

# Co-workers, students in mourning after WSU education dean's unexpected death

**Mitchell had led College of Education for 11 years**

By Yesenia Amaro, Daily News staff writer

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Mitchell

The Washington State University community will remember Judy Mitchell as a true leader.

The dean of the university's College of Education died unexpectedly early Saturday morning at her Pullman home. Her official cause of death has not been determined.

Mitchell, 70, led the college for the past 11 years and was the longest-serving dean at the university.

"She was just a dynamic leader to make sure that we were professional and always growing," said Gail Gleason, a graduate student in the College of Education who often met with Mitchell.

WSU Provost and Executive Vice President Warwick Bayly on Monday named Len Foster interim dean of the college. Foster had served as the college's associate dean for three years.

Foster said Mitchell left the college positioned to continue moving forward as it, like the rest of the university, deals with significant budget cuts.

He said Mitchell "practiced a good team style" that allowed collaboration from others.

"She left the college well-positioned to handle any unforeseeable situations with (the) budget ... and to keep going forward in a very positive way," he said.

Foster said Mitchell was a leader who advocated for students and faculty. She also was supportive of new projects and innovations.

"Her legacy will remain because she planted the seeds," he said. "She was a wonderful teacher, mentor and very wise leader."

Foster said he will continue the work Mitchell left behind.

"We are revisiting the college's strategic plan to be aligned more with the university's plan," he said, adding that officials also will continue to advance the college in the area of research.

Department of teaching and learning chairwoman and professor Corinne Mantle-Bromley said Mitchell "had very high standards" for the college, and officials will do everything they can to continue meeting those benchmarks.

"We will work very hard to make her proud of how we move forward," she said.

Mantle-Bromley said Mitchell had a "strength at appreciating the human piece of work" that is done within the college.

"She loved being around people," she said.

WSU professor Michael Trevisan said he was "deeply saddened" by Mitchell's death and called it a "real loss" for the college.

"(She) was a person of integrity," he said. "She was one who cared for everyone within the college and everybody will feel her loss."

Foster said the loss will be felt beyond the university community.

"(She) was very much a state and national leader," he said. "We have been receiving e-mails from people who knew her because of her involvement."

College of Education spokeswoman Julie Titone said Mitchell's family is expected to arrive in Pullman sometime this week.

She said the family is planning memorial services in Pullman and in Tucson, Ariz. The College of Education also is planning to have a memorial service when faculty and students return this fall.

Titone said she has created a Web site where people can check for updates.

"That's the best place for people to look for information about the services," she said.

On the Web:

- [education.wsu.edu/news/releases/judymitchell/](http://education.wsu.edu/news/releases/judymitchell/)

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