Faculty and Staff Updates

The Department of History bids farewell to Barb Blauvelt, who is retiring in July 2014 after forty five years at IPFW.

Barb Blauvelt’s work as the secretary for both the Departments of History and Political Science has been tremendous. She is responsible for the smooth functioning of two departments and she has dealt effectively with an ever-increasing workload. She never forgets that the reason we are all here is for the students. Majors in both departments are aware of her knowledge and frequently went to her for assistance in scheduling and other issues. She invariably responded positively to such requests for assistance, and students knew they could rely on her. Her responsiveness and extensive knowledge help explain why students from outside the department sought her advice. Her high-quality work, as well as her extra service, has always been, first and foremost, in the interest of the students. She has trained many department chairs (and two deans) over the years, and has served as an invaluable support system for new faculty arriving at IPFW.

Faculty in the Departments of History and Political Science have a 40+ year tradition of playing a vital role in IPFW governance. Following the lead of earlier faculty members, current members of the history and political science departments are very active in IPFW governance. Indeed, faculty members in these two departments play a vital role in IPFW politics today. Invariably, faculty members seek Barb’s counsel when discussing university policies and procedures. She explained how policies have evolved over time and the specific steps needed to address an issue or problem. It was a welcome perspective that always put quality of education and the welfare of students first. Many of the accomplishments of the department faculty would have been impossible with Barb.

Over the years at IPFW, Barb has served as the Secretary for the Fort Wayne Senate, President of the Clerical and Service Staff Advisory Committee and in numerous other ways. She helped start the Mike Downs Center for Indiana Politics and continues to serve as its Secretary. For the entire existence of the Brown Ink Society, which provides emergency grants for students in need, she has served as the secretary and treasurer. She schedules the meetings and has helped lead the fundraising efforts of both organizations. Her efforts have raised over $100,000 for IPFW, with more than 320 grants worth more than $87,000 dispersed to students in need. It is hard to envision an activity that has been more important to students in need and which has played a more positive role in student retention.

Barb’s community service outside IPFW is extensive as well. She has been active in Indiana politics, including precinct work and election monitoring. She is also active in her church.

Barb’s extensive experience, intelligence, pleasant demeanor, and willingness to always do more than is required in any given situation has made Barb the "go-to" person for students, faculty in the two departments, as well as the chairs.

Barb's dedication to her position, and to the university community as a whole, is well-known and respected. She has earned this much-deserved respect in part because of her ability to work closely and productively with individuals at every level of the university structure. We are
unaware of any situation where Ms. Blauvelt has not exhibited a positive attitude, tact, diplomacy and genuine warmth in dealing with others.

Barb’s encyclopedic knowledge of all things IPFW, her excellence in everything she does, her kindness and patience, her support and encouragement, and her delightful presence will all be greatly missed.

As we all wish Barb the very best with this new phase of her life, which will involve new adventures including more international travel, the Department of History moves into uncharted territory—the department without Barb.

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The Department of History also bids farewell to Professor Bernd Fischer, who will be retiring this spring after 20 years at IPFW.


Dr. Fischer made significant contributions to the department and the university. He was an excellent teacher, and students benefitted from his fine instruction. He was also an ideal colleague and department citizen. Furthermore, as department chair he fostered a very positive and harmonious department culture, which proved to be a great environment for junior faculty members to flourish in. Additionally, he and his wife Deborah Fischer generously hosted many department and IPFW events at their house, including holiday and retirement parties. He also served the university and the profession in his role as a journal editor (for *CLIO, A Journal of Literature, History, and the Philosophy of History* and for *Albanian Studies*) and by serving on numerous local, national, and international Executive and Advisory boards.

Dr. Fischer was also an active member of Fort Wayne, a community he appreciated and enjoyed being a part of. He made many good friends in the area. Additionally, he was director of the Fort Wayne International Forum. Community members regularly attended this popular forum at which there was a talk on international affairs and a meal. The forum moved from its original setting at the Rib Room to JK O’Donnell’s a few years ago.

Dr. Fischer is a renowned scholar. We don’t have nearly enough space to list all his accomplishments here, so we will have to settle for a very abbreviated list. Owing to his expertise in Albania, he was appointed special advisor to the Albanian Royal Court (2008), and elected to be a member of the Albanian Academy of Sciences (2006). He wrote and edited numerous books on the Balkans. Here’s a partial list: *Balkan Strongmen: Dictators and Authoritarian Rulers of*
Southeastern Europe (2007); Albanian Identities, History and Myth (2002); Albania at War, 1939-1945 (1999); and King Zog and the Struggle for Stability in Albania (1984). Many of his works have been translated into foreign languages, and his monographs have not only won critical acclaim, but also been very popular. He is invited to Europe regularly to give presentations, and entire conferences have been organized to honor his work. Unsurprisingly, he has also been awarded the top faculty research award here at IPFW. As an expert on the Balkans, he has given countless press and televised interviews both in the U.S. (for example in the NY Times) and abroad. He has also served as a consultant to the State Department and served as an expert witness on dozens of asylum cases.

We greatly appreciate Bernd’s service to the department and the university and wish him the best in his retirement. While he will be greatly missed (not least of all his contagious and agreeable chuckle), we are happy that he has moved on to an exciting new phase in his life. Upon retirement he and his wife Deborah moved to Washington State, right on the Pacific Ocean, a coastal region where he spent a great deal of time in the past. In addition to enjoying the outdoors, he will continue writing. He has agreed to write a book on Albania for the distinguished Cambridge University Press Concise History Series.

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Dr. Christine Erickson is continuing to work on her book manuscript, Fraternity on the Frontier: The Montana Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s.

Dr. Suzanne LaVere’s book, Out of the Cloister: Scholastic Exegesis of the Song of Songs, 1100-1250 will be published next year. She is presenting papers at three conferences in the next few months, and is working on articles on medieval sermons and a new book project on Church reform and pastoral care in the High Middle Ages.

Dr. Ann Livschiz was appointed to the Honors Program Transition Team for Fall 2013 and as an Interim Honors Program Director for Spring 2014. She is continuing work on her project on the memory of the Holocaust in Belorussia.


Dr. David G. Schuster’s current project is a condensed history of American medicine for an edited volume on the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. When not working on his research, lesson planning, or reading papers, David can be found walking and bicycling around town. He tries to avoid using his car and encourages other people to do the same.
Dr. Richard Weiner's recent publications include "Antecedents to Daniel Cosio Villegas' Post-Revolutionary ideology, which appears in Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos (Winter 2014) and a forthcoming chapter on Mexico and Central America in the Routledge Handbook to the History of Global Economic Thought. This summer he plans to work on his book manuscript on Mexico's Legendary Wealth.

The Department of History welcomes new faculty member, Dr. Deborah Bauer, in Fall 2014. She received her PhD from UCLA in 2013, and she will be teaching the Western Civilization survey and courses on European history, the history of France and the French Empire, and the history of espionage. Her research focuses on the professionalization of permanent intelligence and counter-intelligence agencies in France in the half-century prior to World War I. She is working on her book manuscript, Marianne is Watching, along with articles on the role of the military in directing espionage work and the shifting perceptions of spies in the public imagination. She is looking forward to sharing her passion for European history with IPFW students.