Duquesne Students, Staff Witness Historic Visit of Pope Francis
Message from the Dean

In 2015, we witnessed significant growth and development in our teaching and research missions. Last year, Praxis focused on student accomplishments; this year we dedicate it to several initiatives. The feature story, which highlights our Catholic mission as a Spiritan University, follows four of our Journalism and Multimedia Arts students as they worked alongside Adjunct Faculty member Mike Clark to cover Pope Francis’ inaugural United States trip as Pope.

The students are working to assemble their report into a documentary.

Each department and program boasted noteworthy accomplishments for the year. Among them:

• The Theology Department worked on a grant to increase the awareness of how to teach issues of race in our classrooms.
• The Communication and Rhetorical Studies Duquesne Debating Society hosted a successful debate tournament on campus.
• The English Department hosted Penn State University Professor Michael Berube and launched an after-school tutoring program at a local school.
• The Philosophy Department began an endowed Examined Life speaker series.
• The Journalism and Multimedia Arts Department hosted another successful internship for two of its students at the 9/11 Visitor Center in New York City.
• The Psychology Department's Clinic provided 4,067 psychotherapy sessions and 111 intake assessments. In total, 167 clients were served, 16 of whom were through the military track.
• The Healthcare Ethics Program hosted a Kelly Bioethics Lecture focused on the impact of bioethics on the Ebola crises.
• The College continued to partner with the African Studies Program to provide coursework and to involve students in our African Study Abroad programs.
• The Theater Arts Program and Red Masquers ran 12 performances of Arthur Miller’s Death of a Salesman to sell out performances.
• The Modern Languages and Literatures Department hosted two successful new after-school programs in Beechview Elementary School.
• The Women's and Gender Studies Program collaborated with the Department of History to host a Pop Up Museum on Secular and Holy Saints.

Our mission in the College is to educate students in a Catholic and Spiritan liberal arts curriculum. Our continual challenge of teaching well our traditional and long standing liberal arts competences is coupled by the demands of a globalized world and the need for increased practical focus in liberal arts programs. We meet these challenges with the development of our faculty and staff expertise, and with the help and support of our alumni.

Dr. James C. Swindal
Dean, McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts
Duquesne University
Military Veterans Week
For the first time at Duquesne, the Office for Military and Veteran Students hosted a week-long recognition of veterans. For years, the University has hosted the state’s largest morning gathering of veterans at a Veterans Day breakfast. This past year’s event, in collaboration with the College, branched out to include a lecture, a documentary screening and a military appreciation night at the men’s basketball opener for the University’s ’10 season.

The events focused on the education of veterans, says Dr. James Swindal, dean of the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts, which co-sponsored this landmark week. “These events served Duquesne’s educational mission, particularly the moral and spiritual education that is specific to Duquesne,” he adds.

Military and veteran students comprise nearly three percent of Duquesne’s student body and are registered in all nine schools, says Don Accamando, director of the Office for Military and Veteran Students. About two-thirds of these veteran students are enrolled in the McAnulty College.

Events co-sponsored by the College during the week included:

**Dr. Edward Tick, Warriors and Warfare: The Sacred and Profane**

Tick, an internationally recognized healer and psychotherapist, is co-founder and director of the nonprofit Soldier’s Heart. He has served as the U.S. Army and Air Force National Guard expert in the holistic healing of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, training more than 2,500 chaplains and officers. Tick discussed war’s roots in religious traditions, moral vs. immoral use of force, the prevalence of the shadow as well as the spiritual warrior, and essential conditions needed for spiritual healing of troops and veterans.

**Project 22**

Project 22 is a documentary intended to raise awareness about the 22 suicides that occur daily among veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Co-produced by Duquesne’s free military psychological services, was interviewed in the documentary. He attended the event, along with executive producer and law school alumnus Theo Collins, as well as the two vets who made a cross-country motorcycle ride to raise awareness of the suicide issue.

**Screening of Project 22**

**Dr. Greg Barnhisel, The State Department’s secret guidelines for handling William Faulkner on his 1950s overseas tours**

**Dr. Roger Brooke,**

**Dr. Lew Irwin, professor of political science, has been promoted to Major General in the U.S. Army Reserve and is among a rare number of academics to achieve this position ranked second from the top in the Reserve forces.**

**Dr. Patrick Jude, of the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, received an Innovation Works funding award for his research. He used some of his software recently to verify the authorship of one of J.K. Rowling’s books.**

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Liberal Arts in Action

There has been much public discussion about employment outcomes for liberal arts majors. At the same time, research has consistently shown that the skills a liberal arts education fosters are exactly the skills that employers value most. The challenge facing the College as well as higher education as a whole is to continue to make the connection between the value of a liberal arts education and its vocational expression. Spring 2015 marked a new undertaking for the College by actively addressing this challenge via a new course called, Liberal Arts in Action. Liberal Arts in Action is a course that covers a lot of ground. Imagine early in your college career learning how to write a resume or cover letter or how to develop an online profile that is attractive and substantive to employers. Yet, this is completed under the heart of a Duquesne education where students have a chance to clarify their values and examine what they would like to achieve in life.

Co-taught by WTAE-TV Channel 4’s Mike Clark and Bill Kiewien, academic advisor in the College, Liberal Arts in Action challenged students to dig deep in understanding what they would like out of life. The semester culminated with a networking event on April 8 where a group of diverse College alumni came together to speak with students enrolled in the class. Alumni ranged from lawyers to medical doctors to those working in marketing and communications. The students found this experience overwhelmingly productive and helpful as they begin to progress throughout their Duquesne careers.

**Newsmakers**

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Duquesne University hosted a special dedication of the new Genesius Theater for the campus community.

The 10,500-square-foot, black-box style theater features include:

- Seating for up to 130
- Portable risers
- A rehearsal hall
- Dressing rooms
- Building shops
- Costume storage
- Mechanical electrical rooms
- Offices
- A green room

The theater is used by Duquesne University’s Red Masquers, Spotlight Musical Theater Company and Mary Pappert School of Music ensembles for performances. It also has space for production classes.

‘Art Beyond Bars’ Allows a Glimpse into the Lives of Incarcerated Men

Artwork imagined behind prison walls was displayed at Duquesne University, thanks to the work of the University’s public history program, the State Correctional Institute-Pittsburgh, and the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program.

The exhibit, Art Beyond Bars, brought approximately 20 pieces of artwork from different media—poetry, drawings, sculptures, raps—to the Les Ideés Gallery in the Duquesne Union in April 2015.

The goal of the exhibit was to “humanize the inmate, to show that everyday people can relate to these men in one way or another,” explains Abigail Kirstein, a public history master’s student who was involved with promoting the exhibit. “We were attempting to build a relationship through the medium of art.”

While the men had the opportunity to share their work, they and the graduate students also learned about curating an exhibit, constructing a historical narrative and developing public history skills.

Besides sharing this work with the campus community, students worked with residents of the men’s home communities, offering them the opportunity to discover these previously hidden talents, share new viewpoints and engage with thought-provoking ideas represented in the exhibit.

The idea for the show was grounded in the work of Dr. Norman Conti, associate professor of sociology and leader of Pittsburgh’s Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, and Dr. Elaine Parsons, associate professor of history. The Inside-Out program holds classes inside jails and prisons, with class members including typical Duquesne students (outside) and incarcerated (inside) individuals. As an outgrowth of this work, Conti has established a think tank with seven men serving life sentences who hope to impact the safety of their home communities.

While working with the think tank, Parsons discovered that these men expressed themselves through art. “It is too easy for us to forget that there are many incarcerated people who are our neighbors,” Parsons says. “They are physically walled off from us. But taking the time to look at their art helps us to remember them and ways in which we are connected to them.”

Working with Dr. Michael Cahall, director of graduate studies in history, as well as the graduate students and think tank members, the idea of an exhibit moved forward. “This art tells a deeper narrative, one that most people do not get to hear, reflecting the past, present and future of these men,” Cahall says.
Duquesne Psychologist Takes Veteran Counseling down the Grand Canyon

Eighteen veterans with physical and psychological wounds from war participated in a healing raft trip down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon last July.

Dr. Roger Brooke, the clinical psychologist on the trip, is a professor of psychology and director of Duquesne University’s free military psychological services. He made his first trip with disabled veterans from the Vietnam, Gulf, Iraq and Afghanistan wars in the summer of 2014 and returned again this past year. Brooke and the participants not only navigated physical obstacles that might be encountered by their 36-foot-long dinghies in the storied river, they also had to maneuver the delicate terrain of personal and emotional landscapes.

Brooke, a veteran himself and the father of a veteran, has a special interest in the needs of those who serve and have served in the military, as well as their families. In his work, Brooke reframes combat trauma as a universal human experience of initiation onto the warrior’s spiritual path, but not primarily as a psychiatric issue. He has found this distinction critical and, in itself, liberating for participants.

“Understanding combat trauma as a human universal event offers the experience, dignity and direction through the life span,” Brooke observes.

As in the previous year’s session, addressing these spiritual and moral aspects became part of a nightly ritual. Veterans had the opportunity to place memorabilia on a campsite altar and discuss it. “Everybody would put something on the altar and explain the significance of the item,” Brooke explains. “The experience highlighted the need for a veteran community that includes civilians, the need for a continued sense of service among veterans, and the moral and spiritual trauma at the heart of war.”

“Each evening, I would talk for a few minutes about some lessons learned from traditional warrior cultures and invite people to think about the relevance, what we might learn from these cultures for our own healing and integration, and they found it very helpful,” says Brooke, who also did one-on-one work. This past year, Duquesne University post-doctoral psychology fellow Denise Mahone, under Brooke’s supervision, joined the trip.

Sponsored by Canyon Heroes, a Ligonier nonprofit funded by foundations uses holistic interventions to touch the emotional, moral and spiritual wounds of veterans. Each participating veteran has a disability from post-traumatic stress disorder and/or other injuries. This past year, as in the year before, male and female veterans were selected for participation from the Pittsburgh area and beyond.

The goal, according to Brooke, was to provide veterans with an opportunity to rediscover equilibrium and move their lives forward. “We’re still in the process of getting the outcomes (from last year), but all of them found the experience helpful and most of them have written that they felt their lives turned around,” Brooke says.
**STUDENT & ALUMNI NEWS**

**FULLBRIT SCHOLARSHIP**

Critics of the liberal arts have asked, “What does one do with a degree in Philosophy?” The short answer: a lot. Two Duquesne University philosophy graduate students have been selected as Fulbright recipients from the same department—a first in University history. These two are joined by four other graduate philosophy students receiving prestigious awards.

For those unfamiliar with the Fulbright Scholarship, “In 1945, Senator J. William Fulbright introduced a bill in the United States Congress that called for the use of surplus war property to fund the promotion of international good will through the exchange of the students in the fields of education, culture and science.” On August 1, 1946, President Harry S. Truman signed the bill into law, and Congress created the Fulbright Program, the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. Government (fulbrightscholar.org).

“We consider it an amazing year in terms of national and international awards,” says Dr. Ronald Polansky, department chair, who credited the dual emphasis on philosophy as well as contemporary and ancient languages with the department’s international success.

“But because the program is focused on continental thought, it seems you need requisite learning in the language,” Polansky says. “We think that this, in addition to good philosophical study, is helping them get these awards.”

In addition to the success with the Fulbright program, the Philosophy department also had other international successes in 2015.

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**Fulbright Scholar Martin Krahn, Jamestown, N.Y.**

Krahn will study the relationship between metaphysics and physics in Hegel’s philosophy of nature at the Technical University of Kaiserslautern, Germany. From March through July, he is participating in a student and faculty exchange program at the University of Heidelberg. He received his bachelor’s degree in philosophy from Middlebury College in Vermont.

**Fulbright Scholar Paul Zipfel, Belleville, Ill.**

Zipfel’s Fulbright will support the study of phenomenology of Husserl; he will look at non-rational notions—for example, desire and animals—to show how they are important to philosophy and human flourishing. She received her bachelor’s degree in philosophy and classics at Belmont University in Nashville, Tenn.

**SSHRC Scholar Aaron Higgins-Brake, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada**

Another winner of the elite four-year SSHRC Doctoral Fellowship from the Canadian government, Higgins-Brake chose to pursue his doctoral degree at Duquesne. He is studying Plotinus’ philosophy of the self, explaining that self-knowledge is not only necessary for individual happiness but for understanding the world at large. Higgins-Brake graduated with a bachelor’s degree in classics, with honors, from the University of King’s College and received his master’s degree in classics at Dalhousie University, both in Halifax.

### Etty, a Kristallnacht Commemoration

Stein offers the example that Hillelsom wrote on Sept. 23, 1942, “Every atom of hate we add to this world makes it still more inhospitable.”

Prior to the performance in Duquesne’s Genesis Theater, the historical context of Kristallnacht and biographical information of Hillesum was shared by Drs. Marie Raeb, Daniel Burston and Matthew Schneirov, faculty members of Duquesne’s McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts.

Besides the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts, the event was sponsored by the Nathan and Helen Goldrich Foundation, Duquesne’s Jewish Studies Program and its Women’s and Gender Studies Program.

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**Etty Hillesum loved life.**

Even in occupied Amsterdam 1941. Even in a concentration camp.

Her writings, which show a young Jewish woman wrestling with her love/hate world, come to the Duquesne University campus in a special one-night performance on Tuesday, Nov. 10. The play, directed by Austin Pendleton (Finding Nemo, My Cousin Vinny) was a haunting roller coaster ride of emotion and expression of human experience.

“Etty marked the remembrance of Kristallnacht, the night in November 1938 when tens of thousands of Jews in Nazi Germany and Austria were removed to concentration camps, their property and temples destroyed. “The messages in Etty’s diaries and letters provide a very personal window into the Holocaust. They advocate social justice, challenge prejudices and examine genocide,” says Susan Steen, the author and actress in the one-woman play, Etty, which relies only on Hillesum’s words.

“Etty Hillesum invites us to examine our own personal lives and offers us a model for living without hate,” Stein says.
Imagine walking into an internship or job interview and mentioning to a prospective employer that you had the opportunity to cover the historic visit of Pope Francis as a member of the media. Journalists from around the world and the United States would treat this experience as an opportunity of a lifetime. This is what happened for four Duquesne journalism and multimedia arts undergraduates who were credentialed to cover the papal visit as part of a class with Mike Clark, adjunct instructor and WTAE-TV Channel 4 reporter.

Talk about a resume builder. Emily Stock and other student journalists, working on a project for Clark’s class, traveled to Philadelphia with pilgrims from the Diocese of Pittsburgh to cover the World Meeting of Families. They also had the opportunity to travel to the Canonization Mass of St. Junipero Serra in Washington, D.C., before returning back to Philadelphia.

In addition, the student journalists had the opportunity to interview law makers as well as Bishop of the Pittsburgh Diocese, David Zubik, DD.

As Stock, a junior, of Pleasant Hills, shares, “The experience was a once-in-a-lifetime chance for me both professionally and spiritually.”

Clark and Dr. Dennis Woytek, assistant professor of journalism and multimedia arts, previously helped Duquesne students to gain major news experience documenting Pope Francis’ first U.S. visit. “In 2008, the students worked alongside local, national and international journalists, and on occasion, they collaborated with these fellow journalists,” Clark says. “They were interviewed by FOX News and CNN live on the air, and I think, more than anything, they know they can do the job as a working journalist.

Clark applauded Dr. James Swindal, dean of the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts, for his hand in making this independent study course a reality. “He really wants the women to have a great experience because it’s all about the Duquesne mission of serving, to explore your faith, to explore other people’s faiths, to come together as a team to learn about this pope and learn about his messages,” Clark says. “I think that’s really in line with what Duquesne’s mission is all about.”

While no one can predict the future, this much we know: “Regardless of what the kids do when they graduate,” says Clark, “they’ll keep this experience in their hearts forever.”

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Duquesne Students, Staff Witness Historic Visit of Pope Francis
What was it like to come back to campus last spring and speak to students? Totally surreal. I wasn’t prepared for how many people were there. I hadn’t been back on campus since 2001 and it was amazing to see the changes campus has undergone. I’m grateful that I had the chance to speak with some of the students on a one-on-one level afterwards.

Let’s talk about your professional career? When I say the name August Wilson, what comes to mind? Father, best friend, mentor. He’s one of the primary relationships of my professional career. He once told me to “claim it” as it relates to this profession. That has stuck with me. I met him at 26-years old and consider his family my family. It took me a long time to go from Mr. Wilson to calling him August.

I noticed some of your playwright work and professional projects have revolved around music—Tupac, Nikki Sixx and David Foster. It sounds like you’re a big music fan? A lot of stumbling into things. I was fifteen and remember listening to Bob Marley and his words had meaning to me. It wasn’t just music. From that moment, I began to listen to music differently.

Kenny Leon was completely influential regarding, Halter! If You Hear Me. I was never the biggest fan of Motley Crue growing up but my agent, Susan Levy, gave me Nikki Sixx’s biography and I found myself reading it late one night. Not long after, I was at his house talking about how I found meaning in his words and would love the opportunity to write about it and make it come alive. I’m having the career of my dreams in a way I never imagined.

When you were selecting a college or university, what drew you to Duquesne? Growing up outside of Pittsburgh yet in a rural area, Pittsburgh was my New York City. The 412 was my 212. I had applied to another university in the city and wasn’t accepted so I started looking for alternative options. I knew I wanted an urban, downtown location so Duquesne’s location suited me exceptionally well. I actually began at Duquesne as a Physics major but found the Liberal Arts at the end of my first year by almost stumbling into things. The Liberal Arts have been a foundation that have served me well throughout my career.

Tell me about your experience here as a student? The Red Masquers were my spoke. I did everything with the Masquers from running props, to sound, to acting. Oddly, I didn’t see a play until I was seventeen. Jay Keenan was a major influence on me. I took one of his playwriting courses and it changed my life. I have a deep appreciation for the gift of a formal Liberal Arts education.

Advice to someone currently in the Liberal Arts? Be ever curious. Because of the Liberal Arts, I’m a lifelong student. From that moment, I began to listen to music differently.

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Dr. Scott Churchill is a graduate of the College’s Clinical Psychology program and a current Professor at the University of Dallas. We talked with him about his time at Duquesne as well as his role in the American Psychological Association’s (APA) legislation to ban the use of psychologists in the use of interrogation regarding national security measures.

What drew you to Duquesne’s Clinical Psychology program?

I had studied pre-med biology at Bucknell while taking several courses in existential phenomenology along the way, and had developed a deep and abiding interest in this fascinating and inspiring field of thought.

When graduation approached, I began to waver between medicine and philosophy. I visited Bucknell in the fall and met Ernie Keen, a phenomenologist in the psychology department who told me to apply to Duquesne.

While working at a New Jersey psychiatric clinic the following January, I read the Duquesne catalogue and it was as though the program description had been written specifically for me! I immediately began writing my application essay. Because of my limited psychology background, I was placed on the wait list. A pre-med student accepted to the program decided to attend medical school so I was called as his replacement. Back then, classes were constructed as a gestalt by the faculty. It was not a simple matter of having a number on a wait list: you were selected to fill a particular spot. So it felt amazing to have made it, finally, into Duquesne.

How has your professional and personal experience shaped being a key sponsor of a bill by the American Psychological Association banning the involvement of psychologists in national security interrogations?

Torture has always been a concern to me, perhaps because of an almost “too intense” capacity for empathizing and imagining the horrors that people have been subjected to in the course of human history, whether depicted in books, film, painting, etc. As a member of APA Council—beginning when I was a substitute representative in the early 2000s—I became aware of psychologist involvement in torture. This issue continued to concern me over the course of the next decade.

I came from a strong Christian background; my mother, a sympathizer for the cause of Native Americans, wrote letters to President Eisenhower on their behalf when I was a child.

Two of my Duquesne mentors, most notably Constance T. Fischer and Amedeo Giorgi, had been involved in APA governance as Division 24 and 32 presidents. Fischer was APA president for many years, which involved her in professional ethics issues.

My therapy professors, Charles Maes and Anthony Barton, had deeply impressed me with their profound sense of empathy for their patients; and Rolf von Eckartsberg and Frank Buckley, also Duquesne psychology graduate professors, along with Paul Colaiuzzi, inspired a strong sense of commitment to social justice. Indeed, my first of two internships—both arranged by Fischer—was for the PA Governor’s Justice Commission, writing qualitative assessments of police, court, jail, juvenile detention center, and other social programs funded by the Allegheny County Planning Committee. Fischer’s guidance helped me to see how I could use my role in these settings as an advocate for social change.

As a Council Rep for Division 32 (Humanistic Psychology), I had been privy to the ongoing review of the APA’s torture policies, and its longstanding efforts to keep psychologists out of interrogations. When in the early summer of 2013 I read a letter to the list serve for the Council of Representatives from activist Dan Aalbers, I decided to write back to him, to reach out and offer to bring a resolution to Council to finally implement the 2008 membership resolution to remove psychologists from GITMO and other black sites, for once and for all—if for no other reason than that the very presence of a psychologist in an
Have you had regular contact with the Psychology department?

I’ve been back to the Psychology Department on each visit since graduating in 1984—at least twenty visits in 35 years. I’ve stayed in touch with all of my professors, often staying with them. I have enjoyed watching the department grow and develop, and continue to welcome students who are interested in developing what we used to think of as “alternatives to mainstream psychology”—alternatives that now, thanks to advocacy in the APA inspired primarily by Fischer, who taught us to work within the system to change it—have become part of the mainstream.

What are some of your fondest memories of your time at Duquesne as a student?

Bonding with classmates in Duquesne’s first-year master’s program. Then as a doctoral student in a specially combined class that included eight students accepted from my master’s program and another eight from the previous year’s two-year program, I became part of what von Eckartsberg from the previous year’s two-year program, referred to as an “existential village” of students and faculty. We bonded for a common cause: what Giorgi had termed “the project” of an existential phenomenological psychology.

Endnotes

Dr. Rebecca Cepok
Writing Program
Dr. Richard Duque
Sociology
Dr. Jeff Martin
Writing Program
Dr. Rebecca May
Writing Program
Dr. John Mitchell
History
Dr. Katie Rask
Classics
Justin Sines
Theater Arts Program
Dr. Gregory Specter
English
Dr. Jerry Stinnett
English
Dr. Annarita Primier
Modern Languages and Literatures
Dr. Pamela Walck
Journalism and Multimedia Arts

New Faculty

Promotion to Full Professor:
Dr. Jennifer Bates
Philosophy
Dr. Laura Engel
English
Dr. Kathleen Roberts
Communication and Rhetorical Studies
Dr. Darlene Weaver
Theology

Tenure/Promotion to Associate Professor:
Dr. Faith Barrett
English

Faculty Advancement

Dr. Lori Koelsch
Psychology
Dr. Emad Mirmotahari
English
Dr. Danielle St. Hilaire
English
Dr. Anna Scheid
Philosophy
Dr. Daniel Scheid
Theology
Dr. Elisabeth Vasko
Theology

New Scholars in Residence

John Wagner Givens
Political Science
Limin Jia
Philosophy
Wang Maio
Philosophy
George Mikros
Computer Science
LiLong Qiang
Philosophy
Zhao Tang
Philosophy
Habib Turker
Philosophy
Aminu Wushish Center for Qualitative Inquiry
Wu Xiaoan
Philosophy

Faculty Retirements

Dr. Patricia Durham
Political Science
Dr. Charles Hanna
Sociology

Dr. Doug Harper
Sociology
Dr. Gregorio Martin
Modern Languages and Literatures
Dr. G. Evan Stoddard
Associate Dean of the College
Dr. Steven Vardy
History

Faculty Endowed Professors

Dr. Ronald C. Arnett
Communication and Rhetorical Studies
Fr. Eugene Elochukwu
Theology
Dr. Pierre Schouwer C.S.Sp. Endowed Chair
Dr. Linda Kinnahan
English
Dr. Mia Evms
Psychology
Dr. Linda Kinnahan
Theology

Dr. Emad Mirmotahari
English
Dr. Danielle St. Hilaire
English
Dr. Anna Scheid
Philosophy
Dr. Daniel Scheid
Theology
Dr. Elisabeth Vasko
Theology

Special Achievement College 2015 Excellence Awards

Dr. Laura Engel
English
Dr. Mark Haas
Political Science
Dr. Lisa Kinnahan
History

Faculty Excellence for Service to the Mission Award
JMA Department
Work at Ground Zero

The McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts at Duquesne University has a unique partnership with the 9/11 Tribute Center in New York City. We were fortunate to send two Journalism and Multimedia Arts students to participate in their summer internship program. Sara Speedy and Jen Liedl, two master’s of media arts and technology students, participated in the 2015 program. This is their story.

Sarah Speedy

The September 11th Families Association welcomed Jen Liedl and me with open arms, excited to share their knowledge with us and welcome us into their workplace. I was given a list of projects I’d be working on over the summer and some daily tasks. I was lucky enough to get to spend time getting to know the staff and volunteers of the Tribute Center while filming events and programs throughout the month. I filmed the weekly program, We Were There and the story telling program The Moth, and I photographed quite a few events such as the teacher’s workshop and a benefit both held by the Families Association and Tribute Center.

I spent the majority of my time creating, filming and editing a video for the crew of the U.S. S. New York. The ship, adopted by the Tribute Center, is made with seven tons of steel from the Twin Towers. On Sept. 11 last year, the video was aired on the ship thanking its crew members for their sacrifice and service.

The September 11th Families Association strives to preserve the memory of Sept. 11, 2001 and educate those who did not experience it. This internship was about much more than videography. It was unlike any job I’ve done before.

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STUDENT & ALUMNI NEWS
STUDENT & ALUMNI NEWS
came together. The years that followed, a city, a nation and a world 2001. On this day, and the days, weeks and police officers, emergency medical strength and resilience. Their firefighters, some were police officers, construction workers, recovery workers and others who were close loved ones of the victims of that day.

I filmed as a fireman told his story of working on the site during the recovery process. He, along with many others, spent days looking through rubble hoping to find a single survivor. He told us, when the site grew silent, he knew another fallen brother or sister was discovered. The site went silent to salute them.

Each of these stories was as important and powerful as the next. They were full of terror, tears, love and sometimes joy. These stories, however, always ended with a bit of hope. They were shared to spread knowledge, to educate, to make our world a better place.

How could someone that I've never met before do something so comforting and supportive? I believe that, in that moment, I experienced a piece of New Yorkers' caring and supportive nature. When they're faced with tragedy, they bond together and help in any way that they can. When I was in a time of need, this woman helped me—sure, it wasn't a big sign, it was just a simple hug to let me know that she was there.

This is what people did every day after Sept. 11, 2001. New York, the nation and the world came together to help, big or small. New Yorkers and all of those affected by the attacks were some of the strongest people that I have ever had the pleasure to meet. This is in memory of all of the victims of the attacks and all of the service men and women that were lost that day. You will never be forgotten.

The Tribute Center, located in lower Manhattan, is run by people who experienced the tragedy of 9/11 firsthand. Volunteers speak and run guided tours of the Center as well as the memorials. They tell their personal stories to visitors throughout the tours, in We Were There presentations and during The Moth workshops (workshops for storytelling). Some of the volunteers were firefighters, some were police officers, construction workers, recovery workers and others who were close loved ones of the victims of that day.

Personally, I come from a firefighter family. My dad is a volunteer firefighter in the area where I grew up. I know what it is like to have my loved ones leave at a moment's notice to go on a call. Regardless of the time of day or night, they go with no questions asked.

So, I understand the feeling of not knowing what the future may hold for them when they respond. With that being said, during my time working for the Tribute Center, two peoples’ stories made me cry. I cried for them and the pain that they had been through, and I cried because I thought of how easily my dad could suffer the same fate.

One story that really touched me was told by a woman whose father was a firefighter. She began by saying that once she heard the news of the attacks she knew that her father would be one of the many who would respond. As she told her story, I could feel the tears in my eyes beginning to form. She concluded her story by saying, “I know that the first step to recovering is to acknowledge that something happened… so this is in memory of my father, Captain – -, New York City firefighter.” At this point, I began to cry uncontrollably. I couldn’t even begin to imagine what she and many others had to go through, that sadness reached my heart. She had to go through something that no one should ever have to experience—an unfair death of a loved one.

After I retreated to the restroom to attempt to gain control over my emotions, a woman, whom I have never met before, gave me a hug and I lost control again. She gave me a pat on the back and told me, “I know, it’s hard to listen to these stories. It’s so hard!”

How could someone that I’ve never met before be so comforting and supportive? I believe that, in that moment, I experienced a piece of New Yorkers’ caring and supportive nature. When they’re faced with tragedy, they bond together and help in any way that they can. When I was in a time of need, this woman helped me—sure, it wasn’t a big sign, it was just a simple hug to let me know that she was there.

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“My experience with the McNulty College of Liberal Arts Learning Communities established the foundation for my education, and more broadly for how I view the world. My sense of responsibility to others was instilled in me through the service learning component of the communities. The central themes of Judaism (my learning community) stuck with me throughout my education and I still carry them with me in my everyday life. To discuss concepts in my courses and subsequently help implement them in the real world through service to others was a totally comprehensive and immersive way of learning, and it was instrumental in defining who I am as a person today.”

–Neal Caldwell (AY10)