

Feature Story on Dean Sara Baron



In honor of her upcoming [Book Club discussion](#) on Pearl S. Buck's "the Good Earth", the Daily Runner interviewed regent University Library [Dean Sara Baron](#) about her life and work.

While most on-campus students are probably very familiar with the University Library, distance students may not know very much about the department or the resources it has to offer. Dean Baron was quite happy to discuss the library and her love of books and learning. When asked whether she had always planned to pursue a career in library work, Dean Baron said that she has always loved books, reading and libraries. She worked in a library in high school, but had not specifically planned to continue doing so after college. The first job she was able to get after earning her Master's degree in Speech Communication was in a library. She realized that she really wanted to continue library work, and so she went back to school and earned her M.S. in Library Science.

Dean Baron said she hadn't necessarily always dreamed of earning a Master's Degree, but upon finishing her B.A. in Speech Communication, she found that she "wasn't ready to move on" and so went on to pursue a Master's. She explained that she loved attending classes, reading and discussing ideas with other students. For her, the most challenging part about earning her Ed.D. in Higher Education Administration was writing her dissertation, because at that point in one's education, there are no more classes to attend and no classmates to bounce ideas off of, "it's just you and the research and the writing" she said.

The author is an online student who has yet to visit the Regent campus, and was surprised to learn that the University Library department is so large. Dean Baron explained that the Regent Library was originally designed for Masters students, so now the undergraduate students have access to a lot of graduate-level resources they might not get elsewhere. Throughout the conversation, the Dean's love of books and learning were very much in evidence, as was her enthusiasm for the University Library. When asked about the most rewarding aspect of her work, Dean Baron said, "One of the most rewarding things is having an impact on the education of nearly every student." She also "likes being able to empower her staff to be creative...to

meet the demands and expectations of students today” and she said that she loves being in administration.

On the topic of advice for students considering a career in administration, “the number one thing I would say is never stop learning, and by that I mean reading” Dean Baron says. Her other piece of advice is that “leaders need to be willing to change...change is not comfortable sometimes” but it is necessary. As an example of necessary change, she cited the fact that libraries have been following some of the same procedures since the 1700s, but some of those practices are no longer relevant and need to be updated.

When asked if she cared to share any details from her personal life, Dean Baron said “My dad was in the military, so I’m what’s considered a military brat.” She has lived in many different places, and like most other children of military families, often struggled to answer the question, “where are you from?” She related that half of her family is from Virginia and half are from Boston, and Virginia is home for her. She enjoys knowing that she no longer has to move around, unless she chooses to. Dean Baron feels that her experience as a “military brat” gives her the ability to relate to students who feel displaced, whether because they also are connected to the military, or because they are in a new environment, away from home.

No interview with an avid reader would be complete without asking about favorite books and authors. “I have very eclectic tastes in reading” Dean Baron said. She enjoys reading fiction, including mysteries and literary classics. She also loves to read travel books. She said that through her involvement with the Library Book Club, she is becoming familiar with some of the classics she “should have read in high school...I’m really enjoying *The Good Earth*.”

When asked if there was anything in particular she wanted to tell readers, Dean Baron replied, “I would love to invite all the Daily Runner readers to join the [Library Facebook group](#)” which posts news, quotes and library-related updates. “There’s also a list of all the Book Club books we’re reading,” she said. The Dean also [welcomes suggestions](#) from distance students on way the University Library can improve its services to them.

The Dean will be leading a leading a discussion on “The Good Earth” tomorrow in the Library Conference Room (Room 119), from 12 to 1 p.m. The event is hosted by the Library Book Club. Everyone is invited and attendance is free.

Bio:

Meagan Wilson is an English Major in her Junior year as an online student at Regent. She is thrilled to be writing for the Daily Runner and welcomes your suggestions or advice. Contact Meagan at meagwil@mail.regent.edu.