

A favorite professor honored: University creates Horowitz Center

10/18/07

Dr. Gary Horowitz served Alfred University for 28 years, first as a member of the history faculty, then director of Alumni and Parent Programs, and finally as a senior development officer. Additionally, Horowitz was active in the community, serving as mayor of the Village of Alfred, and a member of the Community Chest Board of Directors, as well as other civic and cultural groups. He was also, for a time, publisher of the Alfred Sun, the community's weekly newspaper. When he left in 1994 to become vice president for Advancement at Frostburg State University in Maryland, he counted hundreds of former students and Alfred University alumni among his friends. Now some of those former students are helping to create the Gary Horowitz Center for Service Learning at Alfred University, a unique living-learning facility to be located at 10 Park St. "This center affirms an important Alfred University goal: Teaching our students to be involved members of their communities," said Dr. Charles M. Edmondson, president. "The Horowitz Center will foster an environment of social responsibility and community engagement to prepare students for their roles as citizens of the communities in which they live and work." Dr. Horowitz set the example when he was here at Alfred, and it is one we would like our current students to emulate," said Edmondson. Former students of Dr. Horowitz have made a gift to cover start-up costs for the Horowitz Center and seed an endowment to support ongoing operations. Horowitz is more than pleased with the charitable gesture by some of his former students. "It's a great opportunity for students to have this chance to do experiential learning and the leadership component will really add to their educational experience," he said. "What a wonderful way to build on what the students have learned in the classroom," he added, noting he has seen a similar project succeed at Frostburg. "It's not an internship. Students are applying all that they've learned. That's what makes this so exciting," said Horowitz. Dr. Suzanne Buckley, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, is very pleased to have a former faculty member honored in this way and to have an opportunity for academics to launch a joint venture with Student Affairs. She noted that since the 1990s a national group of academics have led initiatives for service learning as an integral component of a student's academic work. They see service learning as part of the core mission of American higher education because such learning can help prepare students to be the knowledgeable citizens so essential to a democratic society. "We think the Gary Horowitz Center for Service Learning will also be a center for leadership development on campus," said Kathy Woughter, vice president for Student Affairs. "We believe that service is a powerful vehicle for developing student leaders by promoting the values of equity, social justice, collaboration, citizenship and service. The Center will offer a unique opportunity to prepare our students to be leaders in the area of social change through service learning." Woughter and Buckley noted the Alfred University program will have two components. First, there will be a service learning curricular component. Student Affairs will provide administrative support, program planning and outreach to community organizations, and faculty will incorporate service learning into their courses. Small grants will be available to faculty members to support the development of service learning elements for their curricula. Community organizations will provide service opportunities to the students. Second will be special interest housing at 10 Park St. for eight to 10 students. "Students living at Horowitz House will develop skills to be ethical and effective leaders through community service and civic engagement," said Woughter. House residents will plan and carry out a yearlong, service learning project under the supervision of a live-in, service learning coordinator, who might be a VISTA volunteer. The coordinator will serve as the connection between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to create and promote programming that links community service to curricular learning objectives. The person in that position will build relations with community agencies and connect needs of the community to academic course work that relates to these needs. The special interest house is expected to be open for its first students in fall semester 2008. Future plans call for a Horowitz Fellow program for students, as well as summer camps or projects and inter-semester projects.