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BOARD OF TRUSTEES RATIFIES APPOINTMENT OF MARY MORTON, NEW DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

DAYTON, Ohio — The University of Dayton’s board of trustees has ratified the appointment of Mary E. Morton as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Morton, 43, will succeed Paul Morman, who steps down July 1 to return to teaching after a 14-year stint as dean. She’s the associate dean of the College at the College of the Holy Cross.

Under Morman’s leadership, UD developed a distinctive general education program, initiated a doctoral program in Catholic theology, launched the nation’s first undergraduate degree program in human rights, endowed five faculty positions and constructed the Jesse Philips Humanities Center and the first two phases of the Science Center, among other achievements. Morton said “the strong shape and vision of the College of Arts and Sciences” influenced her decision to take the job.

“For me, it’s not title seeking. It’s looking to make a difference,” said Morton about why she’s joining UD on July 1 after serving as an associate dean at the College of Holy Cross since 2000. She came to Holy Cross 13 years ago as the Charles A. Dana Faculty Fellow and assistant professor in the biology department. “When you think about the hours one puts into a job, it can’t just be about you, especially not if it is your vocation, your life’s work. That won’t make the world better. ...I have been fortunate to be at a college and now to be joining a university that has fundamentally the same values as I do. I need a job that I can grow with and can grow with me.”

As associate dean, Morton helped initiate a major review of the college’s curriculum, made hiring recommendations in dozens of tenure-track searches and initiated an annual academic
conference to showcase undergraduate research. She served as the Holy Cross representative for a $15 million science and mathematics partnership between Worcester institutions and the Worcester Public Schools.

She’s a biochemist by training with an unwavering commitment to interdisciplinary education that might seem surprising to those who don’t know she double majored in biochemistry and French literature at Bowdoin College. “I’m passionate about literature and am an avid reader. I actually took more literature than French and science when I was in college,” she said. “What makes one a scholar in any given area is being creative, using the skills you’ve learned and seeing the patterns others have set out before you. I chose to continue in biochemistry to see if I could be creative in the sciences.”

More than two dozen Holy Cross students have worked with Morton in her lab, and some have co-authored peer-reviewed articles. Her students have received more than 60 travel and research grants, awards or fellowships. Morton, who earned a Ph.D. in biochemistry from Dartmouth Medical School, holds a patent for use of anti-calcium channel antibodies for detection and treatment of small cell carcinoma of the lung. She has received grants from the Muscular Dystrophy Association, the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation. Most of her research has focused on investigating voltage-gated calcium channels, a family of proteins important in nerve and muscle function.

“Calcium channels are found in your heart, skeletal muscle and nervous system. Their localization within these tissues is highly regulated,” said Morton, noting that understanding their biochemistry could lead to advances helping people with muscle and nerve disorders.

Morton, who grew up in Indianapolis, is looking forward to moving back to the Midwest with her sons, Duncan, 6, and Aiden, 2. “The people I have met at the University of Dayton have made me feel as welcomed as I did 13 years ago at Holy Cross,” she says. “I look forward to joining this active, caring and committed community.”

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For media interviews, contact Mary Morton at (508) 793-2541 and Fred Pestello, provost and senior vice president for educational affairs, at (937) 229-2245.