

TA members and friends,

I know some of you have seen this message below, but I thought it worth sharing.

The author is Maryellen Weimer, the editor of the Teaching Professor. Although she is trying to drum up attendants for the TP annual meeting this summer, the message is worth a read and some thought.

My hope remains that the CVM Teaching Academy is contributing to your “instructional health”. If not and there is something we can do different or better, please let us know.

I also encourage you to look for other opportunities to energize, expand your knowledge and skills, and get inspired – whether it be other events on campus or travel to conferences. For those of you who teach in the DVM curriculum, [the VEC conference this summer](#) is one opportunity you might consider.

Have a great weekend!

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Stephen A. Hines, Director, CVM Teaching Academy

“Everyone leads: It takes each of us to make a difference for all of us.”

Subject: A message from Maryellen Weimer on taking care of your instruction health

Dear fellow educator,

I continue to fret about the haphazard way we take care of our instructional health. To begin (and this is not our fault), we work hard and are way too busy. Whether it’s teaching five courses a semester or teaching less but having a research agenda that must be moving forward and continuously productive, we have precious little time for another thing other than the strenuous motions required to keep our heads above water.

Against the backdrop of these strenuous job requirements (to say nothing of obligations at home), we must preserve and protect our vitality as teachers. I chose the word backdrop purposefully. Many times our busyness becomes an excuse for not participating in a faculty development workshop, not joining a pedagogical reading group, and not even being able to spend five minutes with a colleague who wants to talk without standing on one foot and then the other. We find time for what is most important, but often our **instructional vitality** does not make the cut.

For too long we have assumed that by force of will we can make it through semester after semester. Like someone out of shape climbing too fast, we gasp for air between semesters, over spring break or on that two week family vacation, but it’s never enough. A few weeks into the next semester and the tiredness descends.

Persistent tiredness evolves into something more sinister. I would venture that we all know faculty who trudge to class without enthusiasm, who are happiest when students don’t show up for office hours,

and who end up disconnected from content they once loved and students who now more than ever need teachers committed to learning. The question about them, which is really about us, is how long were they just tired before burnout set in?

And there's a follow-up question. Have you done anything for your teaching self this year? At the end of May, hundreds of college faculty will descend on Boston for the 11th annual Teaching Professor Conference. I hope you'll be among them. I know, that's self-serving. Actually, it's not really about attending this particular event, but about gently chiding you to take care of your teaching self.

I do have to be honest, though, and tell you that The Teaching Professor Conferences are always energizing and inspiring events. To be together with a large group of faculty — all committed to teaching, all wanting new and better ideas to promote learning, and all willing to share — is so refreshing. Even for somebody like me, who has been around the block more than a few times and is no longer easily impressed, I leave the conferences absolutely convinced that events like these are exactly what teachers need to refill empty tanks and rekindle dying embers.

I invite you to learn more about The Teaching Professor Conference here: <http://bit.ly/1jjeun7>

I hope to see you in Boston, May 30 to June 1! Until then, please do take care of yourself.

Maryellen Weimer, PhD
Editor, The Teaching Professor newsletter
Professor Emerita, Penn State Berks