Covenantal promises

Dr. Brenda Wirkus advises the class of 2016

The following is an excerpt from the convocation address to the Class of 2016 by Dr. Brenda Wirkus, professor in the Department of Philosophy and winner of the 2012 Distinguished Faculty Award. After beginning with giving practical advice to the Class of 2016, Dr. Wirkus focused her subsequent remarks on her understanding of the nature of the classroom experience.

I would like to propose a model and a vision of the academic experience that fits the Jesuit and Catholic nature of John Carroll University, as well as fosters the kinds of long-term relationships we hope to have with our alumni.

I shall begin with a question: Why is the academic experience upon which you are embarking worth the investment of four years of your life and thousands of dollars? Surely there are shorter and cheaper ways to provide you with vocational training and help you find a job.

What happens in the classroom is not simply about conveying information and skills necessary for vocational success. It is a place in which we learn to challenge the status quo, to cultivate the imagination, to open new possibilities for understanding and transforming the world. And it is also a place that models for us ways of forging our future relationships with self, with others, with the community, and with the world.

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NOTES

Listed are self-reported faculty accomplishments in research, teaching, and scholarly achievement, along with other professional activities.

ACCOUNTANCY

ART HISTORY AND HUMANITIES

Professor Guest also reviewed Les vitraux du choeur de la cathédrale de Troyes (XIe siècle) by Elizabeth C. Pastan and Sylvie Balcon in Speculum 87:2 (2012) 594-595.

BIOLOGY


Professor Saporito also presented a paper coauthored with undergraduate Yaritbel Torres-Mendoza and others titled “Ontogeny of Alkaloid-based Chemical Defenses in the Dendrobatid Frog, Oophaga pumilio,” at the Seventh World Congress of Herpetology in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, August 8-14, 2012. Another undergraduate student, Daniel Paluh, presented a poster of their research titled, “A Test of Aposematism in the Dendrobatid Frog, Oophaga pumilio: The importance of movement in clay model experiments.”

CLASSICAL AND MODERN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

Martha Pereszlenyi-Pinter presented “A Hungarian ‘Madwoman in the Attic’: Rehabilitating Elizabeth Báthory, a Seventeenth Century ‘Serial Killer,’ a.k.a. ‘The Blood Countess Dracula,’” and chaired a session titled “Educational Initiatives in Hungary” at the American Hungarian Educators Association’s Thirty-Seventh Annual Conference, Long Island University, Brooklyn Campus, April 2012.


College of Arts and Sciences


Dean Colleran also was invited by Cuyahoga County Executive Edward Fitzgerald to be part of the Cleveland Delegation to Ireland in mid-September. The delegation attended receptions by the Taoiseach, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, and the American Ambassador to Ireland, Dan Rooney. While there, they also visited Cleveland’s sister city in County Mayo.

Communication and Theatre Arts

Bob Noll’s play “Famous” was published by Original Works Publishing. “Famous” has been produced twice off-off Broadway recently. This is his ninth published play.


Professor Schmidt presented a paper coauthored with Jack Soper and Tina Facca titled “International Variations in Divergent Creativity and the Impact on Teaching Entrepreneurship” at the International Council of Small Business in Wellington, New Zealand, June 2012.

Professor Schmidt also attended the workshop “Entrepreneurship in the Liberal Arts” at Hiram College in May and the National Communication Association Institute for Faculty Development at Hope College in Holland, Michigan, in July 2012.

Economics and Finance


Education and Allied Studies


Promotions

Congratulations to the following faculty on their promotions to full professor:

James Krukones, Department of History and Office of the Provost and Academic Vice President

James Lissemore, Department of Biology

Philip Metres, Department of English

PROMOTIONS

Krukones

Lissemore

Metres
Listed are self-reported faculty accomplishments in research, teaching, and scholarly achievement, along with other professional activities.

**ENGLISH**

**George Bilgere** published “Darkly Shifting Flux” in *River Styx* (May 2012), and it also was featured on the website *Poetry Daily* on August 15, 2012. Four of his poems, “Desire,” “Robert Frost,” “Tamed,” and “Horses,” were broadcast on the Garrison Keillor’s National Public Radio program, *The Writer’s Almanac*, between April and September 2012.

Professor Bilgere was chosen by a consortium of colleges and universities to do a series of poetry readings for the Great Plains Writers Tour. In a week, he read at colleges and bookstores in Colorado, Nebraska, Iowa, South Dakota, and Missouri.

**HISTORY**

**Maria Marsilli-Cardozo** coordinated the symposium “The Past is Nobody’s Land: Uses of Historical Memory in Processes of Identity Formation,” and presented her paper “La Bruja (Pérfidamente) Conveniente: Los usos de “La Quintrala” en La Creación de la Identidad Chilena, Siglo XIX,” at the Fifty-Fourth International Conference of Americanists in Vienna, Austria July 15-20.

**MATHEMATICS AND COMPUTER SCIENCE**


**PHILOSOPHY**


Professor Spurgin presented “Do Business Leaders Have Role-Model Obligations to be Good Political Actors?” at the Fifth World Congress of the International Society of Business, Economics, and Ethics, Warsaw, Poland, July 14, 2012.

**Sharon Kaye** had her article, “Dress Rehearsal for Life: Using Drama to Teach Philosophy to Inner-City High School Students,” in *Analytic Teaching* 26 (2006) reprinted in a Slovenian journal.

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION**  

**PROVOST AND ACADEMIC VICE PRESIDENT’S OFFICE**  
John Day reviewed *Fraternity* by Diane Brady in *Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education* 42 (Fall 2012) 56-57.

**PSYCHOLOGY**  
Elizabeth V. Swenson published “Translating Ethical Dilemmas from the Traditional to the Online Classroom,” in *The Ohio Psychologist* (2012).

**SOCIOLOGY AND CRIMINOLOGY**  
Penny Harris published “Maintaining Friendships in Early Stage Dementia: Factors to Consider,” *Dementia* 11:3 (May 2012) 305-314.


Professor Long also authored a grant proposal to subsidize the Japan study tour for students. The project, “Popular Culture in Times of Crisis: Japan 2012,” received $21,600 from the Center for Global Partnerships.

**THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES**  

Professor Hahnenberg also addressed the First Friday Club of Cleveland, JCU reunion weekend, the Sisters of Charity Health System administrators’ retreat, and the Annual Clergy Conference of the Diocese of Nottingham, U.K.


Professor McGinn also published with Jane Webster, Erin Runions, Eugene Gallagher, Davina Lopez, Todd Penner and David Howell “Student Learning Outcomes for Biblical Studies in the Liberal Arts,” *Teaching Theology & Religion* 15:3 (July 2012) 262-283.

Zeki Saritoprak participated in the CrossCurrents Research Colloquium as a Coolidge Scholar in July 2012. Dr. Saritoprak’s proposal based on the Colloquiums’ theme “The Role of Religion in Social Movements” was one of only twenty accepted out of the hundred plus proposals for the four week event at Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary’s campuses in Manhattan.

**ON THE RADIO**  
Linda Gojak (Department of Education and Allied Studies) – Director of the Center for Mathematics and Science Education, Teaching and Technology and President of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics – spoke about reasoning and making sense in mathematics on WCPN’s “Sound of Ideas” on Oct. 2.

Jen Ziemke (Department of Political Science) was featured in a story about crisis mapping for WKSU’s Exploradio series on Sept. 17.
Some people use the concept of contract to characterize the academic experience. According to this characterization, the teacher in the classroom provides a checklist of requirements. The student meets some number of the items on that list. Then the teacher gives a grade corresponding to how many items have been checked off.

This contractual model has certain advantages. It is clear and simple. But it is a model that can reduce the teacher-student relationship to an instrumental one. As teacher, I set up a list of items for you to do. You do some or all of them. I reward you. Everything is mapped out neatly. There’s no room for flexibility, nor for individual development. Ideally, at the end of the day, everyone has done everything the same way. Individual differences are overcome rather than celebrated. Conformity is rewarded. Our roles are prescribed and there’s no varying from them. It’s a model of quid pro quo: I do this, you do that. The contractual model reduces us to an instrumental relationship that impoverishes us.

I would argue life is richer and far more complicated than a contractual relationship wherein every dimension can be articulated. I would also argue the professional life for which we are preparing you is not like that. A professional needs to be creative and innovative, able to respond appropriately to the varying demands of varying situations, to be flexible. No one is going to provide a professional with a checklist.

A covenant is, like a contract, an agreement or commitment. But, unlike a contract, the details of the covenantal agreement are not always so clearly spelled out. Just think about the archetypal example of a covenant, that between Yahweh and the Chosen People. The terms of that covenant were often confusing. The Chosen People often misunderstood what was going on. But, at its base, that covenant and every covenant is a commitment to a common project, the terms of which are always needing to be worked through together. A covenant establishes ongoing, permanent, and intimate relationships based on far more than the simple performance of a set of discrete actions. A covenant connects one to others and to entire traditions. And every covenant entails a set of promises that each member makes to every other. That was true of the Hebrew covenant and even truer of the “new” covenant articulated by Jesus at the Last Supper.

And so, here are the covenantal promises that we, as faculty, make to you, our students:

- We promise our classroom will be a space wherein we embark on a common project that engages every member of the class.

- We promise the classroom is a safe space, a haven, a place where we encourage the exploration of new and sometimes apparently outrageous ideas.

- We promise you are free — within obvious constraints of civility and morality — to try out or try on those new ideas. We can consider the classroom a sort of dressing or fitting room, as in department stores. In the classroom, we try on new ideas to see whether they fit, whether they make us look like a kind of person we want to be.

- We also promise to challenge the beliefs you already hold when you first walk into the classroom. We are not trying to change your beliefs. But we do want you to make them your own, not your parents’, not your society’s, not your religion’s, but yours. To do so, we have to challenge them and argue against them and offer alternatives to them. You, in turn, will need to grapple with those arguments and consider those alternatives.

- And in that process, we promise to assist you in developing methods of careful and critical reasoning that will allow you to evaluate your ideas and those of others.

- In short, we promise to provide a space wherein you can learn not only the skills required to make a living but, more importantly and in the Jesuit tradition of education, to learn how to make a life. A life that is meaningful, good, and productive. A life that transcends whatever series of jobs you might hold throughout your remaining years. A life that is worthy of the investment placed in you by those who have entrusted you to us.

- And so all of us faculty, regardless of what we teach, aspire to introduce you to and connect you with our shared human past. Only in so doing can we aid you in constructing your future.
SELECTED WORKS: GRASSELLI LIBRARY’S NEW PROJECT TO PUBLICIZE AND PERMANENTLY ARCHIVE FACULTY WORK

A brief background:
Grasselli Library bought a program last spring that enables the collection, preservation, and display of digital content — software that was desperately needed for all of the material being digitized during JCU’s 125th anniversary and beyond. And so was born the Digit Team (Digital Grasselli), headed by Ruth Connell, with expertise contributed by Mina Chercourt, George Leggiero, Laurene DiCillo, Charles Zarobila, and Tia Pearson. The team selected Digital Commons, a hosted software platform offered by bepress. The library was also able to hire a part-time director for the project, Samantha Schneider, who has been busy developing JCU’s site, now called “Carroll Collected.”

What is Selected Works?
Selected Works is a separate, but related, piece of software created by bepress. It is a research announcement tool that maximizes the readership and impact of faculty work. This tool makes possible individual faculty bibliographies with university branding while providing a high level of web-publishing technology. It was designed and optimized to help research be discovered and shared, JCU’s Selected Works pages will not only be available on the open web, but will be distributed through bepress’s international network of scholarship. All Selected Works content is automatically available via the Open Archives Initiative (OAI) to a broad array of scholarship distribution services. All sites are optimized for Google and Google Scholar and can be changed to view the presented material by subject or by type of work.

Many JCU faculty members have web pages already. Typically these pages allow a faculty member to upload papers, a photograph and a biography, and perhaps link to multimedia. Selected Works will do all these things and provide an RSS feed and readership reports and statistics. Additionally, space is provided for listings of courses taught, awards won, service activities, or whatever a faculty member believes is important to note.

Why the library?
Librarians are embedded in the process of scholarly communication in many ways, most specifically in issues of open access and copyright. Since copyright can be trumped by a contract and teaching faculty often do not have the time needed to thoroughly check their rights on their material, Grasselli Library’s role in Selected Works is to mediate the sites and provide value-added services. The library will set up the sites and subsequently can continue to provide maintenance for the site or turn it over to the faculty member, according to individual preference. The services the library will provide for each site include:

• finding and gathering articles and other scholarly materials;
• performing the rights checking against publishers’ policies;
• scanning, retypesetting and other file preparation;
• metadata preparation; and
• uploading.

The process of bringing up all the sites will take time. Already liaison librarians have been talking with faculty members about the program. The first phase will be to catch all the articles for which publishers will allow a PDF upload. These will provide the initial content for the creation of the sites, which will happen later this month. Next, the librarians will distribute lists of articles for which a preprint or postprint is allowed. The liaison librarians will be asking for books published to create links to publisher’s sites and for copies of presentations and papers to go on Selected Works.

What does the library need from faculty?
1. The first thing the library needs to move forward is for faculty members who does not want a Selected Works page to notify their library liaison about that immediately.
2. Faculty could help by sending a current CV to their library liaison to expedite the gathering process and ensure its accuracy.
3. Faculty will be receiving letters from liaison librarians listing materials identified for inclusion on Selected Works. All faculty should respond to these promptly if there is something listed that, for whatever reason, they do not want uploaded.

JCU faculty member Paul Lauritzen created a Selected Works page several years ago. This is what the Selected Works pages will look like (see image at left), with the exception that the John Carroll logo will appear where the Selected Works logo is: http://works.bepress.com/paul_lauritzen/.

For more information about Selected Works, visit http://works.bepress.com/.
NEW FACULTY

We welcome the following new faculty:

Dr. David Baker (Visiting Assistant Professor, Management, Marketing and Logistics)

Dr. Chrystal Bruce (Associate Professor, Chemistry)

Dr. Emily Butler (Assistant Professor, English)

Ms. Julianne Cabusas (Instructor, Management, Marketing and Logistics)

Dr. Jennifer Allen Catellier (Assistant Professor, Communication and Theatre Arts)

Dr. Jenna Drenten (Assistant Professor, Management, Marketing and Logistics)

Dr. Lei Gao (Visiting Assistant Professor, Chemistry)

Dr. Nathan Gehlert (Assistant Professor, Education and Allied Studies)

Ms. Eun-Jeong Han (Visiting Instructor, Communication and Theatre Arts)

Dr. Victor Lee (Visiting Assistant Professor, Mathematics and Computer Science)

Dr. X. Gloria Lee (Assistant Professor, Accountancy)

Dr. Rosanna Miguel (Assistant Professor, Management, Marketing and Logistics)

Dr. Michelle Millet (Director, Grasselli Library)

Dr. Namrata Mitra (Visiting Assistant Professor, Philosophy)

Dr. Justin Pruneski (Visiting Assistant Professor, Biology)

Dr. Colin Swearingen (Assistant Professor, Political Science)

Ms. Tongxia Zhang (Confucius Classroom Instructor, Classical and Modern Languages and Cultures/East Asian Studies)