

Friend of the Faculty

PLNU SAYS GOODBYE —PATRICK ALLEN MOVING TO SNU

By Jeff Birdsell

As he departs Point Loma Nazarene University after 10 years as its top academic officer to take a similar post at Southern Nazarene University, Patrick Allen leaves behind a reputation as a visionary advocate for faculty.

"He truly was a champion and a cheerleader for the faculty," said Becky Havens, vice provost for educational effectiveness. She often overheard Allen saying to visitors, "If you think the ocean view is great, wait until you meet the faculty."

When Allen, chief academic officer and provost at PLNU, announced at the final faculty meeting May 11, 2005, that he had accepted an offer to become SNU's provost effective Aug. 1, those present spontaneously rose to their feet and applauded in tribute to Allen's tenure.

Havens, a member of the search committee that landed Allen back in 1995 as vice president for academic affairs,

encouraged such faculty interaction as a Monday lunchtime science/theology discussion where, according to Kirkemo, "faculty are able to talk about issues and across disciplines in ways that are dangerous on other campuses."

The ability to dream big served Allen well, as did his ability to share those dreams and support those who would make them reality. "When the idea of a Women's Studies Center bubbled up from faculty and student interest, he was imperative in terms of encouragement," said Linda Beail, chair of the department of political science and director of the Margaret Stevenson Women's Studies Center.

Allen's support didn't stop with words. His attitude "was never 'Oh, that's the best we can do for a little college,'" said Beail. "He helped get money, a location, and time to discuss important issues. I always felt like his attitude was 'Let's do this right,' without a fear of any controversy."

Popular with the student body as well, Allen "bridged the world of students and the rarified world of 'the leaders,'" said Kirkemo. He was known for his blues guitar – he

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recalled a comment Allen made during his interview, "He said, 'If you hire me, I'll have the second best job on campus. Faculty have the best job.'"

"He didn't just represent us, he was one of us," said, Mike McKinney, professor of German and Literature, "As a faculty advocate, he brought a fusion between the administration and the faculty."

Allen held his post during a period in which Point Loma Nazarene College became a university, its structure was reorganized into colleges and schools, and its business department expanded to the Fermanian School of Business.

Before arriving in San Diego in 1995, Allen had been vice president for academic affairs and dean of the college at Anderson University in Indiana. Prior to that, Allen, a one-time banker in Kansas City, held the offices of dean of the College of Business at Friends University in Wichita, Title III Coordinator and a business professor at SNU, and associate dean of students at MidAmerican Nazarene University.

Ron Kirkemo, professor of political science, said Allen was unique in the role of the academic dean or provost in the history of PLNU. "Dr. Keith Pagan created the modern office of academic dean...Patrick institutionalized it," said Kirkemo. "There was a growth in associate deans and vice provosts to keep up with the growth of the university and its many new academic programs, campuses, and accreditation requirements."

This confidence "made the faculty come alive," according to Vic Heasley, professor chemistry professor. Allen

played in a chapel bluegrass band – and for his passionate storytelling in chapel.

In all of his uniqueness, Allen remained grounded. Havens remembered that he "always began staff meetings with scripture, devotion, and prayer."

"Dr. Allen has been an effective and gifted leader at PLNU for the past 10 years and has played an instrumental role in the quality and growth of the university," said Brower. "We are not replacing Patrick Allen; he is irreplaceable."

In his own words, it was important for Allen, as he entered his tenth year with PLNU that he "catch a vision as to where to move, or move." After hearing of a new provost model at SNU, Allen saw a newly created position that would bring him "more of a question than a vision."

He's always had a "tender spot" for SNU since his time there from 1978 to 1986. He sees the move back to Bethany, Okla. as "a way of giving back to those who took in a young buck who thought he knew everything."

If there were anything he'd like to reinforce about PLNU as he leaves, it would be that the faculty knows "how very good it is, and how good it can be."

In fact, Allen's favorite PLNU memory is one that he has been able to relive annually over the past decade. "I tear up when I see the faculty entering the [Greek] amphitheater during commencement. I think to myself, 'These are good folk.' " ■

Jeff Birdsell (2003) is a PLNU admissions counselor.