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FACULTY PROFILE

Luci Fortunato DeLisle

One of the great satisfactions of being a college professor is the opportunity to link your research interest with the classroom concerns of teachers and students. In the case of history professor Luci Fortunato DeLisle, she has successfully bridged the gap between her love of Renaissance history and her commitment to improve the teaching of history.

Although Luci is a new addition to the History Department at Bridgewater, she is no stranger to the College. A graduate of Bridgewater with an honors degree in history, Luci also received a Master's Degree in the humanities here. While still working on her Ph.D. in European history at Boston College, she moved to Connecticut to teach at Miss Porter's School where she served a term as chairperson of the history department, and became the director of new teachers. During her time away she also was a recipient of several National Endowment for the Humanities grants including a teaching fellowship at the University of Connecticut to implement a model Western Civilization curriculum and a summer seminar to

study the writings of Petrarch in Avignon, France. She also received the directorship of a Younger Scholar's Grant, the subject of which was Renaissance women. Her dissertation research on a salon of the Risorgimento took her to archives in Florence, Italy, as well. But the chance to return to her alma mater to pursue the twin goals of research and teaching proved to be an irresistible attraction.

Since arriving back at Bridgewater, Luci has introduced courses on Renaissance texts and women's history through her research and studies. Her current passion is the pursuit of the history of women in sixteenth-century Tuscany. Using letters and documents from the Renaissance era culled from archives in Florence and Lucca, Luci is finding that women did have a voice, and were concerned with a whole range of issues. Luci is interested especially in the life experi-

ences of both noble and common women who have received little attention by researchers, but whose stories shed light on the times and conditions in which they lived.

The bridge between historical practice and classroom teaching directs her work both at Bridgewater and in the education reform effort in the state. At the College she is working to

make curriculum changes that recognize the importance of women in history. She is also a member of the state-wide committee which drafted the new Social Studies Curriculum Framework for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts which was designed to comply with the Education Reform Act and the guidelines for a Common Core of Learning for students from pre-K through high school.

Luci has become a key player in fashioning the curriculum guidelines on which future courses in social stud-

ies will be built. This task of curriculum development is difficult and somewhat controversial since it involves issues of what students will learn about the past and the democratic process. To be certain that the frameworks do not remain simply a plan on paper, Luci has become involved with several implementation efforts, including a frameworks review committee in collaboration with Brockton High School and the Southeastern Massachusetts Arts Collaborative initiative at the College in order to integrate the arts into the social studies classrooms of Massachusetts.

As if she is not busy enough with her research and curriculum development, Luci has taken on the role as adviser of Bridgewater's chapter of the international honor society, Phi Alpha Theta, and the History Club. Most importantly, she serves as supervisor of student teachers in social studies. In this capacity, she is responsible for placing the student teachers in local middle and high schools and supervising their practica. As with all good supervisors, Luci spends considerable time working with the student teachers to improve their classroom skills, stressing responsible and creative strategies to meet the needs of all students. Together Luci and Professor Emeritus John Myers supervise about two dozen student teachers annually. Because statistically history is still a male-dominated discipline, one of Luci's goals is to encourage more young women to become history majors and social studies teachers.

Although Luci has been back at Bridgewater only a short time, she has made a significant impact on the college. Perhaps, more than anything else, Luci is a role model for many women who may be reluctant to pursue a career in history or enter the classroom as a social studies teacher. As with her passion for expanding our knowledge of Renaissance women, Luci is working to expand the horizons of Bridgewater women.



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