International students reflect on first semester

Narayan Núñez Blandón - Staff Writer

“As an institution of higher education committed to the Reformed Christian perspective, Dordt College equips students, alumni, and the broader community to work effectively toward Christ-centered renewal in all aspects of contemporary life.” – Dordt College mission statement

During their first semester at Dordt College, many international students start the process of culture assimilation by facing culture shock and learning valuable lessons from it. As they prepare for their second semester in college, they look back to the influencing culture at Dordt College.

Before attending Dordt College, many international freshmen weren’t exposed to the Reformed Christian thought. In fact, Dordt College is the first Reformed institution that many international students have ever attended. While some freshmen have found the Reformed thought enlightening and have integrated or adapted the Reformed worldview to theirs, other still find it challenging to adapt to.

For Stephanie Cho, a one-year exchange student from South Korea, coming to Dordt College broadened her mind academically. Cho says that the education system at Dordt has impacted her because in South Korea, students are normally not encouraged to give their opinion about a topic that the professor is lecturing on, as it is at Dordt.

“I am not used to giving my opinion, so that is what made it difficult (for me),” said Cho. “When professors ask questions, the students (here) give away their opinions whereas I try to find the correct answer: the answer the professor is looking for.”

Dordt College has not only impacted Cho in the academics, but it has also impacted Cho in her spiritual life. Cho says that despite the fact that Dordt College is in a rural location and that Christians in Sioux Center tend to be quieter, Dordt College has a well-formed devotional programs and activities for its students.

“The location is awful, but due to the interesting programs, we can enjoy the campus,” said Cho. “With this time at Dordt, I am giving myself the time to think about my future and life. Dordt is as meaningful to me as (my university at home).”

Similarly to Cho, other international students have also been impacted by Dordt College, but still find it difficult to fully cope with the Reformed thought. Such is the case of Chibundo Onyia, a Nigerian freshman, biology major and soccer player.

“It is different than what is normal (for me). I am not used to it. I feel it is too structured,” Onyia said.

Onyia says that the reason he still finds it hard to adapt to the Reformed thought of Dordt College is because of the way he was raised at his home country. He said that in his school for Scandal, won a regional award. Five costumes from the show were featured in the costume parade on the main-stage theatre for an audience of more than 1,000 people.

Ludens, who participated in the costume parade, wore a huge orange dress that belonged to the character of “Mrs. Candour” who was played by Carolyn Van der Aa this past fall.

“It's a big deal for a designer's work to be presented at the festival,” Ludens said. “Only 12 sets of costumes are chosen in our five state region. It's an honor to take part

Men's basketball has a top-five national ranking and sits first in the GPAC. Contributed Photo

Douma exceeds goals

Sam Ekstrom - Staff Writer

When Ross Douma accepted the position of Dordt men's basketball coach, the goals presented were simple.

"Be very competitive in the GPAC and creep back into the national scene," Douma was told by then-athletic director Rick Vander Berg.

Five years later, the demands have been met—and exceeded.

The Defenders have won 10 or more conference games in each of Douma’s five years. They’ve appeared in three consecutive GPAC Championships and two straight national tournament Elite Eights.

But the biggest accomplishment isn't something that can be quantified in numbers. Dordt College has built a winning culture that has the program squarely on the NAIA's radar.

The credit can be assigned to several sources—Douma, of course, being a prominent one. The fifth-year head coach has developed a mantra that demands the most out of his players.

"It's important for us to be as good as we can be, and we try to push our players to that level," Douma said. "I am not used to giving my opinion, so that is what made it difficult (for me)," said Cho. "When professors ask questions, the students (here) give away their opinions whereas I try to find the correct answer: the answer the professor is looking for."

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Theatre experiences

Haley Mulder - Staff Writer

"It’s like America’s Next Top Model for theatre kids," junior Megan Ludens said. Elaborate gowns, feathery birds and dirty pirates along with many more award winning costumes from colleges and universities all over the mid-west participated in the parade on the final night of the American College Theatre Festival (ACTF), which ran from Jan. 20-24 in Lincoln, Neb.

Dordt's costumes, designed by Sue Blom for the fall production of The School for Scandal, won a regional award. Five costumes from the show were featured in the costume parade on the main-stage theatre for an audience of more than 1,000 people.

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Basketball success

The electric atmosphere coupled with the team’s success became a huge selling point during recruiting—something at which Douma excels.

"Coach Douma is a natural recruiter," said Bouma. "He has an ability to connect with prospective student athletes and their parents and interest them enough to make a campus visit."

It is a common practice for recruits to come watch a game in person during the recruitment process. For any high school student, the energy within the DeWitt Gymnasium may often seal the deal on their college choice.

"What basketball player doesn't want to come and play in front of a full gym and an action gym?" said Byker. "That's a no-brainer."

There was some question heading into this season about how Dordt would fare after losing the standouts that came from Douma's first recruiting class. However, the impact of last year's seniors created "long-lasting ripple effects" that have endured onto this year's team.

The current group is enjoying a top-five national ranking and sits first in the GPAC, benefiting from the seeds that were sown with the previous generation.

"We have a new group of seniors in Austin [Kate] and Kyle [Lindberg] who were able to witness those things, but they don't want it to end either," said Bouma. "They feel a sense of pride in terms of continuing the tradition."

Five years into the job, Douma has successfully built a program based on "the relentless pursuit of excellence." And for the third straight season, Dordt fans get to call their team a contender.

Transfers welcomed

Rachel Mulder - Staff Writer

At the beginning of each spring semester, Dordt welcomes transfers, returning students, and new freshmen. Since 2010, the number of transfer students who enroll at Dordt College has steadily increased. That trend is expected to continue each year.

"This spring we had 17 transfers, 13 returning students (those that left Dordt for at least one semester), 6 new freshmen and 4 international students of which one was a transfer," said Tom Van Den Bos, Associate Director of Admissions at Dordt College.

Each fall Dordt College enrolls approximately fifty transfer students. About thirty percent of these students had looked into Dordt as a potential school but ended up enrolling at a different institution.

Sixty percent of transfer students make up the five main majors—Business Administration, Agriculture, Education, Nursing, and Engineering. Only twenty-eight percent transfer from community college.

According to Van Den Bos, very few transfers enroll because of athletic recruitment. Many either know about Dordt from a friend who attends or are recommended by Dordt alumni who enjoyed their experience here.

"Dordt College faculty and student sell the college. Transfers sense the intentional Christ-centered community here and have heard about our academic excellence. In admissions, we just need to guide them through the process better than other colleges they are considering," said Van Den Bos.

The goal of the Dordt College Admissions Office is to respond to an inquiry the same day they receive a one about Dordt.

"Along with providing them with the necessary information needed to transfer, we strongly encourage a campus visit if they have not previously done so. We also connect them to the registrar's office and often a professor and financial aid experts on campus," said Van Den Bos.

Drissell pursues new art endeavor

Eric Rowe - Staff Writer

It stands at 5 feet 5 inches and is waiting to be transformed in the sculpture room of the Art Department. It spent a life dispensing edible goodies. It's not another piece of artwork for Dordt's campus, but rather a unique showcase for work created by students. It's a vending machine that dispenses art instead of snacks.

"It's a fun way to make their work a part of someone else's life," said art professor, Matt Drissell.

Professors Drissell, Neal DeBoo and Walker Cougroupe transported the art vending machine to Dordt, and it is in transition while it's modified for its new calling. Drissell plans to get the machine running and filled with artwork for sale by spring break.

The machine contains 19 slots that range from Snickers to Doritos size. The art can be priced at anywhere from a penny to $99.99.

Drissell is hoping to get his art students involved in filling the machine at first, but it may be possible to set up a way for the student body to submit work in the future.

"It's not limited to artwork," Drissell said. "Anything goes as long as it fits in the machine."

The art vending machine will catch on and encourage more creative endeavors remains to be seen.

"That would be too cool," senior Tanner Brasser said when he heard the eventual project of recycling cigarette machines into art dispensers. He hadn't seen one in person until he visited Wheat's Field food co-op in Ames, Iowa, last April.

"I thought why not?" Drissell said. "Why can't we have that here?"

Drissell applied for Dordt's creativity and innovation grant and was given the go-ahead to buy a machine. It was tricky to find a vending machine online but after months of waiting, Drissell was able to win the bid at an online auction and came in just under budget.

One of the goals of ideas like the art vending machine is to encourage the spirit of creativity on Dordt's campus, Drissel said. To get students to ask the question, "What does it take to make this place their own?"

Whether the art vending machine will catch on and encourage more creative endeavors remains to be seen.

"That would be too cool," senior Tanner Brasser said when he heard the eventual purpose of the vending machine. "I would buy something from it!"

The art department is still looking for a snazzy name for the machine and suggestions are welcome.

Actors recognized

After auditioning for the Irene Ryan Scholarship, the nominees got personal feedback from the judges.

"It's refreshing to be around so many people who share the same passions as I do," junior Irene Ryan nominee Jerusha Pimentel said.

Students attended theatrical workshops including, acting, lighting design, technical theatre, makeup/costume design and more.

Junior technical theatre major Jessica McCarthy had the opportunity to stage-manage the Irene Ryan Acting Finals on the festival's main-stage theatre Friday evening.

"It's a great experience to be able to learn from such seasoned professionals in the business that I'm interested in," McCarthy said. "I loved being able to work in a different setting with different dynamics at a high performance level."
Making a difference in Tanzania

Lauren Kleyer - Staff Writer

The hand-washed hospital bed sheets, which are normally supposed to be sanitary, are set to dry on the line in the sun. Exposure to wind, dust, and bugs is not something that the staff is concerned with. This is how things are run at Machame Hospital in Machame, Tanzania. This is also where Dr. Steve Meyer, an orthopedic surgeon and founder of STEMM, chooses to do his work.

Back in June of 1996, Dr. Meyer and his wife, Dana, felt God calling them to Tanzania. They followed that call, not knowing how things would shape up or what exactly they would end up doing, but knowing that Tanzania was where God wanted them. They ended up with STEMM.

Stouwland Tanzania Educational Medical Mission (STEMM) is using amazing things for the people of Tanzania. Today, they run an orphanage that houses 11 children, they have full-time Tanzanian employees that get paid well, and they are able to minister to countless people.

Dr. Meyer flies himself and his family out to the STEMM orphanage, also referred to as the STEMM Children's Village (SCV), for about one month each year. During this time, Dr. Meyer is able to perform many orthopedic surgeries for free for local people. His wife and their three children are able to help out with the orphan children, as well as completing any projects that need to be done at the SCV.

I had the opportunity to go to Tanzania with AMOR over Christmas break, along with eight other students, Venn Erickhoff, and Professor Volkers, also known as my dad. We were able to spend about a week at the SCV. While there, we had the chance to visit Machame Hospital and see where Dr. Meyer does his free surgeries for the people of Tanzania. The conditions that they work under would seem atrocious to us here in the States, but the sad truth is that most hospitals in East Africa are in worse condition than the ones that we were able to visit while we were there.

“Rooms were filled with rows of beds piled nearly on top of each other, and there weren’t curtains in between beds for privacy. The hallways were lined with hospital beds, visiting families, and soiled bed pans. ” - Lauren Kleyer

One hospital we visited, Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Center (KCMC), was full beyond capacity—rooms were filled with rows of beds piled nearly on top of each other, and there weren’t curtains in between beds for privacy. The hallways were lined with hospital beds, visiting families, and soiled bed pans. Even under these conditions, it is apparent that the staff has a heart of gold and does what it can for so many who need so much. The Director of Orthopedic Surgery with eight other students, Venn Erickhoff, and Professor Volkers, also known as my dad. We were able to spend about a week at the SCV. While there, we had the chance to visit Machame Hospital and see where Dr. Meyer does his free surgeries for the people of Tanzania. The conditions that they work under would seem atrocious to us here in the States, but the sad truth is that most hospitals in East Africa are in worse condition than the ones that we were able to visit while we were there.

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Tintle. Why was this style chosen instead of a traditional classroom setting for STATSA 131? Hybrid classes allow professors to take advantage of the resources and technology a campus offers, while giving students more options to engage with course material in a broader range of learning styles, said Tintle. “The reality is that in the 21st Century, access to information is nearly instantaneous, but the standard pedagogical approach is still lecture, which can tend to focus on what he/she reads, and I react to every reaction. That, of course, doesn’t happen in an ordinary CORE 180 class.”

As technology advances, so do class styles. “We can look up facts instantaneously, so no longer is a lecture-based teaching approach appropriate, if the singular goal is knowledge transfer.”

Community and a person-to-person learning community will never go out of style. “We are doing a serious disservice to students if all we want you to do is to hear what we say and regurgitate it back to us,” said Tintle. “There are great ways to keep building community,” said Zuidema. “And our professors have so much experience. What we’re aiming for in all our classes is something you wouldn’t want to miss for anything—in person and online,” said Zuidema.

One familiar class that is now being offered online? Do students in an online class have the same amount of work and accountability as students in an “in-person” class? Are there ghosts of students technically enrolled in CORE 180 under retired professor Professors have so much experience. What we’re aiming for in all our classes is something you wouldn’t want to miss for anything—in person and online,” said Zuidema.

Dordt College fulfills its mission of equipping individuals with values that are essential to the development of a Christian life. Regardless of the different Christian backgrounds and traditions, Dordt College creates a positive impact on students that broaden their vision and challenge their thinking.

Online courses bring both advantages and struggles

Hannah DeVries - Staff Writer

What does it mean for a college class to be offered online? Do students in an online class have the same amount of work and accountability as students in an “in-person” class? Are there ghosts of students technically enrolled at Dordt that don’t actually exist on campus?

Yes and no. Dordt offers several online classes, including Nutrition, E-Marketing in the fall, and Graduate Education courses. Seven high school students are currently enrolled in CORE 180 under retired professor Jim Schaap.

One familiar class that is now being offered in an unfamiliar format is STATSA 131: Elementary Statistics. It is not technically an online class, it is a “hybrid” or “flipped classroom model,” said statistics professor Nathan Tintle.

The class is made up of several different components: required videos and/or readings, optional drop-in help sessions with instructors or TAs for help with homework, and in-class quizzes and tests. “This format uses a mix of online and in-person resources to allow students flexibility in how they engage course material,” said associate provost Leah Zuidema. “But they may need to block out more time, and realize that it is going to be collaborative work.”

Community is another area that is both a struggle and a success in such a class. “Not being able to see students drove me crazy, just crazy,” said Schaap. But not all was lost behind the computer screen. “Online teaching does provide an opportunity for a teacher and a student to have far more personal communication,” Schaap said. “Every student has to react to what he/she reads, and I react to every reaction. That, of course, doesn’t happen in an ordinary CORE 180 class.”

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high school, students are encouraged to form their own beliefs about God and life whereas in Dordt College the beliefs are taught to the students through the writings of the Reformed theologians. Whether he gets used to the Reformed thought or not, Onya says he likes the community at Dordt College and that he has felt welcomed and accepted. He agrees that Dordt equips students with good values for life and right mindsets even though he has not gotten used to the way the values are imparted. Just like Cho or Onya, many international students have been enlightened and challenged by Dordt College, not just culturally or academically, but also spiritually. Dordt College fulfills its mission of equipping individuals with values that are essential to the development of a Christian life. Regardless of the different Christian backgrounds and traditions, Dordt College creates a positive impact on students that broaden their vision and challenge their thinking.
AMOR built relationships, served communities

Rachel Mulder - Staff Writer

AMOR teams returned safely back to Dordt before the start of the new semester on Tuesday, January 14 after traveling to Ethiopia, Jamaica, Haiti, Tanzania and Liberia to do mission work. “We had very few traveling glitches,” said communications professor, Bruce Kuiper, who went as a leader to Jamaica. “We interacted with a lot of people in different areas of Jamaica, we contributed to the work of the orphanage, we had no major injuries, and we experienced God’s world in a new way. A great trip by all accounts.”

The Ethiopia team worked with the organization Ethiopia Reads, which focuses on literacy in education, specifically for kids who are three to five years old. “We spent Monday with two schools doing art work and just coloring and interacting with the kids. It was a great experience and God really opened my eyes to the amazing work He is doing in Ethiopia,” sophomore Lindsey Pierson.

In Jamaica, the team worked with Caribbean Lifetime Missions and spent much of their time building relationships with the Jamaican people. They visited two orphanages, a hospital and infirmary, and also led VBS. “This meant we didn’t necessarily have as much to ‘show’ for our time, but it also meant we had many more opportunities to interact with people and get a glimpse of how our Jamaican brothers and sisters live,” said Kuiper. “By visiting orphanages, hospitals, churches, and other institutions, we saw firsthand the needs of Jamaica as well as the faithful service of those who worked there. The trip was a blessing in many ways, and I think we all had renewed vision for our own service in the world.”

The team in Haiti worked with the orphanage and clinic at Children of the Promise (CoP) and led Vacation Bible School, helped with physical therapy for special needs orphans, and did a variety of construction and clean-up work around the organization’s campus. “We also spent time reflecting, walking through rural villages, giving blood at the local hospital, leading musical worship for the CoP community, enjoying a Haitian food, playing soccer with youth of the local village, and spending quality time getting to know our hosts. God’s faithfulness was ever present and apparent on our trips,” said biology professor Robbins Eppinga.

Those who went to Tanzania worked with Stouxlund Tanzania Educational Medical Ministries (STEMM) and helped with the orphanage, painted, and filmed some interviews and at hospitals, schools, people’s homes, and a worship service. “Our group left home as team members and came back as friends. We were all able to do something that was in our fields of interest. ‘To be exposed to such a different way of life was a real eye opener to all the things we take for granted. It was a great experience we won’t soon forget,’” said Vern Ekhoff, Tanzania leader.

The Liberia team, despite hectic travel issues, made it to the organization One Body One Hope and were able to accomplish most of the things they were hoping to. “We helped teach at the school, built a swing set, and saw the work that God is doing over in Liberia. The church, Abide in the Vine Disciple Church, was very welcoming and pleased we could be there to see what was going on. God’s work was visible there,” said junior Austin Lindemulder.

A large goal for short-term mission trips is to build relationships with the people in those places and communities. Many students and leaders found that to be true. “We had things we wanted to accomplish but we had the attitude that these things would get done on God’s time. Our main focus was to build relationships and learn about God from Liberians and the Liberian culture,” said senior John Van Weelden.

Many groups came back feeling more blessed than they could have imagined. “The organization was so thankful that we spent our time and energy helping them develop their organization to better serve the people in Ethiopia. We went there for a service project, but I think they served us better than we did them,” said Pierson.

These trips were a blessing to all who participated and everyone came back with new friendships and memories that will last a lifetime.

Jazz band and orchestra improved through tour

Lauren Bird - Staff Writer

Over Christmas break, Dordt College’s jazz band and orchestra went on tour to several cities in Minnesota and Wisconsin, including Edgerton, Prinsburg, Waupun, Oostburg, and Sheboygan.

The two ensembles visited assisted living homes, local schools, and churches. Students performed two to three times each day, including concerts during school assemblies during the day and evening performances at churches. Yuri Henriques, the current band and orchestra director at Dordt, accompanied the students on this tour.

“I think the schools were very excited to have us there,” said Henriques. “When we went to the assisted living homes, it was neat to see the students interacting with the residents. I think our music touched them and brought them alive.”

Since the students presented their repertoire many times in one day, they became very familiar with the music they were playing. “We got into a routine of playing every day,” said Henriques. “The students kept getting better and better with each performance. When you get to play that much, everything tightens up a lot.”

Kristen Raroyo, a member of the jazz band, also felt that playing multiple times each day was beneficial for the groups. “I learned how much playing three times a day really can add so much to each performance both individually and as a band,” said Raroyo.

“Past years, the concert band is the group that goes on tour. This year, since it was only the jazz band and orchestra, the group was much smaller than usual. A normal tour usually takes up two buses, but since we’re a smaller group, we could take one bus,” said Henriques. “This created an interesting dynamic in the group, and since there were only 36 of us, we all got to know each other very well.”

The group had time to enjoy themselves and to have fun on their tour while bonding together. “My favorite memory was definitely the version of the TV show Chopped we played on the bus,” said Raroyo. “The members had to create a meal with various food items and come up with a creative presentation which was quite hilarious!”

The two groups returned to Sioux Center on the evening of January 13. They performed in a concert at Dordt on Friday, January 17. Their tour officially ended with a recording session the next day. “Our concert put a cap on the tour,” said Henriques. “I think the students learned to not just perform, but to enjoy the experience.”

Jazz band performed multiple concerts over Christmas break. Photo by Dan Woudenberg

Jordan Shaffer went to Tanzania to work with STEMM over Christmas break. Photo by Shelby Herrema
Jeremey Jabber

First off, welcome back! I hope your break was as good as mine was, and that Santa didn’t leave you with too many X-mas hangovers or whatever. To the transfer students, I hope Dordt is everything you’ve ever dreamed of, or that’s just me being either way. Sure, it’s cold right now, but that’s because it’s winter, and you knew it was coming. Despite the weather, I’m sure this semester will be as great as any.

Now, down to business. Just before Christm-as break, as a story in this issue indicates, a car was pulled out of a pond in the near-by town of Alton. This car happened to be a Dordt Campus Security car from the late 1990’s. Apparently the car was stolen and at some point was driven into the pond. (No one was hurt.) This story surprised me because it sounds like something that would happen at a college in the movies or on TV, not in real life. It all seemed too crazy to be true.

What equally surprised me was my next thought, “Are we boring?” I wanted to say no. When I thought about it, though, I was disappoint-ed, and a little offended to discover that, yes, at times, life outside of class here can be a little boring. We don’t have the crazy frat par-ties, the intense freshman initiation tradition, the hacky sack clubs, or even the protests and demonstra-tions of those colleges in the mov-ies. Granted, life isn’t a movie, and I get that. Sometimes I just wish that life here was a little more wild than playing Settlers of Cana-van-every night or going to Wal-Mart just because there’s nothing else to do.

If we are boring, I guess the next question to ask would be, “Why?” Well, I’m sure that there are many things that contribute to our lack of movie-level excitement including, but not limited to, our distance from a major cen-ter, the size of the town we live in, the size of our campus, the fact that it gets cold outside, and the fact that so many people here are ei-ther cousins or have gone to school together since they were 5. Would I be outside of my rights to ask if perhaps another reason for the lack of movie-level excitement around here is the fact that it is a Christian campus? I guess some would argue that a lack of certain mov-ie habits and shenanigans is a good thing.

So how do we become more exciting? I believe that becoming more exciting simply starts with not being complacent and willing to sit around every night and do homework or play video games, especially on the week-end. If you find yourself getting bored, just go do something. Don’t rely on something just “coming up” because it rarely does. Instead, make something happen; do something cra-zy; simply because it’s crazy. (Within a certain level of course, reason 1. I guess. Crimes are discour-aged.)

Dordt students are familiar with Defender Dollars. We use them almost every day to eat lunch at the Grille or pick up a snack at 55th Avenue.

Some view these dollars as a bonus for paying tuition, others think Dordt un-necessarily takes our money and funnels it toward certain causes. As usual, the truth lies somewhere between those extremes.

The basic purpose of Defender Dollars can be boiled down to two words: community and variety. Art Attema, head of the business department, shed light on the issue.

"Before Defender Dollars, meal plans were rigid. Defender Dollars were designed as dis-cernatory food money. Social Interaction be-came more important later on," said Attema. 55th Avenue and the Grille provide alter-native options to the common. Different types of food are available at more flexible times. These spaces are also excellent places to build community.

Our current system is not bad, but I be-lieve it could be improved. I often hear people propose different op-tions for Defender Dollars. Some want to spend their money at the bookstore, while others wish to donate their share to charity. Despite their noble heart, the problem with these suggestions is they neither build com-munity nor provide alternative food options.

I would like to suggest Defender Dollars use be expanded to local restaurants such as Pizza Ranch and Culvers. This would con-tinue to fulfill the Defender Dollar purpose. Allowing students to use this money on food around town would greatly expand our food options at times when all other options are unusable.

In addition, community is prevalent at these places. Large groups often head to Culvers for a quick concrete mixer or Pizza Ranch for a tip night. These off-campus loca-tions also provide an opportunity for some-thing Dordt students often lack: community with non-Dordt students. Rather than meet a friend at 55th, perhaps someone could meet a mentor at Pizza Ranch.

Many large universities allow students to use their meal dollars at different locations in the area. I think it makes sense for Dordt. Im-plementation should be easy as the locations would be eager for additional customers. It is also a great way for Dordt to give back to businesses that are supportive of the school.

Professor Attema, however, did not agree. "As soon as you spend money off campus, it’s not going to benefit Dordt services, clubs and the college itself."

Defender Dollars pay for many things around campus. If money flows off campus, the difference would have to be made up.

I am merely a student providing sugges-tions, but I think the value gained would be greater than the money lost. What do you think? Feel free to email your suggestions on how to improve Dordt!

Lee Ver Burg - Columnist

The other day, I was sitting in the most in-famous dating hot-spot on this campus: the library. I was with my friend Adam Vander Stoep, a buddy of mine since the high school days we do not speak of.

It was about 3 p.m. on a Friday and believe it or not, I had actually come to the library to do homework. My focus was sub-par, not to mention that fact that I had to listen to some incessant girl chatter only four tables away. I had three homework assignments to com-plete, and my progress in all three of them was less than even the “Starting to take out my books” stage.

But before I knew it, Adam and I were ac-tually doing something we enjoyed, having bro-talk. You know, that conversation where you and your buddy actually get serious and start talking about stuff that’s actually inter-esting, like girls. Ironically, we were having the type of conversation that would most like-ly be found within the confines of Covenant Hall, you know, the types of conversations two junior guys should have grown out of. If you’re waiting for a punch line to all of this, read a little bit farther…okay you are finally there.

All of this really got me thinking: exactly is the meaning of the word “home”? Is college meant to teach me some obscure calculus formula that I will probably never use (you know, since they invented something call-ed the computer)? Is college for teaching me complex finance observations that I will someday utilize to get good and rich, leading me to a path of utter destruction and despair (I-hoebis anyone)? Is the purpose of college to overwhelm me with huge, expensive text-books that talk about confusing chemistry patterns or funny little educational tips?

I came up with this simple conclusion: no. Interestingly enough, 87 percent of college graduates don’t get a job in their preferred field. So going to college with the intention of learning a bunch of stuff to be successful someday really makes you miss the point.

College is about having a final paper due the next morning and figuring out a way to get it done. College is about waking up in the morning and absolutely hating life, yet pro-ceeding to take a shower and go to your 8 a.m. Core 140 class anyways even though you know you are going to have to listen to Fessler rant on and on about Greek history. College is about flouting with that cute guy/girl and hav-ing that painfully awkward first conversation where, upon completion, you want to smash your face into a bucket of water. In essence, college is that precursor to your future…that last horizon before you have to enter the real world of daily commutes, coffee spills, and depressing office cubicles.

So please kids, don’t get too caught up in the things that matter not. Hopefully for most of us, undergraduate college happens only once…so enjoy it while you have the chance.

Darin Lammers/Kyle Dykema - Columnists

We’re back… It’s weird…

Darin: So...
Kyle: What, why are we still in this newspa-per?
Darin: Didn’t we spend all of last semester establishing that we’re terrible columnists?
Kyle: And didn’t we wrap up this column? We’re not in Los Angeles anymore.
Darin: Attitude observation.
Kyle: Why, thank you.
Darin: But seriously...what are we sup-posed to do now?
Kyle: Well...for now we could just talk about the fallout of leaving LA and how strange it all is.
Darin: I’ve heard worse ideas.
Kyle: Alright, then let’s try that.
Darin: I’m scared, you go first.
Kyle: But... Darin: But Kyle, you’re the best at it.
Kyle: D
Darin: Stop emoting and just do it already
Kyle: Fine. So the first thing you need to know about leaving Los Angeles is that it was sad. I just miss it more than anything. I miss all of the great people we met, I miss the food, the great opportunities for cool film screen-ings all of it. I don’t mean this as an insult at all, but it’s a little difficult to compare in the “things happening” depart-ment.
Darin: Yeah that’s definitely some-thing I noticed too. I think I’ll miss going to “Harmontown”, discovering new coffee shops, and going to art museums. But what I’ll miss the most is being in the “film capi-tal” of the world. It’s amazing to be in a place filled with people who are equally passionate about a certain ‘thing’ as you are, and where there’s plenty of resources available to pursue that passion.
Kyle: That’s exactly. It also, people always want to know what was the coolest thing was, or what was my favorite part. I still haven’t been able to get it perfect, and my answer probably changes every time someone asks.
Darin: But honestly what’s weirdest is that I missed Dordt when I was in L.A. I most-ly missed the people. Dordt has some pretty good looking, genuinely amazing, top-notch people.
Kyle: Except for Caleb Vanderhill.
Darin: Yeah, that guy’s an ugg.
Kyle: Maybe from now on this column could just be dedicated to reviewing and ranking the school’s bathrooms.
Darin: I recommend the bathroom in KP22.
Kyle: Interesting choice.
Darin:Alright, that’s the end. Hopefully this wasn’t another train wreck like we think it is.
Kyle: It totally was.
Darin: Time in next time for “We’re in a Bathroom, Do You Care?”
Van Dyke concludes basketball career

Sam Ekstrom - Staff Writer

Kara Van Dyke grew up watching basketball. All three of her older siblings played, so it was only naturally for the youngest Van Dyke to follow suit.

Now with only a handful of games left in her collegiate career, the Leota, Minn., native is poised to graduate with her name strewn throughout the Dordt College record book.

Van Dyke will conclude her career as a top-10 all-time scorer and a top-five all-time rebounder.

"Right now I don't think about it a whole lot," said Van Dyke. "I'm just playing the games. Down the road it might hit me more."

Van Dyke has kept a humble attitude despite her tremendous success at every level. Before her outstanding Dordt career, she set a school record with 1,428 points at Southwest Christian High School.

However, her college decision was not based on basketball.

"Dordt was a better fit for my education," said Van Dyke, a double major in sports management and business.

Choosing Dordt did have a basketball perk as well. She got to continue playing with her Southwest Christian teammate Kayla Broekhuis, currently a senior.

"I know how she likes to catch the ball, and she knows where I like to get the ball on the court," said Van Dyke. "After playing with each other for eight years, you get to know that stuff."

"We are pretty close," said Broekhuis. "Both on and off the court you can almost always find us joking around together and giving each other a hard time with our sarcastic nature."

Possibly the most rewarding aspect of Van Dyke's career has been growing close to her other teammates, namely the five other seniors: Jamie Kos, Danielle Boone, Elise Marsh, Jessica Jelsema and, of course, Broekhuis.

"We're always together, so I think that's good for chemistry," said Van Dyke. "We just have a really good time out there."

Head coach Craig Stiensma has enjoyed watching them grow together over the years.

"They really enjoy all aspects of team playing together, encouraging off the floor, having fun and just being there for each other as Christian teammates is special," said Stiensma. "They are great examples of what it means to be a great teammate."

Surrounded by a strong group of teammates, Van Dyke's scoring average has improved each season, as have many other aspects of her game. One quality she's grown in is her leadership.

"Just being an example for them and working hard," said Van Dyke. "The people above me always worked hard, so I continue to work hard every day in practice then."

"The hard work has paid off. Van Dyke is primed to score around 1,300 points and secure close to 800 rebounds."

"But it's the team camaraderie she'll miss the most when it's all over."

Van Dyke will conclude her career as a top-10 all-time scorer and a top-five all-time rebounder.

"Spending time with the team is going to be one part I miss," said Van Dyke. "Even the roadtrips, we made so many memories from them."

Dordt track and field strives to build team and make nationals

Christian Zystra - Staff Writer

The indoor track and field season has finally begun, and the upcoming season seems to be a promising one for the Dordt College Defenders.

Through the first two meets (Dordt Open and Nebraska Wesleyan Invite), the Defenders have four athletes slated to compete in the NAIA Championships come March. Lauren Opp in the 5,000-meter, Erin Francis in the 55-meter high hurdles, Tim Bierma in the 400-meter and Katie Bonnema in the 600-meter. Christy Heidema also qualified for nationals with the "B" standard in the triple jump and will now shoot for the "A" standard, which means automatic qualification.

"We're off to a really good start with our overall team performance," said Dordt head coach Craig Heynen. "Our upperclassmen have had a couple of good performances, and our four national qualifiers is about as good as we've ever done this early in the season."

"The first two events speak to the promise and potential of the team, even with many freshmen on this year's squad."

"About one-third of our team this year are freshman," Heynen said. "For them, it's all about adjustments. Many of them have run indoor events in high school, but in college it's an entire season. They just have to adjust, and I'm already seeing improvement in this talented group.""

But just how high is the potential for Dordt this season?"

"For the women, we have been in the top-three in conference the past couple seasons, but we graduated a lot of seniors, too. We could potentially be back up there with this young and talented group, but it won't be easy," Heynen said. "For the men, we have some really great seniors and a good group of freshman. The past couple years we have finished in the middle to even lower part of the conference, but we have a lot of potential this season and look to continue building that for the future."

"Of course, goal-setting is crucial for any team seeking to maximize its potential. Dordt has goals in place not only to do well in conference and have as many people make it to nationals as possible, but to build the team aspects of the sport as well."

"In a sport that is often seen as fairly individualistic, goals like that are commendable."

"We really want to be a good team," Heynen said. "Those team aspects of unity, working together and getting better are important to us."

So what events should one look out for when watching a meet? According to Coach Heynen, the relay teams have a lot of potential, and he could see many of them succeeding at conference and qualifying for nationals.

"Students' next chance to watch Dordt compete on campus is Feb. 15 in the Dordt Invite. Make sure you come on down and support your Defenders as they make their final push to qualify for conference and nationals."

Derrick Vander Waal
Senior production

Doubt will stimulate conversation

Sam DeGroot - Staff Writer

The Dordt College Theatre Department invites the Dordt community to come enjoy Nathan Sparks' Senior Production, Doubt. They have no doubt it will be an experience you will remember.

The production will open Feb. 27 and run through March 1 in the New World Theatre.

Doubt a play by John Patrick Shanley, will offer much to stimulate audiences. Although not flashy or sensational, director Nathan Sparks said it avoids the dangers that often plague sensationalized theater; that is, it is believable.

He chose to produce Doubt for his senior production for this reason. "I chose Doubt because, of all the plays I read, this was the one that felt the most real. As in, it didn't feel like I was reading something theatrical," Sparks said. "The dialogue, characters and plot all felt real, with all of these characters having something important to say about the world we live in."

Sparks is directing the play as part of his theater arts: acting and directing major. Theatre arts majors have the opportunity to equip the community to view the show. "Doubt can be an opportunity for the campus to grow together both as a community and as believers in Christ," she said.

Theatre Professor Teresa Ter Haar thinks the show offers a great opportunity for the Dordt community. "This show is a good example of our desire to connect our productions to the life of this community in more explicit ways," she said. She said plans are to surround the production with discussion and to "interrogate the production more as a campus." Ter Haar hopes these efforts will equip the community to view the show.

"We want everyone to go to the theater and feel that they have the tools to engage with it," Ter Haar said.

Poster designed by Kyle Foose

Sparks said audiences should be prepared to struggle through the themes that the characters have to deal with right alongside the actors. While it may be tempting to side with one character or another, it is more difficult in this show. "There aren't any clear-cut good or bad guys; these are real characters with both good and bad parts that show themselves," Sparks said.

Leach suggested that audiences be sure to planning on coming with open mind and heart," she said.

Sparks is excited for the opportunities the play offers for stimulating conversation and discussion on campus. He cordially invites the entire campus community to attend the show. He hopes to see you there.

For more information on the show or ways to get involved, please contact Nathan Sparks (nthnsprks@dordt.edu) or Teresa Ter Haar (teresa.terhaar@dordt.edu).

Who: Performance - Anyone looking for a well-produced, challenging show
What: Production of Doubt, Nathan Sparks’ Senior Production, under his direction
Where: New World Theatre, Dordt College
When: Performance – Feb. 28 – March 1

Doubt follows the controversy surrounding a progressive new priest. The staunch older nun who runs the local parish school thinks he may have done something very inappropriate, although he denies it. Doubt deals with themes of doubt, assumption and the tension between progressive and traditional ideas. Sparks thinks the show explores these topics in a way that will appeal to Dordt students.

"What is great is that it tackles these ideas in a way that doesn't feel preachy, which I feel Dordt students already have to deal with a lot of," he said.

He said it is a play that connects with students where they are and treats them like the thoughtful adults they are. "Dordt students don't want to be talked down to, they want to be challenged and to grow, which I feel the play does," Sparks said. "The actors take on the responsibility of leading the Dordt students to their heart," she said.

Shanley, the stage manager for the show, also thinks the show will offer Dordt an opportunity for growth.

"Doubt can be an opportunity for the campus to grow together both as a community and as believers in Christ," she said.

The theme of the show is sacrifice, and it features 20 framed intaglio prints. Today, these designs are made by scraping away at metal plates, filling these scrapes and grooves with ink, and running the plate through a press which allows the ink to be transferred to paper.

A subplot theme also lies behind the art, one of fellowship and a collaborative spirit held by the artists as they came together to create their work in one studio, said Versluis. "Either the subject matter can be very dark, there is something there we need to consider as viewers, and gain some appreciation for that kind of image making."

"The style in which the prints are made has a historical significance in itself. "Intaglio" started out as a method of engraving images or designs onto jewelry and utensils. They were later filled with ink and, even later, these designs were pressed onto paper. Today, intaglio prints are made by scraping away at metal plates, filling these scrapes and grooves with ink, and running the plate through a press which allows the ink to be transferred to paper.

The prints are creations of six members of the organization Christians in the Visual Arts who worked in close proximity in Florence, Italy. Their goal was to produce a completed portfolio in the space of only one month.

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The theme of the show is sacrifice, and while the figures that fill the paintings may be blurred and indistinct, the emotion is no less rich.
Movie review: American Hustle

Megan Kaiser - Staff Writer

I did not see one single film in a movie theatre over break. I don't know if that really puts myself under a bright light for being a digital media major, but you didn't hear it from me. Setting that aside, I did see American Hustle the week we all re-gathered here upon Dordt's studious campus, and, well, I didn't quite know what to expect.

If you haven't seen American Hustle yet, or aren't planning too, I should probably give a brief summary of how this movie goes down. Irving Rosenfeld and Sydney Prosser are two con-men (con-man and con-woman?) that end up working for FBI agent Richie DeMaso. DeMasó wants to bring down a loved political man named Carmine Polito. They get deep into the world of powerbrokers and start dealing with members of the mafia. It just sounds like a lot of trouble that could potentially make your gut ache.

There is quite a star lineup as well. Amy Adams incorporates into every single outfit that she wears. Do I also need to remind you that Jennifer Lawrence is in the film? Oh of course...NOW you want to go. I will give her this, she was funny. When is she not funny? Oh, Right. The Hunger Games. The 1970's feel simply oozed out of the screen onto the floor and I loved it. The film is pretty long, but if you've that immersed in it, you won't even notice the length. I felt the film may have been a bit shallow and some scenes were really drawn out. On the positive side, a solid bromance is formed, and Bradley Cooper has weared perm'd hair. Again, this is all my opinion, so maybe you should go see it for yourself. If none of that floats your boat, just please go to see the first scene of the film...

And Bradley Cooper's hair. You will thank me later. But probably not.

He gained 43 pounds for the role, took on a heavy jacket accent, and by-golly did a fabulous job.

In an interview with the Los Angeles Times he stated, “I discovered that I put on weight like Santa Claus. I just get this belly that kind of extends out. I still have not been able to put on jeans.” That’s a huge contrast to his film The Fighter, where he lost an extensive amount of weight for his role. Plus there’s his stature in the all of the Batman films. I almost feel bad for neglecting how much turmoil Christian Bale has endured for the sake of the film industry. Now to remind you, this film is rated R for language, sexual content, and a ridiculous amount of deep V’s that Amy Adams incorporates into every single outfit that she wears. Do I also need to remind you that Jennifer Lawrence is in the film? Oh of course...NOW you want to go. I will give her this, she was funny. When is she not funny? Oh, Right. The Hunger Games. The 1970's feel simply oozed out of the screen onto the floor and I loved it. The film is pretty long, but if you've that immersed in it, you won't even notice the length. I felt the film may have been a bit shallow and some scenes were really drawn out. On the positive side, a solid bromance is formed, and Bradley Cooper has weared perm'd hair. Again, this is all my opinion, so maybe you should go see it for yourself. If none of that floats your boat, just please go to see the first scene of the film...

And Bradley Cooper's hair. You will thank me later. But probably not.

Walk the Civil War battlefields

Eric Rose - Staff Writer

It's not a re-enactment in the sense of dress uping and firing weapons, and it's not just a tour. The second Annual Dordt College Staff Ride July 9-12 is a learning vacation in which participants physically walk the Civil War battlefields of Wilson’s Creek, Missouri and Pea Ridge, Arkansas.

"People are assigned generals and men in leadership positions,” Paul Fessler, history professor and Staff Ride leader said. You research your historical person and you are the expert when you visit the battlefield. While walking the terrain, they will share the strategies and tactics their general employed. The group will spend the entire day where the battle was fought and will ask why that person made the decisions they made.

"When walking the battlefield,” Fessler said. “You see the consequences of decisions these people make in a very concrete way.”

The staff ride was first developed by the military for their own research while at a pre-1860 era manor house, along with meals, and a battlefield guidebook so that you don’t have to do all your own research while familiarizing yourself with the role you will represent.

"The readings are designed to put you in the shoes of the battle’s leaders,” the event website said. "You’ll understand what challenged, frustrated, and motivated them.”

We would like to thank Rebekah Dykhuisen for the new banner design and Justin Pastoor for putting a lot of time and effort into our new design!