

Jun-2000

Faculty Profile: Gail Price

Recommended Citation

(2000). Faculty Profile: Gail Price. *Bridgewater Review*, 19(1), 30.
Available at: http://vc.bridgew.edu/br_rev/vol19/iss1/14



FACULTY PROFILE

GAIL PRICE

Professor Gail Price of the Mathematics and Computer Science Department is a faculty member who wears many professional “hats.” Professor Price is an engaging teacher with a particular expertise in computer programming languages. She is also the Chair of the Department with the responsibility of overseeing the Math and Computer Science curriculum and the nineteen faculty members who teach the courses. Finally, she is the lead negotiator representing Bridgewater in its contract talks with the Board of Higher Education. Like many faculty members at Bridgewater, Professor Price has learned the art of balancing many tasks.

As an instructor, Professor Price teaches the introductory course in computer science. Because of the heightened demand for computer science proficiency, Professor Price has turned her attention to the JAVA programming language, which has moved into the mainstream of computer science programming. During her upcoming sabbatical, Professor Price will enhance her knowledge of JAVA and develop courses that will be introduced to the students in the coming years.

Besides her work with advanced computer languages, Professor Price has developed an interest in working with young mathematics teachers at the elementary level. As part of a statewide math initiative called PALMS, Professor Price has worked with teachers to alleviate their anxiety over math instruction. She calls her approach Math By Discovery. Over the years, Professor Price has developed a number of techniques to help teachers overcome their phobia toward math, including hands-on experiments that have a math message. Professor Price has recently worked with a group of 45 student teachers at Wheelock College to sharpen their skills, and she will travel to Bermuda during the summer to conduct additional workshops.

At the heart of Professor Price’s teaching philosophy is a commitment to make mathematics a subject matter that is not intimidating but rather a rewarding experience. She is also working with a CD program that will assist remedial math students in grasping essential concepts and procedures. This will be a self-paced program that the students can work with at home or at the computer lab on campus. During the summer Professor Price hopes to develop a pilot program for the CD and test it out on a group of remedial math students.

In many respects Professor Price’s work as teacher and department chair come together in her work as contract negotiator. Professor Price is an active member of the Massachusetts State College Association (MSCA), which is the professional union representing the faculty and librarians at the nine state colleges in Massachusetts. The centerpiece of the Association is the contract that determines the rules, procedures and responsibilities the faculty and the administration of the colleges must follow during the life of the agreement, which is normally three years.

Professor Price is quick to comment that she is energized by her role as contract negotiator. As part of the contract process she is required to poll the faculty to elicit their concerns related to the professional climate on campus and their vision of what a future contract should include. The input of the faculty becomes the proposal that is presented to the Board of Higher Education. As with any labor negotiation, the Board of Higher Education has its own set of concerns and vision, which quite often is at odds with that of the MSCA. This is where Professor Price has learned the art of negotiation. She and her colleagues from the other state colleges participate in what has become a long and arduous set of meetings in which both the MSCA and the Board of Higher Education seek to fashion an agreement that is acceptable to both sides. This process is difficult and time consuming, but Professor Price is determined to represent the interests of the faculty. When completed, the contract is a huge document that addresses issues such as evaluation, governance, workload, promotion procedures and of course pay schedules. In recent years, new issues such as distance learning, property rights and post-tenure review have complicated the negotiating process.

While the negotiation process is often a frustrating experience as both sides seek to advance their cause, Professor Price remains excited about the process and privilege of representing the faculty in what is certainly a critical part of their professional life. Like most faculty, however, Professor Price remains focused on her teaching, but because of her unique experience as a contract negotiator she is always thinking of how she can improve the instructional atmosphere and rights of her fellow teachers at Bridgewater State and indeed throughout the Massachusetts State College System.