

'Twas the night after finals

December 08, 2022 1:30 PM Alicia Jasmin
ajasmin@tulane.edu



As the fall semester draws to a close each year, one Tulane School of Professional Advancement (SoPA) faculty member turns to her plume to author poems of cheer to the academic advisors, faculty and staff who work tirelessly in support of students at Tulane SoPA.

Robyn Ice, program director for two of SoPA's degree programs—General Legal Studies and its new Business and Leadership Studies program—has penned holiday poems annually since 2016.

“My poems are based on some of the wackiest experiences of the advisors and program directors during the previous year,” said Ice. “Since we had no parties in 2020 or 2021, those poems are recaps and observations of events from the year.”

While Ice’s “plume” is actually a keyboard, her work has become a highly anticipated addition to the annual Tulane SoPA faculty and staff holiday party, where Ice’s eloquent words of wisdom and advice are read aloud.

In 2020, Ice wrote to the SoPA team through her fifth annual poem, “The world is cold, but we stand by, making sure their dreams don’t die” — a sentiment that she says serves as confirmation to all that their work is necessary and appreciated.

Until now, Ice has kept her poems close, only sharing with co-workers. As part of her own tradition, she says she incorporates clues to her gift given during the popular “Dirty Santa” game, wherein gifts are traded among players with the option to “steal” more desirable gifts from others.

“I’ve always enjoyed writing essays and other prose in specific frameworks such as book reviews and out-of-office emails, especially when I worked in law firms,” said Ice. “But most were inspired by the totally random gifts I found when shopping the sale table at Marshall’s for the gift exchange.”

Today she shares *’Twas the Night After Finals*, which was written in 2017 specifically with academic advisors in mind.

’Twas the Night After Finals

’Twas two nights after finals and all through Tulane,
Many students are calling to express their great pain.

“This class was online, so I didn’t go;
Turns out I had work due, but how could I know?
Retroactive withdrawal - that’s what I need!
Can you make that happen while I beg and plead?”

"You wanted my transcript, so what's the big issue?
My grades are all here, scrawled out on this tissue."

"I dropped all my classes – an error, you see.
Will you please re-add them, right now, just for me?"

For nearly all questions, just send them to Hope.
She'll know the answers and won't need to grope.

But for that worst case, where no answer will fit,
Just open the box to this year's Self-Help Kit!

Teaching students to set goals, to work in advance,
That's the purpose of STEP ONE. Just give it a chance.
Put tape on the calendar, mark dates in blue,
Faux organization: it's all up to you.

If Step One is a failure, despite what you do,
Try relaxed Psychotherapy, à la STEP TWO.
Ask mind-numbing questions to calm down the student:
You don't need a license; just be a bit prudent.

If Freud does not fix it, no need to despair.
STEP THREE is Martinis: just shake up a pair.
The goal is advancement, though pathways may veer.
So, have a great holiday – see you next year!

—Robyn Ice, J.D., M.F.A.

In case you were wondering what Dirty Santa gift accompanied Ice's 2017 poem, it included three parts: a time management kit (calendar, colored markers and stickers); a home "Psychoanalysis Made Easy" game consisting of cards with "meaningful" questions and answers and lastly, a cocktail shaker.



Robyn Ice, program director for two of SoPA's degree programs—General Legal Studies and Business and Leadership Studies—has penned holiday poems annually since 2016.