

PIONEER PROFILES



IMAGE: Associate Dean Garth Sleight

Pioneer Profiles: Meet Garth Sleight

MILES CITY, MONTANA: After moving around the country as an Air Force kid, including to bases in Wiesbaden, Germany, Grand Forks, North Dakota, and Champaign, Illinois, Garth Sleight has been glad to leave the packing boxes to gather dust and settle down for the last 37 years in Miles City.

Now the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at Miles Community College, Sleight both teaches classes and is involved with college leadership, including coordinating accreditation, serving on Montana University System (MUS) committees, and helping liaison with area high schools to connect students with opportunities at MCC.

Sleight says, "I have the job of my dreams. I get to teach amazing students as a faculty member." He adds, "I like the variety. I appreciate the opportunities for professional growth and development. I enjoy the relationships I have been able to develop with students and colleagues."

Sleight has seen his classes change students' lives -- his Public Speaking course, for instance.

"I love to teach Public Speaking because I hear all sorts of speeches, but more importantly, I have been able to watch countless people deal with their extreme speech anxiety head-on and succeed."

Sleight remembers one student, in particular, who had difficulty with the course.

"She had been in an extremely abusive marriage. As a result, she had a zero self-esteem and was so afraid of giving speeches that she would throw up before coming to class." Fortunately, with her classmates' support and encouragement, the student eventually succeeded. "She came to realize that she was a worthwhile human being," Sleight says. "I witnessed a remarkable transformation." He considers this student's success a career highlight.

Sleight appreciates the variety of tasks and responsibilities his position involves, including traveling. The moving boxes may be dusty, but Sleight enjoys packing his suitcase for some of the out-of-the-way destinations he visits on the job.

"As part of my duties as a peer accreditation evaluator, I had a dream-come-true opportunity to spend several days at Ilisagvik College in Utqiagvik (formerly Barrow) Alaska. I stood in the Arctic Ocean, and I was able to meet some of the remarkable people of the Inupiat nation," Sleight says.

At home in the summertime, Sleight enjoys yard work and watching old movies and vintage TV shows with his wife.

But when the school year starts, he's glad to be back. In fact, when asked what he would be doing if he were not working in his current position, he replies, "I would be missing my students and colleagues terribly. I'm contemplating that very question, as a matter of fact. Stay tuned for the answer."

Sleight's best advice for anyone working in education?

"If you love your students first, they will most likely love you. In other words, lose the ego and respect the students."

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