



# Office of the President

**Oct. 28, 2023**

Dear Faculty, Staff, and Students,

It gives me overwhelming sadness to share that Tanya Winegard, PhD, Creighton's vice provost for Student Life, has died following a long and courageous fight against cancer. She spent her remaining days surrounded by friends and family before passing away peacefully on Friday, Oct. 27.

There are simply not enough words to express the transformative, positive impact Dr. Winegard had on our University, our students, and the countless colleagues, parents, friends, and supporters of Creighton she inspired. For more than 25 years, she championed the student experience and, even when struggling with the physical and emotional pain of her illness, she was always for and with others — putting the care and success of our students first.

In the coming days, weeks, and months, our Creighton community will be celebrating Dr. Winegard and her contributions as a higher education professional and as a person. To lose such a bright light is incredibly painful and, just as she would have done for any of us, our counseling and other services are available to those in need; this includes Student Counseling Services, Campus Ministry, and our Employee Assistance Program. St. John's Church and chapels on our Omaha and Phoenix campuses are available for personal reflection or community prayer.

Dr. Winegard first arrived at Creighton in 1997 to lead our student programs and activities. She was named assistant dean of students in 2000, which put her at the forefront of overseeing efforts such as Welcome Week, new student orientation, student government, and other student organizations.

In her role as assistant, then associate, dean of students, Dr. Winegard was a source of stability for students, particularly those on the margins, providing counseling resources and guidance on how to address instances of misconduct. She was also often the main point of contact for parents, ensuring their children were being cared for at Creighton. It was a role she excelled in as an active, engaged parent herself, often volunteering at her sons' school events and baseball contests, as well as serving as a parent-teacher organization board member.

In her career, Dr. Winegard helped initiate, create, and oversee such vital efforts as the Creighton Alcohol Recovery and Education Track to Recovery from Alcohol Abuse at Creighton (TRAAC), the Committee on the Status of Women, the Center for Student Integrity, and Title IX compliance. She was also a driving force behind the design and construction of the Mike and Josie Harper Center as well as Graves Hall. This is in addition to the work she did leading renovations for the Kiewit Fitness Center and Skutt Student Center.

Dr. Winegard also gave her time to many committees, strategic planning groups, mission and accreditation advisory groups, and selection committees for student grants and awards. Included among these efforts was establishing and chairing our Critical Incident Response Team, a vital resource to keeping Creighton operational while maintaining the safety of our students, faculty, and staff.

Celebrated for her compassion and collegiality, Dr. Winegard was respected and loved by students, faculty, staff, and parents alike. She was the recipient of the 2001 Rev. Thomas J. Lukaszewicz, S.J. Award; an honorary inductee into Alpha Sigma Nu in 2002; recognized with the St. Ignatius award in 2010; received the Mary Lucretia and Sarah Emily Creighton Award in 2012; and was honored with the Creighton Administrator Award in 2020.

Dr. Winegard's peers also recognized her keen intellect and desire to improve the lives of students. She served as a member of the American College Personnel Association, NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, National Association for Campus Activities; National Orientation Directors Association; and was acting president elect for the Jesuit Student Personnel Association. She also served her community, volunteering her time to support causes such as civil rights, victim advocacy, and education.

A deeply spiritual person, I know that Dr. Winegard not only lived Creighton's Jesuit principles and had a close connection with God. Her positive attitude, fearless optimism, and passion to be a champion for others was evident especially through the final months as she was battling cancer. Her legacy will live on in the literally thousands of people she has inspired.

I join so many in mourning the loss of Dr. Winegard's presence at Creighton, and my heart goes out to her husband, Mike, and her two sons, Gabe and Noah, as well as extended family, friends, and colleagues. Please join me in praying that we can all find the guidance and strength to carry forward as we remember Dr. Winegard and support each other during this difficult time. More information about funeral services and other arrangements will be shared once they are available.

Sincerely,

Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD

**Creighton**  
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