

## Alfred University celebrates installation of four into endowed positions

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Alfred University marked the installation of four faculty and staff into endowed positions while members of the Board of Trustees were on campus to join in the celebration.

“Installing even one person into an endowed position is cause for celebration,” said Alfred University President Mark Zupan. “To be able to have four, as we did this weekend, is truly remarkable. We are deeply grateful to Michele and Marty Cohen, the late Frank Goetz, and Marlin Miller for their generous philanthropic investment in our University that led to this occasion. Please join me in congratulating four distinguished members of our Alfred University community as we install them in endowed positions, an honor that is a tribute to their exemplary professional achievements and a reflection of their dedicated service to our University.”

Gerar Edizel was installed as the inaugural holder of the Michele and Martin Cohen Endowed Deanship for our School of Art and Design (SoAD). Trustee Michele Cohen and her husband Martin, parents of Alfred University alumnus Adam Cohen BFA '03, created the endowed deanship.

A professor of art history who joined the Alfred University faculty in fall 1990, Edizel earned a BFA from the State Academy of Applied Fine Arts in Turkey, an MFA from Southern Illinois University, and an MA and PhD from Cornell University. Edizel is highly regarded as a teacher and has won seven Excellence in Teaching Awards at Alfred University. He has been serving as the dean of the School of Art and Design since 2015, during which time the School has made improvements in student enrollments, student outcomes, and philanthropic support.

A gift from Marlin Miller, Jr. &54, &89 HD, a long-time member of our Board of Trustees and chair emeritus of our Board, has endowed the Wayne Higby Directorship of the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum. The gift is in honor of Wayne Higby, an internationally acclaimed artist and educator, as well as the director and chief curator of the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum. Higby earned a BFA from the University of Colorado at Boulder, and an MFA at the University of Michigan. He joined Alfred University in 1973 after serving on the faculty of the Rhode Island School of Design. Wayne is a member of honor of the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (an organization that Alfred University played the lead role in launching and that now organizes the largest annual ceramic art event in the world), a Life Trustee of the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, the Vice President Emeritus of the International Academy of Ceramics (headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland), and an honorary citizen of the “Porcelain City” of Jingdezhen, China.

His art work is held in the permanent collections of museums around the world including at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, DC, the Metropolitan Art Museum in New York City, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the National Art Museum of China, the Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo, and the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

“Through Marlin Miller’s generous philanthropic support and Wayne’s artistic and managerial direction our Alfred Ceramic Art Museum became an iconic component of our campus last fall, 113 years after a “study collection” of ceramic art was started shortly after the founding of the New York State School of Clay-working at Alfred University,” said Zupan. “It is more than fitting that Wayne be the first to fill the position that so aptly celebrates his remarkable career at our University.”

As Higby moves into his new position, succeeding him as the holder of the prestigious Robert C. Turner MFA '49 Professorship (also endowed by Marlin Miller) is Linda Sikora, a faculty member in the School of Art and Design since 1997. Sikora is a Canadian native who earned a BFA from the NSCAD University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and an MFA from the University of Minnesota. Before joining Alfred University, Linda held positions at the Ohio State University, the University of Colorado at Boulder, and the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in Vancouver, Canada.

While at Alfred University, Sikora has received the Faculty Research Mentor Award for Visual and Performing Arts and the Ruth Berger Rubenstein Memorial Award for Excellence in Teaching (the University's top teaching award). Last fall, Sikora and Alfred University were prominently featured in the nationally-broadcast PBS special "Craft in America."

Sikora has exhibited her work widely throughout the United States as well as internationally. Her most recent international exhibition was the 2016 Hangzhou International Contemporary Ceramic Art Biennale at the China Academy of Art Gallery in Hangzhou, China. She is a member of the board at Haystack Mountain School of Crafts and a member of the International Academy of Ceramics (headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland).

Sikora became a full professor in 2008. Twice, she has served as head of Ceramic Art, a division within our School of Art and Design that is routinely rated by U.S. News & World Report as the top unit of its kind in the country. Sikora first served as the Ceramic Art division head from 2005-2008, and returned to the leadership position in 2015 where she continues to serve her division.

The University also recognized Andy Eklund as the inaugural holder of the Frank Goetz & 71 Professorship in Honor of Wes Bentz. The late Frank Goetz created the chair out of respect for Wes Bentz as a caring teacher and committed member of our community. Andy is following admirably in Wes's distinguished footsteps. A five-time recipient of the Excellence in Teaching Award from the University, Eklund also has won the Ruth Berger Rubenstein Memorial Award for Excellence in Teaching and a Student Senate Teaching Excellence Award. He avidly roots for Saxon athletic teams and serves as an advisor to the Forest People as well as the student chapter of the American Chemical Society.

Eklund joined our faculty in 2001 after receiving a BA from the College of Wooster and a PhD from the University of California at Irvine.

"Please join me in thanking the Cohens, Marlin Miller and the late Frank Goetz for their marvelous support," said Zupan. "Please also join me in congratulating Gerar, Wayne, Linda, and Andy on the altogether fitting honor that has been conferred on them."