

Graduate School appoints two new associate deans

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BLACKSBURG, VA.,
 September 11, 2009 -- The
 Graduate School at Virginia
 Tech has appointed Rosemary
 Blieszner and Janet W. Rankin
 an associate dean effective
 Aug. 10.



Rosemary Blieszner (left) and Janet W. Rankin

The new appointments were made upon the retirement of Anne McNabb, professor of biology, and the departure of Brian Mihalik, professor of hotel and tourism management. Mihalik was appointed dean of the College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management at the University of South Carolina in Columbia.

Both associate deans' positions are 50 percent half-time calendar year appointments allowing Blieszner and Rankin to continue teaching and research in their respective academic departments.

"It is important that the graduate school embrace a collaborative approach as well as a university-wide perspective," says Karen P. DePauw, vice president and dean of the [graduate school \(http://www.grads.vt.edu\)](http://www.grads.vt.edu). "Our team continues to be a vibrant and effective one," she said.

During the spring of 2009 a search committee chaired by McNabb was established to consider all applicants for the two positions. The committee made recommendations of Blieszner and Rankin to DePauw. Both Blieszner and Rankin have previous administrative experience at Virginia Tech.

Blieszner was the director of strategic planning in the Office of the President during 2000-01. And, Rankin was the interim director of the Institute for Biomedical and Public Health Sciences from 2003-06, and the acting department head of human nutrition, foods, and exercise during 2001.

Blieszner is Alumni Distinguished Professor of Human Development in the [Department of Human Development \(http://www.humandevlopment.vt.edu/\)](http://www.humandevlopment.vt.edu/) . She is also the associate director for the Virginia Tech [Center for Gerontology \(http://www.gerontology.vt.edu/\)](http://www.gerontology.vt.edu/) . Her research areas within gerontology are friendship, caregiver issues, and family relationships.

"I believe in being a part of the larger university community. So working in the graduate school allows me to make a broader contribution," says Blieszner.

Currently, Blieszner is the editor of the *Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences*, which is sponsored by the Gerontological Society of America. In July, Blieszner organized a symposium on emerging family issues in aging at the World Congress of Gerontology and Geriatrics in Paris, France.

Blieszner began employment at Virginia Tech in 1981. She received her bachelor's degree from Mercyhurst College, a master's degree from Ohio State University and a Ph.D. from Penn State University.

Rankin is a professor in the [Department of Human Nutrition, Foods, and Exercise \(http://www.hnfe.vt.edu/\)](http://www.hnfe.vt.edu/) . She teaches courses in exercise and health, sports nutrition, and does research related to the effects of nutrition on inflammation and oxidative stress.

"A scholar's work is typically focused and narrow, the associate dean's position allows me to make a broader impact," said Rankin.

Rankin sits on the Board of Montgomery Regional Hospital. Also, she writes a monthly column in the Current section of the Roanoke Times on health. She is a former officer with the American College of Sports Medicine, and a former member of the Science Advisory Board for Gatorade.

Rankin began employment at Virginia Tech in 1982. She received her bachelor's degree from Duke University and a Ph.D. from the University of California at Davis.

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