

By NLDestiny
Published in Cardinal Points Newspaper (award winning newspaper)
Plattsburgh, New York
Newspaper Journalist 2010 to 2011



Higgins leaves PSUC after 28-year stint

Iran, grandchildren, flexibility, and research are what dreams are made of. Patricia Higgins dreams about what she plans on making reality after her upcoming retirement.

After being hired in the fall 1973, Higgins, a distinguished professor of anthropology, interim provost since July 2009 and VP of academic affairs since fall 1999, will retire from Plattsburgh State.

She said the big differences when you enjoy the colleagues you work with, and that is what she will remember the most: the people.

Higgins said she will start enjoying retirement life immediately and has many plans for her new free time.

With a couple of grown children and four grandchildren, she wants to make more time to play grandma. Flying back and forth for more frequent and longer visits between the two living in England and two living in California is definitely on her itinerary she said.

"I want to have the freedom to continue to do that and spend more time and to help out to the extent I can," Higgins said.

She said just enjoying more free time and flexibility and not having to wake up and head off to work will be special because it will allow for more time to do things she doesn't have the time to do now like returned Iran, something she hasn't been able to do since the end of the revolution.

Her eyes are almost glowing and she talks about her plans to go back. She said she desires to go to Iran to get back to the research she started so many years ago in the 1970s exploring the culture of the Persians and Islam, and continue ethnographic research on education and socialization within homes and schools.

"Higgins is without any doubt in my mind the hardest working most competent person I know," said James Armstrong an anthropology professor an associate director of the honors program.

"Her dedication to education is amazing."

Armstrong has worked with Higgins for more than 30 years as a colleague in the anthropology department, on the general education committee and through the development of an internship in Alaska.

He said her entire career has involved understanding educational culture and believes she has done a wonderful job as interim provost under difficult circumstances.

“Pat has served as interim progress for longer than she had originally intended and through very difficult period in the history of the college.”

President John Etling said, “She has been an invaluable advisor always cheerful and well-informed and always with the greater good of the entire campus community uppermost in her mind.”

Deborah Altamarino, anthropology department chair also said Higgins has proven herself as an irreplaceable part of the department since joining in 1994.

She has held several critical roles on campus, in addition to her faculty position, Alamarino said, “first and sponsor research and now as an term provost.”

For many years, she served Suny by editing “Practicing Anthropology, the journal of applied anthropology,” Alamarino said.

“Fortunately where not losing are completely to retirement,” she said. “Pat will continue to contribute to the campus and to the anthropology department she will be teaching her very popular course on peoples and cultures of the Middle East this coming fall. I wish her all the best as she begins a new phase in her life.”