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Faculty endowment creates opportunity

When Amy Orr learned she had been selected as the first George A. Westcott III Distinguished Professor of Sociology at Linfield College, she was both honored and flabbergasted. Honored to be selected to serve in the first endowed faculty position established at Linfield in decades. And flabbergasted to learn that it carried with it an increase in compensation and funding not only for professional development, but also for hiring a student research assistant.

Orr, professor of sociology and chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, said the endowed professorship will benefit not only her, but also the SOAN department and the college as a whole.

“Student education is enhanced anytime we provide support and resources for faculty development,” she said. “Faculty who are knowledgeable in their areas and stimulated by their work are vital in creating a vigorous, engaging academic environment.”

Orr is still exploring options for how the funds will be used. She may be able to attend more than one professional

conference a year or expand her interests into a research project abroad. And, funding for research assistants may provide one or more students with hands-on research experience each year. In addition, she will give two public lectures during her tenure in the position.

“The knowledge and experience gained from my professional development will enhance students’ education experience as I incorporate what I have learned into the classroom,” she said.

The new professorship was established with a \$1 million endowment from the estate of George Westcott '69 who studied economics and sociology at Linfield and went on to earn advanced degrees in business administration, city and regional planning, and health policy management from the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard University. He had a distinguished career in economic development and health care administration, and in a high-tech start-up company. In appreciation for the outstanding faculty with whom he studied at Linfield, Westcott funded the endowed professorship through his estate plan, prior to his death in 2010. 🍂

