



JOSEPH SEPE

Adjunct Professor

With a big smile, Dr. Joseph Sepe will tell you a simple but powerful tenet he lives by: Life has to be an adventure. Deployed to teach biology classes and volunteer at the field hospital at Shindand Air Base, Afghanistan, he is currently living his greatest adventure yet – and relishing every moment.

From Hudson Valley, New York, Dr. Sepe earned his BS in biology from Elmira College and spent several years conducting research on the neurobiology of bird song. At age 25, he moved to Italy to see the world while studying medicine and surgery at the University of Naples.

After earning his MD, he worked in the university's hospital and was contacted about the possibility of teaching for UMUC Europe. In 1992, Dr. Sepe taught his first class at Naval Support Activity Naples. Opening a private practice soon after, he has balanced work with teaching, research, lecturing at Italian universities, editing a medical journal, managing his small farm, and spending time with his family.

To Dr. Sepe, the fundamental goal of teaching is to empower those who will shape the future. By sharing his own experience as a physician, he encourages his biology students to think outside the textbook. "The future is in their hands. The progress in this world will come from them," he said.

His mentor, Nobel laureate Norman Borlaug, is known as "The Man Who Saved a Billion Lives" for his contributions in improving the global food supply. Hoping to follow in these footsteps, Dr. Sepe plans to involve his students in a research project to increase regional food production for the local population while in Afghanistan.

After two decades of teaching in Naples, he identifies with the Navy community. Regularly getting up to run with his students at 5 a.m., the military lifestyle has become his norm. Dr. Sepe hopes to use his latest endeavor downrange to better relate with the war zone experiences of his future students. "I don't know if this will make me a better teacher," he said, "But I know it will make me a better human being."