Sept. 26, 2013

Prestigious Livingston Lecture is Nov. 7


They all studied engineering in college.

“I have thought for a long time that people should consider taking an engineering degree because these programs provide students with a good foundation in the fundamentals of math and science, while also providing general education breadth," says Sue Holl, chair of Sacramento State’s Mechanical Engineering Department and the Livingston lecturer for the 2013-14 academic year. “These programs allow students to make connections between their technical knowledge and the arts, humanities and social sciences, and create opportunities for them to demonstrate the importance of engineering to society.”

Holl will present her talk, “Engineering Education: Thoughtful Design of a Quality University Curriculum,” during the John C. Livingston Annual Faculty Lecture at 3 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 7, in the University Union’s Redwood Room. A reception follows the lecture, which is free and open to the public.

“An engineering degree is a good foundation. Students just have to make themselves focus,” she says. “Our curriculum is very structured and rigorous. We have to think about fitting everything into a four-year program, including technical and general education. Engineering is a good model, whether we are talking about economics or the humanities or theater arts. I think it would be fabulous if people thought about integrating all requirements for the bachelor’s degree throughout the four years.”

The Livingston Lecture is an honor awarded each year to a member of the Sacramento State faculty who has been active in the life of the University, including faculty governance, and who displays consistent collegiality, commitment to students and actively participates in creative and scholarly activities.

It celebrates the life of the late John “Jack” Livingston, a professor of government at Sac State from 1954-1981. He was a respected scholar and a leader in developing the character of collegial governance throughout the California State University and at Sacramento State, in particular.
“Sue Holl definitely meets the criteria,” says Thomas Krabacher, a member of the Livingston selection committee and himself the award recipient for 2011-12. “She’s taught here for 30 years. During that time, she taught courses for six programs and received an engineering-teaching award. She’s been a member of the time-demanding and politically sensitive Instructional Program Priorities and University Budget Advisory committees. She played a role in establishing the General Education Honors Program, and she is the long-serving advisor to the Competitive Robotics program.”

Holl, who earned her doctorate in materials science and engineering at UC Berkeley, has been department chair since 2008. During that time, she helped create two successful events – the Mechanical Engineering Homecoming and the Evening with Industry – as well as the Mechanical Engineering Senior Project Showcase. She wrote the department’s undergraduate advising manual and the manual for faculty advisors. As department chair, she interacts with most of the nearly 700 mechanical engineering majors.

She has taught a wide variety of courses, including Corrosion and Wear, Conceptual Physics, Electronic Materials and Freshman Seminar. Her students are successful in academics and as professionals.

As a part of her community outreach, Holl volunteered as a math specialist at Starr King Elementary School and has served on Encina High’s technical advisory board.

“It’s an honor to be asked to be the Livingston lecturer,” she says, “because Professor Livingston was the embodiment of all that we value in the Sacramento State culture: engaged with students, engaged in the life of the faculty and interested in many subjects. I am pleased to join the list of distinguished faculty who have presented the Livingston Lecture in the past.”

For media assistance, contact Sacramento State’s Office of Public Affairs at (916) 278-6156.

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