



THE PROFESSOR IS IN

THE NEW FACULTY-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM

THE PROFESSOR IS IN... *in-residence, that is*

—BY TARA HUNT '12

It's 7:30 on a Tuesday morning and Ed Hums, a faculty member in the Mendoza College of Business, is already surrounded by students. Twice a week, Ed gathers together students, staff and passerbys in LaFortune to watch Morning Call on CNBC, talk the market and visit with students.

The standing appointment and his devotion to his students is part of what drew the Office of Student Affairs to invite him to be a Faculty-in-Residence in Lyons Hall. The pilot program began with the goal to transcend the perceived divide between academics and student life. As the pioneers of this arrangement, Ed and his wife Shirley, an associate IT support representative in the Athletics Department, have been able to put their own spin on it, ranging from study sessions from the confines of their living room to office hours for their cat Squeak, who draws even the non-business majors.

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“The program got started as an idea coming out of Father Jenkins’ strategic plan for the University,” says Erin Hoffmann Harding, Vice President for Student Affairs. “One of the goals was to better integrate our students’ academic experience and their residential life.”



Residents of Lyons Hall visit with Ed and Shirley Hums in their apartment

Peer institutions like Harvard and Yale are perhaps best known for the faculty-in-residence model, but it wasn't long ago that Notre Dame had “bachelor dons,” or lay professors, living in the dorms. Up until 1980 when famed professor Paul Fenlon passed away, Sorin College had hosted a lay faculty member since its inception in 1889, while dorms like Lyons and Howard hosted teachers on an irregular basis.

With the remodeling of Lyons Hall last summer, the time was right to unearth the tradition, Hoffmann Harding says. The annexed east wing of Lyons was converted for the couple's use and now features two bedrooms, a spacious bath, closet space, a renovated kitchen and a living room — it isn't luxurious, but it also isn't typical dorm living.

Ed and Shirley agree they didn't do it for luxury, or perks — and there are a few, including a coveted on-campus parking space, easy access to the gym, free room and board, and a small stipend funded in conjunction with the provost's office for programming. They agreed to the new arrangement to change the pace of their lives and also to more profoundly engage with the students. They had already started meeting with small groups in the dining halls on a weekly basis — another activity that caught the eye of Hoffmann Harding and her staff — but they wanted to deepen that interaction.

“You have to be committed to the students. You have to love your students. The students have to be [at] the center of your life,” Ed says. “You don’t come here to put this on your resume. You come here because you’re dedicated to the students. You’re dedicated to the people who have been here. And you understand what Notre Dame is all about, about developing wonderful young people.”

It took some time to figure out how a married couple, especially a middle-aged man, might seamlessly meld into the lives of the girls, the rector, the dorm, but Hoffmann Harding affirms the Humses did so gracefully and graciously.

“I think they took quite a bit of time to listen and learn,” she says. “They didn’t insert themselves. They didn’t have a set program they came in place

faculty into the hall for a lecture or event has been eye-opening and barrier-breaking or faculty and students alike. Now that the couple has signed on for a second year, they say they plan to get more involved with hall life and to participate more actively in freshman orientation so they can get to know their residents from the start. Shirley says she’d like to reach out to a larger swath of girls, too.

While the program has run very smoothly, there were some challenges along the way, Ed and Shirley tease. There were some issues with a clanging radiator and a lack of hot water. It also took a little time to understand that the rhythms of a dorm don’t cease at 9 p.m., they’re just revving up, and there are nights when girls are whispering at 2 and 3 in the morning, often



Ed Hums talking the market with students at LaFortune

to implement. They were flexible and they adjusted to the life of the hall. I think that was really valuable.”

A year in, the Humses have learned a few lessons: study sessions are popular, especially before exams; it’s easier to get to know the residents socially if they’re in small groups, particularly over the fall and spring breaks when their schedules are lighter; the girls are more likely to respond to an invitation to the Humses’ apartment, noting that dropping by a professor’s home unannounced may be too big a jump for many students; and that bringing other

inconveniently outside the Humses’ bedroom window. But what came as the biggest surprise was just how studious, focused and stressed the students are.

The students’ course loads pile up quickly, Ed says, and it occasionally cuts into their ability to take advantage of extracurricular opportunities. Even activities like visiting the Humses’ apartment is sometimes cut short, Shirley says.

He has to remind himself to take time away, too.

An unexpected result of the program has been how easily accessible his own work is, Ed says. “Because you’re here, physically here, and you don’t have to drive into work to go to the office, you can walk over to the office in ten minutes, so you wind up walking to the office on Saturdays and Sundays,” he says. “I try now to take a couple mornings or half days.”

“ THE STAFF MODEL ”

One of the concerns with the new arrangement was that the faculty-in-residence be mistaken for the rector of the dorm, Hoffmann Harding says. But the Humses have made clear to both students and administrators that true leadership lies with Lyons Hall rector, Meghan Brown. Ed calls her the captain of the ship, and insists he and Shirley are just riding on board. The couple is there for academic and professional support, to be good role models and to be an example of a Christian marriage. But Brown is the administrator, the community builder, the counselor and the staff director.



A sign greets visitors to the Hums' apartment

“Ed has been great as far as deferring to my leadership in all matters that concern the way the hall is run. His role and mine don’t overlap other than we’re both adults in the building,” Brown says. “When women seek him out for advice it’s usually on the more academic side, or life advice and career advice pertaining to his expertise. Ed won’t hesitate to refer someone back to me if they think it’s something I should be handling. And I don’t hesitate to refer people to Ed if I think it’s more related to his expertise.”

Hoffmann Harding is quick to point out that the role of the faculty is not to replace the priests-in-residence, either. While the Humses do have a sort of ministerial presence, pastoral guidance remains in the priest’s and rector’s hands.

“ FUTURE FACULTY ”

After a successful first year, plans to spread the faculty-in-residence are underway. With the impending construction of two new residence halls, designs may feature apartments with separate exterior entrances like the Lyons Hall annex which could be occupied by faculty or priests, Hoffmann Harding suggests. Some of the West Quad apartments also could be appealing to faculty in the upcoming years. What’s important, though, is that each faculty member participates in the program in a way that feels authentic to them, which should mean that each community looks a little different, Hoffman Harding says.

As for selecting future faculty, Hoffmann Harding says she’s looking for a few specific attributes. “First and foremost is comfort with students and a genuine interest and love for working with them. Secondly is a little bit of flexibility and [being] entrepreneurial; I think much of this has to be grassroots. Thirdly, the right relationship with the hall staff, so clarity of roles and understanding that. Probably fourth, it really goes with the first, is a level of accessibility.”



“It breaks down the overly formal relationships, yet maintains just the right amount of conventionalism.”

Brown echoes that dedication to the students is imperative, and suggests that it’s just as important that the students feel committed to the faculty member. “I think it would be great if the students had a say in which faculty lived in their dorm.” She continues, “Student recommendation suggests a willingness to engage with students outside of the classroom, and that’s really the biggest piece.”

Thus far, the students seem supportive, suggesting that Ed’s presence has done more than expand their accounting knowledge. Lyons Hall sophomore Brittany Von Rueden says, “The Hums[es] are part of the dorm, yet separate enough to maintain professor professionalism and private family living. It breaks down the overly formal relationships, yet maintains just the right amount of conventionalism.”

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Ed, his wife Shirley, and their cat Squeak can often be found enjoying campus life together and with other fellow residents of Lyons Hall



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