

# Camille Odell Retires; Department Establishes New Scholarship in Her Honor

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Camille Odell has been the director of the Professional School Counselor Education Program at Utah State University since 2001 and retired at the end of 2021.

She was born in Utah and completed her undergraduate and graduate education with Utah State. The program had 12 students at the time of Odell's hire; today, the program has 174 active students pursuing master's degrees across the state of Utah.

Odell's career has been recognized by many organizations throughout the years, beginning with her time as a student at USU. She received the Utah State Psychology Department S.T.A.R (Scholarship, Teaching, Applied Research) Award in 1991. Most recently, Odell received the Outstanding Faculty Award from the [USU Pinnacle Honor Society](#). As stated on their website, Pinnacle is a national honor society for non-traditional students that focuses on academic excellence, leadership, service, persistence, and future promise.

Odell has received the following recognitions during her academic career:

- 2021 Outstanding Faculty Award, USU Pinnacle Honor Society
- 2020 Special Recognition Award, Department of Psychology
- 2010 Finalist, Utah State Board of Education Nominee
- 2005 Course Development Award, Women and Gender Studies Program
- 2003 Course Development Award, Women and Gender Studies Program
- 1992 Recipient, Rural School Psychology Training Grant
- 1991 Utah State University Psychology Department S.T.A.R. (Scholarship Teaching Applied Research) Award

"Camille is one of a kind, a strong advocate for students and relentless in her pursuit of excellence in the Professional School Counseling Education Program," said Scott Bates, Psychology department head. "We will miss her energy and passion, and I am happy that future students will hear her story and understand the impact that she had."

In addition to the annual Outstanding Student Award, the Psychology Department is establishing a new scholarship in honor of Odell's commitment to school counseling and the graduate students in the program. Each year, a scholarship will be awarded to a deserving student who exemplifies Odell's dedication to school counseling and her community.

## **You have been an Aggie for a long time. What makes USU so special to you?**

The people and the mission of USU. When I was a young girl, my father was a cattle rancher in Southern Utah. Some of my early memories include knowledgeable and caring USU extension agents who worked with my father and the other ranchers in the area. It was a tough existence at times, due to scarce water.

## **Utah State University Mission**

The mission of Utah State University is to be one of the nation's premier student-centered land-grant and space-grant universities by fostering the principle that academics come first, by cultivating diversity of thought and culture, and by serving the public through learning, discovery, and engagement.

As I grew older and traveled away from Utah and the U.S., I appreciated, even more, the impact that Utah State University has on the state of Utah and its citizens. Our outreach programs can—and do—reach the diversity of thought and culture across the state. USU continues to have the capacity to lead Utahns into new vistas of unlimited discovery across a broad spectrum of innovation in fields including climate change, education, agriculture, business, engineering, and space exploration. The options seem limitless when we draw on the diverse expertise that exists in Utah. The people connected to USU are the university's greatest asset, and the ties I have with people across the USU landscape are precious to me.

The MEd Professional School Counselor Education program is offered via USU's broadcast system to towns and cities across the state. It has been an honor to interact with highly skilled, professional, and caring people located in every school district in Utah. These individuals focus on making all the resources that USU has to offer available to Utahns located up to hundreds of miles from the Logan campus. Instructors in the program have reached out with cutting edge curriculum to effectively teach and mentor our students through every step of the challenging educational process.

#### **Where did your passion and interest in professional school counseling come from?**

My passion for professional school counseling is based on my desire to prepare young people for happy and fulfilling adult lives and my confidence in the capacity of Positive Psychology to make lives better across the lifespan. Being a school counselor is unique from other roles in K–12 education because the main focus is on preparing students to successfully engage in post-secondary education and lifelong learning. When a new high school graduate is truly prepared to embark on a career pathway that leads to financial independence and life satisfaction, an amazing compendium of benefits ensues.

#### **What is it like to work with young adults that are just starting to find their passion for school counseling?**

I feel a sense of exhilaration every time I talk with students training to be professional school counselors. As students in the program begin to develop solid skills that lead to successful outcomes for K–12 youth, an unquenchable fire for the work of school counseling is ignited. Our challenging program of study becomes enticing and hugely gratifying for students. Experiential components of the program allow our students to work in K–12 school counseling centers in schools close to their homes.

Students get hands-on experience commensurate with their level of skill.

#### **What advice would you give to your past and current students?**

Never let your zeal for school counseling be thwarted by the challenges that face you in serving kids in schools. While some of the challenges are daunting, they make your job crucial as well as invigorating. I do not recall ever hearing a school counselor say that they are bored. The daily landscape can go from calm to the epitome of stress in a matter of minutes. Keep learning and growing professionally so that you are prepared to meet the challenges that come your way.

#### **What has your favorite part of your career been?**

My professional first love is teaching. When I am teaching in the classroom, I have the rich opportunity of delving into the subject matter of the course and interacting with it. Excellent teaching requires a great deal of preparation, but the rich rewards of navigating an ever-evolving curriculum with students is an unquantifiable pleasure. That being said, my position as director of the program has been matchless in creating opportunities to work with extraordinary people engaged in powerful endeavors. Every day of my career, I have been touched by individuals who desire to improve the lives of youth. I treasure my memories of the high ideals and motivation demonstrated by my students and professional colleagues.

#### **What is next for you?**

Right away, skiing with my husband! I cannot wait to hit the slopes on weekdays. We also plan to travel. Hopefully, the coronavirus will not interfere too much with that goal. I have some writing that I want to do. I also want to spend more time with our three sons and our eight grandchildren. Next fall, we plan to serve in a mission for our church.

#### **Is there anything you are particularly proud of?**

I am proud to have been a member of a USU team that takes seriously our commitment to being a premier student-centered land- and space-grant university by serving Utah's rising generation. Psychology department head Dr. Scott Bates has provided key support at every level, including ensuring that funding was available to take positive psychology and college and career readiness content to Utah's kids by our highly skilled program graduates.

Using Bronfenbrenner's ecological model as a pattern, I would next cite the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services with former Dean, Dr. Beth Foley and new Dean, Dr. Al Smith in the lead. Over the past decade, USU's Academic Instructional Services Director, Dr. Robert Wagner with President Noel Cockett at the USU helm, relentlessly pursued educational equity for students attending at broadcast sites located throughout the state.

Finally, I am proud that Utah ranks 5<sup>th</sup> lowest in terms of the poverty rate and 7<sup>th</sup> from the top in overall child well-being. The past several years, Utah's legislature has appropriated and the governor has approved funding to hire additional mental health professionals, including school counselors. With the complex landscape created by the coronavirus and other factors, we will need to focus our continuing efforts on minimizing negative mental health issues and maximizing achievement by our youth.