

Dr. Shawn Bingham's Sociology in the Halls

Faculty in Residence brings unique culture to the students

Dr. Shawn Bingham, a professor within the Sociology department at USF, has always had a passion for helping students grow both inside and outside the classroom. In a recent interview, seasoned Faculty in Residence (FIR) Dr. Bingham explained his belief in the holistic development of students. "Since USF is so big, I really wanted to find a way to be closer to the students and the Faculty in Residence program allows me to do that." Given that FIRs live on campus and provide specialty programs for students, I was interested in hearing how Dr. Bingham felt about living back on campus. He laughed at my question, but nodded his head saying, "I love living on campus because there's so much going on and there's energy in the halls that you can't get in a neighborhood. You get to talk to the cleaning staff, the students; and they just give you energy."

This energy, in turn, is given right back to the students in the form of socially conscious programming. Dr. Bingham hosts international movie nights every month that are sometimes selected by students or other faculty members. These movies always have a unique social issue at heart to open students' eyes up to events around the world. Further, his Road Scholars program emphasizes trips with students to get off campus and engage with the community. Some Road Scholars trips have included the Dali Museum and the Tampa Theatre. Finally, Dr. Bingham has also taken students on overnight trips to St. Augustine, FL and Savannah, GA to celebrate the cultural and historical aspects in those areas. Having a culturally focused event is a passion for Dr. Bingham. In fact, he explained to me that these events are usually something he would do on his own with his wife and two kids. Still, his favorite part of the FIR program is his ability to bring culture and sociology, his own passions, into the lives of students to help them grow and develop.

Finally, I asked Dr. Bingham what advice he could provide to parents with students in college and he had the following two things to offer, "First, it's okay to guide your kid, but even if they're spending your money, still try to give them some space. Hovering can stress your kid out. And I'm saying this as a parent as well as someone who has studied child development. Second, I know that as a parent we want our kids home on the weekend, still let them build a community by staying on the weekends and spending more time on campus."

Dr. Bingham looks forward to how his programming will continue to help students develop and grow through unique cultural and community experiences. They are experiences that students not only appreciate but look forward to every month and from year to year.