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DePaul President Testifies Before Congress on Keeping College Accessible

On Jan. 28, the Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M., president of DePaul University, gave testimony and answered questions at a hearing before the Congressional Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training regarding “Keeping College Within Reach: Sharing Best Practices for Serving Low-Income and First-Generation Students.” The subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), is investigating improvements to the Higher Education Act, which will need to be reauthorized before it expires at the end of 2014. Specifically, the committee is exploring how to improve postsecondary access and affordability for low-income and first-generation college students. Of particular interest to the committee were the TRIO programs, federal outreach and student services programs authorized by the act that identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.

During his oral testimony, Fr. Holtschneider explained how DePaul’s TRIO programs—Student Support Services and McNair Scholars—are improving the success of its low-income students. “Our latest graduation rate for Student Support Services students was over 80 percent, 10 percentage points above the institutional average. Eighty percent of our McNair students are going on to graduate school within three years.”

DePaul is also taking additional steps to ensure low-income and first-generation students are better prepared for college success. “We recently shifted our remedial coursework to the summer before college and made it free of charge,” Fr. Holtschneider stated. He explained how DePaul completely redesigned some of its gateway courses, particularly math-heavy courses that put students at risk of dropping out of college if they fail.

When asked by Rep. Timothy Bishop (D-NY) about simplifying the student aid process, Fr. Holtschneider said, “Simplification is always attractive in its own right. [TRIO eligibility] should simply follow Pell [needs-based grant] eligibility. I have staff dedicated to determining eligibility. We could take the funds being used to determine eligibility and apply them to other uses.”

Fr. Holtschneider also addressed some inflexibility in TRIO program requirements in his written testimony. He stated that while collaboration between institutions is allowed in principle, “it is our experience—at least with respect to Student Support Services—that the regulation prohibiting commingling of funds discourages institutions from any significant collaboration.”

The committee also heard testimony from James Anderson, chancellor of Fayetteville State University in Fayetteville, N.C., Mary Beth Del Balzo, senior executive vice president and chief operating officer at the College of Westchester in White Plains, N.Y., and Joss Garrido, a graduate of the University of Texas Pan American in Edinburg, Texas.

Fr. Holtschneider’s testimony can be read in its entirety at bit.ly/affordablecollege. The archived webcast can be viewed at edworkforce.house.gov/hearings. For more information on DePaul’s TRIO programs, visit trioprograms.depaul.edu.

“Eighty percent of our McNair students are going on to graduate school within three years.”

- Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M.
Illinois Supreme Court Justice Burke Shares Insights With Law Students

Last October, DePaul College of Law students got an exclusive chance to participate in a rare event. Faculty of the Criminal Appeals Clinic arranged to have Justice Anne Burke (SNL ’76, DHL ’05) offer practical insights on making oral arguments and answer questions, something Illinois Supreme Court justices generally never do. Justice Burke and the other justices were in Chicago because their historic quarters in Springfield, Ill., are being renovated—the first time the court has been in full session outside of the state capital since 1897.

For 90 fascinating minutes, Justice Burke talked about deportment (“never put off a question from a judge”), the importance of clarity (“be clear about what you want done”) and total familiarity with the case record (“every page”). She discussed some unique aspects of the court’s work, for example, the use of an “impression” vote taken right after hearing oral arguments, which is the only time the justices actually discuss the case. She said that when they are in session, the justices live and dine together dormitory-style in a wing of the courthouse.

Justice Burke encouraged the students to maintain a healthy work-life balance and involve themselves in projects they love. One of the justice’s interests is historical retrials. In her role as one of the court’s liaisons with the Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission, she was part of an effort that resulted in the 2013 broadcast “The Insanity Retrial of Mary Todd Lincoln,” which was nominated for a 2013 Chicago/Midwest Emmy Award.

DePaul University Library Enhances Its Online Heritage Collection

The DePaul University Library has added two new resources from University Archives to its DePaul Heritage Collections online. The additions include photographs depicting life at DePaul from its earliest athletic teams to the famed Pushball contests between the freshman and upper classes, as well as student newspapers, featuring a nearly complete run of The DePaulia from 1923 to 1998 and the alternative student publication The Aletheia, 1967-71. Full-text searching of newspaper content and photograph descriptions allow for an unprecedented level of access to these vital pieces of DePaul’s history. The library will digitize and make available later editions of The DePaulia throughout 2014.

Visit the DePaul Heritage Collections at bit.ly/depaulheritage.

Image courtesy of DePaul University Library Digital Collections.
In Memoriam:
Victor “Vic” Cacciatore (1930-2013)

The DePaul family lost one of its most cherished members and greatest benefactors when Victor “Vic” Cacciatore (BUS ’52, JD ’55) passed away Dec. 30, 2013, at the age of 83.

The roots of Cacciatore’s illustrious and highly successful life as a Chicago business magnate and entrepreneur were in his family, the force that inspired his life. Cacciatore grew up in the South Side neighborhood of Bridgeport and, as a teenager, worked in his father Joseph Cacciatore’s real estate office.

After working his way through undergraduate and graduate school, he married his high school sweetheart Charlotte in 1956 and spent the next two years serving in the U.S. Army as a U.S. counterintelligence special agent in France. Cacciatore and his wife raised 10 children, seven of whom are DePaul graduates. Former DePaul president, the Rev. John T. Richardson, C.M., baptized all 10 children and officiated at the weddings of most of them.

Upon his father’s death in 1975, Cacciatore was elected chairman and CEO of the Joseph Cacciatore & Co. real estate firm. He ran seven companies and built Lakeside Bank into a billion-dollar community bank. In 1970, Cacciatore founded what is now Elgin Sweeping Services Inc. to clean Chicago-area expressways. The company expanded to cover four states.

As an attorney, Cacciatore represented as many as five oil companies, including Shell Oil for 28 years. Some of his other clients included the FDIC, the Chicago Park District, the Midwest Stock Exchange, the Illinois Housing Authority, the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority, Federal Express, Chicago Title & Trust Company, DePaul University and Mount Carmel High School. In 1986, he was appointed special assistant attorney general for the State of Illinois.

This South Side visionary was generous in sharing his innovative thinking and foresight with his alma mater. Cacciatore joined the Board of Trustees in 1973, and, as chairman of the Physical Plant and Property Committee, helped DePaul acquire the Goldblatt’s building in the South Loop. He played a leading role in bringing the Goodman School of Drama into the DePaul community and headed the drive to acquire the Blackstone Theatre, now the Merle Reskin Theatre.

DePaul University President, the Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M., says, “Vic modeled much of our Vincentian mission. An esteemed alumnus, he showed his deep respect for DePaul through his great generosity, his ongoing involvement in university life and his commitment to ensuring a most successful future for DePaul. A distinguished member of our family, he will be remembered with the highest regard and tremendously missed.”

His generosity resulted in the construction of Cacciatore Stadium, where the Blue Demons softball and soccer teams compete. Along with the stadium, his endowments include the Victor J. Cacciatore Annual Scholarship Award and the Joseph Cacciatore Classroom, both for the DePaul College of Law. Last year, Cacciatore was inducted into the DePaul Athletic Hall of Fame as the recipient of the Dr. Robert Hamilton Special Service Award.

“Vic was such a sweetheart of a guy,” says DePaul Athletics Director Jean Lenti Ponsetto (EDU ’78). “He was one of those iconic Chicago guys, and he created an iconic Chicago family name.

“The Cacciatore Stadium seating and improvements were necessary for us entering the BIG EAST Conference,” Ponsetto continues. “If not for the generosity of Vic and Char, none of that would have been possible.”

Men’s soccer coach Craig Blazer and the entire Blue Demons program are grateful for Cacciatore’s tremendous support. “Vic was a great leader for the DePaul athletic department and the soccer program,” Blazer says. “He was committed to providing the best for the student-athletes at DePaul. He wanted everyone to have success.”

Women’s soccer coach Erin Chastain echoes Blazer’s sentiments. “Vic Cacciatore has made huge contributions to DePaul, and we will always feel a tremendous amount of gratitude for that,” Chastain says. “He has set a wonderful example for our student-athletes when it comes to work ethic. His life is inspiring, and he will be remembered always as someone who believed in DePaul.”
Celebrations Commemorate New Theatre School Building

In September 2013, The Theatre School opened the doors of its striking new building on the western edge of the Lincoln Park Campus. The five-story artistic hub, designed by world-renowned architectural firm Pelli Clarke Pelli, emphasizes open space and transparency with floor-to-ceiling windows, a rooftop courtyard and wide corridors. An inviting lobby serves as a central gathering place, while a bright yellow staircase—both practical and playful—connects each floor. Two theatres, numerous rehearsal spaces, lounges, design studios and acting laboratories offer ample opportunities for creative engagement and collaboration.

About 400 guests explored the facility during a dedication ceremony on Sept. 12, 2013. Attendees enjoyed backstage tours, student performances and refreshments. James M. Denny, co-chair of the Performing Arts Campaign Committee, offered remarks during the program, as did Theatre School faculty member Phyllis E. Griffin and DePaul University President, the Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M.

Four days later, The Theatre School held a community open house for more than 800 students, alumni, faculty, staff, neighbors and local arts organizations. An open rehearsal of "Our Town" and a reading by new playwrights drew many observers. Additionally, graduates of The Theatre School were invited to sign an alumni wall.

Take a video tour of the new building at bit.ly/thetheatreschool.

New Home for the College of Education

The College of Education celebrated its new home with a dedication ceremony on Oct. 18, 2013. Formerly housed in the Schmitt Academic Center, the College of Education is now located in a renovated three-story building on the corner of Halsted Street and Belden Avenue.

Vasilko Architects and Associates revamped the interior of the 51,000-square-foot facility, which formerly served as office space for Children’s Memorial Hospital. With 11 classrooms, 10 tutoring rooms, eight counseling rooms and plenty of space for faculty and staff offices, the new building enhances learning opportunities for future teachers, counselors and educational leaders.

Dean Paul Zionts asserts, “The upgraded facilities are going to allow us to provide better services to our students.”
The 2013 DePaul women's soccer season is one for the history books. Despite losing a heartbreaker (1-0) in the mid-November matchup with Indiana in the NCAA tournament, the Blue Demons kept their opponents scoreless for 75 valiant minutes and finished the season with the best winning percentage in program history. The team had its best start as well and overcame the season-ending injury to starting goalkeeper Megan Pyrz. The Blue Demons finished with a record of 13-6-2 that included a 5-3-1 mark in the BIG EAST, and they set a school record with an eight-game undefeated streak.

The historic season included a seven-game unbeaten streak at Wish Field, their best winning percentage in a BIG EAST Conference season and highest finish (third place in the regular season). The Blue Demons advanced to the BIG EAST title game for the first time in school history after a 1-0 road upset of No. 15/8 Georgetown on Erin Pekovitch's goal in the 68th minute of play.

Once she got in the groove with her back line of Kylie Nordness, Rachel Pitman, Nina Kodros and Brianna Ryce, sophomore goalkeeper Alex Godinez had an unprecedented season. She went from backup to BIG EAST Goalkeeper of the Year and led the nation in save percentage during the regular season. The National Soccer Coaches Association of America selected Erin Chastain as Northeast Region Coach of the Year and named Godinez and Nordness to the All-BIG EAST First Team while Elise Wyatt and Rebekah Roller were named to the All-BIG EAST Second Team and Pitman to the All-Conference Third Team.

“All of our players have been great representatives of our university and of our conference.”

- Erin Chastain, head coach, DePaul women's soccer

In the opening round, “All of our players have been great representatives of our university and of our conference. This group was one of the most feisty I have ever coached. They just played so hard for each other all season long. Our seniors inspired this team, both on and off the field. They put us in a great position to build on the foundation and the standard they helped to set.”
Blue Demons Triumph in Historic Track and Field Performance

The results of the BIG EAST Indoor Track & Field Championship, held Feb. 21-22 at the New Balance Track and Field Center at the Armory in New York City, represent the best showing in DePaul program history. Five Blue Demons captured individual BIG EAST Conference titles, and DePaul struck gold in the last event, the 4x400-meter men’s relay, which clinched third place overall for the men’s team. Each team member scored at least one point, contributing to the overall team finish.

Standout performances included freshman Xavier Jones’ win in the 60-meter dash, senior Tonderai Tomu’s first place in the 200-meter dash and second place in the 400-meter race, and sophomore Mac Melto’s triumph in the 400-meter race. Tomu, Brandon Threats, Jones and Melto combined to win the 4x400-meter relay. Tomu was honored as the Male Athlete of the Meet. In men’s shot put, senior Matt Babicz took first ahead of his brother, junior Anthony Babicz.

The women’s team came in fifth—their highest BIG EAST finish—led by Sarah Moss, who won the shot put, and sophomore Tayler Whittler, who was third in the 60-meter and 200-meter dashes and helped lead the 4x400-meter relay team to third place. Teammate Erin McCoy finished third in the 60-meter hurdles.

DePaul track and field coach Dave Dopek (EDU ’96) noticed a difference in his team at the meet. “The biggest improvement we’ve made is that the team understands and recognizes that we want to be a part of something bigger,” says Dopek, DePaul’s NCAA 200-meter indoor champion in 1995. “They brought tremendous energy to the event and carried it through.”

Women’s Basketball Coach Doug Bruno Named Coach of the Year

After leading the DePaul women’s basketball team to its first-ever BIG EAST Conference regular season title and the No. 1 seed in the conference tournament, Doug Bruno (LAS ’73, MA ’88) was named the league’s Coach of the Year. Bruno led the Blue Demons to a 24-6 record and his team finished with a 15-3 conference mark. DePaul concluded the regular season by winning 13 of its last 14 games and moved into the national polls in the No. 25 position.

The Blue Demons lead the BIG EAST in scoring offense (84.0), scoring margin (+13.1), field goal percentage (.452), 3-point field goals per game (9.0), 3-point field goal percentage (.366), assists (20.1), steals (11.9) and turnover margin. In those same categories, DePaul ranks in the top 10 in Division I in scoring offense, 3-point field goals per game, assists, steals and assist-to-turnover ratio.

Brittany Hrynko and Jasmine Penny were named unanimous picks as first-team, all-conference performers. Megan Rogowski was an honorable mention honoree, and Jessica January earned a spot on the All-Freshman team.

Blue Demons Softball Awaits Home Opener

There’s nothing like the friendly confines of Cacciatore Stadium as DePaul’s home opener commences the BIG EAST Conference season with a noon doubleheader on March 22 against St. John’s. The Blue Demons open the season with 24 consecutive road games, competing at two tournaments in Florida along with tournaments in Nevada, Southern California and South Carolina.

Coach Eugene Lenti (EDU ’80) comes into the 2014 season with 1,174 wins in 32 years at the helm. He is fifth in the nation in wins among active college softball coaches. DePaul is looking to qualify for the BIG EAST tournament for the ninth year in a row and is shooting for its 16th NCAA tournament bid in the last 18 years. The Blue Demons will host the BIG EAST tournament May 9-10 in Rosemont, Ill.

Two Chances to Watch Women’s Tennis

The only home matches of the Blue Demons women’s tennis team in the spring are April 13 against Cincinnati and April 19 versus BIG EAST rival Marquette. Both matches will be played at Lakeshore Sport & Fitness.

Patricia Fargas was 6-4 in last fall’s singles matches, including a 2-2 record against nationally ranked opponents. She advanced to the ITA Midwest Regionals semifinals in the main singles draw. Zaina Sufi was 8-1 last fall while Jarret Fisher and Rebeca Mitrea were both 6-4. Jasmin Kling and Ana Vladutu were 4-2 in doubles and went 1-1 against nationally ranked competition.

For full schedules, results and other news about DePaul Athletics, visit depaulbluedemons.com.
DePaul Hosts Prestigious British Studies Conference

DePaul welcomed more than 150 attendees to the 60th annual meeting of the Midwest Conference on British Studies, Oct. 11-13, 2013. This marked the first time the university hosted the Midwest Conference, which is the oldest regional organization on British studies in North America. Associate Professors of History Eugene Beiriger and Lisa Sigel co-organized the conference that brought preeminent scholars of British studies to the university to discuss cutting-edge interdisciplinary research.

Honored at the proceedings was leading Queen Victoria authority and co-founder of the Midwest Conference Walter Arnstein, professor emeritus at the University of Illinois. Winston Churchill specialist Jonathan Rose from Drew University in Madison, N.J., and British court expert Robert Bucholz from Loyola University Chicago were featured speakers. Several DePaul professors presented during the conference, including Rajit Mazumder, associate professor of history, on the introduction of western veterinary practices in British India; Euan Hague, professor of geography, on the representation of Scotland in American romance fiction; and Daniel McNeil, Ida B. Wells visiting professor of African and Black Diaspora studies, on sociologist Paul Gilroy and the digital age.

James Kariuki, counselor and head of the politics, economics and communication group at the British Embassy in Washington, D.C., spoke about the political and cultural ties between Great Britain and the United States. Chicago British Consul General Stephen Bridges also attended the conference. Visit bit.ly/midwestconference to read more.

Conference Explores the Implications of Crowdfunding in Real Estate

On Dec. 11, 2013, leading real estate professionals convened to discuss crowdfunding at the annual conference for the Real Estate Center and the Chaddick Institute for Metropolitan Development. This year’s event explored the topic “The Future of the Deal: Using Crowdfunding to Close the Gap Between Traditional Real Estate Investors and the Communities They Build.” Developers normally have relied upon wealthy investors and institutions for the capital to back a project; however, the advent of crowdfunding in the real estate sector may change the capitalization landscape.

In his keynote speech, Benjamin Miller, real estate crowdfunding pioneer and co-founder of Fundrise, explored the ramifications of new federal regulations that allow residents and other nonaccredited investors to take stakes for as little as $50. “There's an underappreciation of the sophistication of the small investor,” Miller explains.

Then, the potential uses of crowdfunding in real estate were discussed by a panel comprising Miller, James Berger, president and managing broker of Chicago Signature Properties, Michael Episcope (BUS ’94, MS ’08), DePaul Real Estate Department Chair Susanne Cannon, Benjamin Miller, Prof. Joseph Schwieterman and Leon Walker, managing partner of DL3 Realty LP, led a question-and-answer session.

While real estate crowdfunding is still in its infancy, it has the potential to shake up the traditional models of investment. “It’s a revolution,” Miller asserts. “It’s going to have a cataclysmic effect on the real estate industry.”