

It doesn't take an expert in enumerative combinatorics* like FKCC Math instructor Dr. John Majewicz to see that at small institutions the interactions between students and faculty would statistically be more frequent and personal than at larger institutions. That's why in 2009 Majewicz acted on his love for Key West and made the logical leap from the 40,000-plus campus of the Community College of Philadelphia to find a sense of true community at the small southernmost college.

"There were so many classes and so many instructors, you hardly ever saw the same student twice; it was very impersonal," said Majewicz of the institution where he taught for 20 years. "Here, it's not uncommon for me to work with a student through four courses—from College Algebra to Calculus. I've developed some really nice student-instructor relationships. We have conversations about the subject matter and they don't hesitate to seek help."

Majewicz has a bachelor's, a master's, and a doctorate in Mathematics, the first from Pennsylvania State University and the latter two from Temple University. Such credentials and experience would certainly enable him to teach at a university, but Majewicz enjoys being in the classroom over the pressures of research requirements at a big university.

"It's nice to be able to work somewhere where I can focus on how students learn and what approaches work best."

One tactic that seems to work is learning students' names. Majewicz finds that it builds rapport with the fringe benefit of instilling accountability.

"I have a knack for learning names really easily. I tell my students that they aren't going to have that experience at a big university. Plus, because I know all their names, they realize that I notice with they miss class, so most limit their absences."

Majewicz, who also serves as the vice chair of the FKCC Faculty Council, cites passion as a key quality in being a good math instructor.



"Most students in math courses are satisfying a requirement and are not really passionate—but if *you* make it interesting and they see *your* passion, they become more engaged. It's rewarding when you can see people turn on."

Of course Majewicz also deals with challenges like the classic questions from reluctant math students about the practical need for or use for math, which is required of every degree.

"I tell my students: 'You might never use it, but it's helping you learn how to think logically and how to analyze based on facts. Here are a bunch of givens, what can you conclude or not conclude from it?'"

Contrary to the math whiz stereotype, Majewicz is also very creative and once thought he would become an artist. These days, the art he loves and hones is that of teaching.

"There's something about being in the classroom and giving knowledge; it's a great way to make a living."

When not in the classroom, Majewicz enjoys reading classic novels and taking in the beautiful island weather on his bicycle.

* *Enumerative combinatorics is concerned with counting the number elements of a finite set S . It will be clear that S has many elements, and the main issue will be to count (or estimate) them all and not, for example, to find a particular element.*