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Voices of the "realigned"

This issue of the *LFU News* presents the first in a series of articles honoring the contributions of faculty members who have been affected by the "realignment" that was announced in a faculty meeting on March 5 of this year. The announcement of this faculty restructuring — which affected ninety-two faculty members, according to administration count — came just weeks after the faculty voted by overwhelming majority to form a union on January 20. The LFU has steadfastly demanded that the administration rescind the letters that were sent to individual faculty members shortly after the March 5 meeting.

The LFU welcomes comments [here](#) from anyone who feels concerned by the faculty "realignments". Affected faculty who would like to present their stories in future issues of the LFU News are encouraged to contact [Deborah Beers](#).

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News items

Email us with your news items for future issues of [LFU News](#).

Stay tuned!

Stay tuned for future editions of [LFU News](#).

Profile: Sophie Vilker



I have taught in the Longy String Department for thirty-two years. During my time on the faculty, I have taught private violin lessons and chamber music in the Conservatory and in Prep and Continuing Studies. I also conducted the Longy Chamber Orchestra, which I founded. As Chair of the String Department for eight years, I initiated the "Generations" concerts sponsored by the String Department. These concerts featured students from all the divisions of the school as well as alumni and were later copied by other departments in the school.

Over the years, I have volunteered many hours of extra time to the school in various capacities, including rehearsing and coaching performers for the "Generations" concerts, playing in at least thirty chamber recitals at the school, and serving on different committees. For example, I played an important role in the committees that helped establish the Masters degree at the school. I was also instrumental in starting the Masters degree with emphasis on string pedagogy.

Longy became my second home. I dedicated my life to the school because it was very special. One of the things that made it special was the warm relationship between the faculty and administration.

In March, without any prior explanation directed to me as an individual, I received a letter from the administration stating that my contract would not be renewed to teach next year. According to the letter, a "...merger with another institution, as well as the economic realities we continue to face, have made it necessary for us to make some difficult decisions in order to meet these challenges and prepare for the future." Students who came specifically to study with me, and whom I have been teaching for several years, will now have to find another teacher. I had been hoping and expecting to be able to guide them through their studies to finish their degrees.

—*Sophie Vilker*

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Profile: Frances Conover Fitch



I joined Longy's faculty in 1982, after studies in Europe with the distinguished harpsichordist Gustav Leonhardt. Decades of increasingly dedicated teaching followed along with performing, recording, writing about and conducting music. My work at Longy grew as I taught hundreds of students in Conservatory and Community Programs courses and lessons. The practical applications I teach in lessons and the theoretical understanding I teach in classes have informed each other over the years.

In addition to teaching at Longy, I have been committed to building its Early Music Department. From 1999 to 2010, I served as Chair of this department, recruiting faculty and students and working with faculty and students on a wide range of projects, including public performances of fully staged operas. For one year, I filled in as Acting Dean.

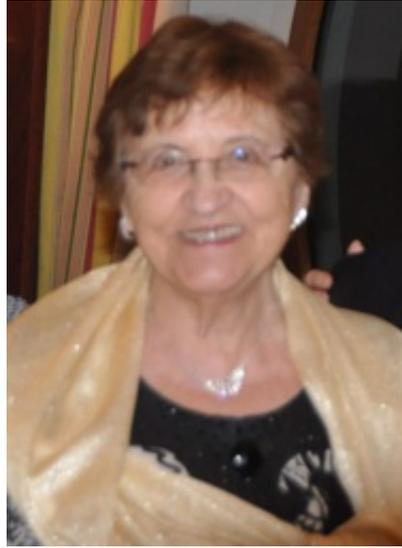
My commitment to Longy was based on my belief in the school's unique history and teaching philosophy, and I wanted to help make it the best school it could be. The gracious, humane atmosphere of the community appealed to me and I loved carrying on the tradition of Nadia Boulanger, who sang Bach and Monteverdi with her Longy students. It has been as exciting to assist a retiree to play the harpsichord beautifully at home or with other amateur musicians as it has been to mentor Masters degree students who now bring joy to thousands of people worldwide.

This past March, I learned, to my dismay, that I would not be allowed to continue teaching private organ or harpsichord students at Longy next year, and that my present students would be reassigned.

—*Frances Conover Fitch*

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Profile: Faina Bryanskya



I was hired by Victor Rosenbaum after a national search for a piano pedagogy teacher, and I have taught piano pedagogy and private piano at Longy for the past twenty-three years. I have taught lessons at the Preparatory level and in the Conservatory, and I have brought most of my private students to the school. At masterclasses, lectures, and teaching and coaching demonstrations that I have given at conferences and conventions in

Canada, Europe, Russia and all over the United States, I have always advocated for Longy and acted as an ambassador for the school.

I developed the Longy Summer Piano Pedagogy Institute by myself and have successfully conducted it for many years. People have come from all over the United States and from other countries to participate in the Institute, which allows them to obtain Piano Pedagogy Training Certificates from Longy. I have students who are still in touch with me after twenty-three years, including some who have gone on to teach successfully at Longy and other prestigious schools in New York and Boston. One of my best piano pedagogy students was this year's recipient of the Mary Ellis Smith Prize for outstanding achievement in Piano Pedagogy at Longy.

The Longy website still offers a brochure for the June 2010 Piano Pedagogy Institute with a bio referring to my skill as a "teacher of teachers". In March, though, Longy sent me a formal letter telling me that my faculty agreement is not going to be renewed next year. I cannot see any reason for this controversial action.

—*Faina Bryanskya*

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