

Pace Professor Honored by ArtsWestchester for Documentary Class

A Pace University professor who has traveled the world creating award-winning documentary films with her students has been honored by ArtsWestchester for her work teaching filmmaking in a unique, hands-on program at Pace.

Maria Luskay, a professor and program director of Master of Arts in Media and Communication Arts, was presented with the Sophia Abeles Education Award at the annual Arts Awards Luncheon on Apr. 11 at the Westchester Hilton in Rye Brook. She was one of seven artists honored at the event.

"What makes Pace University special is that we make sure our students get real-world experience alongside academic instruction," said Pace President Marvin Krislov. "Dr. Luskay's Producing the Documentary class is a fantastic example of that. Her students spend a semester as professional filmmakers, producing world-class documentaries. It's been a transformative experience for so many aspiring filmmakers, and both her students and I are deep grateful to Dr. Luskay for (her) vision and dedication."

"Mahalo," said Luskay as she accepted



Pace Professor Maria Luskay with university President Marvin Krislov after Luskay was recognized by ArtsWestchester for her documentary filmmaking class.

the award. "I say Mahalo because I just got back from spending a week with 20 of my students in Hawaii, telling the story of the people of the big island and the Kilauea eruption. I truly know what I am thankful for. Thank you to ArtsWestchester for this honor."

Each year, students in the Producing the Documentary class choose an environmentally and culturally relevant subject and travel to various parts of the world to create a documentary film. Students conduct interviews, film, edit and produce the documentaries under Luskay's guidance.

Her class recently returned from Hilo, Hawaii where 20 students and two staff members chronicled the effects the Kilauea volcano eruption and how the volcano has shaped the lives of the island's people for generations. The latest documentary will premiere at the Jacob Burns Film Center on May 7.

Students from the class have produced award-winning documentaries in locations across the world, including Cuba, Brazil, Costa Rica, Portugal, The Netherlands and Curacao. Last year, they documented the effects of Hurricane Maria on Puerto Rico. These films have been recognized and featured on WABC, as well as various newspaper and television news outlets.

Luskay, is a Pace alumnus and has been teaching at the university for more than 25 years.