New assistant professor enjoys smaller IUS campus

Kelly Ryan

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Kelly Ryan, assistant professor of history, has begun her first semester at IU Southeast after receiving her doctorate from the University of Maryland last year.

One of the reasons Ryan said she decided to teach at IU Southeast was because she liked the small class sizes and the connection with students.

"When I taught at big universities I had classes were there were 160 students and I didn't get to really interact with them," Ryan said.

She said she thought it was strange that some students seem to talk negatively about IU Southeast as just a regional institute, giving it little or no respect.

She also said professors don't get enough credit because even though students have to write 10 page history papers, professors may have to grade as many as 30 of them.

"I like reading students' papers because a class can read the same book, but each paper I read is completely different," Ryan said.

She said she felt writing papers are an important part of the learning process because they lend themselves to discussion, which is also important.

Ryan works about 60 hours a week and attributes this to her coffee addiction. She also sometimes sings during class.

"I think life should be like a musical where someone could just start to sing and dance," Ryan said.

She grew up in a military family that was constantly on the move, even living in Hawaii when she graduated from high school.

"Being on the move I started noticing patterns in behavior and became cynical and became interested in why we are the way we are," Ryan said.

Ryan said because she went to college preparatory high school, she found her first two years at George Mason University in Virginia easy.

"I started getting serious toward the end of my sophomore year and started getting more interested when I started my major in history," Ryan said.

She received her bachelor's degree from George Mason University in 1995 then got her master's degree from Boston College in 1999 and her doctorate from the University of Maryland in 2006.

"I really liked my time in college because it's the only time in life to devote yourself to learning, determine your character, establish a political identity; and afterwards it's a little depressing," Ryan said.

When she was growing up she was into movies and music and worked in a flower shop, candy shop and as a researcher.

Ryan said being a movie critic or researcher would be her dream job. She is working on publishing a book and would like to publish another. She commented on the current political condition of the country. She said she feels that sometimes both parties can present facts to fit an argument rather than tell the truth.

"I think it is an American's role to read into the argument and find the truth for them selves," Ryan said.

Faculty Senate president ready for challenges

By ZACH HESTER
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Joe Wert

The Faculty Senate is the governing body which sets academic guidelines for the university. They have many responsibilities, including creating guidelines for admission, academic probation and faculty-related issues like tenure and course loads.

At the head of that body is Joe Wert.

Wert, an associate professor of political science, was elected by Faculty Senate members last spring.

As Faculty Senate president, Wert presides over the senate's monthly meetings, helps set agendas and works as a liaison among the faculty, the chancellor and administration.

"I see myself as kind of a disseminator of information from the administration to the faculty and from the faculty to the administration," he said. "And in a sense I act as an advocate for the faculty."

For example, the administration is forming a committee that will make recommendations for guidelines on faculty salary policy for next fiscal year and some faculty members did not initially like the way the administration was going about it.

"There were some issues involved in how the faculty members for that committee would be selected," Wert said. "I took those concerns to the chancellor and we worked out a solution."

Wert said he thinks the relationship between the senate and the administration is a good one.

"So far I have found them receptive," he said. "We've been able to work together really well."

Although this is Wert's first year as Faculty Senate president, he said he has been involved with the senate in some way for most of the time since he arrived at IU Southeast in 1999.

He served a three-year term as a social science representative, and continued to serve on committees after his term ended. He decided to run for the presidency last spring.

"The past president asked me if I'd be interested," he said. "As a political scientist I think that interest comes naturally to me."

"It was something new to me and it was something I wanted to challenge myself with," Wert said. "I wanted to hopefully make a difference on campus."

One issue the senate is working on is the upcoming accreditation review of the university. Every ten years the university must undergo a review by the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement in order to keep its accreditation.

The NCA will evaluate the university in five areas: student learning and effective teaching, mission statement clarity and appropriateness, use of resources, community involvement and research and creative work.

The senate is working with Gilbert Atnip, vice chancellor of Academic Affairs, on a self-study of the university that will be sent to the NCA before they visit the campus.

"We kind of look at where we are, where we're going and where we've been, and then the NCA comes in and does their thing," Wert said.

Wert is also the coordinator of the political science program at IU Southeast. As coordinator, his responsibilities include forming schedules for semesters, hiring adjunct professors, and making assessment reports.

"I enjoy being Faculty Senate president, but I've been the political science coordinator for several years now and I think I enjoy that the most. It allows me to work closely with other faculty members here in the political science department and we've got a great set of faculty," he said. "They're a pleasure to work with. It makes my job easy."

Jean Abshire, associate professor of political science, said she thinks Wert does a good job as coordinator.

"He's a fantastic colleague. He keeps the department running, basically," she said. "He keeps us all on track and accommodates all our special requests while keeping us all on track."

Abshire is also a member of the Faculty Senate's nominating committee, and said she thinks Wert's first term as president is going well.

"I think he's doing some good things," she said. "He's committed to listening to the faculty and addressing their concerns.

His focus is very much on trying to improve communication."

Wert is also a faculty adviser for the Student Government Association and the College Republicans.

He said he does not have much time to be involved in anything outside of the university.

"This keeps me very busy," he said.

Wert is originally from Indianapolis and applied for an assistant professorship after earning his doctorate at the University of Cincinnati in 1998.

"This is kind of my back yard, which is part of what attracted me," he said.

'Democracy does not guarantee equality of conditions — it only guarantees equality of opportunity.'

– Irving Kristol

IUS Facts

In case of a campus-wide emergency, the university will communicate by personal communication where appropriate, television and radio broadcast messages, outdoor warning sirens, e-mail, the emergency preparedness Web site, and the IU Southeast web site.