

T-Talks Reinvent Teacher-Student Relationship

Gabby von Euw
February 1, 2017



In her freshman year of the 2016 spring semester, Gabby von Euw was working at the Student Life department of Chabot Community College where her responsibilities included coming up with new ways to engage students on campus. Gabby always enjoyed watching **inspirational talks on YouTube** and thought it would be a great idea to bring to life such talks on campus by having professors share about their journey and the lessons learned on their career path.

“I enjoy listening to inspirational talks and life stories because it motivates me to pursue my own career path and continue moving forward. So, I thought it would be great to bring something similar to campus because I knew there would be others that would be inspired and benefit from this event!”

We often associate our professors with term assignments and papers or a specific expertise or niche perspectives, but rarely do we realize our **professors are people**, too. Our professors stood in our shoes at some point and they went through a process that led them to be teaching at our university today.

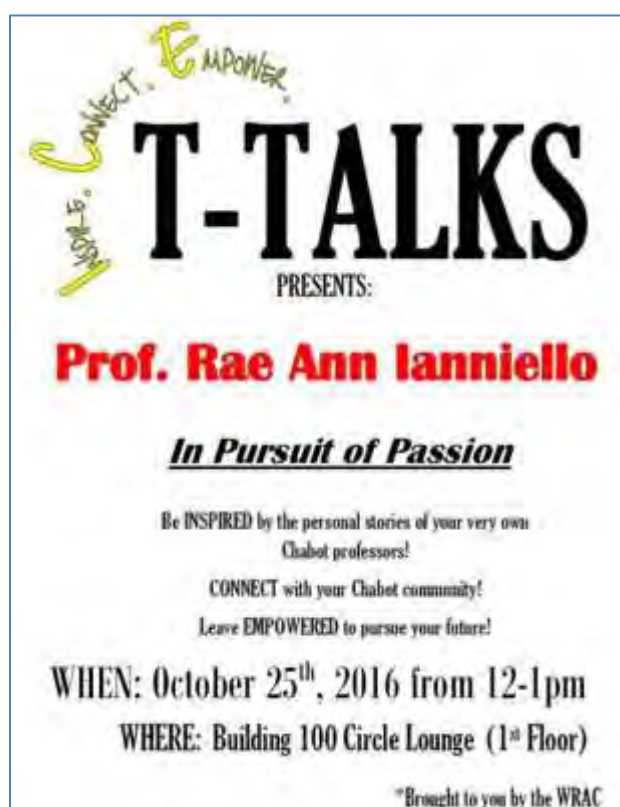


Naomi and Gabby, creators of the T-Talks

Naomi, also a student at Chabot at the time, realized how disconnected students were to the professors and faculty from her interaction with students at the campus tutoring center. There was a misunderstanding that the relationship between students and professors was solely oriented around grades.

Naomi could see that professors really had much more wisdom to share outside of the classroom and academics and could be a **strong support system** for students. From her own experience, Naomi connected with one professor who shared about her tendency toward perfectionism and could then give tips to Naomi on how to deal with this inclination.

These life lessons were something that **any student could relate to**, no matter their major.



ICE: CONNECT, EMPOWER

T-TALKS

PRESENTS:

Prof. Rae Ann Ianniello

In Pursuit of Passion

Be **INSPIRED** by the personal stories of your very own Chabot professors!

CONNECT with your Chabot community!

Leave **EMPOWERED** to pursue your future!

WHEN: October 25th, 2016 from 12-1pm

WHERE: Building 100 Circle Lounge (1st Floor)

Brought to you by the WRAC

Gabby and Naomi came to find out they had a similar idea so they put it into action. The two pooled their resources from the tutoring center and the Student Life department and together, they created *T-talks*. Before Naomi transferred out, she connected Gabby with two other like-minded students who are now helping Gabby host the *T-talks* in its third semester.

So, what is a *T-Talk*? *T-Talks* stand for “Teacher Talks” which are focused on three main points: **Inspire, Connect, Empower** (ICE). The hope is that through T-talks, professors, who are teachers, can share their personal testimonies of their academic career, life, and how they came to where they are at now. Teachers can share tips and advice to help inspire and empower students to continue persevering and doing great things.

This event is meant to encourage students to **enjoy their academic and career-searching journey**, rather than over-stressing and feeling hopeless. And this is also a way for students to connect and better understand their professors, which can help

their overall college experience.

“In the beginning, it was difficult to get these T-talks going. We worried about whether people would come. But relatively quickly, it became easier and easier to make happen. Now we always have on average 30 students attending and their responses have been very positive.”

Gabby and her team prepare flyers for each monthly *T-Talk* and post them across campus to attract students and other professors to attend. They also utilize their Facebook page for outreach and even post *T-Talks* to YouTube.



Nate Moore, a campus security guard presents his story, titles “Getting Off Your Knees.”

At the start of each event, one of the organizers explains the concept of these *T-talks* for newcomers, then introduces the professor-speaker. The professor-speaker shares his or her story for 20-40 minutes.

Examples of talk titles have been “Getting Off Your Knees,” “In Pursuit of Passion,” and “How to Turn Failures Into Successes.” All of these talks focus on personal testimony and lessons learned to stimulate a more internal interaction between professors and students.

Following the talk, students can ask questions in an open forum style. Gabby and her team make sure to end the event with some feedback and announcements about the next *T-talk*. There is always a lot of engagement in the open forum as students become more interested in their professor’s life experience.



Professor Ianniallo shares her story of being in college for 11 years and becoming a professor.

“What I learned is to take initiative and be proactive. If I have an idea then I need to take the responsibility and initiative in making it happen. My perspective has changed. Doing these T-Talks and organizing other activities for my local church community brings me lots of joy and happiness because I can see it brings a smile to the people who participate. A smile makes it all worth the effort!”

These events are a substantiation of an inspiration. A key factor in Gabby’s success in establishing these *T-talks* on her campus is the fact that she had a **team around her** for support – others who shared in her vision. This is the

third semester in which these *T-talks* will be in session and undoubtedly, these will be a success even after Gabby moves on.

Gabby is studying Kinesiology and finishing up her time at Chabot community college this semester. With plans on the horizon to transfer to a four-year state university by next fall, we hope she is inspired to continue these *T-talks* so long as she is a student.

In addition to planning monthly *T-Talks*, attending to her studies, and playing soccer during fall semesters, Gabby is involved in her local church community with organizing activities for the youth and also helping out at Young Adult Ministry.

Before college, Gabby was part of the GPA program for two years from 2013-2015. She had the opportunity to work with CARP Las Vegas for a couple months during the program and was inspired by the community and events they had established there. These *T-Talks* are an expression of that inspiration as she sought to **create more engagement** in her community.

These *T-Talks* are similar to CARP Talks as they are short, powerful talks meant to inspire. This adaptation of the talks by inviting professors to connect to students on a deeper level is a wonderful and innovative approach to creating community on campus.

“Thank you for letting me share. Sometimes you forget how far you’ve come.”



Professor Rae Ann Ianniello preparing to start her presentation



Chabot students taking notes and listening to Professor Ianniello's T-Talks presentation

T-TALKS : INSPIRING STUDENT TO CHASE THEIR DREAMS

By: Arianna Arciaga
Entertainment Editor

"You don't die, if you fall in the water, you die only if you don't swim - Unknown", one of the quotes that Communications Professor Rae Ann Ianniello lives by as she discusses with the Chabot College students, on October 25 in building 100, what she has been through to get where she is today.

Ianniello, opens the discussion by talking about her past life, living on a bus that was traveling from Berkeley to New York City, and how that experience has helped her along the way. She continues to describe her younger self as someone who didn't fit in and

is not "normal" and because of who she was growing up, it helped her pursue her passion. With the knowledge that she has gained, she now shares 3 tips with the students of Chabot College that will help them pursue their dreams.

The first "tip" that she discussed was entitled, "Life is a Marathon, not a Sprint". She also told students that things take time and that you don't need to rush things. Under this topic, she asked the audience four questions, "What/Who shaped you, what significant experience have you had, what has always been your strength, and lastly is this your passion or your destiny?" Having them to think about their past and what things or

experiences that they went through that are really enjoyable, and if those experiences or things are really something that will help them pursue things that they want to pursue. Saying that "people can be have a passion for music, but do they really love music, to get to the place where they want to be"

"Don't quit. As cliché as it is sounds, don't quit because you could be so close to the finish line", is the next tip that Ianniello gives. She tells the audience to not quit, no matter what. Saying that, "yes we do fall in the water at times but you just have to keep swimming". Ianniello, exaggerates immensely on this topic telling her story of how many

times she changed her major, and how being a mother never stopped her from getting her degree.

Professor Ianniello's last piece of advice for the students were, "there is no such thing as a bad experience". With this last piece of advice, she discusses different experiences that she has from being diagnosed with a severe sickness to a car accident that she was in, and how these events has given her so much knowledge of life and passion. She then continues to say that, "everything happen for a reason".

Chabot College business major, Anthony Hall says that, "I really enjoyed the things she said because it is really

important for students or people in general to remember that, things do take time and that there really isn't a point to rush things, especially for people in college because you see all your friends graduating before you and you feel left out, but that doesn't matter because it's really kind of up to you where you want to end up".

Overall, the presentation of Rae Ann Ianniello impacted students to help them pursue the passions that they want to do, and advise them that things do happen for a reason and not all experiences are "bad" experiences.

T-Talks in the Chabot Spectator campus newspaper.

Consider getting your professors involved and start organizing *T-Talks* on your campus. Reach out to Gabby or CARP HQ for more information about *T-Talks*.