

Professor to become student during sabbatical

Kyu Ho Youm, who teaches media law, will pursue a master's degree in legal research at Oxford

BY MEGHANN M. CUNIFF
SENIOR NEWS REPORTER

Every year, numerous University professors take time away from

their work to further their academic endeavors through travel and research.

In the next school year, journalism

professor Kyu Ho Youm will be among them. Youm will spend a year pursuing a master's degree in legal research at the University of Oxford Faculty of Law. Youm has held the School of Journalism and Communication's John Marshall First Amendment Chair since 2002 and said he is looking to improve his skills as both a media scholar and professor while at Oxford.

"Basically, I want to do better at what I'm doing," Youm said. "I have a pretty good record as a scholar over the past 20 years, but I know I can do better."

Considered one of the world's top media law scholars, Youm's work has been cited by the United Kingdom's highest court and has been published in the world's most prolific publications. He has been a professor for more than 20 years, something he said makes him nervous about his pending yearlong stint as a student.

"Being a full-time student is quite a challenge I'll have to face with reality," Youm said, adding that thinking about the adjustment is "definitely making me more stressed out than absolutely necessary."

Experiencing life as a full-time student is something Youm hopes will make him more aware of the challenges facing today's students.

Charlotte Nisser, who has been both a student and teaching assistant in Youm's Communication Law class, said his striking intelligence and his sense of humor have served his students well. Youm strongly encourages communication with his students and sees more to education than what's taught in a classroom, Nisser said.

"He really recognizes that and tries to get students to recognize that too," she said.

Journalism instructor David Koranda said Youm's engaging personality and genuine interest in students and in spending time outside the classroom with them have and will continue to be an inspiration to everyone in Allen Hall.

"He considers that time very important," Koranda said. "He's been a great mentor in that sense."

Youm said the encouragement and support he has received from his colleagues at the journalism school played a large role in his decision to make a long-term commitment to the University.

"I've enjoyed my life very much, with extraordinary support from my colleagues," Youm said. "My colleagues are very, very friendly to me."

In addition to earning another degree, Youm will conduct legal research, both of which will culminate in a thesis exploring press freedom from an international and comparative perspective.

Youm said he hopes to incorporate what he learns at Oxford into his teachings at the journalism school and to use his experiences to help move the school to the next level of excellence.

"English legal education is a lot more global and international than our American approach to legal education," Youm said. "I hope I will develop some sort of international comparative media law course when I come back."

Associate Dean of the journalism school Al Stavitsky said it has not been decided who will teach the Communication Law course while Youm is away but said his absence will require only minor alterations to the journalism school's course schedule next year.

Sabbaticals are routine at the

journalism school and are strongly encouraged, Stavitsky said.

"The experiences that the faculty have while they're away will ultimately come back to pay benefits for their students," Stavitsky said. "Everyone wins in the long run."

In a proposal letter about the yearlong sabbatical to Tim Gleason, dean of the journalism school, Youm wrote that "it will be another defining moment in my academic career because it will challenge myself to rethink and expand my legal scholarship beyond U.S. communication law."

Youm said he hopes interactions with top media law scholars from around the world while studying at Oxford will challenge his academic ideas, help round out his education and improve his performance as a professor.

"Pedagogically, I might learn from how English professors, especially Oxford professors, are interacting with students," Youm said. "Getting to know professors is one of the most effective ways of getting something out of college."

Youm will live alone in England while his wife continues working in Eugene. He said he wants to be completely absorbed in his studies while at Oxford and needs to leave behind anything not related to academics, thus he will live "like a monk."

Though Youm expects his year at Oxford to be a challenging one, he is confident it will be one that will immensely benefit his work at the University and is hopeful it will be a year to remember.

"When someone asks me about my tenure at Oxford, I'd like to say without hesitation, 'It was a heck of a good time,'" Youm said.

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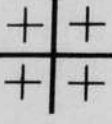
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Walsh: He will testify about student fees

Continued from page 1A
remains unfilled.

Walsh, who took office May 25, said he has spent the last week settling in.

"Three to four hours of meetings after finishing class and work is becoming the norm, so it makes it exciting not only for the summer preparation but for all of next year," he said. "It's a grueling pace so far, but that just means that there's going to be a lot of work that

gets done."

Commenting on recent student concerns about alleged racist practices in the College of Education, Walsh said he has publicly pledged to multicultural student unions to do "everything in our power" to help make the campus a better place for all students.

He said he will be testifying today before the Oregon University System Board of Directors about rising student fees, which he

called a "backdoor way of funding tuition" increases.

Walsh added that he hopes to bring the same passion Petkun had for state issues to the local level by working on increasing relations with the city and the Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce over the summer, which he called a "good place for us to take a leadership role."

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