



**Introducing Your New
EmeriTimes Editor:
Richard (Dick) L. Sleight,
Ph.D., Instructor Emeritus**

Earlier this summer, I was surprised to learn that our *EmeriTimes* newsletter was

on hiatus awaiting a new editor to replace the faithful Dr. Evette Hackman. I contacted two emeriti faculty I knew well. [Dr. George Scranton](#) taught my daughter Jean ('16) and she acted opposite him in *King Lear*. Dr. Mike Macdonald taught German to my wife Nancy ('77). I was happy to offer my skills as your next newsletter editor.

Unlike emeriti faculty who earned that honorable designation legitimately, I am counted among our number by dubious means. Here's my academic story for those of you who are not familiar with Dick Sleight (pronounced "Slate"), or as Dr. Rod Stiling happily recalled, "SL8."

I have taught Engineering, Computer Science, and Business courses at the college level, but my first real teaching opportunity came as a senior at West Seattle High School when I was asked to teach the FORTRAN programming class when the teacher-of-record lacked an hour for it in his schedule. This event illustrates a theme. No matter what other hats I wore over my career, demand for my computer skills shaped that career at every turn.

I like to tell folks that I went to college in 1973 and never left. I'd planned to become an Engineer like my father and brothers. Yet, while a junior in Electrical Engineering at the University of Washington, I decided to change my major to Economics. (*Editor's note: The average college student changes majors at least three times.*) Despite this move, I kept my undergraduate teaching assistant position in the College of Engineering. While I earned that Economics degree and added a teaching certificate in Secondary Social Studies, it was the College of Engineering that offered me a position as a Lecturer when I was 22 years old.

I taught at the UW for twelve years, adding an M.Ed. in Educational Psychology with an emphasis in measurement and statistics, and later a Ph.D. in Educational Policy Studies, (the same terminal degree earned by former SPU President Dan Martin.) My award-winning dissertation focused on transfer student quality in admissions into high demand Engineering programs at the UW. I taught Engineering Graphics, FORTRAN programming, Engineering Statistics, and Engineering Economy. When I left the UW, I was the undergraduate chair of its Industrial Engineering program.

Since my Ph.D. was not in an Engineering discipline, it was time to move on. Two three-letter organizations had me in for multiple interviews, SPU and IBM. SPU made an offer first. I enthusiastically moved the three miles west down the Lake Washington ship canal.

I was happy to join the staff of the old Academic Advising Center (AAC) with Betty Spina and Director Dr. Doug Rich who became a mentor to me. The fact that I came with my own laser printer and a strong proficiency with WordPerfect back in 1989 didn't hurt. Among the other tasks I performed was the desktop publishing of Doug's periodic AAC newsletter. He was once asked, "What did you do before you hired Dick?" His answer: "We didn't do it."

I had been told that I should not expect to ever gain a faculty position at SPU. Despite this, within months of my coming to SPU, [Dr. Karl Krienke](#), Dean of NMS, asked me to teach the *Engineering Graphics and Descriptive Geometry* course I'd taught quarterly at the UW.

In December 1990, SPU went through one of its intermittent 'fiscal adjustments' we'll call it. One Friday morning, thirty Professional Staff were let go across the campus.

I loved my brief eighteen months at SPU. Providentially, within a few months, I received two new job offers. I reasoned that the business school would be a better fit for me and might provide a more stable future than the Division of Continuing Studies (DCS). Like Indiana Jones, I chose wisely.

Even before I began my duties as the MBA Coordinator, I was hired to teach the statistics course in the school's off-site MBA program. Not surprisingly, most of my students were Boeing engineers.

A few years later, upon the retirement of Professor Howard Mount, I was asked to take over his BUS 1700 *Spreadsheets* course. Soon after that, as the business school pursued AACSB accreditation, Dean Alec Hill asked me to become the school's technology manager.

In 2000, Alec Hill secured for me the courtesy title of Instructor. For some reason, I found myself teaching a near-full academic load as I added the undergraduate business statistics course to my duties on top of my two *Spreadsheets* sections each quarter. At least within SBE, I was accepted as a faculty member. My position at SPU became a hybrid of faculty and staff duties. I continued as the McKenna Hall building manager, webmaster, computer lab manager, Time Schedule processor, honor society officer and coordinator, event and portrait photographer and more. If it sounds like having two jobs, you'd be right, but I loved the work.

Finally, in 2013, I understand that a rule change allowed qualified staff to be nominated for faculty status with the approval of the Faculty Senate.

After teaching at SPU since 1990, I was humbled when Dr. Bruce Baker rushed back to McKenna Hall from the December 5, 2013 Faculty Senate meeting to be the first to tell me I'd been unanimously granted faculty status. The vote on my status was the first item on the Senate agenda, otherwise they might have tabled it, because the only other item on the agenda that day was a long debate on faculty salaries. (That second item on the agenda guaranteed a big turnout!)

Over my years in SBE/SBGE, I was twice awarded the Dean's Service Award. Dr. Ross Stewart once gave me perhaps my greatest compliment: "You are a George Bailey."

I was proud to be inducted first into the Sigma Beta Delta business honor society, then later into the Beta Gamma Sigma business honor society and

the Omicron Delta Epsilon economics honor society.

I came to SPU in 1989 as an academic advisor, having served a doctoral internship in the big UW Central Advising Center and later as Acting Director of the UW Engineering Advising Center. At SPU I continued as an advisor in the AAC, then with MBA students, and finally with all minors in the business school.

I taught the last class held in McKenna Hall at the end of Winter quarter 2020 since my *Spreadsheets* students needed access to our computer classroom to take their Microsoft Excel certification exam. Like all of us who taught during the Governor's "stay home, stay healthy" lockdown, I spent the next five quarters teaching from home, in my case from my basement man cave in Bellevue. COVID-19 had only changed *how* we taught. All humility aside, I was delighted when my last two sections of BUS 1700 awarded me scores of 4.7 and 5.0 on my end-of-quarter course evaluations, despite my teaching Excel via Zoom.

I did not really want to retire at age 66 in 2021, but a growing quiver-full of grandchildren, now numbering ten, all living between Lake Stevens and Auburn, made the decision easier.

Back in 1982, I struggled to discern between pursuing an M.Div. or a Ph.D. (God got my full attention and allegiance [the day Mount St. Helens blew](#).) A trusted pastor cleared up my confusion a few years later by counseling me to teach both in the Academy and the Church. I've since taught at Bellevue Presbyterian Church, and beginning in 2012 I've taught through Matthew, Acts, Jeremiah, and next year Galatians at a large retirement community in Redmond.

I am delighted to serve the SPU emeriti community as your new *EmeriTimes* editor.

Dick Steight

"Life is so unnerving
for a servant who's not serving."

Lumière, Beauty and the Beast