In the department of social work, Diane Calloway-Graham can now be called professor — or her office nickname: Practicum Goddess.

In earlier days, she might have been Practicum Princess or Practicum Belle, but with the announcement that she has been named a full professor, Calloway-Graham has earned that distinctive badge, said Derrik Tollefson, director of the department of sociology, social work and anthropology.

Joseph Ward, dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, echoed Tollefson’s description during a recent celebration that marked Calloway-Graham’s promotion to professor. At the Inaugural Lecture featuring Galloway-Graham, a circle of her former students was in the audience to hear words they already knew. “Teaching changes lives forever.”

Calloway-Graham acknowledged the fruits of her career. “I have the privilege to say,” she said, “that many of my former students are now my colleagues and lead social service agencies in our community.”

During the gathering at the home of USU President Stan Albrecht, Provost Noelle E. Cockett explained that “the Inaugural Lecture in a time-honored tradition to recognize people who have achieved the pinnacle of professorial rank.”

Calloway-Graham told the gathering that her solid footing in education sprang from the solid footing of her youth in a home that was “very oriented towards education.” Born in Logan and raised in Ogden, she often visited her grandmother in Logan, looking up toward Old Main and remembering her kin who taught at USU. But it was during a high-school field trip in Evanston, Wyo., to a hospital for the mentally ill that her heart set on teaching and compassion.

“The experience,” she said, “touched me in a way that set me on a course … to become a social worker.”

From there, Calloway-Graham, a self-described “doer,” stopped for nothing. (Indeed, she takes her motto from the Star Trek captains’ command: “Make it so.”) Calloway-Graham worked as director of services for the American Red Cross, a faculty member at Weber State University and as a therapist before joining USU in 1990 as a tenure-track assistant professor and practicum director.

She remembers ruefully those early first weeks at USU during the fledgling scanty period of the now-robust social work program, wondering “why social work was located in this strange building, Animal Science.”

She learned quickly, however, despite little job description or direction.

“No one trains or educates you initially on how to be an effective teacher or practicum director,” she said. “You just grow into that job and create your own direction and path based on social work practices, experiences, the shared experiences of others and essential guidelines to try to make sense of it all.”

Since her arrival in 1990, the social work department that utilized four faculty members in an undergraduate program has grown to a faculty of 12 and a master’s program.

Now based in Old Main, Calloway-Graham has over the years created and advanced social work education. She believes that “effective teachers possess the capacity for connectedness with their students and choose methods
that encourage students to become involved in their own learning.”

Her primary responsibility as a teacher, she said, is to “prepare students for field education in the classroom setting, and then integrate theory and experience during field education.” As program practicum director, she orchestrates the overall learning experience.

Her regular scholarship and undertakings include teaching courses, administering field practicum, developing curriculum, advising and mentoring students, mentoring field education faculty, providing professional and university service, and presenting and publishing on a national level.

Among her recent publications is an article published in the national, peer-reviewed Journal of Technology in Human Services on technology-based courses and collaborative learning in distance education. Her awards accumulation is long and include the 2015 award as teacher of the year for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. She’s also been named as a finalist for university teacher of the year and as social work educator of the year from the National Association of Social Workers.

Besides her many students who have gone on to successful careers in social work, Calloway-Graham views as her greatest contribution to the profession her involvement with the Western Social Science Association. A lively participant since 1991 of this organization that advances professional exchange across all social sciences disciplines, she has served as president and a member of the executive council and is currently chair of the social work section.

Calloway-Graham began and ended her presentation with the words of poet T.S. Eliot: “We shall not cease from exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.”

This passage “expresses the essence of who I am,” she said. “Although I have now reached the top rank of my promotion process, there is still much to do. Our life journey never ends.”

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