

Fifteen new faculty members include visionary leaders, experienced scholars

Lisle, Illinois ~ Tanya Crum spent two years as a student at Benedictine University pursuing an undergraduate degree in Biology after transferring from Richard J. Daley Community College in Chicago.

Nine years later, she will get to see the view from the other side of the podium.

Crum is one of 15 new faculty members at Benedictine University this fall. The newest highly-credentialed, extensively-experienced faculty members include former professors at Western Kentucky University, Illinois Institute of Technology, Arizona State and the University of Illinois, a former Circuit Court administrative counsel and a former fellow at Fermilab.

“We are excited to have these outstanding new faculty members join our academic community,” said Donald Taylor, Ph.D., Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs at Benedictine. “All new hires were chosen based on their ability to provide the best fit for their academic department. In some cases, it was providing vision and experienced administrative leadership, while in other cases it was their potential to be excellent teacher-scholars.

“All of the new faculty members are charged with being curricular champions for their respective disciplines, and we look forward to their outstanding contributions as we continue to grow Benedictine University,” he added.

Crum, who graduated from Benedictine University in 2002, worked as an environmental scientist at Argonne National Laboratory and elsewhere while pursuing a doctorate. She completed her doctoral studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago in 2011, and has now come full circle.

“I remember taking a class with Dr. Taylor,” said Crum, a George Washington High School graduate who grew up on the far southeast side of Chicago and now lives in Oak Park. “Now I will be teaching the same class.”

Other new faculty members include:

Hai Ri Han, an assistant professor of Graphic Arts and Design and Humanities, earned a Master of Fine Arts in Visual and Performing Arts from Purdue University. Han served as an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Art at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green. Han currently resides in Naperville.

Allen Legutki, assistant professor of Music Education and Humanities, earned a Ph.D. in Music Education from the University of Illinois at Champaign/Urbana. He served as Director of Bands at Sullivan School District and was a visiting Assistant Professor of Music Education at the University of Illinois. Legutki currently resides in St. Joseph, Ill.

Sidney DeLair, J.D., term faculty in Criminal Justice, earned a Juris Doctor from Illinois Institute of Chicago Kent College of Law. He worked at the 18th Judicial Circuit Department of Probation and Court Services in Wheaton in a number of capacities for more than 30 years. DeLair currently resides in Naperville.

Carol Fendrick, instructor of Chemistry, earned a Ph.D. in Inorganic Chemistry from Northwestern University. She did postdoctoral research at Ohio State University and was a research chemist at Argonne and Quantum Chemical Corporation. She has served as an adjunct professor at Judson College, Joliet Junior College and Benedictine University since 1992.

Elizabeth Freeland, assistant professor of Physics, earned a Ph.D. in Physics from The Johns Hopkins University and had postdoctoral appointments at Washington University (St. Louis, Mo.) and the University of Illinois. She also was the 2006 Blewett Fellow at Fermilab. She currently resides in Oak Park.

Roli Prasad, instructor of Biology, earned a Ph.D. in Physiology and Biophysics from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Prasad is an expert in anatomy and physiology, and has taught at Benedictine as an adjunct since 2007. Prasad grew up in Park Forest.

Elizabeth Shaffer-McCathy, instructor of Biology, earned a Master of Science in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences from the University of Illinois at Champaign/Urbana. She is an expert in ecological assessment, wetland and stream restoration, water conservation and site remediation. Shaffer-McCarthy has taught as an adjunct faculty member at Waubonsee Community College, College of Dupage and Benedictine. She resides in Naperville.

Deborah Cernauskas earned a Ph.D. in Management Science and Finance at the Illinois Institute of Technology. Her most recent position was Program Chair for Business Management and Healthcare Services Administration for Colorado Technical University. A former teacher at ITT and Northern Illinois University and Ameritech executive, Cernauskas is a published author of a recent book on risk management and various journal articles. She currently resides in Downers Grove.

Elizabeth Bormann, instructor in the Public Health program, earned a Master of Public Health from Northern Illinois University with an emphasis in Health Promotion. She recently served as the Director of Administrative Services in the School for Professional and Continuing Education at Lewis University. Bormann currently resides in Lemont.

Bonnie Beezhold, assistant professor in the Department of Nutrition, earned a Ph.D. in Physical Activity, Nutrition and Wellness from Arizona State University in Tempe. She recently served as Clinical Assistant Professor in the Nutrition Program of the College of Nursing and Health at Arizona State. Beezhold is a native of Chandler, Ariz.

Laurie Schubert, assistant professor in the Department of Nutrition, earned a Ph.D. in Nutritional Studies from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Schubert completed her Didactic Program in Dietetics at Benedictine. The former analytical chemist resides in Naperville.

Stephanie Ellis, instructor in the Department of Nutrition, earned a Master of Public Health in the Didactic Program in Dietetics at Benedictine University. She has recently worked as clinical instructor at Rosalind Franklin University and clinical dietician at Delnor Hospital. She currently resides in Naperville.

Elizabeth Ritt, chairperson in the Department of Nursing and Health and the Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.) program coordinator, earned an Ed.D. in Leadership and Educational Policy Studies from Northern Illinois University. She recently served as Vice President of Academic Affairs for the Provost Mercy College of Health Sciences in Des Moines, Iowa, and Dean of the School of Nursing at North Park University. She currently resides in Kildeer.

Joan Libner, coordinator of the R.N.-to-B.S.N. program in the Department of Nursing and Health, earned an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from Concordia University. The Park Ridge resident served as chairperson of the Associate Degree Nursing Program at Triton College for the past 16 years.