

Remarks Given at West Chester University

Jen Bacon

Dr. Jen Bacon is Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities at West Chester University. She has served in a variety of leadership roles over her career, including Interim Associate Provost, Faculty Associate for the College of Arts and Sciences, Chair of the English Department, Director of Women's and Gender Studies, and Director of the University Writing Center. With an interdisciplinary PhD from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, she has worked to build connections between the departments and programs in the College of Arts and Humanities during her time as dean, including the college's Change Agent Fund to support experiential learning, funding opportunities for internships, study abroad, and faculty-student research. The college's Campaign for Social Justice is another initiative that she developed in order to better understand barriers to academic success for students and faculty alike, and the fully funded Equity Communications Internship is a legacy that links the fund to the college initiative.



a professional headshot of Dr. Hyoejin Yoon. She is smiling and wearing a navy blue blazer and navy blue blouse with flowers. The out-of-focus background is sunlit trees and shrubs.

As Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities, I had the honor of working with Dr. Katherine Hyoejin Yoon for all of her 20+ years at West Chester, from her job interview with the English Department back in 2001 until her untimely death on December 16, 2022. She was 52.

A specialist in rhetoric and composition, she received her Ph.D. from the State University of New York at Albany. She received both a BA and an MA in English from Virginia Polytechnic Institute, where she also earned a BS in Biology. She attended the HERS: Women in Higher Education Leadership Institute in 2014 and held numerous positions at the university on her path

to becoming Senior Associate Dean in 2016.

Her focus on both student and faculty research was evident from the beginning. A first-generation college student, she knew at a deep and personal level how imposter syndrome could creep in, and as an Asian woman, she knew what it felt like to have students with racial and gender biases question her expertise in the classroom. She never forgot those feelings, and it made her a fierce and passionate advocate for our most vulnerable faculty and students.

I really got to know Hyoejin when she moved to my neighborhood in Philadelphia and joined my carpool. We spent those long commutes talking about our teaching and our research, but also about our lives. We learned that Hyoejin was a cat lover (and then a dog lover); we learned that she was eager to find a partner to build a life, and a family, with. We learned about the ways her Korean heritage had shaped her, and we learned that she really wasn't a morning person.

Hyoejin helped launch our Equity Access Inclusion and Diversity Grants, she encouraged a group of amazing faculty members as they formed the Women of Color Faculty Resource Caucus, and she advocated for the resources to appoint a Faculty Associate for Equity Action in the college. I was delighted to learn that the university has named the HERS scholarship for women in leadership in her honor, so that future women leaders who participate in the institute will be part of her legacy.

Hyoejin – we are still not ready to say goodbye to you. I am so grateful to have your insight, and your compassion, and your humor in my life. I miss you, friend. I know we all do.

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