

The UDC Spark

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A “UDC Miracle” in Organic Chemistry

*The following was enthusiastically submitted by Dr. Daryao Khatri, Professor of Physics. Based on an email, dated 5/31/07, from Dr. Mehdi Hajiyani, titled, “**Phenomenal success in Organic Chemistry I – Spring 2007 Semester**”, I call this success a UDC Miracle. Dr. Hajiyani, Professor of Chemistry who taught Organic Chemistry I during the Spring Semester of 2007, has been teaching at the university for over 30 years. In his email, he reports classroom retention doubled (from 50% to 97%) and student success tripled (from 30% to 90%). As reported by Dr. Hajiyani, 31 students who enrolled in Organic Chemistry I during the Spring Semester 2007. One student never showed up and another student withdrew from the course after about seven weeks, leaving 29 students who were present until the end of the semester. Student demography of the class was 45% African Americans, 25% whites, 10% Hispanics, and 20% other.*

Dr. Hajiyani attributes this success to his using many of the teaching techniques that he has

been exposed to lately and mentoring provided by Dr. Khatri. He also reports spending enormous amount of time during the weeks as well as over the weekends in preparing new handouts, quizzes, take-home examinations, tests, and exams. In this regard, Dr. Khatri has also been reporting 100% classroom retention in his college physics courses over a period of several years. I have been dreaming to duplicate this success in other courses at the university, Dr. Khatri states. It has now happened. Dr. Hajiyani, now, reports similar success in retention rates in Organic Chemistry.

Dr. Hajiyani is so encouraged by this experience that he, now, plans to teach the same course during the fall 2007 and beyond in a transposed fashion from what is presented in most of the organic textbooks; transpose chapters and the topics contained in them. In addition, he will consider writing a book in Organic Chemistry that would include the pedagogy he employed for the spring 2007 semester.