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FACULTY PROFILE

Susan Holton

For Professor Susan Holton of the Speech Communication and Theater Arts Department the job description of a Bridgewater State faculty member is more than just the responsibility to teach students about a specific academic discipline. Although Susan teaches a range of Communications courses on rhetoric, organization and conflict management, she has built a stellar reputation at Bridgewater as one of the most active members of the faculty in the areas of instructional improvement and campus quality of life.

Susan was the founding force behind the Massachusetts Faculty Development Council, which since 1986 has brought together both public and private college instructors and administrators interested in improving the art of teaching in our state colleges and universities. Susan's involvement with the Massachusetts Faculty Development Council grew out of her work on the Bridgewater campus where she started the Committee on Teaching Quality in 1984. The Committee recognized the need to encourage faculty to hone their teaching skills and be open to new methods and technologies in the classroom. Over the years Susan has brought both to the campus and to state-wide conferences noted speakers who have informed faculty about the latest research on improving teaching.

Susan's concern with improving teaching on college campuses is now matched by her interest in strengthening the learning and living environment at Bridgewater. Susan is co-chair, with Vice President of Student Affairs, Lynn Willett, of the Campus Climate Action Group. The Group's mission is to promote appreciation of differences on campus and to create a positive environment for all students. Susan is especially concerned that Bridgewater create a true campus community where students of color, homosexuals and the disabled are welcome and treated with respect. Under Susan's guid-



ance the Campus Climate Action Group has developed a number of programs and initiatives to sensitize the student body to differences and to create an atmosphere of caring.

Besides her very active involvement in the areas of teaching improvement and campus climate, Susan has found time to edit a new book, *Conflict Management in Higher Education*. Using her professional interest in conflict management, Susan has created a book that is getting wide circulation in the academic community, primarily because higher education in the United States has increasingly become the focal point for a range of societal conflicts involving such issues as collective bar-

gaining, student rights, and town-college relations. Susan has attracted a number of well known experts on conflict in higher education and has written a number of chapters herself, including the final prescriptive section dealing with possible solutions to the problems facing academe.

Susan's involvement with conflict management in higher education has made her a popular speaker at conferences around the country and has led to a second book, *Mending the Cracks in the Ivory Tower*, a more specific discussion of strategies to remedy the problems facing higher education in the United States. The second book should be published in the Fall of 1997. But that does not end Susan's scholarly commitment. She is already working on a third book which will profile leaders in higher education and describe how these leaders successfully faced challenges in their institution. Again the emphasis will be on the role of conflict management as a key to advancing institutions of higher learning during times of crisis.

Susan Holton is one of the best examples at Bridgewater of a faculty member who just can't sit still. She is forever moving forward, taking on new responsibilities and conquering new challenges. It is a certainty that in the coming years Susan Holton will be making further contributions to the Bridgewater campus, contributions that strengthen the reputation of the college as an institution that cares about teaching and students. ■