

HEATHER VACEK NAMED DEAN

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, by action of the Board of Directors, has appointed the Rev. Dr. Heather Hartung Vacek as vice president for academic affairs and dean of faculty effective March 1, 2016. Beginning Nov. 30, 2015, Vacek will become associate dean of academics.

"I have found Dr. Vacek to have just the right mix of administrative skills, institutional understanding, and inter-personal insight required for academic leadership. Her colleagues recognize her as a fine administrator and able leader, not only in committee work but also in pedagogy and in thinking about the curriculum as a whole," said the Rev. Dr. David Esterline, president and professor of cross-cultural theological education.

Sandy Lamb, chair of the Board, said: "Dr. Vacek loves to teach and will continue to be a trusted colleague and coworker with our faculty. The Board of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary looks forward to working with Dr. Vacek on the many initiatives she has already assisted us with as a member of the Strategic Planning Committee."

"Among other responsibilities, I understand the work of this position as attending to the mission of the institution, the Christian vocations of those within it, and the ways in which our academic programs support both mission and vocation. I am eager to lead this work and accept the Board's nomination with great enthusiasm," said Vacek.

Vacek joined the faculty at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in 2012 as assistant professor of church history. Her research focuses on the historical relationship between Christian belief and practice in the American context. Her book, *Madness: American Protestant Responses to Mental Illness* (Baylor University Press, 2015), explores Protestant reactions to mental illnesses from the colonial era through the 21 century. Her research interests also include American religious history, Reformation church history, practical theology, and theologies of disability and suffering.

After working for a decade in corporate positions, Vacek earned an M.Div. and Th.D. from Duke University, Duke Divinity School. Previously, she earned her bachelor's in industrial engineering and bachelor's in economics from Northwestern University; master's in engineering and MBA from Northwestern University, J. L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management.

Vacek is ordained in the Moravian Church in America. Her ministry experience includes service at Raleigh Moravian Church in Raleigh, N.C., and at John Umstead Hospital in Butner, N.C. Vacek serves as a trustee and vice chair of the Board of Moravian Theological Seminary. She is a member of the American Academy of Religion, the American Historical Association, the American Society of Church History, The Conference on Faith and History, the Association of Practical Theology, and the Moravian Historical Society.

Vacek replaces the Rev. Dr. Byron H. Jackson, Louise and Perry Dick Associate Professor of Church Education, who has faithfully served with wisdom and dedication as vice president for academic affairs and dean of faculty for more than 10 years.



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