

**Sacred Heart University**

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**From the Selected Works of Bronwyn Cross-Denny, Ph.D., LCSW**

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June 1, 2012

## University College Presents Annual Faculty Awards

Bronwyn Cross-Denny, *Sacred Heart University*



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## University College Presents Annual Faculty Awards



Dr. Bronwyn Cross-Denny, left, and Prof. Mary Treschitta, winners of the 2012 University College Faculty Awards.

News Story: June 1, 2012

Mary Treschitta, assistant professor in Sacred Heart University's Department of Graphic Design and Visual Arts, and Dr. Bronwyn Cross-Denny, instructor of Social Work, were honored for going "above and beyond" their expected duties as faculty members during Sacred Heart University's annual Commencement Breakfast for part-time adult students on May 15.

Also recognized were two students, Allyson Mahler, who received the Gold Medal of Excellence in General Studies, and Steven Skiptunas, who received the Silver Medal. They were selected based on their grade point average.

Treschitta and Cross-Denny were chosen by their students, who are invited to nominate professors who demonstrate a genuine interest in them and their subject matter, use an active teaching style in the classroom to encourage greater participation, make good use of technology to enhance learning and in other ways to stimulate a heightened interest in the course work. A University College committee screens the nominations. The awards have been a tradition since 2004.

Treschitta, a graphic arts professor who has an MAT in both studio art and education and an MFA specializing in graphic design, has been at Sacred Heart for eight years. She began her career as a mechanical artist and worked as an art director and creative director. She now owns her own design firm while teaching. "With each step in my career, I honed my skills and that has allowed me to become a better teacher," she said.

Treschitta, who won the Best Athletic Mentor Faculty Award in 2008-2009 for her work with SHU's equestrian program, was thrilled and honored to learn she had won the University College Outstanding Faculty award. "It's a wonderful way for the students to communicate their reaffirmation that I'm on the right track. I'm always trying to perfect my teaching technique. I keep up with new technology in graphic design software and try to make it relevant for the students," she said. "They have to listen to lectures, read and remember material and experience

skill-building tutorials. But the most important part of their experience is to perform and execute what they have learned through real-life projects in the industry. By the end of the semester, they have honed their software and design skills and are prepared for the job market and graphic design careers.”

Treschitta said she makes it a point to connect with her students and try to discern their learning styles. “One size does not fit all when it comes to teaching. It’s more work for me as a teacher, but it’s important that I do whatever is necessary to reach all my students.”

University College offers educational opportunities for working adults who must often balance family and career responsibilities with pursuing advanced education. Mary Lou DeRosa, vice provost for Special Academic Programs, said the “21st-century students” – as they are now called – are 23 and older and are returning to higher education or entering for the first time. They juggle family, work and other responsibilities while attending classes. Many, she said, have come to SHU because they see the value of having a degree in today’s economy. Others, some of whom received their associate’s degrees from the community colleges, are completing their education.

“They value their time in the classroom,” DeRosa said of the adult students. “They are investing their time and money, and they work hard.” The students’ focus and accomplishments are recognized by the faculty members, who give them a standing ovation at commencement. “It is heartwarming to see,” she said.

Cross-Denny has been a full-time SHU faculty member in the Social Work department for two years and worked as an adjunct professor for a year before that. Her courses include Research Methods, Cultural Competency, Practicum and Seminar, Social Work Practice, Human Behavior in the Social Environment and Introduction to Social Work. She holds both a master’s degree and a doctorate in social work from Fordham University.

In addition to teaching, Cross-Denny serves as an adviser to students majoring in Social Work and to the Social Work Club. She also is a coordinator for the Social Work Graduate Fair and the Social Work Career Fair and serves on several academic committees. She was a presenter at the National Association of Social Workers Specialty Conference in 2011 and will present at the Council on Social Work Education’s Annual Program Meeting this fall.

She is “incredibly honored” to receive the University College Faculty Award. “I discovered my passion for teaching when I first became an adjunct instructor at Fordham University in 2004. It is the reason I pursued my doctoral degree. I can’t think of a more meaningful honor than to know that I have impacted students in such a positive way that they would nominate me for this award.”

Cross-Denny believes the secret to her success is her deep commitment to social work. “I am energized and enthused by teaching about social work. I tell students that my number one priority is for them to succeed,” she said. “I gear my teaching style based upon each class as there are many different learning styles within a class. I include a variety of activities to accommodate the various learning styles.”

She said her small private practice also informs her teaching. “I am able to bring real-world examples into the classroom. I also learn from my students and consider us to be partners in the learning process.”

University College has more than 700 adult part-time students, and 146 of them graduated on May 15.