

# continuing

## TRADITION OF FACULTY EXCELLENCE

*New faculty members demonstrate commitment to DC's mission and educational vision of engaged learning*

*by Dr. Catharine O'Connell, Provost*

In the four years I have been at Defiance College, it has been my pleasure to welcome into the faculty ranks 12 new tenure-track faculty members. In the following pages, you will learn more about these extraordinary individuals and their passion for teaching and learning. One new faculty member from each of our five academic divisions is interviewed at length, with the others introduced through brief profiles. These professors continue the tradition of DC faculty members who were and are deeply knowledgeable about their disciplines, committed to student learning, actively involved in the community, and ready and willing to move the College forward in achieving its goals for the future.

In the last few years DC has focused on faculty hiring, and done so in a way that maximizes the effectiveness of our unique educational mission to integrate academic excellence and education for responsible global citizenship. All of the faculty members profiled in these pages find ways to make organic connections between learning in the classroom and real-world authentic problems. They model and teach professional responsibility and, in doing so, prepare our students for success in their chosen fields and for citizenship.

While the terms we use to describe a Defiance education today are of relatively recent coinage – “civic engagement,” “active learning,” “service-based research” – the concept is not new at all. The spirit that energizes the DC faculty today when they work in community settings with students is the same spirit that animated such activities as winter term trips to the American Southwest led by Randy Buchman, Bob Boehm and Eug Andrews. When professors travel with students internationally to

promote global understanding, they are motivated by the same pedagogical and ethical concerns that led Calista Olds to journey to the Holy Land with her students in the 1960s. The concentrated focus on the undergraduate student and his or her academic potential that has led to the success of alumni who worked with faculty like Bernie Mikula and Jim Frey is present today not only in our science faculty (four of whom are recent additions who bring exemplary academic credentials) but across the disciplines.

Today, collaborative faculty-student research is recognized as a mark of educational excellence, and DC faculty members regularly work closely with students to carry out such projects in all disciplines and around the world through the McMaster School for Advancing Humanity.

Emeriti faculty members Bernie Mikula and Maggie Noble Mikula note that the work of our new faculty members positions us well for future excellence: “The new faculty and the new approaches to the disciplines they represent have brought cutting-edge knowledge to Defiance College.” They go on to observe that work such as the collaborative faculty-student learning communities of the McMaster School connect to and extend earlier innovations. “Winter terms provided



*Junior faculty process at commencement.*

Learning Communities within disciplines. McMaster provides Learning Communities that are cross-disciplinary at both the faculty and student level, and the multiple projects' foci are determined by the host site or culture. Contributions by alumni such as Helen and Harold McMaster and their children have made possible the dreams of earlier faculty members to encourage student and faculty cooperation in research to address significant problems. This kind of collaboration can best happen in a small college environment.”

As you know, our new DC motto makes use of the uniqueness of our name: “Defy the Ordinary.” With the extraordinary professional and life experiences the new members of our faculty bring to the classroom, I think you will agree that they defy conventional expectations of faculty and will continue the spirit of Defiance that has given our alumni such a strong educational foundation. ♦