

Conclusion

To become a Faculty Master at Binghamton University, you must first be a tenured faculty member (which typically means having taught at the university for at least six years). However, it takes far more than that to be a true Faculty Master, one who exhibits all the qualities and characteristics that help to inspire students to achieve and to succeed both inside and outside of the classroom. Being Faculty Master also means having to make sacrifices. No other professors on campus commit as much time to their students as the Masters do. No other professors go to community programs with such frequency as Masters do or eat in the dining halls as regularly as the Masters. No other professors stay up for hours on end to be present and give reports at area government meetings and it is almost assured that no other professors have as close a relationship to their students as the Faculty Masters do. Though many of the other residential colleges have had great Faculty Masters, it seems as though Hinman College has been blessed with having some of the very best in its forty year history. The five men who have had the title of Master of Hinman have built up a legacy that has withstood the test of time and has inspired countless numbers of their students to go on and do great things with their lives both during and after their college careers.

In 2007, Nick Sterling had this to say when asked what the definition of being Faculty Master of Hinman College was.

Being a Master is being a friend, a confidant and an advisor to students. You help bridge the gaps between academics and the residence halls. That was the essence of my job. It's also helping student government and student groups. It's about passing on advice and experience to students.¹

Also in 2007, Al Vos had this to say on what he considered to be the definition of Hinman College Faculty Master,

Increasingly people have seen me as a father figure of Hinman. I see myself as a figure nurturing Hinman leaders and talent. I see myself as a talent-scout and a community builder. My whole time here I try to cultivate and preserve Hinman Community, Hinman Spirit, Hinman Family, Hinman Pride, and Hinman Tradition. Being a Faculty Master is about creating and developing those five things.²

All of these are appropriate definitions of what it means to be a Faculty Master.

However, perhaps the position is best described in this way. The 1998-1999 Roosevelt Hall staff made Al Vos a poster for his very first Faculty Master Appreciation Day. On that poster they wrote all the things that Al had brought to Hinman. They were: Friendliness, Advice, (being a) Role Model, (always having) An Open Door, Ideas, Knowledge, and Spirit. Although this poster was given to Al Vos to represent what he brought to Hinman, all these things have been characteristics of each of the Faculty Masters of Hinman.

The Faculty Master position at Binghamton has changed a great deal since it was introduced in the 1960's. Originally, Masters handled almost everything in the residential colleges including hiring staff, setting budgets, and disciplining students. However, starting in the mid-1970's with the centralization of Residential Life at SUNY Binghamton and continuing into the late 1980's, the Masters lost much of their power with regard to those aspects of their job. However, one thing that has not changed and has been constant throughout is their willingness and their passion to mentor and to be positive role models and influences on their students. To be a Faculty Master at Binghamton is make the ultimate commitment to students and no where else is this more evident than in Hinman College. These men have truly gone above and beyond the call of duty and have made profound and lasting impacts. From Pete Gruber's pioneering and foundation-laying efforts, to Vito Sinisi's efforts to protect collegiate structure and establish time-tested traditions, to Al Haber's sense of humor and mentoring effects, to Nick Sterling's relationship building and social activities, and Al Vos's continuation

of traditions and commitment to innovation, each and every one of them deserves a place of honor in the history of Hinman College for their undying love for their jobs, their students, and the Hinman Spirit.

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¹ Nick Sterling, telephone conversation with author, May 9, 2007.

² Al Vos, interview with author, May 8, 2007.