

Dear Students,

Thankyou so much for coming to the Executive Officer farewell party and dinner on Wednesday afternoon, May 1, 2019. I was speechless. About half of you came, plus some alumni and others. Although I did not count, it seemed like each of the students attending told me something that I did for them as Executive Officer that enabled them to continue in their PhD studies, even when they thought that it might have been hopeless. I never realized that I had such an influence. I was just doing the job I committed to do. Sometimes I had to find a pathway through the policies and rules of the bureaucratic system to get done what was needed to be done. Sometimes I had to go to the Provost's office and explain a situation that was unique and was not properly covered by the policies and rules. Sometimes I had to plead to have the Provost's office allocate some additional fellowship money. Other times, I had long conversations with some of you either about academic matters or life and spirituality.

Each time that one of you came to the Executive Office, I understood that there was a reason. Sometimes I could see the discomfort. I knew there was something that was not working and I had to do something. I made what was meaningful to you, meaningful to me. To the best of my ability I did what needed to be done to clear the way. I never thought that what I was doing was anything special, anything that touched you the way you told me at the party and wrote about in the big party card.

You are right. I did care and I never realized how much until I walked into that room where you were all waiting to surprise me. I saw that you cared. Then I understood how much I cared.

What you did on Wednesday, May 1, 2019 touched me. And I am truly humbled. Thankyou so much.

May God bless each of you.

Sincerely,
Robert M. Haralick