



Touro College

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FOR RELEASE

**TOURO PROFESSOR HONORED BY HEALTHRIGHT INTERNATIONAL
FOR VOLUNTEER WORK WITH TORTURE VICTIMS SEEKING ASYLUM**

New York, N.Y. January 31, 2011— HealthRight International recently honored Dr. Steven A. Luel, associate professor of education and psychology at Touro College, for his outstanding volunteer work at its Human Rights Clinic. Dr. Luel conducts psychological evaluations of torture victims seeking political asylum in the United States and prepares affidavits that are used as expert testimony in federal immigration courts.

The announcement was made in concert with HealthRight International’s dedication of December 2010 as “Volunteer Appreciation Month,” and in recognition of more than 30 Human Rights Clinic (HRC) volunteers throughout the U. S. Dr. Luel was profiled by HealthRight International in its blog, *Field Notes*: <http://blog.healthright.org/?p=617>, and was also featured in the organization’s newsletter. HealthRight International is a global health and human rights organization working to build lasting access to health for excluded communities, with a particular focus and expertise on care and support for survivors of human rights violations.

Dr. Luel’s testimony on behalf of victims of torture often prevents someone from being returned against their will to his or her country of origin where he or she would be further persecuted or even killed. He has evaluated individuals seeking asylum from China, several African nations, and the former Soviet Union, among others. He has also counseled Holocaust survivors, 9-11 widows and workers, and survivors of severe abuse and/or rape.

A faculty member at Touro College for 30 years, Dr. Luel incorporates his experience in studying and treating severe trauma into his courses at both the Lander College for Women/The Anna Ruth and Mark Hasten School and the Lander College of Arts and Sciences – Flatbush. Among other courses, he teaches Psychosocial Foundations of Growth Development and Learning, and Advanced Topics in Psychology, such as Psychology of the Holocaust and Terrorism, and Anxiety Disorders. He also provides instruction on the identification of suicide-prone and violent-prone individuals.

“Nothing in life prepares one for something like Virginia Tech or the recent shootings in Tucson,” Dr. Luel said, referring to the shootings at a Tucson strip mall, where 19 people were injured or killed, including Arizona Representative Gabrielle Giffords. “It’s a tragic and violent

end to someone's life and the bereavement and healing process following such an event is a slow one, affecting not only the victims, but family members as well as witnesses and bystanders."

Dr. Luel said he is proud of the work he has done with HealthRight International, which he said has one of the highest rates of success in assisting clients in obtaining asylum in the nation, with over 85 per cent of its clients being allowed to remain in the U.S. and rebuild their lives.

"It's very involved and time-intensive work, as we have to prove that those seeking asylum meet international standards for post-traumatic stress syndrome and depression." He added that his patients are also examined by medical doctors for physical injuries.

Dr. Luel said his inspiration to help survivors of torture and persecution stems from being the son of Holocaust survivors. "As the son of survivors, I have always been attuned to the suffering of the defenseless and anyone at the mercy of cruel and inhumane oppressors," Luel said. "In my work with trauma survivors, I intervene and try to reduce another's pain and the sense of being unheard and invisible."

He said he realizes that his evaluation may well make a major difference in a patient's life. "Knowing this underscores the sacred nature and great privilege of my work," he added.

Touro College's Lander College for Women/The Anna Ruth and Mark Hasten School is a student-centered institution where Jewish women follow a rigorous academic program while continuing and deepening their Torah education and commitment. The Judaic Studies and general academic curricula aim to enrich the student's general knowledge, to develop her leadership skills and to prepare her to enter her chosen field of interest. The school has helped women reach their fullest potential in a caring and challenging environment since 1974.

The Lander College of Arts and Sciences - Flatbush, with separate divisions for men and women, is located at Avenue J and East 16th Street in the Midwood section of Brooklyn. More than 1,000 students in separate men's and women's divisions are enrolled each semester at the Flatbush campus, which encompasses more than 90,000 square feet and was inaugurated in the spring of 1995. Students are pursuing studies in more than 20 different majors, pre-professional, and professional fields."

Touro is a system of Jewish-sponsored non-profit institutions of higher and professional education. Touro College was established in 1971 primarily to enrich the Jewish heritage, and to serve the larger American community. More than 18,000 students are currently enrolled in its various schools and divisions. Touro College has branch campuses, locations and instructional sites in the New York area, as well as branch campuses and programs in Berlin, Jerusalem, Moscow, Paris, and Florida. Touro University California and its Nevada branch campus, as well as Touro College Los Angeles, are separately accredited institutions governed in common by the same Board of Trustees as Touro College. For further information on Touro College, please go to: <http://www.touro.edu/media/>.

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Photo Courtesy: HealthRight International

HealthRight International recently honored Dr. Steven A. Luel, associate professor of education and psychology at Touro College, for his outstanding volunteer work at its Human Rights Clinic. Dr. Luel has been a Touro faculty member for three decades, bringing his professional expertise into the classroom.