

Deans' List

*A continuing series profiling
the University's academic deans*

Civic-Minded Passion

MITCHEL WALLERSTEIN G'72 THRIVES ON SEEKING OUT new challenges in his professional life as well as in his leisure time. He delights in navigating the whitewater of Idaho's Salmon River almost as much as he does charting the future course for the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs—consistently ranked the top public affairs school in the country by *U.S. News & World Report*. “I believe you've always got to keep reaching,” says Wallerstein, who was named the first alumnus dean of Maxwell in July 2003. “When you stop reaching, you stultify. I want to see the school, the faculty, and the students continue to improve. That's what it's all about.”

Throughout his career, Wallerstein has challenged himself with eclectic experiences centered on international development, science and technology, and national security. He first developed an interest in public policy as a West Orange, New Jersey, high school student. That civic-minded passion intensified as he earned a bachelor's degree in government from Dartmouth College. He later earned a master's degree in public administration from Maxwell, and master's and Ph.D. degrees in political science from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. With his roots grounded in academia and teaching, he branched out to work as the deputy executive officer of the National Research Council, the research arm of the National Academies of Sciences and Engineering, which provides research and policy advice to the executive branch and to Congress. Before joining the Maxwell faculty, he led the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's international grant-making division, awarding more than \$70 million in grants each year in 86 countries. “I find it stimulating, every so often, to do something completely different, which brings with it a whole new set of issues, relationships, and projects to tackle,” he says. “I like to have an impact.”

Of all his career accomplishments, he takes the most pride in his work from 1993 to 1997 as deputy secretary of defense for counterproliferation policy and senior representative for trade security policy in the Clinton administration. He played a role at that time in developing an agreement with North Korea to suspend its plutonium reprocessing and nuclear weapons production. He also helped coordinate the ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention to ban the production, storage, and use of chemical weapons. Following the Gulf War, Wallerstein worked in NATO to change policies and practices regarding the defense against nations that possess weapons of mass destruction. While leaving Washington was initially difficult, Wallerstein embraced the new opportunities and challenges at the MacArthur Foundation and later at Maxwell. “I've learned

a lot more about the school, which has changed greatly from my graduate student days, and all that is happening in it,” he says. “I am not at all put off by having six or more meetings in a day—each on a completely different subject. I like to multi-task and to provide momentum for new ideas.”

In April 2004, Wallerstein outlined an ambitious agenda for Maxwell in “A Strategic Vision for the Maxwell School” (www.maxwell.syr.edu/deans/dean_vision.asp). Among his top priorities: expanding the school's involvement with undergraduate education; engaging in more activities with Central New York communities; and strengthening national and international security policy studies through new faculty hires and the Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism, a joint project with the College of Law. The dean also hopes to more than double the amount of the school's externally funded research and to significantly



expand its \$48 million endowment, which is currently less than a tenth of that possessed by its closest competitors, Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School. Wallerstein admits that it's hard to understand how Maxwell competes so successfully with much better endowed schools, but he offers two explanations for its success. “We are able to provide a more diverse course of study because of the synergistic effect of having all the social sciences located within the Maxwell School,” he says. “The atmosphere at Maxwell is also very open and collegial, creating a strong sense of camaraderie and community among faculty, staff, and students.” —Margaret Costello

Privilege and Responsibility

WITH A STRONG VISION AND sense of purpose, Louise Wilkinson knows exactly what she wants, why she's here, and what she has to offer. "I am interested in improving schooling for all students," says Wilkinson, who was appointed dean of the School of Education and Distinguished Professor of Education, Psychology, and Communication Sciences in 2003. "That is a personal story and my passion." She traces that passion to two primary sources: growing up in an immigrant family that values literacy and sees education as a means of achieving the American dream; and, as an adolescent, having a memorable conversation with her uncle, a physicist who worked on the development of the atomic bomb

as a member of the Manhattan Project. "We talked about the responsibilities inherent in scientific discovery, and this had a big effect on me at the time and going forward," says Wilkinson, who holds a B.A. degree from Oberlin College and master's and doctoral degrees from Harvard.

Wilkinson, who previously served as the dean of the Graduate School of Education at Rutgers, considers American higher education to be "among the greatest inventions." "I believe in the academy as a transforming institution," she says. "It is a place where we educate ourselves and our children. We discover, create, and produce research." But more needs to be done, says Wilkinson, whose extensive research on children's language and literacy learning is reflected in her book, *Language and Literacy Learning in Schools* (Guilford Publications, 2004), and her more than 115 articles, chapters, and volumes. "It's not enough to create knowledge and to prepare young people to be leaders in society," she says. "In addition, there is the drive for interpretation of new knowledge to improve the world. We produce knowledge, and we consider the consequences of our research discoveries. The application of knowledge for the social good is, for me, both a right and a responsibility."

Wilkinson thinks of her work as a combination of several careers. "One aspect of my professional life is that I am a researcher and a teacher, and I see those as the same," she says. "Research is discovery, and I'm learning about the world. I care about the questions I'm asking. And I don't think you can be a good teacher if you're not intellectually curious." A second part of her career is her work as a national and inter-



LOUISE WILKINSON
School of Education

national leader who lectures about educational reform and literacy education throughout the world, including China, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, Argentina, and Armenia, and serves as chair of the International Reading Association Urban Deans' Network.

Her top professional commitment right now is as the dean of a school with a long and rich history. "The premier strength of the School of Education is the legacy and prominent leadership it provides in improving and informing educational practice for diverse communities of learners," she says. "With colleagues, I share the belief that diverse learning communities create conditions that both enrich educational experiences and provide opportunities for all to realize their full potential." Wilkinson is quick to remind all that the School of Education pioneered the inclusion movement in the United States, making way for all learners—diverse in many dimensions from each other—to participate fully and thereby maximize the strengths of mainstream classrooms and other inclusive learning environments. "I'm focused on building the school to its full potential," says Wilkinson, whose husband Alex is a Professor of Practice in the School of Information Studies; their daughter Jennifer is a sophomore at Oberlin.

Wilkinson feels privileged to hold the position of dean and is hard at work with colleagues to ensure that the school transcends its potential. "I believe people will come here because whatever we do, we do it better than anyone else," she says. "I want this to be the 'go to' place for our area of excellence. And I'd say we're off and running with that."

—Amy Speech Shires

Transforming an Information Society

RAYMOND VON DRAN EFFORTLESSLY DETAILS THE LATEST research in Internet search engines and high-tech gadgets. But, the dean of the School of Information Studies notes, the study of information isn't just about complicated software or a glitzy new piece of hardware. "I'm surrounded by students who think all these things are cool toys," von Dran says with an engaging smile. "I'm 58 years old. I'm way past cool toys. I want to go into my office, turn on my computer, and get my work done."

That's one of the messages von Dran and his faculty relate to their students—focus on the people you are helping, not just the technology. "We tell our students that they have to put themselves in the boss's head," von Dran says. "All supervisors want is to make sure they can have a productive workday and make good decisions; not worry about the hardware or software."

Von Dran, who earned a Ph.D. degree in information science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, didn't start out in information studies. He holds bachelor's degrees in foreign languages and history and master's degrees in library science and European history. "I was interested in intellectual history, which explores how cultures change and how new knowledge is created and integrated in society," von Dran says. "Intellectual history is similar to the information field; it deals with the development of new knowledge and how it can be stored, retrieved, preserved, and used to help people make good decisions."

While dean of the School of Library and Information Science at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., von Dran used his expertise to assist the Library of Congress, NASA, and the Environmental Protection Agency. He then served as dean of the School of Library and Information Sciences at the University of North Texas before coming to SU in 1995. He arrived knowing that the School of Information Studies had a strong reputation. He proudly notes the school was the first of its kind, starting in 1896 with the library program. The vision continued to expand and, in 1974, the school embraced the coming Information Age. Its name was changed from the School of Library Science to the School of Information Studies. Along with that came new degree programs, such as information management and technology, and telecommunications and network management, and inclusion of information science in the library degree. "We broadened our focus from information and its physical properties—such as on bookshelves—to the information that could be networked, manipulated, and retrieved," he says.

During von Dran's tenure, the number of students and faculty has more than doubled and the school continues to build quality programs. *U.S. News & World Report* ranked the school's M.S. program in information management and its Ph.D. in information transfer second in the nation. Since 1996, the school's sponsored research has increased 500 per-

cent, and von Dran credits the faculty with pursuing a variety of research opportunities. "They're enthusiastic and upbeat," he says. He points to work being done in the school's seven research centers, such as development of a search engine that mimics human intelligence, and computers that translate English into Arabic and Farsi. Von Dran also oversees the renovation of Hinds Hall, which will become the school's new home in 2006.

Never far from the classroom, von Dran teaches graduate-level courses and attends freshman forums. Yet he revels in his role as dean as a way to reach all students. "You affect thousands of students in some small way," he says. His mission is expressed in the school's vision statement: to expand human capability through information. "I would like to see everything we do have a tremendous social impact," von Dran says. "The future belongs to those societies that can put information to use for the betterment of their citizens."

—Kathleen M. Haley



RAYMOND VON DRAN
School of Information Studies

Douglas Lloyd

Engineering Edge

ERIC SPINA, NOW IN HIS SECOND YEAR AS DEAN OF THE L.C. Smith College of Engineering and Computer Science (ECS), is about as erudite a conversationalist as one is likely to meet. A graduate of Carnegie-Mellon University who holds a doctorate from Princeton in mechanical and aerospace engineering, he is seamlessly articulate on subjects as diverse as modern history, home improvement, theater, and organized structures in a supersonic turbulent boundary layer.

While giving a talk recently, Spina asked members of the audience for the first word that comes to mind when they think of engineers. "Without hesitation, someone yelled, 'Geek!'" he says. "I told them, 'I know the stereotypes, but you're wrong about Syracuse engineers. We get a bum rap. This is not your father's engineer.'" The dean contends that the school is producing a new generation of more sophisticated and worldly engineers. Almost half of ECS students complete either double majors or minors outside the college, about five times as many as a decade ago. Management, economics, psychology, public policy, and foreign language study attract many of them, and they take semesters abroad in increasing numbers. "Engineering has become a profession for people who communicate well, both locally and internationally," says the Douglas D. Danforth Dean of Engineering and Computer Science.

With 23 engineering colleges in New York State, many of them institutionally anchored to the discipline, Spina believes Syracuse University is the asset that gives ECS an edge in a competitive market. Currently, the college has about 900 undergraduate majors. "The best applicants know we offer many opportunities for adding value to their educations, and that simply isn't the case at many places," Spina says. He points to the example of ECS alumna Beth Cohen '01, who completed a dual major in music. Her interdisciplinary education may seem "eccentric" by yesterday's standards, but it led her straight through the door to tomorrow's job at the Bose Corporation, a manufacturer of cutting-edge audio equipment.

Plans to expand research and doctoral education at ECS are grand and hold implications for the entire University. "Given the role of technology in contemporary society, the growth of engineering and computer science is essential to achieving the Chancellor's vision of increased international stature for Syracuse," Spina says. "Since we don't have a

medical school, the hard sciences and engineering drive our research profile."

The college is already making great strides in this regard. Spina expects ECS research expenditures to increase to at least \$15 million in 2005, a 300 percent jump since 1997.



ERIC SPINA
L.C. Smith College of Engineering and Computer Science

Bolstered by SU's central position in the emerging constellation of Syracuse-area research institutions focused on environmental systems, expenditures in that area, which includes faculty members from all ECS departments, have risen nearly 1,000 percent in just three years. Strengths in electrical and computer engineering and bioengineering have also contributed to the increase in sponsored research. Spina's personal expertise on jet flow has led him to projects that include studies on aerodynamics for NASA and on the trajectory of golf balls for the United States Golf Association.

The dean plans to take to the road and personally deliver all the good news at ECS to as many alumni as he can. "Improved communication with our alums is another of my priorities," he says. "I need to make sure they understand what the college is accomplishing so I can hear their feedback and get their ideas on how they can help. We'll be having more alumni coming in to speak to students, both formally and informally. They created the rich legacy we're building on and I want to make them feel welcome here."

—David Marc