



Art Conservation *and a passion for learning*

For 12 years, Dr. Vicki Cassman has shared her passion for learning, teaching, and the preservation of cultural heritage with students at the University of Delaware, most recently as the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the UD's Department of Art Conservation. Cassman's UD journey began during a summer internship in northern Chile while a Fellow in the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation (WUDPAC) in the early 1980s, where she was dismayed to see archaeologists padding ceramics with 2,000 year-old textiles found at the same ancient burial sites. She wanted archaeologists to know that textiles were important, but also knew they might not listen to an art conservator. So, after completing her masters in art conservation, she earned a Ph.D. in archaeology at Arizona State University. The experience is part of what Cassman sometimes refers to as her "itinerant" life. She believes her continued studies helped her promote conservation to allied fields; her wide-ranging writings in textile conservation, anthropology, and archaeology include a standard in the field she co-edited entitled *Guide to the Treatment of Human Remains for Museums and Academic Institutions* (2007).

The undergraduate program has grown and evolved since 2006, when Cassman became the program's first Director. The major, which was being taught part-time by WUDPAC faculty before she arrived, has added both general and core courses and a senior capstone course. Cassman pushes undergraduates to do research and encourages them to publish, and she is thrilled that this year for the first time an undergraduate has submitted an article for publication. In addition to her work with undergraduate students, Cassman has also served as committee chair or co-chair for students pursuing a doctorate in UD's Program in Preservation Studies.

This winter, Cassman will leave UD for San Francisco to receive medical care and be near family, and to use her platform to raise awareness about metastatic breast cancer. "I have absolutely loved working at UD, the teaching, my colleagues, the students. It's only ending a little sooner than I expected." Some of her doctoral students will fill in for her undergraduate course supervision when she leaves. "It is good to see these new colleagues who have taken over my classes," she says, "and see how full of energy they are, and what great ideas they have. It is so much easier to leave knowing my students are in great hands. It has been a great community." Dr. Cassman is a cornerstone of that community, and UD's art conservation programs bear the imprint of her commitment to cultural heritage conservation.

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ARTC Spotlight—December 2018

The University of Delaware's Art Conservation Department educates and trains professional conservators who are well versed in the treatment, analysis, documentation, and preventive conservation of individual artifacts and entire collections. For more news about our students and other department activities visit our web site at www.artcons.udel.edu.

Top: Dr. Cassman works with undergraduate engineering students on an animal prosthetic. Above: College of Arts and Sciences Dean George Watson presents Dr. Cassman with the 2012 Outstanding Service Award and the Excellence in Advising and Mentoring Award; Vicki and her son Victor at the awards ceremony. Left, top: Dr. Cassman and students practice packing techniques for the *Australopithecus afarensis* skeleton known as "Lucy." Left, bottom: Dr. Dilia Lopez-Gydosh (far right), Director of UD's Historic Textile and Costume Collection, consults on an undergraduate project.