

Phi Beta Kappa sponsors lecture on altruism

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Deborah A. Stone, visiting and research professor in the Department of Government and the Rockefeller Center at Dartmouth College, will deliver a free, public lecture entitled "The Paradox of Altruism" on Thursday, March 16, at 7:30 p.m., Howell Hall, on the Alfred University Campus. A reception will follow the presentation. Stone's presentation is part of a three-day (March 15-17) stay at AU hosted by the University's Phi Beta Kappa chapter. Stone earned her AB in Russian studies at the University of Michigan, and a Ph.D. in political science from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Her recent publications include "Values in Health Policy: Understanding Fairness and Efficiency," "Reframing the Racial Disparities Issue for State Governments," and "For Love Nor Money: The Commodification of Care." The "Paradox of Altruism" asks: Is human nature fundamentally self-interested or altruistic? Can there be genuine altruism? Which view of human nature should guide public policy? By and large, modern social scientists are skeptical about the possibility of genuine altruism, and policymakers therefore design programs around the idea of incentives and appeals to self-interest, says Stone. Her lecture will draw on the stories of extraordinary rescuers and ordinary everyday altruism to understand the rewards people get from helping others and the paradoxical ways altruism works in our lives. It will conclude with thoughts on designing policy to evoke and harness the altruistic side of human nature.