

McKinley Fellow Award Acceptance

Blaine Lewis

Dear Friends,

I am surprised, grateful, and humbled to receive this year's McKinley Fellow Award. Thank you so much for this distinguished award. My career at Mount Union has been a journey of hope and success filled with so many fond memories of our campus and my colleagues. However, what I cherish the most is the time and interactions I have had with our students. These relationships have had the most impact on me.

It is entertaining each fall semester to see the wide-eyed look of our freshmen during their first weekend on campus away from their home. This experience always makes me smile. To see their excitement and enthusiasm in the first step of their college experience also gives me new-found hope that each of them is now part of a new family, our family, the Mount Union family. My role also becomes more easily defined to now focus on the task at hand; to provide the best living and learning environment that will help them be successful students.

The sophomore and junior years of our students remind me of the grind of life. You're not new anymore and you're not close to the end of your journey. However, I have always believed these are the most important years of discovery of yourself and the world around you in your chosen path of higher education. These are also what I call the confidence building years. You know what it takes to be successful and you put it into practice in the classroom every day.

The senior year for our students is when everything comes together. They are going through the last year of college life and begin to anxiously look forward to what lies ahead. Possibly a new family, a career, travel, and other exciting new chapters yet to come. It all culminates on graduation day, my favorite and most special day as part of the Mount Union community. These are the days that we all remember and reflect back upon as a major milestone in our lives. I have truly been blessed to have shared these special days with so many of you.

I am now "graduating" from my career at Mount Union. It has been an honor and a privilege to have worked side-by-side with so many talented and exceptional people. It is with deep appreciation and gratitude that I accept this award. Thank you.

Blaine Lewis