Dean Rossett takes objective look at WU

WU is at a crossroads. If the right changes are made now, according to Richard N. Rossett, WU has a chance of becoming a member of the nation's most elite group of universities.

"Washington University has built a very strong core of exceptionally fine faculty. The endowment has been built to the point where there is a possibility of doing some very imaginative things with it. All the conditions are right," said Rossett, the new dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

Formerly a professor of business economics at the University of Chicago, Rossett was appointed dean in May 1984.

WU now has a group of tenured faculty who are among the best in the country, Rossett said.

"The thing that remains to be done is to take advantage of that and of our fine curriculum to spread the fame of Washington University."

Rossett explained that enhancing WU's position among the universities would enable WU to be highly selective in the students it admires.

In addition, he believes the rising quality of the tenured faculty has made it possible for WU to become increasingly selectively in its recruitment of junior faculty members.

"You get in a position where you can sustain the quality that has been painstakingly built over the past decades."

Rossett comes to WU after serving as chairman of the Department of Economics at the University of Rochester from 1966 to 1974 and dean of the University of Chicago's Graduate School of Business (GSB) from 1974 until 1983.

During his tenure, GSB enrollment rose 50 percent, the faculty increased by one-third, and the endowment doubled. At the same time the quality of entering students improved greatly.

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Majority of WU's '78, '83 graduates are employed, paid well, enjoy work

The overwhelming majority of WU graduates from the classes of 1983 and 1978 are employed, enjoy their work, and make good money, according to a survey recently conducted by the Career Planning and Placement Service. 

A questionnaire mailed to those who received bachelor's degrees in 1978 and May 1983 yielded a response of 46 percent. The results reflect good news about WU grades just starting out (class of '83) as well as those who are established (class of '78).

Of those in the class of '78 returning completed questionnaires, 88.7 percent are employed, and only 1.6 percent are unemployed and not looking for work. The remaining 9.7 percent, not working and not seeking work, include working spouses, full-time students, and others not working and not actively seeking. That figure dropped from 35.5 percent unemployed and not seeking work in last year's survey of the class of '82. The percentage of those unemployed and looking for work also is down for '83 graduates -- 3.5 percent, compared to 5.7 percent for the class of '82.

Of those responding five years after graduation, 68.5 percent are happy about their jobs as having career potential. Only 11.5 percent think of their positions as temporary ventures.

However, women are far more likely than men (21.4 percent compared to 5.4 percent) to hold non-tenure track positions as lacking career potential. The percentage of temporary employment is, of course, much higher in the class of '83 (32.8 percent). However, this group includes many respondents who are simultaneously engaged in graduate study.

Nearly 90 percent of the class of '78 are working in the fields of architecture, engineering and surveying (25.0 percent) than any other. Next comes medicine and health (12.2 percent), then managers and officials working in public administration, finance and service industries (14.5 percent), and administrative support (12.9 percent).

And for all these professional potential, the pay is good. Despite the recession of the late 1970s, the class of '78 reports a median salary of $28,000. Just over a year out of college, the class of '83 reports a median salary of $18,999.

Of those in the class of '83, 56.3 percent were continuing their education, 69 percent of them in full-time programs. Of the class of '83, 56.3 percent were continuing their education, 69 percent of them in full-time programs.

Rosett -- continued from p. 1

liberal education enhances a person's ability to earn a living, but even if that were not true it would still be significant. "The liberal education equips you to live a richer, more interesting life. You acquire tools not just to learn to make a living, but so life will be worth living," he said. "Most universities have an advocation in Rosett. "The advantage of going to a fine private school is that you get a chance to spend four years of your life in close association with people who have first-rate minds," Rosett said. "I think private universities will always be able to compete because they give undergraduate students unmatched access to excellence."

Rosett explained that from his experience in education the quality of a professor's teaching directly correlates with his quality of research.

"If explained that when a person is granted tenure, the university will have to employ them almost regardless of what happens in the classroom. "When you award tenure, you're trying to make a judgment about what this person will be doing in 10, 20, 30 years from now," Rosett said. "Will this person still be doing good research and teaching and be a good citizen of the university?"

"Now, the evidence I've seen suggests that if you have someone who's 55 years old and is an excellent teacher but shows little interest in the subject he is the only one who reads the research -- then the chances of that person still being an exciting and interesting teacher 20 years later is slender."

Rosett stressed that teaching and research go hand in hand. Without the intellectual stimulation of research, teaching will suffer, according to Rosett.

"There's student input at a university is important. "We should treat you as if we really wanted you here and recognize you could have gone somewhere else."

Rosett said that in matters concerning housing, food — the general atmosphere of the university — student views are paramount.

On the inside, the academic side, I think we ought to be sensitive to and responsive to what students are interested in," he said. "But we also need to keep in mind that they came here because they thought they knew what they would learn."

Rosett stressed that student input is important. But that, conversely, "students didn't come here to tell us what to teach them. They came here because they thought this was a place to find the answers to their questions."

There are great treasures here. There are people in this faculty of such quality that it's one of life's great privileges to be able to spend even one half-hour in their company.

Many good things will happen to you after college, but never again in such concentration and abundance."

James T. Madison
Poet Diane Ackerman named Writers' Program director

Poet Diane Ackerman has been named director of WU's Writers' Program by the Department of English faculty. Ackerman, who also holds the appointment of writer-in-residence, was a visiting writer at WU last spring.

Ackerman teaches a graduate course in creative non-fiction writing. As director of the Writers' Program, her responsibilities will include handling various administrative duties and coordinating the writers' colloquium, a series of readings and informal discussions presented in Hurst Lounge by community and visiting writers.

Washington University has a wonderful constellation of writers,” said Ackerman. “I’m delighted to be joining such a distinguished group.”

Ackerman is the author of three books of poems: Lady Faustus (1985), Wife of Light (1978), and The Fifty-ninth Horse (1971). Her experiences working as a cowhand on a cattle ranch in New Mexico are reflected in a prose collection titled “Twilight of the Tenderfoot.”

Two new works, On Extended Wings, non-fiction prose based on her airplane piloting experiences, and Reverse Thunder, an historical play set on the life of Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, a 17th-century nun, are under consideration. Her new book, A Natural History of the Deep, is scheduled for publication in 1986.

Mark H. Leff, assistant professor of history, has received a Mellon Faculty Fellowship at Harvard University for 1985-86.

Leff said the fellowships, which combine teaching and research, are awarded annually to 14 people in various departments. Two are awarded in history. He will continue his research on “The Social Security Financial Crisis” and “The Politics of Sacrifice in World War II.” He also will teach one undergraduate course.

A specialist in 20th-century political and economic history, he recently published The Limits of Synthesis: The New Deal and Taxation, 1933-1939, (Cambridge University Press, 1984). He will present a paper on “Speculating in Social Security Futures: The Perils of Payroll Tax Financing” at a special conference on social security to be held this spring in Albuquerque, N.M.

Leff joined the WU faculty in 1977. He earned a bachelor's degree in economics in 1970 from Brown University, Providence, R.I., a master's degree in history in 1972, and a doctorate in history in 1978 from the University of Chicago.

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Woman's Club holds dinner auction

A diamond brooch, a shopping spree at Plaza Frontenac, a four-day cruise and a new Chevrolet Cavalier are just a few of the more than 100 items to be auctioned at the WU Woman's Club's Annual Auction to be held at 6 p.m. Saturday, March 16, in the WU Field House.

The Woman's Club of St. Louis, a social organization that sponsors cultural and educational activities, is celebrating its 75th year of service to the wives of WU faculty and staff, and women faculty and staff.

Deborah G. Danforth, wife of Chancellor William H. Danforth, will be honored at the dinner auction for her service and devotion to the Woman's Club and WU. She has been a member of the Woman's Club for the last 20 years.

The silent auction, which will be the first non-athletic event held in the new Field House, is open to the public. The auction, dinner and dancing to the band Galaxy is $81.50 per person. Reservations must be made by Feb. 15.

Proceeds will help fund an April 24 Woman's Club Assembly Series lecture, featuring Mona Van Dusen, WU visiting professor of poetry and a National Book Award winner.

To make reservations or for more information, call Magdaline Stalbo at 889-4668 during the day, or 721-5147 evenings.
CALENDAR    Feb. 14-23

LECTIONS
4 p.m. Dept. of Chemistry Seminar, "Stereorechemistry of Crowned Molecules," Kurt Minor, prof. of chemistry, Princeton University.
8 p.m. Dept. of English Colloquium, "Stories and Science," Howard Nemerov, Malinkrodt Distinguished University Professor of English at WU. Hurst Lounge. Duncker Hall.

4:30 p.m. Jewish and Near Eastern Studies. 211 Busch.
7:30 p.m. Women's Studies Program Colloquium with Christine Choy, independent filmmaker, co-directing "Women and Film." Sponsored by Women's Programming Board and Women and Film Class. Brown Hall Lounge.

MUSIC

Friday, Feb. 15 8:30 p.m. St. Louis Classical Guitar Society Concert Series, "The Musicians of Swanee Alley." Graham Chapel. Also sponsored by the WU Dept. of Music. For ticket info., call 725-0759.
Friday, Feb. 22 8 p.m. Dept. of Music Graduate Voice Recital with Janet Gustafson, soprano. Steinberg Aud. Thursday, Feb. 21 7:30 p.m. University City Symphony Orchestra Concert with William Schuckerman, conductor. Graham Chapel.


EXHIBITIONS
"Arthur Baker's Calligraphy and School of Fine Arts Student Show," Opening reception from 2 to 5 p.m. Feb. 17 in Bibby Hall. Also sponsored by WU Dept. of Design. For ticket info., call 889-6945.

CALENDAR    Feb. 24-30

LECTURES
8 p.m. Dept. of English Colloquium, "Stories and Science," Howard Nemerov, Malinkrodt Distinguished University Professor of English at WU. Hurst Lounge. Duncker Hall.

Friday, Feb. 22 4 p.m. Dept. of Psychology Colloquium, "Dynamic Aspects of Perception During Fixations in Reading," Harry Blanchard, U. of Ill. Chicago. 104 Lopata.
7:30 p.m. Women's Studies Program Colloquium with Christine Choy, independent filmmaker, co-directing "Women and Film." Sponsored by Women's Programming Board and Women and Film Class. Brown Hall Lounge.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17
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MUSIC
Thursday, Feb. 14 7 p.m. WU Cultural Celebration Week, "King of Hearts" a foreign film. Free. Wohl Center.
9 and 9:15 p.m. WU Filmboard Series, "Award-winning Short Subjects by Truffaut, Herzog and Others." $2. Brown Hall.
Friday, Feb. 15 8:30 p.m. WU Filmboard Series, "The Godfather: Parts I & II." Also Sat., Feb. 16, same time, and Sun., Feb. 17, 2 p.m. (Brown.)
Saturday, Feb. 16 7:30 p.m. Action for Peace Minisers in concentration with filmboard, "In the Kingdom of Pristina." Free. Brown Center.
7 and 9:15 p.m. WU Filmboard Series, "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town." $2. Brown Hall. (Also Tues., Feb. 19, same time, and Sun., Feb. 24, 7 p.m. Brown.)
Wednesday, Feb. 20 7 and 9:45 p.m. WU Filmboard Series, "Seven Samurai." Also Thur., Feb. 21, same time, Brown.
Sunday, Feb. 24 7 p.m. WU Cultural Celebration Week, "Mardi Gras Party." Sponsored by Cojones. La Cuisine, Wolf Center.
Sunday, Feb. 17 4 p.m. A study group will meet to discuss Religion in the Secular City by Harvey Cox at the Campus Y. (The group also will meet at 4 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 24, at the Campus Y.)
Thursday, Feb. 21 10:45 p.m. Business Minority Council "Computer Show/Trade Show." Brown Hall Lounge.

Calendar Deadline
The deadline to submit items for the Feb. 28-March 16 calendar of the Washington University Record is Feb. 14. Items must be typed and state time, date, place, nature of event, sponsor and admission cost. Incomplete items will not be printed. If available, include speaker's name and identification and the title of the event; also include your name and telephone number. Address items to King McElroy, calendar editor, Box 1142.