

Dean of college fits in on campus

By Tessa Castor
Staff reporter

After living in Indiana for 33 years, Ross Peterson-Veatch, vice president for academic affairs and dean of the college, brings higher educational experience to his new position. Peterson-Veatch oversees the main campus and professional studies academic programs, including the library, registrar's office, writing center and others. Peterson-Veatch earned his master's degree and doctorate at Indiana University, where he began his administrative career in 2001.

Peterson-Veatch lived in Spain for six months after getting his bachelor degree from Earlham College in Richmond, Ind. He was then offered a position at Earlham, teaching Spanish and beginning his career working with college students.

Before coming to Southwestern, Peterson-Veatch had been at his previous college in northern Indiana for 10 years and served as assistant academic dean.

"I was looking for the right fit for a couple of years," said Peterson-Veatch. "As part of the search, it was pretty clear to me that this would be a good fit for a few reasons. My first impressions were that that was true. I felt it was an even better fit than I had anticipated. This is perfect for me right now in my career and personal life. This was really a great opportunity for me."

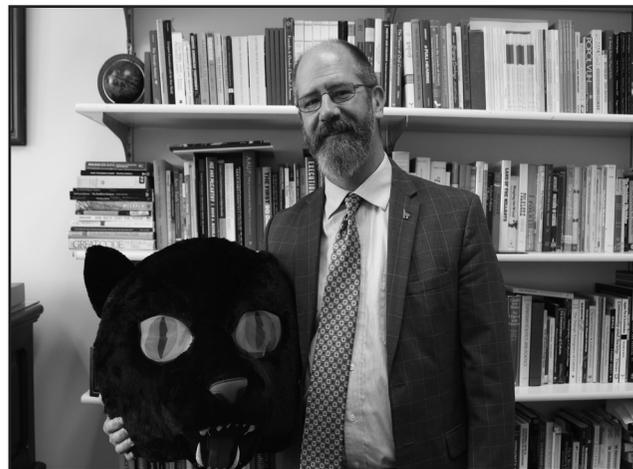
Originally from Tulsa, Okla., Peterson-Veatch said it is good to be closer to his hometown after living away for so long.

"For me, it's great to be a couple hours away from my parents if they need anything," said Peterson-Veatch. "The transition was really big. I pulled up roots for my family. That's a big deal for us, but people have been super

nice and welcoming. My favorite part about Southwestern is that we have the privilege of forming really tight relationships," said Peterson-Veatch. "The nature of building is that you connect with people. To really build, you connect and commit. I think that's what being a Builder is about."

As an educator, Peterson-Veatch has taught kids in kindergarten to people age 70, "in all different kinds of contexts." He said he always hopes to improve, and his immediate goal is to build an academic assessment program.

"I have observed and learned from talking to faculty just how important our relationships with students are to us," said Peterson-Veatch. "How the relationships feel is really unique here."



Peterson-Veatch said he also enjoys Southwestern's traditions. He even has a Jinx mascot head sitting in his office.

"I really love traditions that express that people have joy in what they're doing," said Peterson-Veatch. "I'm a little quirky as a person myself, so I really like the spirit that spawns our quirky traditions. The Moundbuilding Ceremony was awesome. Convocation was nice, and I really like the Jinx. It's so awesome."

Emily Jones, elementary education junior, also said the community aspect of the Builder family is her

favorite part of the college. Jones was one of the students who met with Peterson-Veatch during his interview on campus last semester. She said she immediately realized how unique he was.

"I just remember he was kind of a quirky guy," said Jones. "He was really excited to meet us, and I was really excited to get to know him better."

Jones said that she can see his interest in the school. "I think he's very personable," said Jones. "He definitely made an effort to get to know me. He's just very friendly."

As vice president for academic affairs, Peterson-Veatch is one of the members of the president's cabinet. Brad Andrews, president, said that Peterson-Veatch brings both knowledge and personality to his new role.

"Ross brings great experience and expertise in administration of academic affairs. He has great spirit, and he devotes his life to this type of higher education," said Andrews.

"I think I will always have things to learn from Ross in those two areas – being a good, effective collaborator and leader," said Andrews. "I'm sure I will forever be learning from Ross in that area."

"I see some really great things in the future," said Peterson-Veatch. "The faculty are really committed. I see an increase in the quality of education for students in the classroom. I think the increase in enrollment will help bring a vibrancy to campus that will help our game in pretty much all aspects of our bundled education experience."

Peterson-Veatch likes to make

connections with students, and is unlikely to spend all of his time in his office on the top floor of Christy. Andrews said that he can see the love Peterson-Veatch has for Southwestern and the spirit and dedication he brings to the college. He said he hopes students can see the approachability of Peterson-Veatch.

"Ross is really easy and fun to get to know," said Andrews. "I guess I have two things I would want students to know about Ross. One, Ross cares deeply about the education they receive, and two, it is very easy and worthwhile to get to know Ross."

Andrews said he looks forward to growing with Peterson-Veatch and working together toward the college's aspirations.

"I think he's a great addition to SC," said Jones. "He seems to match our community well. I think he adds quite a bit of enthusiasm to campus and he's able to connect with students on a personal level."

Jones said she looks forward to the future of Southwestern, particularly with Peterson-Veatch. "I'm super excited to see the impact Ross Peterson-Veatch can make on this campus."

When Peterson-Veatch is not on campus, he enjoys fly-fishing, playing guitar and mandolin, and taking things apart and putting those things back together, like his riding lawnmower. Peterson-Veatch said he believes Southwestern is heading for big growth and success, and he looks forward to being a part of it.

Like Jones, Peterson-Veatch can see himself fit in with the Southwestern community.

"The match made between me and Southwestern is a really good one," said Peterson-Veatch.

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