



## IN MEMORIAM

James W. Trent  
Professor of Education  
Los Angeles  
1933–2001

Professor James W. Trent, one of five recipients of the 2001 UCLA Distinguished Teaching Award, passed away on Friday morning, May 11, 2001. Professor Trent's selection for this award reflected the widespread acknowledgement of his outstanding contribution to the UCLA community, including undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty.

Professor Trent was a member of the Department of Education faculty for more than three decades, during which time he taught more than 150 courses across a variety of undergraduate and graduate programs in the Department of Education.

Professor Trent was a pioneer in the field of higher education for his seminal research on college student development, and later made contributions to the areas of college access and institutional research. Another of Professor Trent's research focus was understanding the experiences of Catholics in college and the role of Catholic colleges in the American higher education system.

Professor Trent made a substantial programmatic impact on UCLA's Department of Education. In addition to teaching graduate students in the division of Higher Education and Organizational Change (HEOC), he converted his advocacy for undergraduate education into an Education Studies Minor (ESM). The heart of ESM is the relatively large Education 180 course (The Social Psychology of Higher Education). Due to Professor Trent's efforts at personalizing and providing intellectual zest to what otherwise would be another large lecture course, Education 180 received increasing attention on campus and nationally. ESM has become a very popular minor on campus and, further, has provided a steady stream of talented applicants to the Department's graduate programs in Education, as well as other programs throughout the state and country. In this way, Professor Trent contributed significantly toward attracting some of the most talented undergraduates into the field of education as both practitioners and researchers.

Professor Trent's leadership in the Education Studies Minor led him to initiate another program, the Peer Advisor Program. This program recruits and trains undergraduates to widen the efforts of the Department of Education's Office of Student Services in order to provide academic counseling for students in or interested in the Education minor. The Peer Advisor Program ultimately became the model for another program under Professor Trent's leadership, UCLA's High School Advising Program (HSAP). This program applies the Peer Advisor model to the training of UCLA students to serve as academic advisors and college- prep counselors in inner- city high schools.

Further, Professor Trent served as a major force behind the creation and continued success of the Educational Leadership Program (ELP), a doctoral program designed for working educators and practitioners. Since its establishment in 1993, ELP has trained student- professionals to incorporate leading- edge research, leadership principles and technology into their efforts to improve student learning and development in elementary, secondary, and post- secondary educational settings.

Professor Trent's programmatic efforts also caused him to explore new areas of scholarship. He was a leader in examining leadership training in educational settings. He also examined carefully what too many educational scholars often overlook — the critical nexus between K-12 and higher education. As a result, his recent efforts in the Education Studies Minor and the Educational Leadership Program reflected his keen understanding that “access” to higher education must be considered broadly to reflect the multiple influences on students throughout all levels of schooling.

Inside the classroom, Professor Trent had a gift for facilitating learning at multiple levels, encouraging students to shape their curriculum, to educate and mentor their peers, and to connect their educational experiences to broader aspects of their personal and professional lives. Professor Trent's nomination for the Distinguished Teaching Award was followed by dozens of letters submitted by his current and former students. His passion for engaging the student in the learning process is illustrated by this former undergraduate: “Professor Trent is the most outstanding professor I have encountered in my undergraduate career. Jim is a master in engaging the student – encouraging them, motivating them, and instilling confidence. His work reflects his mastery of the material, his passion for the subject, and the understanding that students need to be rewarded not for rote memorization, but for engaging in the active learning process where one thinks analytically, critically, creatively, and merges ideas and material in writing, and in such a way that political, and social/ moral concerns are considered and addressed.”

Professor Trent's dedication to teaching extended far beyond the classroom walls. Over the years, students were particularly grateful for the individual advice and mentoring provided by Professor Trent. It was not uncommon to find lines of students waiting outside his office (whether or not he was holding official office hours). He was known to motivate and inspire his students, pushing the limits of their thinking about the world and about themselves. As noted by this undergraduate student, “He is the type of inspirational professor that makes positive impacts in students' lives, and will always be remembered for the dedication and concern he showed for teaching and his students.”

Professor Trent was a gifted and committed teacher, colleague, and mentor. His intense commitment to students never subsided, even in the face of recent health problems. He will be sorely missed by the many students, faculty, and staff he worked with at UCLA over the past three decades.

Marvin Alkin  
Patricia McDonough  
Linda Rose  
Linda Sax