



Dr. Peggy Knittel

Faculty Focus

The Faculty Senate would like to feature Dr. Peggy Knittel. We sat down with her to kick off our Faculty Focus series. It was very nice of her to answer our questions, but as part of a day's work, Dr. Knittel is always generous with her time. Students in her classes can learn so much about life, as it has always been one of her curiosities. Becoming a teacher is a result of that curiosity. She credits the great teachers she had along the way as the biggest influences on her career path.

Dr. Knittel established her medical practice in Morrill, Nebraska, she taught her first adjunct classes at Eastern Wyoming College, with the encouragement of Doc Simon, founder of the Veterinary Technology Program at EWC. After about 10 years of practicing medicine, Dr. Knittel and her husband, John Steen, made the move to Torrington so that she could begin work full-time at EWC, a decision they thought would be best for their life with the arrival of their daughter, Beth. Dr. Knittel is most proud of her medical degree, her 27 years of teaching at EWC, and her daughter, a smart, caring and successful woman, currently teaching mathematics at a community college in Minnesota.

"The limitless capacity of the human brain to learn things," and the awe-inspiring wonder of the human body led her into the medical field and she has been passing that love and wonder of science on to students for nearly three decades. Dr. Knittel teaches Biology, Anatomy, Physiology, Nutrition, and Pathogenic Microbiology. She most enjoys preparing students for health careers in science and medicine, both in the classroom and as an academic advisor.

In order to succeed in their chosen careers, her students are required to have a large, organized knowledge-base of science facts. To this end, Dr. Knittel enthusiastically presents facts in an understandable, thorough, and rigorous manner.

Dr. Knittel believes her job on campus extends beyond the classroom, as well, and she has advised over 600 students in her capacity as the health sciences advisor. She also mentors new science department faculty and serves as a "keeper" of institutional memory. She does maintain an active medical license so can return to practice if she were to choose to.

When she is not teaching, Dr. Knittel enjoys exploring the geology and biology of the National Parks. When asked to name three people she greatly admires, Dr. Knittel named Elizabeth Blackwell (the first woman to earn a medical degree in the United States, in 1849), Sean Carroll (a prominent evolutionary biologist at Howard Hughes Institute and the author of several books on evolutionary biology), and Neil deGrasse Tyson (an astrophysicist and Director of the Hayden Planetarium).

One thing most people don't know about Dr. Knittel is that she qualified for an in-person audition for Jeopardy! She made it to the contestant pool, but she was not called to appear before her eligibility ended.

Dr. Knittel was chosen as this month's Faculty Focus feature because of her tireless commitment to the success of her many students. Her experience and expertise are assets to these students, as well as to the employees of EWC. We are fortunate to have such a qualified and experienced colleague.



2016