


# New dean, new

## Le Roy brings vision, experience to new role as academic dean

After reviewing applications from academic leaders around the country, Whitworth selected a nationally recognized teacher and scholar from its own ranks to become the next vice president for academic affairs and dean of the faculty. Professor of Political Studies Michael Le Roy, '89, who studied and taught in Europe and at other top academic institutions before returning to his alma mater in 2002, assumes his new duties July 1. While teaching with the Central America Study Program this spring, he responded to questions about matters academic and sartorial.

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### Michael Le Roy

**Education:** Ph.D., Vanderbilt University, 1994; B.A., Whitworth College, 1989

**Experience:** Professor of Political Studies, Whitworth College, 2002-present; Professor of Politics and International Relations, Wheaton College, 1994-2002; Visiting Professor of Government and International Relations, 1993-94, The College of William & Mary; Fulbright Fellow, Göteborgs University, Sweden, 1992-1993

**Academic Accomplishments:** Author of *Introduction to Comparative Politics* (Wadsworth, 3rd edition, 2004), *Research Methods in Political Science* (Wadsworth, 6th edition, 2005), *1999-2002 World Values Data Archive* (Wadsworth/Microcase, 2005-06) and numerous other academic articles and book chapters. Excellence in Teaching Award, from the American Political Science Association (2000), Fulbright Grant for graduate research (1993), Servant-Leadership Award, Whitworth College (1989)

**Personal:** Wife: Andrea; children: Dana (12), Hannah (10) and Astrid (7); dog: golden retriever, Glen (7)

### Q. Where do you see your strengths matching Whitworth's academic goals?

A. *Whitworth has done well to strengthen its academic profile under Tammy Reid's leadership and I believe that I can help that continue. As a faculty member I understand how difficult it is to make progress on the improvement in teaching and have a flourishing scholarly career. I'd like to try to enhance those odds for everyone. Over the next several years we will need to work hard to improve the resources and facilities in the arts and sciences in order to remain competitive with our peers. Another area in which we have to make strides is international education. My extensive background in Europe and Latin America and in the design of international programs leads me to feel relatively well-suited for Whitworth's needs in this area.*

### Q. What can you bring to Whitworth from your experience at The College of William & Mary and Wheaton?

A. *Those two schools have a lot in common with Whitworth. They are smaller colleges with undergraduate liberal arts at the core of their educational missions. They emphasize an education that is student-centered and expect their faculty to be engaged with their respective professions. These schools also give us something to shoot for. They have national reputations and underscore what can be done when resources are available and are used creatively. In terms of mission, these schools represent two opposite poles: one is secular and the other is strictly evangelical (all faculty and students at Wheaton must be Christians). Each school's approach makes sense given their historic missions, but also highlights by contrast why Whitworth is special. We must always strive to cultivate and maintain the openness of a school like William & Mary and a deep commitment to Christ like Wheaton's.*

### Q. For a fund-raiser last fall, students collected money in the names of five Whitworth faculty and administrators, with the "winner" having to wear a kilt for a day. You beat out a tough field (Baird, Hornor, Pyle, Robinson, Sittser). What's your secret?

A. *I'd like to think that it's good legs, but I'm not so sure.*

### Q. What excites you about Whitworth's 2005-2010 strategic plan?

A. *I am most passionate about increasing outstanding educational opportunities for students – whether it's summer research opportunities in the sciences, improved facilities in the arts, or expanded study-abroad programs.*

### Q. You and Gordon Watanabe, special assistant to the president for intercultural relations, will be the only Whitworth alumni on the 10-member president's cabinet. How will that influence your work as dean?

A. *I know what a strong Christian liberal-arts education can do to develop students' intellectual and spiritual capacities because I know what it did for me. Given that I also have experience at other institutions, I think I have a sense for how other schools might navigate the faith-learning aspects of their missions and I know where Whitworth fits into that spectrum.*


# challenges

## Reid's legacy is collegiality, accomplishment, as she returns to the classroom

Tammy Reid, '60, will return to the faculty this fall after nine years as Whitworth's chief academic officer.

During her tenure, Reid led revision of the general-education curriculum, expansion of the faculty, construction of Weyerhaeuser Hall, two rounds of academic strategic planning and accreditation, and about 11,000 hours of meetings.

She took time recently to reflect on Whitworth's academic accomplishments, surprise office makeovers and her future plans.

The full interview is available online at [www.whitworth.edu/whitworthtoday](http://www.whitworth.edu/whitworthtoday).



**Q: Of all of Whitworth's recent academic accomplishments, what are you most proud of?**

A: First, the disclaimer: No dean accomplishes anything alone. Even though there's tremendous value to being in position to shape the questions, answers require collaboration. I'm proud of lots of things – the writing-across-the-curriculum program, the science division's 10-year plan, the formation of the School of Global Commerce & Management, and establishing the undergraduate research conference. That said, two primary efforts come to mind: sharpening our educational goals, then developing and supporting a faculty culture to deliver them.

**Q: You have focused considerable time and resources on raising Whitworth's academic profile. What are some of the tangible signs that a Whitworth degree is growing in value?**

A: Of course, I think of our #5 ranking in U.S. News among 126 institutions in our category last year. Those rankings say little about the experience of an individual student, but they give us clues about how other folks in higher education see Whitworth. Internally, I think we're more apt to look at the glowing feedback from accreditors or at the growing number of our students accepted by graduate schools.

**Q: Is there anything you had hoped to accomplish but weren't able to?**

A: Robert Browning said a person's "reach should exceed his grasp, else what's a heaven for?" I agree. I wish we were further down the assessment road. It's not easy to answer the question "How do you know they're learning?" Grades are helpful, but not sufficient, especially if we're teaching habits of mind along with information.

**Q: What do you look forward to about Michael Le Roy's leadership as dean?**

A: Each dean puts her or his stamp on the institution, and I think we're each influenced by our disciplines. For example, Darrell Guder was a theologian and challenged us to look at the implications of our Reformed roots, a legacy that continues. My training is in education and English. My immediate concern has been the learning climate of the college, from general education to Weyerhaeuser Hall to hiring faculty who love their students as much as they love their disciplines. I think Michael, as a political scientist, is well-equipped to help the college think well about structural issues and collaborative relationships to accomplish Whitworth's goals. He'll have fresh insights in a variety of areas, and I look forward to them all.

**Q: We hear that your administrative support staff members – Patti Green and Martha Brown – like to "spruce up" your office when you're out of town. Can you describe one of their more memorable makeovers?**

A: This is a hard call, to choose between "Big Bill's School of Cosmetology" and "Sleazy Rider."

**Q: What will you teach when you return to the faculty?**

A: I'll be teaching in the English department, Core 350, and courses in language arts for education students. I'll begin in the fall, with teaching the literature course in the British Isles Study Program – at the request of the English department. Imagine – Wordsworth taught in the Lake District and Shakespeare taught in Stratford. What a way to return to teaching!

**Q: What do you hope to spend more time doing once your administrative responsibilities diminish?**

A: I love spending time with our grandchildren (there are three here in Spokane). And as summertime opens up, I hope to do some cross-country bicycle rides, as well as another safari in Africa and antique-car shows with my husband, Larry.