

Beth Severy-Hoven

Jack and Marty Rossmann Excellence in Teaching Award Citation

April 21, 2016

We are grateful and proud to be able to present you with the 2016 Jack and Marty Rossmann Excellence in Teaching Award. You have received heartfelt and effusive praise not only from your colleagues, but also from your students, ranging from tenure-track faculty to Macalester's first-year cohort. In all of these testimonies on your behalf, an image emerges of a talented, deeply committed and resourceful educator who embodies all of the qualities that we associate with the highest standards of the scholar-educator and good citizen at Macalester.

As a teacher, you have made an indelible impression since your arrival at Macalester, drawing your students to the study of Classical antiquity through masterful pedagogy, care for your students and a great deal of hard work. According to students and colleagues, your talent and commitment as a teacher overmatch numerical logic: you are, they attest, "several professors in one" and you "do more for Macalester than any five people combined." These individuals describe you as an inspiring teacher, a fearless advocate and an empowering intellectual role-model. You inspire confidence in your students and enable them to undertake challenges that they might not have thought possible. For this reason, as one of your colleagues points out, "Many students take most of their classes from [you], saying they like to major in 'Beth.'"

Drawing on your impressive skills and expertise, you have designed a uniquely powerful and effective study-abroad program for our students. Every other January for nearly three weeks, twenty or so of our students along with your grateful Classics colleagues accompany you on a ranging and innovative trip abroad to Rome, and often beyond Rome to other areas of the Mediterranean. This course's two credit hours belie its roughly 100 contact hours of academic rigor, ambition learning goals and potentially life-changing exposure to distant places and times. Colleagues and students alike praise you as the center and life-force of this course, and agree that such an opportunity deeply enhances the academic life of the College. And this is just a single

example of the ways in which you fundamentally strengthen the intellectual opportunities available to Macalester's students.

Your talent and value as an advisor match your impact upon the student whom you teach. Your advisees rave about your ability to help them focus their academic studies, articulate their goals beyond graduation and guide them toward applying their academic skills in their burgeoning professional lives. One student even describes you as a “one-woman career development center.” Another powerfully highlights your talent for equipping your advisees with confidence and resilience: “Through my entire graduate career,” he intimates, “in all of my moments of self-doubt and modest triumph, Beth was there to encourage and congratulate me.”

As with your students, you are an example to your younger colleagues, whom you mentor tirelessly and with unmatched commitment. One of your junior colleagues writes that “what is ‘impossible’ in this area for so many others is, for Beth, the standard of professional responsibility and performance.” “Good professional mentors,” he explains, “train and create good educators, and for this reason Beth’s pedagogy extends beyond her classroom to include those of the newer faculty with whom she has generously shared her time and expertise.”

Finally, you push us constantly toward curricular advancement and institutional integrity, and you are a crucial resource for how to move us into the future with care and efficacy. One of your colleagues therefore suggests that “Macalester is stronger and steadier because Beth has put her shoulder to the wheel on numerous occasions in the service of the College.” Another draws attention to the “seamless efficiency” and “huge effort [you] put into making academic and administrative dreams come true.” Your steady leadership makes you an admirable source of wisdom, advice and guidance in the future of teaching at the College.

For all of these reasons, you make Macalester a better place to teach and learn, and you help to ensure that our students undertake a life-changing and life-affirming academic experience in their time here with us.