

Faculty in Residence

Dr. Kevin Mackay

Dr. Kevin Mackay comes to the Faculty in Residence (FIR) program within Housing and Residential Life with a history of helping students both inside and outside the classroom. His programs within the residence halls are well known and have grown drastically over the past two years. The following is an interview with Dr. Mackay to look at how he got into the FIR program, the programs he's most proud of, and any advice he has for parents with students at USF.

PFO: How did you get started in the FIR program?

Dr.M: I have been involved with student life outside of normal classroom hours in all the academic jobs I have had. In my first job at Queen's University in Ireland I was a Warden in residence halls (involved in the day to day running of Halls after normal office hours.) This allowed me to be much more in tune with the students and understand their situation at college much better. I enjoyed the experience and I think it made me a better teacher as well. My next job was at Grove City College in PA which is a small liberal arts college where faculty were heavily involved in student life and got to know students very well. The whole college was like one big family. The move to USF was quite a shock as the school is very large and that made it difficult to connect with students. Once I found out about the Faculty in Residence program I jumped at the idea of getting involved and I have not regretted it.

PFO: What's the best program you've ever put on and why?

Dr.M: It's exciting to see students get involved in new things. As an educator nothing pleases me more than to see students share in the passion for learning. There have been a few great events in the two years that I have been an FIR:

a: Evening star parties - these can last for several hours and have at times involved over 100 students where we set up telescopes and view the night sky.

b: Cultural events where students try something new (this usually involves a new kind of food experience). I am personally very proud of the fact that students have tried food where no Ketchup was present!

PFO: What advice can you give to parents who have students on campus?

Dr. M: The first thing I would say to parents is not to worry, especially if this is your first child leaving for college. As a parent it is hard to see your children as anything other than a child. But there is nothing more exciting than watching that child becoming an independent adult and leave the nest and break out on their own. This will be one of their best experiences in life and they will learn things and meet new friends that they will keep for the rest of their days.

Like all of the FIR's, Dr. Mackay is dedicated to the educational experience both inside and out of the classroom. The programs he offers to students are fantastic examples on how learning can take place anywhere and in any setting.



Dr. Mackay and his students enjoy a visit to NASA.