Harrisburg Professor Testifies on Capitol Hill

An important United States Senate subcommittee got a taste recently of the quality education Widener Law Harrisburg students are exposed to in the classroom when Professor Jill E. Family shared her expertise in immigration law at a government hearing.

Family, director of the Law & Government Institute at Widener Law Harrisburg, was invited to testify March 19 before the Senate Judiciary's Oversight, Agency Action, Federal Rights, and Federal Courts subcommittee chaired by Texas Sen. Ted Cruz. She was one of three experts who discussed the immigration policy President Obama announced recently that would have provided temporary relief from deportation for some undocumented immigrants—and the ensuing court challenge that resulted in a federal judge blocking the new policy last month.

“It was an invaluable experience, where I was in deep discussion with policymakers who were focused on my area of immigration law,” Family said. “It was gratifying to know my work was making a difference, and contributing to an important discourse on Capitol Hill.”

Family's contributions already enrich the discourse in Harrisburg classrooms. Third-year law student Marissa Mowery, who has taken Family's civil procedure and immigration law classes and served as her research assistant, felt compelled to travel to Washington for the hearing.

“It really drove home for me what we talked about in class,” Mowery said, recalling a lesson on the importance of government administrative agencies, which provide critical information for Congress and the American people.

“People were really grateful to have someone on Capitol Hill who is willing to share her knowledge,” Mowery said. “The hearing was a phenomenal experience.”

Law Professor Jill E. Family shakes hands with Texas Sen. Ted Cruz after testifying on Capitol Hill about President Obama's immigration policy.

“Key was to push them on the right things to make immigration law work for everyone,” Mowery said.

“I was able to see the real implementation of the law,” she said. “It was a special experience.”

Family was one of four law professors in the United States who authored an open letter—signed by 104 legal scholars and law professors—that decried U.S. District Judge Andrew Hanen's decision to block Obama's immigration policy. The letter was made public shortly before U.S. Sen. Chris Coons, the ranking subcommittee Democrat, invited Family to testify at the hearing.

The subcommittee also heard from two witnesses who were invited by Republicans: Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach and David B. Rivkin Jr., partner at BakerHostetler in Washington.
Donors, students, faculty, staff, and other friends of the university joined together on Saturday, April 11 to celebrate the success of Taking the Lead ~ the Campaign for Widener, the university’s multi-year fundraising campaign. The most ambitious campaign in Widener history exceeded the highest expectations, surpassing its $58 million goal by more than $5 million.

Widener President James T. Harris III kicked off the festivities, addressing a crowd in Founders Hall. He expressed his gratitude to all who gave to the campaign and his optimism for the future of the university, saying “Taking the Lead ~ The Campaign for Widener has ushered in a whole new era in Widener history. Because of the campaign and those who supported it, the university will continue on the path to national prominence—Widener is a university whose time has come!”

Trustee and Campaign Chair Tom Bown, ’67, also spoke, sharing significant campaign achievements. Campaign funds contributed more than $10 million to scholarships and awards, and helped triple the university’s endowment, which is a crucial indicator of the university’s future financial stability, according to Bown.

After the presentation, guests were treated to a fun-filled array of activities and great food. The event, held in conjunction with Spring Fling (sponsored by Pride Activities Council), also offered points of interest presented by each of the schools at the university. For example, the School of Nursing sponsored carnival games, and the School of Engineering sponsored a lie detector demonstration and popcorn.

End-of-campaign celebrations will continue with a luncheon for top donors and volunteers on April 24 under a tent in the Bown Garden.

For photos from Spring Fling, click, here.

At the recent School of Business Administration Awards Banquet, the school’s Money Club learned that the Widener Board of Trustees authorized the transfer of $500,000 from the endowment portfolio managed by Commonfund to the club’s Student Managed Investment Fund, which is currently valued at about $63,000.

While the details of the transfer are still being worked out, past and present Money Club members are overjoyed by the news.

"With this gift from the Board of Trustees, Widener’s Student Managed Investment Fund is now on par with student-managed funds at other schools in the area,” said Anthony Imbalzano,’14.

During his senior year at Widener, Imbalzano served as the portfolio manager for the university’s Student Managed Investment Fund. Along with classmate Ryan Paul,’14, and Dr. Iqbal Mansur, a co-adviser for the Money Club, he presented last year to the Board of Trustees about the revival of the Money Club and its Student Managed Investment Fund and the benefits of growing the fund.

“The fund is especially important for finance students because they don’t have a finance class until their junior year,” said Imbalzano. “It allows them to work with stocks and more early on in their college careers and test the waters of the field.”

Current Money Club Vice President Michael Bennett, a senior management major with a concentration in finance, says that the $500,000 will enable students to gain experience with different investment vehicles.

“Right now, we only work with large cap stocks, but in our curriculum, we learn about small cap funds, bond funds, and much more,” Bennett said. “With more money to work with, we will have a more complete learning experience that mimics that of the real world.”
Mary Rondolone, system support specialist for Freshman Admissions in the Office of Admissions, started her Widener career in 2001. Never did she imagine that she would enjoy her job so much that she would call her coworkers family.

“I love this office; we are a family,” she said. “Everyone is truly genuine and appreciates one another, which makes it a wonderful office to be a part of.”

Rondolone has always worked with Freshman Admissions; however, the advances of technology over the past decade have led to a number of changes in her responsibilities as things have become more streamlined. Rondolone focuses most of her time importing data for admitted students, whether it’s e-mail lists for prospective students or SAT scores to complete student profiles.

She is also responsible for a number of mailings that are sent from the Office of Admissions, including the newly admitted student information. Fall is the busiest time of year for Rondolone, as the counselors are recruiting and she receives a majority of the SAT scores. Once the admission decisions are made, she prepares the acceptance mailings, which can be up to 100 a day.

Rondolone is currently gearing up for the second Accepted Students Day on Saturday, April 18. In the spring, she lends support to answering questions from newly accepted students.

Though she welcomes prospective students to campus daily, Rondolone was especially excited to welcome her own son, Anthony, as a student years ago. A 2011 graduate of the School of Business Administration, Anthony now serves as a managing technician for the School of Nursing’s Simulation Lab.

Off campus, the Woolwich, NJ, resident enjoys spending time with her children, Anthony and Alyssa, and her husband, Anthony. When she can, she and her husband spend time visiting Fort Myers Beach in Florida. She is currently excited for baseball season, as she is an avid Philadelphia Phillies fan—even this year.

Mary Rondolone, Freshman Admissions

Poet Mairead Byrne Visits Campus

Distinguished Writers Series in early April, Byrne, who teaches at the Rhode Island School of Design, is a native of Ireland who immigrated to the U.S. in 1994. She is the author of five books of poetry, most recently You Have to Laugh: New & Selected Poems (Barrow Street 2013).

“Byrne is both a pleasure to talk with and a pleasure to read,” said sophomore Kelsey Styles, a creative writing/communication studies major who interviewed Byrne and wrote about her visit for the Blue & Gold.

“She is as approachable as her poems make her seem.”

Poet Mairead Byrne reads to students on Main Campus as part of the Distinguished Writers Series at Widener.

Campus Kudos

Kim Braun, prospect researcher in the Development Office, nominated the students who spoke on the panel during the March Safe Space training for a Campus Kudos!

Braun commended the students for taking the time to share their very personal stories with staff and administrators in attendance to help them better understand LGBTQ issues.
Dr. Jill Black Presents on her Engaging Research Agenda

Dr. Jill Black, associate professor of physical therapy, recently delivered a President’s Lecture on the “Four Keys to an Engaging Research Agenda.” Black was selected to speak after earning both the Outstanding Researcher Award and the Faculty Award for Civic Engagement at the 2014 Faculty Awards Banquet.

Black identified the “four keys” to her research agenda as: 1) alignment, 2) connections, 3) collaborations, and 4) meaning, and demonstrated how these keys guided her to pursue research on three topics that truly engage her: breast cancer and rehabilitation, international engagement, and local engagement.

International Engagement

Black spent much of her lecture focused on the international and local engagement threads of her research and how her Widener colleagues and students have played major roles in a number of projects tied to these topics. When discussing international engagement, she focused on her efforts to develop models of international clinical education, motivated by her own clinical experiences in Jamaica and Mexico. “I was amazed how many people I could help just by giving them a walker,” Black said.

Through interviews with faculty who had experience sending PT students for clinical education internationally, Black and her research partner, Dr. Celia Pechak, associate professor at the University of Texas El Paso, worked to construct a conceptual model for optimal international clinical education. Additional qualitative research led her to create guidelines for the international clinical education of physical therapists. “The goal is to make the experience a win-win for all involved,” Black said. She noted that international experience is of increasing importance to equip students with the skills needed to deal with a new era of globalization.

Black is currently involved in case studies evaluating the effectiveness of the international clinical experiences of Widener students to determine how they compare to the professional clinical education experience standards. One student involved in the case study is Alanna DiBiasi, a third-year physical therapy student who recently completed a two-month clinical rotation in Belize. Her experience laid the groundwork for ongoing opportunities in the country for Widener students to complete rotations.

“Going into a developing country to provide physical therapy services challenges you to think critically because you have to provide treatment with minimal resources,” said DiBiasi. “I definitely learned how to be more resourceful and practiced providing care in a number of settings that were out of my comfort zone.”

Local Engagement

The final component of Black’s lecture focused on local engagement and largely highlighted analyses of various aspects of Widener’s student-run Chester Community Physical Therapy Clinic. Along with Dr. Robin Dole, associate dean and director of the Institute for Physical Therapy Education, and Dr. Kerstin Palombaro, associate professor of physical therapy, Black completed a qualitative study to examine student experiences in creating and launching the clinic and the long-term impact of leadership within the clinic on the early professional careers of new graduates. Respondents overwhelmingly said that they took pride in participating in the clinic as students. As graduates, they viewed their involvement as an experience that gave them a sense of pride and confidence.

A next phase of this research involves exploring what impact student participation in a student-run pro bono clinic has on the students’ perceptions of clinical competence and preparedness in their first full-time clinical experience. While current Widener PT students will participate in this study by noting the influences that their pro bono clinic experience has on their clinical experience in a formalized manner through journaling, Black and the rest of the Widener PT faculty already have some insight into the value students place on their experience in the clinic.

Widener students often present on the clinic at various conferences and have even started their own student-run conference focused solely on discussing student-run pro bono physical therapy clinics. The most recent Pro Bono Network Conference brought together about 130 attendees from 26 schools nationwide. As a result of the Widener students’ willingness to share their clinic experiences and model with others, more than 20 institutions have followed Widener’s lead in establishing their own student-run pro bono clinics.
Senior Viraga Perera Named Newman Civic Fellow by Campus Compact

Campus Compact honored 201 students from colleges and universities nationwide as 2015 Newman Civic Fellows. Among the honorees is Widener University senior Viraga Perera of Colombo, Sri Lanka. The Newman Civic Fellows Awards recognize inspiring college student leaders who have worked to find solutions for challenges facing their communities.

As a member of the Presidential Service Corps/Bonner Leaders Program at Widener, Perera annually commits to at least 300 hours of community service in the city of Chester. He has dedicated much of his time to leading recruitment and coordination of volunteers at The College Access Center in Chester, an initiative of the Chester Higher Education Council that provides free college preparation services to high school students and adults. He also volunteers at the center as a tutor.

“Viraga advocates for education, social change, and in making a difference in the lives of those who live in the Chester community,” wrote Widener University President James T. Harris III in his nomination of Perera as a Newman Civic Fellow. “To aid him in his efforts, he effectively builds relationships with students, community partners, and with the staff and faculty at Widener with his humble charismatic demeanor. He regularly offers his peers examples of positive leadership.”

Perera, a dual electrical engineering and physics major, is also enrolled in the Osken Leadership Program at Widener, which offers a select group of students leadership training and one-on-one coaching that guides them through identifying and developing a project that has the potential to change the world. For his project, Perera is developing a diversity certificate program for students offered through Widener’s Office of Multicultural Student Affairs.

Perera consistently shows a dedication to service while balancing additional responsibilities, including those of founding president of the debate society and member of the Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society, Sigma Pi Sigma National Physics Honor Society, Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity, LOGOS-Christian Ministries, the Widener Chorale, and Widener Men’s Rugby. He has also performed in six different plays with the Widener FreshBaked Theatre Company, which puts on inventive dramas for young audiences.

Newman Civic Fellow awards are made in memory of Dr. Frank Newman, a founder of Campus Compact.

To learn more, read the news release.

Hospitality Management Student takes over the University

Jaclyn Hald, a senior hospitality management major and accounting minor, was appointed President-for-a-Day at Widener on April 1. Hald was the 13th student president of the university, a tradition started by President James T. Harris III. This was the last year Harris will have the opportunity to serve as a Widener student.

Hald was selected from four finalists who gave presentations to a selection committee based on what issue they would address if they were president of the university. Hald addressed the need for expansion of the arts on campus.

As President-for-a-Day, Hald had the opportunity to take action on her platform. She met with members of the Arts Corridor project to share her platform as well as the executive leadership team. Hald also met with a potential donor, toured the new residence hall on Main Campus, met with Chester Mayor John Linder, and toured the Arts Corridor in Chester.

The highlight of her day was sharing her platform. “This was a great gateway to show that there is an increased demand for the arts on campus and how it can not only benefit students, but the whole community,” Hald said. “Learning about the opportunities already available within the Chester community is amazing. There is a lot of potential to increase student involvement.”

While Hald ran the university, Dr. Harris assumed her schedule, including hospitality management classes, student meetings, and dance class!

See more photos from Hald’s day as president, here.
Faculty Fellow Corner: Conceptualizing Course Re-Design
By Dr. Angie Corbo, associate professor of communication studies and faculty fellow

The last few weeks of a term seem to have a focus on the finish line. As faculty, we know that we have content to teach, exams to grade, papers to read, and students to advise. This is also the time when we may recognize some gaps in the student learning objectives (SLO) on our syllabi. Noting these gaps as the semester concludes provides the opportunity to revisit them in the upcoming weeks before the new term.

The catalyst for revising a course may be initiated from internal or external stimuli. An accrediting body may establish new standards, or we find that we may not have reached a SLO as anticipated. The end of a semester is perhaps the best time to take an introspective look at the course design. Have the students accomplished the student learning outcomes articulated on the course syllabus? Was I, as the faculty member, able to connect the learning goals through assignments and evaluation tools?

Re-conceptualizing the design of a course can seem daunting when you understand the value of your course components. You may find that your course is excellent and only minor revisions are needed for a new semester. Faculty may also want to take a more thorough look at the syllabus and explore ways to meet the desired SLO.

There is certainly no shortage of academic jargon, and the SLO is just one of the many acronyms in an alphabet sea of references. Simply put, how do we create significant opportunities for students to learn and succeed in our courses? We have a suggested model that may demystify the course design process.

Fink’s Taxonomy of Significant Learning (2003) provides a model with six categories of learning: fundamental knowledge, application, integration, human dimension, caring, and learning how to learn. The following article provides a brief description of how educational design experts recommend thinking about recalibrating a course.

http://www.deefinkandassociates.com/GuidetoCourseDesignAug05.pdf

Additional information is available through the Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Office. Faculty Fellows are also available for individual consultation in this process. If you are interested in speaking with a Faculty Fellow, please contact Dr. Brigitte Valsey at bgvalsey@widener.edu or x4485.

Students’ Writing Comes Alive with Lone Brick Theatre’s 2nd Annual Student Voices Project

In conjunction with the ENGL/CRWR 308 playwriting class, Widener University’s Lone Brick Theatre Company presented the 2nd Annual Student Voices Project on April 12.

This year’s staged reading featured seven dramatic pieces, ranging from monologues to 10-minute plays, which were developed in the Fall 2014 playwriting class taught by Dr. Kenneth Pobo, professor of English and creative writing.

Student Voices featured the original work of Widener students Luis Aguilar, Emily DeFreitas, Matthew Drake, Devon Fiore, Taylor Jones, Gianna Sheridan, and Kim Vogel. In addition, the Lone Brick Theatre actors bringing the monologues and plays to life included Luis Aguilar, Jared Bernatowicz, Taylor Blum, McKailey Gordon, Carolyn Lodge, Nathan Mirando, Josh Mulzoff, Tyler Palma, Kirk Reichart, Erika Sprague, Kim Vogel, and Lizzy Yenser.

From a funeral for a man of questionable character to an altercation on a city bus, this year’s plays offered a delightfully cynical view of human nature.

“There is a shared desire to find an answer to the basic question of why people mercilessly use each other that linked these plays,” said Melissa Mowday, director of Student Voices and adjunct instructor of English. “The plays highlighted the urgency of needing to find empathy and decency in others, which makes us question our current cultural climate of what is and is not acceptable in terms of connectedness.”

Sophomore Tyler Palma takes on the character of Jeremy, and sophomore Erika Sprague is the narrator in the original 10-minute play "Loggerhead" by senior Devon Fiore.
Dr. Barbara Patterson, professor of nursing, and Dr. Anne Krouse, professor of nursing, wrote an article, “Competencies for leaders in nursing education,” in the April issue of Nursing Education Perspectives.

Dr. Donna Callaghan, associate professor in the School of Nursing, presented at the Westberg Symposium sponsored by the International Parish Nurse Resource Center and the Church Health Center of Memphis, TN, on April 10. The title of her presentation was “The Effects of a Faith Community Nursing Intervention on Healthy Behaviors in Adults.” The Westberg Symposium has been the premier international conference for faith community nurses since the first one was held in 1986.

The School of Law received a first-place award from the Delaware Press Association in its communications contest category “communications programs and campaigns” for the September Supreme Court media preview webcast between the two law school locations. Mary Allen, public relations officer for the School of Law, oversaw this event. The audiovisual team of Brian Fearnbaugh, Jim Hampton, and Dave Vallee, in addition to Barbara Mindell, an educational technician on the Delaware Campus, made this program possible as did all faculty who agreed to present on the Supreme Court cases.

Dr. Beatriz Urraca, director of the Gender and Women's Studies Program and associate professor of Spanish, gave an invited lecture April 7 on the didactic applications of Latin American film and the usage of visual tools in cultural analysis at Rutgers University, Camden, sponsored by the Masters in Teaching Spanish Program. The title was “Celebrity, Slums, and Religion: Reflections on the Other Argentina.”

Students Participate in EuroSim 2015

Seven students recently participated in EuroSim 2015, an international, intercollegiate simulation of the European Union. Students traveled to Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, NY, for the simulation, which focused on the topic of cybersecurity.

From left to right, this year’s attendees included: Dr. Richard Hopkins, assistant professor of history; Torrey Burroughs, a sophomore political science and international relations major; Aubrey D’Angelo, a junior political science and international relations major; Elizabeth Cohen, a sophomore political science and history major; Ashley Rundell, a sophomore political science and criminal justice major; Kyle Purchase, a sophomore political science and international relations major; Ronnie Rabena, a junior political science and international relations major; and Dr. Rebecca Jones, associate professor and chair of political science.

Spotlight on Sports: Allison Gallagher

Not many freshmen can jump into the college scene and have immediate success. In reality, not many freshmen even see playing time in their rookie season. That was certainly not the case for Allison Gallagher, a guard on the Widener women’s basketball team.

The Souderton, PA, native started each of the Pride’s 25 contests this season and put together one of the best freshman campaigns in Widener program history. This stellar performance earned her Rookie of the Year praise from a trifecta of platforms. First, she garnered the Commonwealth Conference Rookie of the Year and a Second-Team All-Conference selection. Next, she brought home the D3Hoops.com Mid-Atlantic Region Rookie of the Year award, and finally she was tabbed the ECAC South Co-Rookie of the Year.

What exactly did she do that was so special? She averaged 15.2 points per game en route to setting a new freshman single-season scoring record for the Pride. Gallagher recorded her first career double-double on December 6 with 10 points and 10 boards against Messiah College. She went on to score a career-high 26 points against Lebanon Valley College on January 8.

And this is just the beginning of her career.
Two-Week Peek
A Look at the Next Two Weeks in Widener Events

Wednesday, April 15

5 p.m. Student Awards Ceremony; Delaware Campus, Main Law Building, Ruby R. Vale Moot Courtroom

6-9 p.m. SDSC First Step Seminar; Widener SDSC

Thursday, April 16

4 p.m. "The History and Potential Future of Ecofeminism," Environmental Law Distinguished Speaker Series with Linda Malone of the College of William & Mary School of Law; Harrisburg Campus, Administration Building, A180

8 p.m. Guest Lecture: What Can You Do in 15 Seconds? Founders Hall, Room 109

Friday, April 17

8:50 a.m. Widener Women’s Leadership Forum presents “From Here to There: Coping Strategies for a Change Climate;” Lathem Hall

9 a.m.–4:45 p.m. Conference titled “Strengthening and Protecting Families: The Intersection of Family Health Law & Domestic Violence;” Delaware Campus, Main Law Building, Ruby R. Vale Moot Courtroom

Saturday, April 18

Widener Day Open House and Accepted Student Day II

9 a.m.–1 p.m. Continuing Studies Annual Day of Giving Back; Elwyn’s Main Campus

5–7 p.m. 25th Anniversary Celebration; Harrisburg Campus, Classroom Building, The Pit

Sunday, April 19

12 p.m. Hoops 2 Help, a fundraiser for Northern Star Sports; Schwartz Gym

3–4 p.m. Widener Dance and Chamber Music Concert; KLC 1

Monday, April 20

1–6 p.m. Conference titled “Halt and Reform?: Death Penalty & Criminal Sentencing Guidelines Reform;” Harrisburg Campus, Administration Building, A180

6:30 p.m. Crime Film Series: Let the Fire Burn; Freedom Hall Auditorium

8:30–9:30 p.m. Stargazing; Widener Observatory

Tuesday, April 21

11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Hospitality Lunch Series; Marriott Dining Room

Wednesday, April 22

9 a.m.–12 p.m. SBDC Seminar: Meet the Lenders; Widener SDSC

Friday, April 24

Student Project Day

9 a.m.–5 p.m. Conference titled “Law Professors as Expert Witnesses;” Delaware Campus, Main Law Building, Ruby R. Vale Moot Courtroom

Sunday, April 26

8:30–11 a.m. Widener Co-sponsored Debate: “Is Media Coverage of Politics Helping or Hurting our Democracy?” Sheraton Society Hill in Philadelphia

7–8 p.m. Widener Chorale Spring Concert; KLC 1

Monday, April 27

8:30–9:30 p.m. Stargazing; Widener Observatory

Tuesday, April 28

4 p.m. Student Awards Ceremony; Harrisburg Campus, Administration Building, A180

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Continuing Studies’ 5th Annual Day of Giving Back

**When:** Saturday, April 18
9 a.m.–1 p.m.

**Where:** Elwyn Media Campus
111 Elwyn Rd.
Elwyn, PA 19063

**Details:** All are invited to join the Continuing Studies Division for a day of giving back. Volunteers will spend the day beautifying the main campus of Elwyn off Route 352. For more information, e-mail dayofgivingback@widener.edu.

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**TD Bank @ Work Program**

Stop by the University Center to speak with representatives from TD Bank for giveaways and special offers for faculty and staff of Widener and to learn more about its Bank @ Work program.

**When:** April 20–22
11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. daily

**Where:** University Center, Atrium

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**Widener University’s Continuing Studies Division**

Enjoy a beautiful spring day while helping the local community

Have fun with friends as we beautify Elwyn’s Main Campus

Anyone can register

For more info call 1-1-1

610-499-4282
dayofgivingback@widener.edu