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Faculty mourns dead co-workers

By Vanessa Renderman
Special Projects Editor

Two Purdue professors and one former Purdue staff member died over the winter break.

Louis Balazs, 64, died on Dec. 26. He was the assistant head of the Department of Physics. Balazs, who received his bachelor's and doctorate degrees from the University of California at Berkeley, had been teaching at Purdue since 1970.

Edward Shibata, associate head of the Department of Physics, said Balazs made efforts to ensure fairness. He was in charge of the graduate student assignments in physics and Shibata says Balazs was an advocate of the teaching assistants.

Balazs was methodical and practical, Shibata said. "He was a very classic type of person," Shibata said. For example, whenever someone would send him an e-mail, Balazs would respond in handwriting rather than e-mail.

Theoretical particle physics was his specialty, Shibata said. He conducted research in elementary-particle theory, and he was known for his knowledge of the current missile defense system. He had 98 publications and

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Extra



was a fellow of the American Physical Society.

Another Purdue professor, Gavin Sinclair, 39, died over the winter break. Sinclair, an assistant professor of organizational leadership and supervision, died on Dec. 19. Sinclair came to Purdue in 1997 and taught several classes. He also co-authored three textbooks and wrote a book called "All Things Work For Good," which talks about how to deal with cancer.

Rodney Vandever, an associate professor of organizational leadership and supervision, co-authored a textbook with Sinclair and says they shared Christian values and life experiences. "He was very professional, but a lot of fun," he said. "He was committed to living life to the fullest."

Vandever said Sinclair became a mentor to others about how to live life. "There isn't a day that goes by without thinking of him," he said.

Sinclair earned degrees from Purdue, Lehigh University and Carnegie Mellon University. He was a faculty adviser for the Purdue Student Society of Business Engineers and the Purdue Triathlon Club. His wife, Jennifer, is the head of freshman engineering at Purdue.

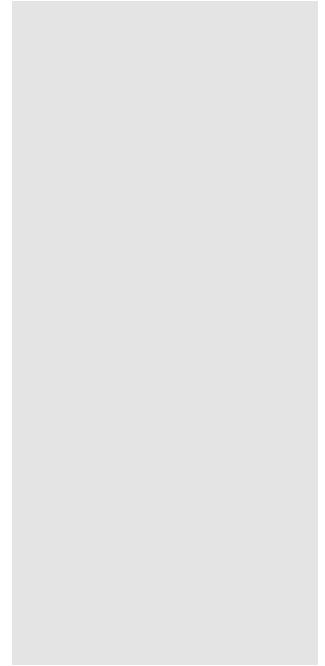
A former Purdue staff member died on Dec. 26. Barbara Elsbury, 64, worked at Purdue for more than 30 years in the Office of the Dean of Students. She was known in particular for her involvement with the growth and improvement of Purdue's sorority system.

Tony Hawkins, dean of students, said Elsbury was student-oriented and made sure students were treated fairly. Elsbury dealt with providing emergency loans for students, and Hawkins

said she would grade the staff members on how well they handled the loans.

"She was great to work with," Hawkins said. "She had a great sense of humor."

Hawkins said Elsbury worked closely with the women of Purdue, especially through the Panhellenic Association. She received the Helen B. Schleman Gold Medallion Award at Purdue in 1988 and was named a Sagamore of the Wabash.



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