries.” While she teaches students the technical aspects of our discipline through hands-on applications, Dr. Goodell’s goal is to show students the value of professional development and self-care to make them more prepared for careers in nutrition.

Nominator Natalie Cook, PhD, RDN, writes, “Passionate about developing the next generation of nutrition educators and researchers, Suzie fosters within her students critical thinking skills and rigor in research methodology. The fact that she allows graduate students to co-teach and develop course curricula with her is a testament to mentorship.”

Dr. Goodell believes that teaching is a bidirectional exchange of information, where the teacher adapts their teaching style based on the knowledge, skills, and motivation of their students. In this time of COVID, Dr. Goodell has seen a rise in stress and anxiety among her students. This stress is not always academic related but can impair students’ academic performance. As a result, Dr. Goodell has added weekly Mental Health Check-Ins, giving students an opportunity to privately share how they are feeling. Because of this effort, dozens of students have thanked her for her openness and have shared their personal impediments to being successful in class. She has spent time with each of those students, discussing their stressors and identifying solutions, such as counseling, access to a food pantry and campus financial resources.

Dr. Goodell has said that she wants her legacy in her career to be two-fold: she cared more about others than herself and she improved the field of qualitative research in nutrition by teaching others what she knew. She has co-authored several articles and presented numerous abstracts related to the scholarship of teaching and learning in nutrition. Her mostly qualitative SoTL (Scholarship of Teaching and Learning) work examines the perceived impact of different teaching methods (e.g., cooperative learning, service-learning) on students' growth in academic achievement, self-efficacy, and professional skills. Dr. Goodell has co-authored 4 chapters in textbooks aimed at teaching students and professionals how to improve their understanding of qualitative research.

She shares this advice, "While I could write forever with advice, I will share 3 points today.

Practice work-personal life balance NOW. Don't put off working on these skills for another time when you are "less busy". You will always be busy.

It's OK to change your plans. Often, we tell ourselves and others our goals and plans, believing that our path in life is straightforward. However, very few people have a straight path. Changing your plans doesn't mean you have failed or that you were wrong, it just means you've learned something new about yourself and about life. Embrace that change, seeing it as a growth opportunity. I wouldn't be in nutrition if I hadn't been willing to change.

Give yourself and others grace. We are not perfect people; we will make mistakes. Instead of focusing on the mistakes, reflect on how we can grow through the tough times. Find others who are willing to support you and happily give you grace. They will be your lifelong colleagues and friends."

Before serving on the SNEB Board of Directors, Dr. Goodell served the Higher Education Division as secretary and chair. During her time as chair of the Higher Ed Division, Dr. Goodell championed the creation of SoTL abstract category for the annual conference and the creation of the SoTL award which she is now receiving. Dr. Goodell served two years as co-chair of the Conference Abstract Reviews, working with Dr. Virginia Stage to make the abstract review process more transparent and to create learning modules for how to evaluate the different categories of abstracts to improve the quality and consistency of abstracts presented at the annual conference.

When asked about her involvement in the Society has impacted her teaching career Dr. Goodell shares, "SNEB has played a pivotal role in my teaching career. Being an active member in SNEB has allowed me to find educators with common interests and encouraged my creativity in the classroom. Serving as chair of the Higher Education division allowed me to evaluate my leadership goals within the society and at my own institution. SNEB is my home society and I am grateful for it."

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