Dear Members,

Having grown up in western Pennsylvania and northeastern Ohio, where the sun disappears behind heavy clouds on Halloween and doesn’t reappear until Easter, I’m accustomed to looking forward to spring. In addition to the sun and warm weather, we in UDARF can also look forward to several events that promise to be entertaining, informative and worthy of your participation. So, hang in there for a few more weeks when the robins return to The Green and we have our first luncheon of the new year.

On March 1, at 11:30 a.m. in Clayton Hall, Associate Professor Richard Hanley will explore the philosophy of popular culture in a talk entitled “Truth is Stranger Than Science Fiction.” Prof. Hanley has written on subjects ranging from classic philosophy to Star Wars and is a recognized authority on the meaning of popular culture. His talk promises to be both informative and entertaining.

On May 9, again at 11:30 a.m. in Clayton Hall, President Patrick Harker will discuss “The State of the University.” The President’s annual address to the members of UDARF is one of our most popular luncheons, and we expect this year to be no different. With so many changes being made on campus and events moving so rapidly, I’m sure you’ll have questions to ask the President. You can register for the luncheons online at our website or by using the form in this newsletter.

Last November, UDARF introduced a new lecture series called “My Intellectual Journey.” Professor Emeritus Wayne Craven was the first speaker, and the event was a smashing success. Attendance was greater than anticipated, and Prof. Craven’s warm and insightful talk received rave reviews from the audience. Needless to say, we are looking forward to the second presentation of the year on April 14, when History Professor Emeritus Willard A. Fletcher will be our guest speaker. An internationally recognized historian, Prof. Fletcher’s personal life and career have been closely bound and influenced by world events. His talk promises to be one not to miss. Remember, “My Intellectual Journey” presentations are held at 4 p.m. in the Courtyard Newark on the University’s north campus. Wine and cheese will be served at the reception following the talk.

We are pleased to announce the expansion of the Executive Committee to include three additional at large members appointed by the President. The appointments of Larry Purnell...
(Nursing), Arlette Rasmussen (Food and Nutrition) and Bob Carroll (Agriculture) give the committee greater representation from programs across campus.

You can find out more about our organization, its history, the programs we sponsor and anything else you want to know about UDARF by going to our new and revised website www.udel.edu/UDARF. We’ll do our best to keep the site up-to-date and encourage you to make suggestions about how we can do a better job.

Best wishes,

Frank Scarpitti, President

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**Don Sparks details DENIN goals at the December meeting**

Donald L. Sparks, director of the Delaware Environmental Institute (DENIN), highlighted the Institute’s goals and current research initiatives during UDARF’s December meeting in Clayton Hall.

Sparks, who is also the S. Hallock du Pont Chair of Soil and Environmental Chemistry, said that DENIN’s multi-disciplinary approach includes partnerships with government, nonprofits, industry and the business community.

“Our main goal is to enhance interactions between faculty in science, engineering and policy, and we are interested in facilitating the development of interdisciplinary academic programs,” Sparks said. “We also have been working very diligently to forge partnerships among government agencies and a number of nonprofits.”

In terms of research, Sparks noted that DENIN, in collaboration with UD’s seven colleges, will emphasize two specific core areas to address significant issues of state, national and international concern: processes at the air, land and water interfaces and environmental forecasting and remediation.
“These are areas in which UD already has significant, well-known research expertise and programs under way, which we hope to build upon and bring to international prominence,” Sparks said.

Working groups are being formed to bring together faculty from across campus, according to Sparks. These working groups will help guide the scientific direction of the Institute and, in many instances, form teams to compete for large federal grants.

The groups may change as faculty discover new ways of working together or the priorities of granting agencies change, Sparks said.

The Institute’s staff helps facilitate these working groups and can assist with coordinating and administering large grants.

In the area of air, land and water interfaces, groups are currently focusing on water quality and sustainability, air quality, and nutrient and metal cycling. In the area of forecasting and remediation, groups are collaborating on climate change, environmental remediation, and monitoring and modeling.

“We are a coastal state with a very fragile ecosystem, so we are very interested in pursuing research that would look at the transport and cycling of contaminants including nutrients, metals and organic chemicals,” Sparks said. “There are also significant issues related to carbon and climate change, sea-level rise and the role of microorganisms in various environmental processes.

“One area of concern in Delaware and many coastal areas is the marshlands that are dying back. With climate change and sea level rising, the marshes are very important because they help mitigate flooding and filter out contaminants.”

Sparks said that around the world and in Delaware, researchers are concerned with an environmental “critical zone,” a layer surrounding the planet that reaches from the outer limits of vegetation down to and including the zone of groundwater.

“The critical zone is basically the area in which we live and which sustains all life on Earth,” Sparks said. “It really is an elegant term because it encompasses all the areas that play critical roles in determining environmental quality. Processes at these critical zone interfaces have major implications for human health, air, soil and water quality and the impact of the environment on economic viability and development.”

Sparks noted the importance of social science and policy in making people aware of the need to address these environmental challenges.

“If you think about the major environmental challenges, we can do the best science and engineering in the world, but if we can’t change people’s behavior, we are probably not going to solve the problem,” Sparks said. “We need to bring in faculty from the social sciences and the humanities. This is something that we are very interested in doing.”
Sparks also told the group about a key structural component that will support DENIN’s multidisciplinary approach to addressing environmental issues: the construction of the University’s new $140 million Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering Laboratory, which will be located at the intersection of Academy Street and Lovett Avenue in Newark.

“This will be a major benefit to our programs in environment and energy. It will be home to DENIN, the UD Energy Institute and the Center for Energy and Environmental Policy,” Sparks said. “This building, coupled with hiring a number of new faculty and the development of new programs, will propel UD to even greater heights of renown and excellence in the environmental area.”

Article by Jerry Rhodes

Photo by Kathy Atkinson

Wayne Craven describes his intellectual journey

Wayne Craven shared a half-century of experiences in academia during the opening talk Nov. 11 of a new UDARF lecture series, entitled “My Intellectual Journey.”

Sponsored by the Office of the Provost, the series gives UDARF members the opportunity to reflect on their professional and personal lives, how the two have intersected and the personal choices they have made along the way.

Now the H.F. du Pont Professor Emeritus of Art History, Craven arrived at UD in 1960, after receiving his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Indiana University and his doctorate from Columbia University.

“When I came here, I believed that UD was one of the places where things were going to happen,” Craven said. “I thought that the University was a place that was on the way up, and I wanted to be a part of that.”
As a student at the Herron Art School in Indianapolis, Craven said an honest personal evaluation of his artistic prowess intersected with conversations in a nearby café about the poet Dante and led him to eventually pursue an education and career in art history.

“One day, I stepped back from my easel to look at the canvas, and said to myself, ‘Craven, old man, you’d better find something else,’” he said. “Also at this time, there was a nearby café where students would go after class. When artists start talking about literature, the conversation becomes translated from words into visions. All of a sudden, the most wonderful images were being conjured up, and I said to myself, ‘I’ve got to look into this.’”

Craven said he started taking courses at the Indiana University extension in Indianapolis, a path that led to his transition from art student to academic. It was also about this time that Craven met his future wife, Lorna.

“Before I met Lorna, my life really didn’t have much purpose. I might have thought at most about the day after tomorrow,” Craven said. “But, when I met Lorna and we began to get serious about each other and so on, then life kind of took on a purpose. All of this came together, and there was a major redirection in my life.”

When he arrived at UD, Craven noted he was one of only two professors of art history in a department that was about to offer its first course in American art history.

“I gave that course, and it was about halfway through it when I was showing a slide by Albert Bierstadt [a 19th century American-German artist and part of the Hudson River School]. When I turned to look at it, I was stunned by the flat-out beauty of the thing,” Craven said. “From that moment on, I was hooked. It was another redirection in my academic career.”

During his UD career, Craven said he has witnessed a series of revolutions, including the challenge of high culture by the emerging popular culture represented by Elvis Presley, the Beatles, baseball, television and the Vietnam War.

“It was kind of like ‘us versus them.’ This was a pretty hard thing to compete with,” Craven said. “I believe that this cultural war is still going on.”

Craven also noted the challenges and changes brought about by the advent of the computer and the competition between information obtained through books and that gathered online.

“The computer turned out to be a wonderful teaching tool, but it might also be announcing the end of the kind of books I have been writing,” Craven said. “I gather my data by observing things around me, and I’m a little concerned about this idea of the book versus the computer.”

When it comes to the changes in the way students are taught and the challenges posed by computer and media technology, Craven said that those in the humanities must accept these changes and work within them.
“We have to recognize that change is inevitable, and we need to figure out how we can best serve our purpose in this change,” Craven said. “A great university generates as well as transmits knowledge. Research also must be part of our purpose. If we produce educated, as well as an employable graduates, that is so much the better.”

Next in the series: Willard A. Fletcher, Professor Emeritus of History, will speak at 4 p.m., Thursday, April 14, at the Courtyard Newark at UD.

Article by Jerry Rhodes

Photo by Kathy Atkinson

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Richard Hanley to speak at UDARF

March 1 meeting

Richard Hanley, associate professor of philosophy, will speak on “Truth Is Stranger than Science Fiction” at UDARF’s March meeting.

The meeting is scheduled from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Tuesday, March 1, at Clayton Hall.

A philosopher, author and songwriter, he has taught at UD since 1999, including courses on contemporary moral problems, metaphysics, time travel and “Star Trek and Philosophy.” His books include The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Language, The Metaphysics of Star Trek and South Park and Philosophy: Bigger, Longer and More Penetrating. Hanley, who co-developed the nationwide curriculum for teaching high school philosophy, is credited with inventing the field of “Philosophy and Popular Culture.”
A new University of Delaware Bookstore is now under construction, with opening scheduled for the beginning of the 2011-12 academic year.

The three-story structure will be located on East Main Street just west of the Academy Street intersection, situated behind the Christiana School District Building. It will accommodate the Campus Bookstore retail operations on the first two floors and offices for University Development and Alumni Relations on the third floor.

The Bookstore, operated by Barnes and Noble Booksellers, will feature textbooks, retail books, logo merchandise and art supplies.
A large outdoor garden and seating area will serve as a destination and gathering area for both the campus and community.

Designed by the architecture firm of DIGSAU of Philadelphia, the facility will replace the current Perkins Student Center Bookstore, which lacks expansion capacity.

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**Faculty interviewers needed for Fulbright applicants**

The Institute for Global Studies (IGS) is working to publicize the Fulbright program and to increase the number of students applying for, and ultimately receiving, Fulbright awards.

The Fulbright Program, sponsored by the U.S. State Department, was established in 1946 by Congress to “enable the government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries.” Traditional Fulbright awards enable students to pursue graduate-level study and research for a full academic year at hundreds of higher education institutions around the world.

Recipients of Fulbright’s English Teaching Award are active as independent teachers and as teachers’ assistants in school and university classrooms, teaching English language and serving as native-speaker resource persons.

Fulbrighters must have earned at least a bachelor’s degree and cannot hold a Ph.D. or other terminal degree at the time their grant commences.

The University’s internal deadline for Fulbright applications is Oct. 1. Faculty from diverse disciplines are needed to serve on the committee that interviews and evaluates all candidates during the first two weeks of October. Faculty can commit to participating in as many or as few interviews as they wish.

Those interested should contact Lisa Chieffo, Associate Director of Student Programs in IGS and Fulbright Program Advisor, at lchieffo@udel.edu.

For more information on the Fulbright program, see us.fulbrightonline.org