Widener University Establishes Two Independent Law Schools

Widener University is pleased to announce the American Bar Association has approved its application to split its School of Law, which has campuses in Harrisburg, PA, and Wilmington, DE, into separate law schools that will operate independently of each other, but remain part of the university. They will be led by separate deans.

Rod Smolla will serve as dean of Widener University Delaware Law School, the name for the school in Wilmington.

Christian A. Johnson will serve as dean of Widener University Commonwealth Law School, the name for the school in Harrisburg.

The change in status and new names will take effect July 1, the day both deans begin their tenures. New websites for the schools recently debuted at harrisburglaw.widener.edu and delawarelaw.widener.edu. Among their many features are biographies of Smolla and Johnson. Each of the new deans has had a multi-faceted career as an educator, scholar, and attorney.

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The Interdisciplinary Sexuality Research Collaborative recently launched at Widener to support research endeavors that are both interdisciplinary and focus on topics of human sexuality. Under the direction of Dr. Justin Sitron, associate professor and PhD program director in the Center for Human Sexuality Studies, the new collaborative is home to a mix of faculty, graduate students, and graduate assistants who are all human sexuality doctoral students.

“The collaborative allows us to consolidate resources,” said Sitron. “With every research project, there is naturally going to be down time in the process. Therefore, if we can bring resources into the collaborative, we can share them and maximize them. For example, we can pay one staff to work on multiple projects at a time, cycling through the busy times and the down times.”

The collaborative is currently contracted by a consumer packaged goods corporation to conduct surveys and focus groups on college-aged students on topics related to sex and sexuality. With assistance from Dr. Angie Corbo, associate professor of communication studies, and her students, the collaborative successfully recruited more than 250 willing participants for this project, which will require 80 participants and will run this semester through the end of the summer.

In addition to this project funded through corporate dollars, the collaborative is supporting a range of interdisciplinary research studies, many of which are led by Widener faculty. Topics range from aligning sexuality education curriculum with the standards for school health education to examining the way men communicate within their friendships with other men.

Sitron explained that the corporate funding exclusively supports the examination of the sponsor’s research questions, so the other interdisciplinary projects must share the remaining resources. Therefore, he said that the collaborative is always looking for sources of funding so that it can continue to grow and produce meaningful research in the human sexuality field.

“This is not a field that attracts research funding easily, so this collaborative helps ensure that important progress continues to take place in exploring topics related to human sexuality,” said Lindsay Lock, a human sexuality doctoral student and a graduate assistant with the collaborative. “I am lucky to have the opportunity to be a part of this experience.”

Learn More
To learn more about the collaborative, visit its offices on Tuesdays through Thursdays on the third floor of Old Main, or send an e-mail to ISRC@mail.widener.edu.
Faces of Widener: Jessica Roque

Have you ever followed the stats for one of Widener’s sports teams or read a recap from one of the games? Have you ever wondered how all of this information is gathered and gathered so quickly? This is the work of the sports information director in the Athletics Department.

Jessica Roque, who took on the role earlier this winter, jumped into her new position full steam ahead with the winter sports ending and spring programs starting.

“It’s been hectic with all of the teams going at once,” she said. “However, the people I work with have helped make the transition easy.”

Roque, who previously worked in the Athletics Department at Long Island University Post, is currently preparing for April, one of the busiest months of the year. There is an athletic event every day of the month.

Roque spends most of her time coordinating home athletic events with the help of Matt Judge, her graduate assistant. One of them must attend every home athletic event.

While at the game, Roque specializes in the art of multitasking. She not only announces, but also takes all of the stats on the game.

“It’s fun to watch the games, but I have to pay very close attention to every play—especially in fast-paced sports like lacrosse.”

Roque’s favorite sport to watch and announce is softball, as she played for more than 20 years, first at shortstop and then at third base.

Once the spring seasons come to an end, Roque hopes to spend time developing a strategic approach to the department’s social media presence with Facebook and Twitter, as well as Instagram. “I want Widener to be more innovative in how we use social media to support the athletic programs,” she said.

Roque is excited for the challenges and opportunities presented in her new role at Widener. The New Jersey native is also looking forward to seeing her family more between sports seasons.

Roque currently resides in Chester. While she does not get much free time away from campus, when she does, she still finds herself drawn to sports. She is enjoying March Madness and looks forward to cheering for the Yankees over the next couple of months.

Roque also enjoys being outdoors; she likes to fish and immerse herself in nature whenever possible.

Faculty Fellows Corner: Advising Practices

Students seek out faculty members for academic advising during course registration. The advising experience provides a rich dimension that assists with the retention and success of our students. Maximizing the faculty-student relationship for graduate and undergraduate students sets the foundation for student academic success and personal growth. Students become more engaged in campus life when a faculty member takes a personal interest in their goals. Transformative moments for faculty and students occur when the students develop a mentorship where both parties understand the mutual benefit of ongoing communication. A student-centered advising model enhances the seemingly transactional advising process into a holistic investment in student success.

Here are some resources to consider during this high-volume advising season:

Better Advise Graduate Students

[https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2015/03/20/steps-help-professors-better-advise-graduate-students-essay](https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2015/03/20/steps-help-professors-better-advise-graduate-students-essay)

Support Student Engagement and Student Learning Outcomes Achievement


Contact Your Faculty Fellows

If you would like additional help with advising or have another issue you are interested in discussing with a Faculty Fellow, please contact Dr. Brigitte Valesey at bgvalesey@widener.edu or x4485.
Sophomore French students from Evonne Mbadiwe’s class at Chester High School recently visited Widener to learn more about studying French at the collegiate level. The students watched and discussed the French film *Au revoir les enfants*, an autobiographical film about a French boarding school with Jewish pupils during World War II. In addition, they had opportunities to interact with Tim Cairy, director of student success and retention; Micki Davis, director of multicultural student affairs; and Dr. Stephanie Schechner, professor of French and director of the Masters of Arts in Liberal Studies Program, in addition to many Widener French students.

All of the Chester students received hand-written cards (written partially in French) from Widener students welcoming them to the university and encouraging them to consider a major or minor in French at Widener. Widener students also talked over lunch with the Chester students about the French Program and the career opportunities available to French-speaking individuals.

“As an international relations major, I spoke with the Chester students about my goals to work for the United Nations, which requires employees to know two languages,” said junior Aniska Solomon. “I explained how studying French in addition to my major will prepare me for working with the international community. I don’t think the students realized how many places speak French outside of France. There are 21 French-speaking countries in Africa alone.”

Jillian Corda, a junior hospitality management major and French minor, is co-president of the French Club with Angelique Matusz, a nursing and French major. Corda explained that this event with Chester High aligns with the goals of the French Club to recruit students into the French Program and to share events celebrating the French culture with a larger audience.

“Students don’t always know when they come into college that French is an option as a major or a minor,” Corda said. “We want to spread awareness so that more students enroll in the French Program early on so that they can complete major or minor requirements in time before graduation.”

Chester Mayor Gives Honors Convocation Address

Linder’s Convocation Address on March 20 concluded the weeklong Honors Week celebration that recognizes student accomplishments through student presentations, faculty lectures, and recitals.

Prior to becoming Chester’s mayor in 2012, Linder served 22 years as a professor of social sciences at Delaware Community College. An expert in individual and group counseling, alcohol and drug education, and marketing and resource development, he has written a number of publications about student development and peer pressure.

He said Widener made a tremendous difference in his young life. He was the first to attend college in his family, and while he was scared at first, he said that Widener’s faculty and students encouraged him, supported him, and changed his life. “I’m grateful to Widener and the people who supported me—that was a human capital investment,” said Linder, who graduated with a bachelor’s degree in behavioral sciences and went on to earn a master’s from Kutztown University of Pennsylvania.

Widener’s Honors Program began in 1988—12 years after Linder graduated. The first Honors Week was held in 1992. The university since has hosted convocation speeches by many notable figures including Brent Staples, an author and member of the *New York Times* editorial board; Delaware Superior Court Judge Susan C. Del Pesco; and most recently, Chris Hahn, a technology entrepreneur.

Following Linder’s address, nearly 250 students from the Honors Program in General Education, School of Business Administration Honors Program, Engineering Honors Program, and the School of Nursing Honors Program, as well as inductees into 31 distinct Widener honor societies, were individually recognized for their achievements.
Loyd Bastin Named Sarnoski Science Faculty Fellow

Dr. Loyd Bastin, associate professor and chair of chemistry and coordinator of undergraduate research, has been named the university's second Cynthia H. Sarnoski Science Faculty Fellow. Bastin has received the two-year fellowship to support his research with undergraduate students on the greener synthesis of pharmaceuticals.

Since Spring 2013, Bastin has worked with Widener students to develop a green synthesis of isoxazole derivatives, which serve as building blocks for pharmaceuticals used as anticonvulsants, antiepileptics, and antimicrobials. To “green” the synthetic process, Bastin and his students aim to reduce waste and to find alternative chemicals to use as reagents to replace those that are corrosive, toxic, volatile, and sometimes carcinogenic.

While Bastin is confident that he and his students have developed a new process to synthesize diarylisoxazole derivatives that uses green reagents for each step of the synthesis, he wants to continue looking at alternative reagents and purification techniques that generate less waste. In addition, the next phase of his research will involve changing the starting material in the synthesis to produce additional derivatives that potentially have medicinal properties.

“The plan is to find a green synthesis that works robustly to make any derivative we want,” said Bastin. “The funding from the Sarnoski Fellowship will enable me to focus over the summer on these next steps for my research and recruit students to work alongside me as research assistants. So far, our students have taken a real interest in green chemistry whether it’s because they are interested in environmental preservation or they see it as the future of science. As the Sarnoski Fellow, I can continue to provide them with opportunities to explore this important topic.”

Bastin will begin receiving support from the Sarnoski Fellowship July 1, 2015. The fellowship is funded by a gift to Taking the Lead—The Campaign for Widener made by Cynthia H. Sarnoski. It rotates to lend support to science faculty members in their scholarship and research endeavors. Dr. Hemlata Mistry, associate professor of biology, was the inaugural recipient.

“Dr Bastin’s research not only provides a wonderful experience for students to practice and enhance a range of skills that will be invaluable to their future careers, it does so with a clear commitment for preservation of the environment,” said Sarnoski.

To learn more, read the full news release.

Biology Faculty, Students Host Brain Awareness Week Events at WPCS

First and second grade students at the Widener Partnership Charter School tested their senses of balance, smell, touch, and sight through a series of interactive activities organized by the Biology Club on March 17 and 19 in recognition of Brain Awareness Week. For the second straight year, Widener science undergraduates led by Dr. Cary Leung, assistant professor of biology, helped the young WPCS students recognize the importance of protecting their brains by demonstrating many important functions of this organ.

Alex D’Ginto, a junior biology major, explained that all of the activities centered around the brain's role in controlling our senses. One activity required the WPCS students to balance on one leg after spinning in a circle, while another challenged them to identify objects based on smell or touch alone. D’Ginto said that she and Leung got the idea to narrow the focus of their Brain Awareness Week teachings and ideas for activities while attending the Society for Neuroscience International Conference in October, at which they also presented on Widener’s 2014 Brain Awareness Week events.

D’Ginto received a Schmutz Student Mini-Grant to support her efforts to organize this year’s Brain Awareness Week events with Leung. The grant helped with the purchase of supplies and prizes for the WPCS outreach.

“I’m interested in working with children as a PT in the future, so I was excited to get this opportunity to plan Brain Awareness Week with Dr. Leung,” said D’Ginto. “I think the students are really enjoying our lessons and learning from them.”

Social Work Students Earn Two Schmutz Mini-Grants

Other community projects recently completed as a result of Schmutz Student Mini-Grants include a Healthy Girls of Chester Initiative and the Swimming with Pride program. Both were implemented by social work students and recently featured on the Widener homepage.
Reflections on Dr. Sarah Roth’s Lecture about Slavery, Race, and Gender in American Popular Culture  
By Courtney Eble, a freshman nursing major

As I listened to Dr. Sarah Roth speak about how black men have been portrayed throughout history by white men and women, I realized that just because a certain issue does not affect someone, it does not mean it should be ignored. Professor Roth discussed how black men have been portrayed as savages through books, works of art, and even movies and how these portrayals in pop culture help define how society perceives a group of people.

While Professor Roth shared many examples of black males being portrayed as inferior and evil in pop culture throughout history, the most important thing to recognize is that these images are exaggerated and incorrect. The color of an individual’s skin or one’s gender has no correlation with their aggression level or worth. Equality is a human right and is deserved by everyone regardless of race or gender.

Although the media is slowly straying away from the intensity of the stereotypes discussed by Professor Roth, it is important that society is aware that stereotypes still exist in pop culture so we can all help stop them. Thanks to Professor Roth, I will be more cognizant in the future when watching movies or TV shows.

Reflections on Dr. Shirley Randell’s Lecture about the Impact of Women Leaders on Global Democracy and Development  
By Faith Foster, a freshman nursing major

Dr. Randell has worked extensively in education reform in developing countries, including Rwanda and Bangladesh. Due to her remarkable work with women and men in developing countries, she was acknowledged as one of Australia’s 100 Women of Influence. As Dr. Randell explained, she gained experience to work on larger global issues impacting women by teaching Aboriginal children in isolated areas of Australia. Dr. Randell has also worked in educational reform in Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka.

After attending Dr. Randell’s event, I was truly inspired by her wisdom, intelligence, and extensive work in global, economic, and gender equality affairs. Her selflessness and compassionate nature is displayed through the impressive work that she has done through writing, speaking, and creating educational programs on these specific issues. For instance, Dr. Randell has created family planning programs for families in Rwanda to help both men and women prepare for raising children and sharing household duties. Through her family planning programs, Dr. Randell has promoted gender equality within Rwandan homes.

At the end of Dr. Randell’s presentation, she remarked that the story of a “global woman” is the “story of lots of anonymous women working together, cooperating, collaborating, and supporting each other.” While I listened to her statement, I reflected on the importance of women having leadership opportunities and positions. Women in leadership positions have the power to represent the voices of underrepresented women and the various issues of oppression and discrimination they encounter. As global leaders, women in these leadership positions can inspire younger women by serving as symbols of the true and remarkable strength that all women encompass.
Noteworthy

Dr. Mary Gozza-Cohen, assistant professor of education; 
Dr. Xiaboa Li, associate professor of education; 
Dr. Dana Reisboard, associate professor of education; and 
Dr. Noreen Yoder, associate professor and director of the Child Development Center, along with teacher candidates, represented Widener’s School of Education, Innovation, and Continuing Studies at the Revving Up for Literacy event held March 21 at the Interboro School District’s Kindergarten Academy. SEICS provided support for the Literacy Fair for families in the Interboro School District. Teacher candidates Meghan Graham and Gina Schonberger created a successful activity for the children with the Number One Sam Race Car Photo Booth. They will present on the community event during Student Project Day April 24.

Dr. Daniel Robinson, the Homer C. Nearing Jr. Distinguished Professor of English, contributed an essay on Wordsworth’s use of the sonnet to the new book Wordsworth in Context, edited by Wordsworth scholar Andrew Bennett and published by Cambridge University Press.

New Cake Boss Named

The School of Hospitality Management announced the 4th Annual Cake Boss on Thursday, March 26. Ashley Miller, a junior hospitality management major, took the honors for her Italian Love Cake, which was entered in the “Grandma’s favorite” category. The Italian Love Cake is a layer of cheesecake, a layer of chocolate cake, and a layer of chocolate mousse. Miller placed first out of 17 entries. This year’s competition was the largest to date with more than 200 people in attendance. Also on hand was Master Chef Joseph K. Poon, known for his Asian Fusion Cuisine and sculpting fruit work.

Spotlight on Sports: Ian Gaynor

For the first time in 30 years, the Widener men’s swimming program can boast an All-American. In just his second season with the Pride, Ian Gaynor of Donegal, Ireland, (pictured above with Head Coach Katy Peterson) earned himself a trip to this year’s NCAA Division III Swimming & Diving Championships held in Shenandoah, TX, March 18–21.

Not wasting any time on making a name for himself, the Irishman swam his way into the consolation finals of the 50-yard freestyle, tying for 10th on day one. Finishers nine through 16 of each event are tabbed All-America Honorable Mention.

He did himself one better as he posted a school-record, seventh-best time of 44.58 in the preliminary rounds of the 100-yard freestyle to grant himself All-America accolades on the final day. The top-eight swimmers are given this praise. Gaynor then bested himself, cutting five-hundredths of a second off of his earlier time as he reached the wall after 44.53 seconds and moved up to sixth in the finals.

Staying true to being a “student-athlete,” the management/marketing major has been recognized for his work in the classroom as well. Most recently, he was one of six Pride athletes named to the Winter Academic All-MAC Team and one of 59 listed on the Academic Honor Roll.

The last member of the Pride men’s swimming program to garner All-America status was Mark Manera, who earned it twice in ’85 and ’86.
Two-Week Peek
A Look at the Next Two Weeks in Widener Events

Wednesday, April 1
3 p.m. President for a Day Ice Cream Social; University Center Atrium
4 p.m. Reading by Visiting Writer Mairead Byrne; LC1

Thursday, April 2
9 a.m.–8 p.m. Public Interest Law Alliance Silent Auction; Delaware Campus, Main Law Building, Main Street
11 a.m. Child Development Center Egg Hunt; Old Main Lawn
4 p.m. Guest Lecture by Jim Donahue (SUNY-Potsdam): “New Directions in Narrative Theory and the Importance of Interdisciplinary Study;” Wolfgram Library, Drost Room
7 p.m. “Climate Change and Climate Action: The Path Forward for Pennsylvania and the Nation,” lecture by Ken Kimmell, president of the Union of Concerned Scientists; Harrisburg Campus, Administration Building, A180
8:30–9:30 p.m. Stargazing; Widener Observatory

Tuesday, April 7
11:30 a.m. Hospitality Lunch Series; Marriott Dining Room
12 p.m. Advice and a Slice: Cover Letters; Career Services

Wednesday, April 8
9 a.m.–12 p.m. SBDC Seminar: Second Step; Widener SBDC
6:30 p.m. Crime Film Series: Kids for Cash; Freedom Hall Auditorium

Thursday, April 9
9 a.m.–12 p.m. SBDC Seminar: Doing Business with the Commonwealth of PA; Widener SBDC

12–2 p.m. Jeop-BAR-dy Competition; Delaware Campus, Main Law Building, Ruby R. Vale Moot Courtroom
4 p.m. Annual John L. Gedid Lecture: “The Executive’s Duty to Enforce the Law;” Harrisburg Campus, Administration Building, A180
6–7 p.m. French Club Charity Fundraiser; University Center, Webb Room
7:30 p.m. Widener Wind Ensemble/Percussion Ensemble Spring Concert; KLC 1 (Music Hall)

Friday, April 10
3 p.m. Registration begins for Run Like a Colorful Fool 5K (Race start at 4 p.m.); Memorial Field
6:30 p.m. Giving Voice: Women, Artists, Inspirations—Gallery Talk; Widener Art Gallery
8 p.m. Stargazing; Widener Observatory

Saturday, April 11
3 p.m. End of Campaign Celebration; Memorial Field

Sunday, April 12
7 p.m. 2nd Annual Student Voices Project; Alumni Auditorium

Monday, April 13
8:30 p.m. Stargazing; Widener Observatory

Tuesday, April 14
11:30 a.m. Hospitality Lunch Series; Marriott Dining Room
3–6 p.m. Backpack to Briefcase; Lathem Hall

Wednesday, April 15
6 p.m. SBDC Seminar: First Step; Widener SBDC

Art Gallery Talk Featuring the Artists of the “Giving Voice” Exhibit
When: Friday, April 10 6:30 p.m.
Where: Widener Art Gallery, University Center
Details: The Widener Art Gallery currently features the work of four local women artists in the exhibit “Giving Voice,” on display through May 16. These artists, pictured below, will talk about their work at an upcoming event.

Pictured from left to right are the artists of the “Giving Voice” exhibit Martina Johnson-Allen, Anyta Thomas-Burwell, Tanya Murphy, and Natalie Brown.

Run Like a “Colorful” Fool 5K
When: Friday, April 10 3 p.m. Registration & Fun Run 4 p.m. Race
Where: Memorial Field
Details: Students from Widener University’s Institute for Physical Therapy Education have organized a 5K “colorful” run to benefit the Chester Community Physical Therapy Clinic.
To pre-register online, visit widener.edu/marketplace.