

Two awarded endowed professorships at Alfred University

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Mary McGee, dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, today announced the appointment of two faculty members to endowed chairs in the College. "It gives me great pleasure to announce Dr. Joseph A. Petrillo as the holder of the Dr. Sanford S. Cole and Frances Halderman Cole Chair in Mathematics and Dr. Robert Heineman as the holder of the Margaret and Barbara Hagar Professorship in the Humanities, effective July 1, 2010, and for an appointment of three years," said McGee. Petrillo was granted tenure and promoted to associate professor of mathematics as of July 1. The Cole Professorship in Mathematics recognizes outstanding teaching and contributions in mathematics by a faculty member within the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. Dr. Cole, who was a 1923 graduate of Alfred University, had a special interest in supporting curriculum in the application of mathematics to industrial problems, McGee explained. The holder of the Cole Chair must be recognized as an excellent teacher, exhibiting concern for students and knowledge about how students learn, and demonstrating enthusiasm about mathematics and its application. "Professor Petrillo has undertaken a special initiative to engage members of the engineering and science faculties to work more collaboratively to design pedagogies and materials that will strengthen the foundational math knowledge needed for students in these programs," said McGee. "In addition to his focus on pedagogy, Prof. Petrillo is continuing his research on finite group theory and undertaking a new research project on mathematics and music. Petrillo, who joined the AU faculty in 2005, received his Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics summa cum laude from Wilkes University. He earned his master's and Ph.D. degrees, both in mathematics, from Binghamton University. Prior to coming to Alfred University, he was a visiting professor of mathematics at Franklin and Marshall College for two years, and was an instructor at Binghamton for four years. He received a Joseph A. Kruson Trust Fund Award for Excellence in Teaching from Alfred University in 2008. The Hagar Professorship recognizes outstanding contributions to the humanistic disciplines by a faculty member within the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, according to McGee. "In determining this honor, we are guided by the definition of humanities created under the 1965 National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act, namely, that humanities 'includes, but is not limited to, the study of the following: language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism and theory of the arts; those aspects of social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods; and the study and application of the humanities to the human environment with particular attention to reflecting our diverse heritage, traditions, and history and to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life,'" McGee said. While Heineman is a professor of political science, his work on political philosophy "exemplifies the bridging of the social sciences and the humanities, as he examines ethical aspects of political discourse and systems," McGee said. "A new phase of Prof. Heineman's research focuses on pluralist standards of ethical discourse and processes with particular attention to American politics and jurisprudence. In our increasingly pluralistic society, his research will contribute to a much needed and enhanced understanding of the impact of different ethical codes on shaping public policy in the U.S." A member of the AU faculty since 1971, Heineman has twice won a Joseph A. Kruson Trust Fund Award for Excellence in Teaching, and also received a Faculty Leadership Award from Alfred chapter of Omega Delta Kappa, the national honor society for leadership. Prior to coming to Alfred, Heineman taught at Eastern Washington State College and Bradley University. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Bradley University in Peoria, IL, and both a master's and Ph.D. degree from American University in Washington, DC. Hagar, a professional ceramic engineer from Zanesville, Ohio, was a 1919 graduate of Alfred, who later served as a trustee of the university as well as president of the university's alumni association. The professorship honors the memories of Margaret Hagar, his first wife, and Barbara Hagar, his daughter.