



7-16-2010

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Recommended Citation

Wallace, Sherry, "Cunningham Named AAPT Executive Officer" (2010). *News and Events*. 1434.

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Cunningham Named AAPT Executive Officer

July 16, 2010

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Beth Cunningham, provost and dean of faculty at Illinois Wesleyan, has accepted the position of executive officer at the American Association of Physics Teachers (AAPT) in College Park, Md.

Cunningham, who will begin her official duties January 1 of 2011, will succeed Warren Hein who will retire on December 31. Effective August 1, Frank Boyd, associate provost for academic planning and standards, will be Illinois Wesleyan's interim provost and dean of faculty.

"I am very appreciative of the strategic academic initiatives that Beth has managed during her tenure, including the broad-based University Council for Diversity, the Academic Advising Center, and a strategic review of the curriculum among many," said Illinois Wesleyan President Richard F. Wilson. "I am confident her leadership skills will serve her well at AAPT."

Founded in 1930, with the purpose of improving physics education, AAPT, with more than 11,000 members in over 30 countries, is "a professional membership association dedicated to enhancing the understanding and appreciation of physics through teaching."

AAPT President David M. Cook says of Cunningham, "Dr. Cunningham's career has provided her with admirable preparation to serve as AAPT's next executive officer and help us all achieve our mission 'to enhance the understanding and appreciation of physics through teaching.'"

[Read the AAPT Announcement](#)

Cunningham, who came to the University in 2006, received her bachelor, master and doctorate degrees in physics from Kent State University, Kent, Ohio.

She was a teaching fellow and research assistant at The Liquid Crystal Institute at Kent State and a postdoctoral fellow at the Hormel Institute at the University of Minnesota. Cunningham taught at Gettysburg College in Gettysburg, Penn., following her postdoctoral fellowship. In 1989, she joined the physics department at Bucknell University as an assistant professor and progressed through faculty ranks to full professor in 2002. In 2000 she was named associate dean of the faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences.

In her positions at Bucknell and Illinois Wesleyan, she has supervised programs for faculty development in the areas of teaching, scholarship and professional development, overseen faculty mentoring and development, hiring of new faculty members, and evaluation of faculty members for promotion and tenure. She has participated in large-scale curricular design and had responsibility for implementing the will of the faculty vis a vis curriculum; managed multimillion-dollar budgets, a task that included reviewing and approving operating and capital budgets for individual departments; and assisted faculty in applying for grants.

At Bucknell, she oversaw the Summer Research Program in Physics from 1995 until her departure in 2006, collaborated on efforts to strengthen undergraduate research across the disciplines, and chaired the faculty and academic personnel committee for one year.

Cunningham has had a long-term association with Project Kaleidoscope, not only as a participant in one of their Leadership Institutes, but also as a member of the PKAL Faculty for the 21st Century, as a presenter/facilitator for several PKAL summer workshops and Leadership Institutes, and as one of the planners of four NSF-supported regional conversations on the meaning of liberal education in the 21st century.

Since 2000, Cunningham has served as a councilor in the Physics and Astronomy Division of the Council on Undergraduate Research, among other tasks facilitating regional workshops. For three years Cunningham has served on the APS Committee on Education, chairing it in the third of those years; and she has participated as an outside reviewer for several college and university departments of physics. She was also a member of the Committee on Substantive Change of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education from 2002 to 2006.

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