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Faculty Updates | 29 Years of Dr. Seeborg's Enduring Passion

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Faculty Updates

29 Years of Dr. Seeborg's Enduring Passion

Ruoqing Li, Heidi Luu

After 29 years at Illinois Wesleyan University, Spring 2019 will be the last Spring semester that Dr. Michael Seeborg teaches here. Having taught at a large state university for 14 years before coming to IWU, he has always held at his core the passion of working more individually with students to help them achieve better analytical thinking and research skills in a smaller class environment. To this day, supervising student research in *Senior Project* and throughout the Spring semester as students work on developing publishable papers on the topics of their own choosing has been what Dr. Seeborg enjoys the most about his role as a professor.

Senior Project, however, is not the only opportunity that Dr. Seeborg has utilized to support students in their studies and research endeavors. One of the most memorable experiences for Dr. Seeborg is the development of the undergraduate research journals at IWU. The first economic journal here was our very own *Park Place Economist* (PPE), developed by Dr. Seeborg alongside several students and IWU Public Relations Administrator Bob Aaron, which was supervised by Dr. Leekley in more recent years. In the mid-1990s, he and several IWU students also collaborated with the Illinois State University Economics Department to start an online economic journal, the *University Avenue Undergraduate Journal of Economics*, which is now the *Undergraduate Economic Review* (UER) and is on its way to the 15th Volume. These journals hold a special place in his heart, as they have given students opportunities to strive for quality research and write excellent papers that can be published. Moreover, they have provided the editor-in-chiefs and associate student workers good opportunities to improve their organizational and leadership skills. Seeing how the PPE continues to become more innovative in incorporating student research and department news at IWU into its publication, as well as how the UER is now receiving paper submissions from all around the world, Dr. Seeborg feels very proud of the work of the students in this regard.

As a professor who has received a university-wide award for teaching excellence, Dr. Seeborg's accomplishments at IWU actually revolve around his students. With a strong interest in issues concerning poverty, race, gender, and more recently immigration, not only has he been able to engage students in doing research in these areas but he has also published numerous papers that are co-authored by students. These are rare opportunities for most undergraduate Economics students, and Dr. Seeborg's guidance is an integral part of the process. Moreover, although the *Robert S. Eckley Distinguished Professor of Economics* award that Dr. Seeborg received speaks for his abilities in teaching, anyone who has ever taken a class with Dr. Seeborg will know how energetic and enthusiastic he is. His enduring passion as well as the positive and friendly demeanor that he carries are known to draw students to his classes and to the major.

These qualities of his are also appreciated by the professors in the Economics Department. He was there for the important moments of the professors' careers, helping and mentoring them with his infectiously optimistic energy. Dr. Ghosh and Dr. Oberg appreciate how he helped them settle in when they first joined the faculty. Whether it was moving to the new town or moving boxes up to the 3rd floor of State Farm Hall on a hot Summer day, he made the daunting experience enjoyable and memorable for them. For Dr. Mendez and Dr. Durbal, the constant support and mentorship that he provided when they were under his supervision or served as Department Chair were instrumental. In Dr. Oberg's opinion, moreover, his cheerful attitude is what keeps people going in the winter when daylight is scarce.

The Economics students at IWU strongly agree with the professors in saying that Dr. Seeborg's positive and passionate energy will be sorely missed as he retires after Fall semester of 2019. For the last 29 years, it has been a great pleasure for both the Economics faculty and students to have Dr. Seeborg with us at IWU. We thank him and wish him that the next chapter in his life will be equally amazing as the experiences he has created for the people around him.