An Awesome Task

Phyllis “Penny” Braudy Harris, professor and chair in the Department of Sociology and Criminology, is the 2009 recipient of John Carroll’s Distinguished Faculty Award, the University’s highest faculty honor. Below is an edited version of the remarks she made at a faculty reception in April when accepting the award. In the photo, Academic Vice President John T. Day makes the presentation. In the fall, Prof. Harris adapted her talk for incoming students and delivered it at the First Year Student Convocation.

As I look out on this gathering and think about the tumultuous times our University is now experiencing, I can’t help but think about those classic lines of Dickens’ A Tale of Two Cities: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity.” And as our community tries to work out our needs and our differences, I think what helps me keep some perspective is to remember: 1) why I came to John Carroll, 2) what I have learned from my 20 years of teaching and research here, and 3) why I stay.

Why Did I Come to John Carroll?
When I informed a former professor of mine that I had accepted a job at
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John Carroll and turned down invitations to interview for jobs at Research I universities, she said in disbelief, “Well, I guess it is OK, as long as you stay up with the reading in the field; however, you know this might stifle your career.” What this professor failed to realize is, at a university like John Carroll – dedicated to undergraduate teaching and not solely to research – one has the opportunity to work closely with young adults to help develop and change minds, and perhaps ultimately lives. For as George Bernard Shaw once said, “Progress is impossible without change; and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.”

For, you see, we are given students, most often at 18 years of age, with their thoughts, ideas, and values still in the process of development, still somewhat in turmoil, and we have the possibility to help shape them. If you stop to think about this, it is quite an awesome task, and one that can sometimes leave you filled with feelings of trepidation.

For as I have come to learn, one of the most important roles an undergraduate professor plays is that of a change agent. And, as a social scientist, I would dare say I may also have the possibility of being an agent of social change. For one of the main goals of an undergraduate sociology professor through one’s research and teaching, I believe, is to challenge the stereotypes and ideas that most students hold about various groups of people, about societal structures, and how society works. This is a daunting but exciting challenge that can have long-lasting effects.

What Have I Learned from Being Here?
Over the years of teaching undergraduate sociology courses and conducting research with students in the areas of aging and poverty studies (my specialty areas), I have learned much from my students and research. And I have changed. That old adage, that your students are often your teachers, is very true. So what have I learned? Here are just five of the many lessons I have learned from my years of classroom teaching, and these are in no particular order:

• Some seeds of ideas may take root, but they may take a long time to bloom . . . be patient;
• It is always those quietest students who surprise you the most with their insights;
• Never waver from setting high expectations of students;
• Every time you step into a classroom, you learn more about yourself – the good and the bad;
• Passion about any field of study can be contagious.

In addition, my students have also taught me to become more human, more forgiving, more accepting, more patient, more tolerant, more questioning, and to laugh at myself, which I still find somewhat difficult. In essence, they have
taught me to be a better human being, and I am grateful to them. And from my research with older adults, be it those with Alzheimer’s disease, cancer, or HIV/AIDS, I have come to understand the absolute resilience of the human spirit, even when faced with devastating challenges.

Why Do I Stay at JCU?
For a number of reasons, John Carroll has been a wonderful balance of teaching and research in a supportive community of colleagues whom I respect and, for the most part, enjoy. This is done in an environment that sometimes parallels my concerns about social justice issues, an area on which I think it is imperative we work. I also stay because of the high academic potential of this University, which is attainable, and needs once again to be made a top priority. For there are such talented faculty members and such dedicated support staff here. However, most of all, I stay because of the students, and my belief in the importance of an undergraduate liberal arts education.

“For ultimately, to me, undergraduate teaching is about changing lives, once you have planted those seeds of critical knowledge and encouraged critical questioning.”

—Penny Harris

For ultimately, to me, undergraduate teaching is about changing lives, once you have planted those seeds of knowledge and encouraged critical questioning. As the great social scientist Margaret Mead once said, “Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” And undergraduate teaching at John Carroll University is one of the first steps in that process.
NOTES

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

OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC VICE PRESIDENT

Nicholas Santilli and Lauren Bowen delivered a presentation titled “Imagining Innovative Academic Programs: From Faculty Development to Curricular Innovation” at the 44th annual meeting of the Society for College and University Planning in Portland, OR, July 2009.

Nick Santilli led a team of faculty from the Academic Planning Task Force - including Jeanne Callahan (English), Susan Long (Sociology and Criminology), Mike Martin (Biological Sciences), and Scott Moore (Economics and Finance) – to the Greater Expectations Institute of the American Association of Colleges and Universities, in Burlington, VT, June 2009.

ACCOUNTANCY


BIOLOGY


CHEMISTRY

Paul R. Challen was coauthor of the paper “The Spectroelectrochemical, Magnetic, and Structural Characterization of Reduced Hexaazatriphenylenehexacarbonitrile, HAT(CN)$_6$.” Synthetic Metals, May 2009.

Prof. Challen and Man Lung Kwan, together with JCU students Thomas Spilker, Wilson Luu, Andrew Schafer, Adam Jenkins, Laura Gruber, and David Essi presented the poster “Improved Synthesis of Pincer Ligand Precursor, and Synthesis and Structural Characterization of Terphenyl Scaffolded S-C-S Palladium Pincer Complexes” at the central regional meeting of the American Chemical Society in Cleveland, May 2009.

RUSSERT DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND THEATRE ARTS

Margaret Finucane and Lauren Bowen (AVP’s Office/Political Science), with John Carroll students Alix Audi and Jamie Flicko, presented a poster titled “Bringing the U.S. Constitution to Life” at the Engaging Civic and Social Responsibility Conference of the American Association of Colleges and Universities, Minneapolis, Oct. 1-3, 2009.

Jacqueline Schmidt and Deborah Uecker (Wisconsin Lutheran College) published “Using Film to Study Cultural Stereotypes and Business Ethics in Russia and in the U.S.” Urgent Problems of Communication and Culture, Pyatigorsk State University Press, Russia, December 2008: 225-231.

Prof. Schmidt presented the following papers: “A Reviewer’s Perspective on Program Assessment” at the Central States Communication Association in St. Louis, April, with Brian Green (University of Michigan). With Roland Madison (accounting), “Accounting Department Chairs: Perceptions of the Importance of Communication Skills” was presented at the AAA 2009 national meeting, New York, May 8.


Prof. Schmidt conducted a two-day program this past summer for the Cuyahoga Family Law Section of the Cuyahoga Bar Association: “Interpersonal Skills in Divorce Negotiation.”

ECONOMICS AND FINANCE


EDUCATION AND ALLIED STUDIES

Paula Britton received the “Outstanding Mentor of the Year” award from the Ohio Association for Counselor Education and Supervision.


Prof. Jenkins and A. Ellenwood presented “Supervision of Interns: Matching NASP Training Standards to Field Expectations” at the annual conference of the National Association of School Psychologists, Boston, February 2009.

Prof. Jenkins also presented “Supervisor Training: Intern’s Role in Determining RTI Effectiveness” with A. Ellenwood and S. Graves at the regional workshop at Bowling Green State University, October 2008.

Prof. Jenkins was appointed to the NCATE Board of Program Reviewers and is the chair and facilitator of the Creativity and Problem Solving SIG sessions at the 32nd annual conference of the Eastern Educational Research Association, February 2009, Sarasota, FL.


Mark Storz presented “Factors Contributing to the Achievement Gap and Their Implications in Catholic Schools” at the Ohio Catholic Education Association Conference, Cincinnati, October 2009.

Nancy Taylor presented “Re-evaluating, Revamping, and Redirecting One’s Career at Midlife and Beyond” at the National Career Development Association’s Global Career Development Conference, July 2, 2009, St. Louis.

ENGLISH


ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The following faculty members have been selected for membership in the Entrepreneurship Faculty Fellows program: Jill Bernaciak (Management, Marketing, and Logistics), Duane Dukes (Sociology and Criminology), Margaret Finucane (Communication), David Mascotti (Chemistry), Pam Mason (Political Science), Scott Moore (Finance), Mindy Peden (Political Science), Gary Porter (Economics), Jackie Schmidt (Communication), and Elizabeth Stiles (Political Science). These faculty fellows met in the spring and summer in a series of seminars. Along with outside reviewers and consultants, the faculty fellows will work on developing courses for the interdisciplinary entrepreneurship minor. Each fellow will also plan to teach at least one course in the minor. The project, entitled “The Academy for Entrepreneurial Learning,” is funded by a grant from the Burton D. Morgan Foundation. The project director is Jack Soper, and project manager is Jackie Schmidt. Resource board members for the academy are Lauren Bowen, Margaret Finucane, Mark Hauserman, Jim Lissemore, James Martin, Nick Santilli, Earl Spurgin, and Mark Waner.

GRASSELLI LIBRARY

NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM INITIATIVES

In June, Academic Vice President John T. Day announced 11 projects that were funded as new academic initiatives. Development of the programs began in the summer and will continue through this academic year. Completed proposals are being reviewed by the Committee on Academic Policies, some as early as this fall.

The projects complement existing programs and strengthen the University’s commitment to interdisciplinary and experiential education. Other promising proposals were not able to be funded. Several will be pursued with the encouragement of the Center for Faculty Development.

The 11 funded projects are:

A practicum for undergraduate psychology students in conjunction with the Cleveland Clinic Center for Autism. Proposed by Tracy Masterson, Psychology.

A major in East Asian Studies and the exploration of John Carroll becoming a Confucius Institute, which, among other things, would provide Chinese language instructors to Carroll. Proposed by the East Asian Studies Advisory Committee, currently chaired by Roger Purdy, History. Pam Mason, Political Science, assumed responsibility for coordinating the East Asian Studies program in July.

A program in Environmental Sustainability, which will include a track in the MBA program, strengthen the curriculum of the Environmental Science major, and help make the campus more sustainable. Proposed by Chris Sheil, Biology, and Jim Martin, Associate Dean of the Boler School of Business.

A minor in Forensic Behavioral Science. Coordinated by Duane Dukes, Sociology and Criminology, on behalf of the departments of Sociology and Criminology and Psychology.

NOTES —continued—

MANAGEMENT, MARKETING, AND LOGISTICS


Jill Bernaciak attended the Teaching Professor Conference in Washington, D.C., and was sponsored by faculty development and Management, Marketing, and Logistics. This summer, Prof. Bernaciak also completed training for the Global Career Development Facilitator certification from the National Career Development Association.

Prof. Bernaciak accepted the position of 5th Year MBA Program coordinator. She has been a visiting marketing professor since spring 2008, and currently teaches business communications and creativity and innovation, which is the first course in the new entrepreneurship minor.

PHILOSOPHY


PHYSICS


POLITICAL SCIENCE


PSYCHOLOGY


Prof. Swenson is the new chair of the Ohio Psychological Association Ethics Committee and a member of the OPA Board of Directors, and was selected to be among the Charter Fellows of the Midwestern Psychological Association.


RELIIGIOUS STUDIES


Sheila McGinn published “My Talk for Future Church in Honor of the Feast of St. Mary Magdalene,” July 2009. Published online at www.futurechurch.org/podcasts/.

SOCIOLOGY AND CRIMINOLGY


Prof. Long led a session at the Diversity Management Conference titled “Medical Decisions and Culture: Understanding Diversity Regarding End-of-Life Care.” Cleveland State University, May 15, 2009.

Prof. Long reviewed a manuscript for Social Science and Medicine in May 2009 concerning Japanese physicians’ attitudes toward withholding and withdrawing life-sustaining technologies.

Donna K. Rumenik led a two-week summer research workshop at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum’s Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies titled “Bringing the Past into the Present: Missing Narratives of the Holocaust in Ukraine.” The international group of scholars presented their research findings to the public on July 31, 2009.


NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM INITIATIVES
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A major in International Business, which will include both study abroad and an internship with an international company. Proposed by Santa Casciani and Luigi Ferri, Classical and Modern Languages and Cultures, in conjunction with Jim Martin, Boler School.

An interdisciplinary minor in Leadership Studies. Proposed by Jim Martin, Boler School, and Beth Martin, Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, on behalf of a committee representing eight academic departments.

An interdisciplinary major and minor in Peace, Justice, and Human Rights. Proposed by Jeanne Colleran, English, on behalf of a committee representing seven academic departments.

An endorsement for certified teachers in Pervasive Development Disorders. Proposed by Thea Ford and Bunny Garson, Education and Allied Studies.

A Professional Writing Program. Proposed by Francis Ryan on behalf of the English Department.

An interdisciplinary major in Women’s and Gender Studies. Proposed by Brenda Wirkus and Dianna Taylor, Philosophy.

The committee that reviewed the proposals and recommended those to fund consisted of Linda Eisenmann, former Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences; Phil Metres, English; Nick Santilli, Associate Academic Vice President for Planning and Assessment; Karen Schuele, Dean of the Boler School; Elizabeth Stiles, Political Science; Mark Waer, Director of the Center for Faculty Development; and Lauren Bowen, Associate Academic Vice President for Academic Programs, who coordinated the application process and is providing ongoing administrative support to the projects.
NEW FACULTY

John Carroll University welcomes its new full-time faculty for 2009-10.

Dr. Scott J. Allen, Assistant Professor, Management, Marketing, and Logistics.

Ms. Medora Barnes, Instructor, Sociology and Criminology.

Dr. Cecile Brennan, Assistant Professor, Education and Allied Studies.

Ms. Carrie Buchanan, Instructor, Communication and Theatre Arts.

Dr. Michael Eng, Assistant Professor, Philosophy.

Dr. Simon Fitzpatrick, Assistant Professor, Philosophy.

Ms. Yan Gao, Instructor, Management, Marketing, and Logistics.

Dr. Erin E. Johnson, Assistant Professor, Biology.

Dr. Bo Liu, Assistant Professor, Art History and Humanities.

Dr. Wayne Mayer, Visiting Assistant Professor, Management, Marketing, and Logistics, and Biology.

Dr. Rosanna Miguel, Visiting Assistant Professor, Management, Marketing, and Logistics.

Dr. Annie M. Moses, Assistant Professor, Education and Allied Studies.

Dr. Yi Shang, Instructor, Education and Allied Studies.

Rev. Dr. George Smiga, Visiting Professor, Walter and Mary Tuohy Chair of Interreligious Studies, Religious Studies.

Dr. Peifang Tian, Assistant Professor, Physics.

LTC Kevin Wallace, Assistant Professor, Military Science.

Dr. Mariah Webinger, Assistant Professor, Accountancy.

John Carroll’s new faculty this year include (back, from left) Wayne Mayer, Mariah Webinger, Cecile Brennan, Annie Moses, Peifang Tian, Michael Eng, Carrie Buchanan, and Yan Gao, and (seated, from left) Simon Fitzpatrick, Yi Shang, Rosanna Miguel, and Medora Barnes.

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Submissions can be sent to facultynotes@jcu.edu. The deadline for the next issue, December 2009, is November 30.

Items of interest regarding faculty activity, including new publications, conference presentations, collaborations with students, community and professional service activities, teaching innovations, etc., will be included. Please include relevant details such as date and place of presentation.

Questions and comments should be directed to:
Lauren Bowen, Associate Academic Vice President for Academic Programs and Faculty Diversity
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