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New faculty member a hit with ASU business students

If there is an “it” factor when it comes to professors making an immediate impact on their students, Teneal Clayton has it.

The newest faculty member of the College of Business at Albany State University wasted no time in connecting with her students. In only her first semester of teaching last fall, Clayton was able to reach her students on a level that some longer-tenured professors have yet to accomplish.

“I approached the students as a businessperson, and they were the customers of my service,” Clayton explained. “I regularly got feedback from them in terms of how they liked the course and what is and is not working. I would make changes based on their feedback because I really valued what the students were feeling and experiencing in my class.”

A native of Idaho and former graduate teacher’s assistant, Clayton teaches undergraduate organizational behavior and the legal environment of business (an online course) at Albany State. She received her undergraduate education at Utah State University majoring in liberal arts and sciences with a minor in human resources. She then moved to the graduate level at Brigham Young University earning a master’s degree in organizational behavior.

Her previous work experience includes four years with Proctor and Gamble in Cincinnati. She also has her own consulting firm.

She said one of the keys to her success in the classroom is engaging the students in open discussions.

“Organizational behavior lends itself to very open and frank discussions,” Clayton said. “We talk about diversity, personality, culture, and other things that not only impact the workplace but personal lives as well. I don’t let them sit in class; I force them to participate and have discussions because I am not going to lecture the entire time.”

Clayton’s students were not shy about expressing their appreciation to her for a one-of-a-kind semester. They presented her with a dozen roses, a card and a group photo of the class. They told her how much they enjoyed and learned from her, and how she taught them in a way that no one has taught them before.

“That was amazing,” Clayton said. “I knew I had had a good experience teaching that semester but I had no idea how much it had impacted the students. It was a perfect way to end a perfect semester for me.”

Dr. Michael Rogers, interim dean of the College of Business, discussed how much Clayton has to offer her students.

“She brings a lot of executive and managerial experience from Proctor and Gamble,” Rogers said. “She brought in guests who were managers at Proctor and Gamble to talk to the students.”

Rogers was most impressed with how Clayton used local businesses as a teaching tool by having the students do organizational assessments of the companies they work for and then give recommendations for improvement.

“I think the students really like that kind of active engagement in which they are doing something meaningful in the community,” Rogers commented. “She has an engaging rapport with the students so they all like and respect her. She values diversity and makes sure students understand the importance of



diversity.”

Clayton’s extraordinary ability to connect with her students has been noticed by others as well.

“Her students must love her because of how warm-hearted she is,” said Latoya Jackson, secretary in the College of Business. “She is an all-around great person and a really good professor.”

Clayton, currently an adjunct professor, said she has plans to earn a doctorate and teach full-time at the university level.