Putting Legs on Our Mission of Renewal

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About this time each spring, President Erik Hoekstra and Dr. Barb Hoekstra invite groups of graduating students into their home, and we listen as our students tell of God unfolding his plan in their lives. We offer our networks, expertise, and anything we can to meet their needs. Then, it’s our turn to learn from them as we focus on their student experience. What would they change? What should stay the same? What do they share with prospective students? What do they think Dordt College should look like in 25 years?

After homemade dessert, Erik and Barb break the ebb and flow of conversation to offer a kind of benediction to our departing graduates. Think of this as the letter your parents snuck in your backpack before you left for school. Of the ten 10 words of wisdom they offer students, number five sticks with me.

Get involved in the local community in which God calls you to live—find a church home, serve on boards, volunteer your time, build the kingdom, and bloom where you are planted.

Erik riffs on the theme as any proud parent would, commissioning Dordt students—this is how we raised you.

The Wall Street Journal’s recognition of Dordt College as no. 1 in the country for student engagement is no surprise when I think of our 18,794 alumni. This summer, we will visit regional chapters across our Defender Nation, and I am confident we will uncover a whole lot of what went into that recognition.

College rankings come and go. Is the number important? Important may not be the right word, but it does help affirm that we are responding faithfully with the gift that God has given us in Dordt College.

Still, your lives tell a story more encouraging than any ranking could. Your collective narrative puts the legs on our mission and tells a broken world a new story of Christ-centered renewal. I see renewal when Erika Hoogeveen (‘02) brings classical music into prisons, Eunice Muthengi (‘01) works to improve the lives of adolescent girls in Kenya, and Jason Kornelis (‘11) finds important stories to tell—and perform—in the Twin Cities. Thank you for living out our mission and working toward renewal where you are planted. Our graduating students cannot wait to join your ranks.

BRANDON HUISMAN (’10), DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS