

Guest Speaker Reaction: Drs. Tu-Keefner, Kitze

Also known as the dynamic duo, Drs. Tu-Keefner and Kitze are a grant writing, research powerhouse in the University of South Carolina iSchool. They feed off each other's intellect with ideas bouncing back and forth faster than the speed of sound. In the short time they spent speaking to the class, I observed that Dr. Tu-keefner is the idea person and Dr. Kitze is the structure person. We were lucky to have them speak to ISCI 804 on March 27, 2023, about their process and experiences as faculty at the University.

The speakers are relevant to my goals because I hope to become research faculty after graduation. The experiences they shared will help me forge my path forward in research. I hope that I can find someone like they have found in each other to collaborate on projects. The partnership they have formed makes research seem fun and not so intimidating.

I was surprised about the projects they were working on together. I was not aware they were working as a team. The research teams I have been around in the hard sciences seem competitive and cutthroat even within their collaborations. To the point, sometimes the department chairs act as mediators. The bond they have formed is unique. I hope that the College and University continue to support their efforts. My main takeaways from the talk were that research is hard but rewarding and change is constant. Embrace the change to a certain extent and lean into the research while learning from mistakes. With research, it's okay to fail because that is learning even if the outcome is not what was intended. Dr. Tu-Keefner has been at the University and

has seen much change in her career. She described the changes as some good and some not so good. One such change was when the library was dropped from the school's name and became the iSchool. Many of the faculty were upset about the change. I recall being in a class with some local librarians and they were concerned about the change. At first, they felt marginalized as the school pivoted to become more marketable. Later they understood that it would also enhance the value of their degrees, so most were fine with it. We were talking about the old card catalogs in class today. I miss the tactile feel and smell of the physical card catalog. My Grandmother, who passed in January of this year, was a librarian at Richland Library West Columbia. She used to let me play with the cards and put them in the catalog when I was younger. She would have been 95 this July.

I think this discussion did change my idea of research a little because it showed that research can be fun. It doesn't have to be monotonous stats and charts. I heard Dr. Kitze's doctoral students talk about the research at a recent event, and they seemed truly engaged with the work being done. I'm not excited by many things in life, but I am excited about being part of the iSchool family and contributing to research. I think it could have a profound impact on my life and others.

I don't have any follow-up questions for them. Dr. Kitze will be on the faculty panel for the April 17th class. If I do, I'll follow up then and take notes. I'm excited to hear from the faculty about what they wish they had known as doc students. It's a shame as we get closer to the end of the semester the class has become more enjoyable and now it's almost over. I love how the class has become more interactive and the nuances between each guest.