

Athletic Teams Reach Scholarly Milestone

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FACULTY NOTES

In July, Instructor of Nursing **Melanie Wynja** participated in the NCLEX item development panel of subject matter experts, which was held in Chicago. Wynja was selected on the basis of her clinical specialty and nursing expertise. This summer, Wynja also earned a national certification from the Society of Simulation in Healthcare, making her a Certified Healthcare Simulation Educator.



Associate Professor of Mathematics **Dr. Tom Clark** presented "Doing Mathematics the Wright Way" at the Association of Christians in Mathematical Sciences Conference at Indiana Wesleyan University. Clark also presented "Innovative Pathways in STEM Teacher Preparation" at the Mathematical Association of America's MathFest in Cincinnati, Ohio; he co-organized a Julia Robinson Mathematics Festival as well.

This fall, Associate Professor of Mathematics **Dr. Melissa Lindsey** and Director of Online Education **Joe Bakker** are leading a faculty book discussion through *Small Teaching Online* by Flower Darby. Eighteen faculty from a variety of disciplines have chosen to participate in the discussion.

Professor of Chemistry **Dr. Carl Fictorie** published an article "I Wish—Thoughts from Science Education" in the July/August 2019 edition of *Perspectives: A Journal of Reformed Thought*. In addition, Fictorie's photography exhibit "The Lord Rejoices in His Work" was on display at the Campus Center Art Gallery September 25 – October 25.

Professor Emeritus of Engineering **Dr. Douglas De Boer** presented a paper titled "God's Grace in Weights and Measures" at the 2019 Christian Engineering Conference at Dordt in July.

For the *Journal of Markets and Morality*, Professor of Economics **Dr. Jan van Vliet** wrote a review of the book *Christian Hospitality and Muslim Immigration in an Age of Fear* by Matthew Kaemingk.

Byker: Athletic Teams Reach Scholarly Milestone

ATHLETIC TEAMS REACH SCHOLARLY MILESTONE

Being named a scholar-team by the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) is noteworthy, especially since athletic team members must maintain a cumulative 3.0 grade point average (GPA) during an academic year. Having all varsity teams named scholar-teams? Historic.

In July, the NAIA announced that, during the 2018-19 academic year, Dordt University had all 18 of its varsity teams earn the honor of scholar-teams—the first time in Dordt's history that all teams have hit the mark.

Ross Douma, Dordt's athletic director, says coaches worked alongside student-athletes to help them reach their potential by connecting to on-campus resources and tutoring opportunities.

"The academic success of our athletic teams is part of a collective campus effort to help each student have a positive academic experience," says Douma.

For the second year in a row, the Dordt University women's basketball team had the highest GPA in NAIA Division II women's basketball, with a 3.82 GPA. The football team earned the honor for the first time in school history with a 3.23 GPA, which is top among NAIA football teams. The men's volleyball team also claimed the top NAIA GPA in the nation with a 3.56.

For 10 years, the registrar's office at Dordt has tracked athlete GPAs and compared them to the student body as a whole.

"Over that 10-year period, when accounting for the differences in GPA between men and women, you can't tell an athlete from a non-athlete at Dordt by looking at the GPA," says Jim Bos, Dordt's registrar. "Our coaching staff recruits students who are a good

DORDT'S 2018-19 SCHOLAR-TEAMS

SPORT/GPA/NAIA RANK

Baseball: 3.25 (9th)

Men's Basketball: 3.21 (19th)

Women's Basketball: 3.82 (1st)

Dance: 3.50 (8th)

Men's Cross Country: 3.50 (8th)

Women's Cross Country: 3.57 (12th)

Football: 3.23 (1st)

Men's Golf: 3.36 (21st)

Women's Golf: 3.63 (15th)

Men's Indoor Track and Field: 3.40 (3rd)

Women's Indoor Track and Field: 3.66 (5th)

Men's Outdoor Track and Field: 3.40 (4th)

Women's Outdoor Track and Field: 3.66 (4th)

Men's Soccer: 3.47 (4th)

Women's Soccer: 3.67 (3rd)

Softball: 3.59 (10th)

Men's Volleyball: 3.56 (1st)

Women's Volleyball: 3.61 (16th)

fit for our institution, and our coaches take academics seriously. It is because everyone is working together and has the success of our student-athletes as their goal that we can celebrate an achievement like this."

Ebby Prewitt, a senior biology major who plays on the women's basketball team, says that time management is key when it comes to maintaining balance. She recalls a time when, wired from a game against Jamestown University, she and three teammates worked on a physiology lab report at 3 a.m. on the bus.

"Maintaining a balance is definitely a challenge," says Prewitt. "I try to do my homework in-between classes during the day, and I make it a priority to relax with friends and do fun things as well as being committed to my sport and to academics."



JAMIN VER VELDE (99)

"The women's basketball team is committed to their work in the classroom and their personal development in their chosen field of study," says Bill Harmsen.

The NAIA scholar-team recognition is the first for the football team in its 11-year history. Joel Penner, Dordt's head football coach, says the football team intentionally prioritizes academic achievement alongside athletic ability. They partner with the Academic Enrichment Center, an on-campus resource that provides tutoring services and helps students gain the skills they need to succeed academically. The football team also develops "academic game plans"—where players are responsible for weekly planning, accountability, tutoring appointments, and scheduling study sessions. The coaches help the players achieve their goals.

"We believe that no one rises to low expectations, and this is as true on the field as it is for other areas of our lives," says Penner.

Other teams have earned the scholar-team honor repeatedly, including the women's and men's cross-country teams, which were honored each year since 2007-08.

"Ultimately, consistency is the key for good distance athletes and, I think, for good students," says Nate Wolf, Dordt's cross-country coach. "The character traits we want to recruit are what make excellent students. We make this clear when we recruit student-athletes."

Prewitt, who hopes to become a physician's assistant someday, says the hard work she and her teammates put into athletics can and should be translated into working hard in the classroom.

"The skill of discipline that we develop in athletics can easily be applied to

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— Joel Penner, head football coach

academics," she says. "We have a goal in mind, just like we would on the court, and we are going to work as hard as we can to achieve that goal."

The women's basketball players rally around each other not only on the court but in the classroom as well, says Prewitt.

"I can think of numerous times when two or three of us had a tough anatomy test right after morning workouts. Teammates would quiz each other during the lift and tell each other, 'Good luck, you'll do great!'" she says. "We love to be known as a team that works hard in all aspects of our life here on campus."

MIKE BYKER ('92)

FACULTY NOTES

Professor Emerita of Music **Dr. Karen De Mol** served as an outside reviewer for the music department at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario.

Associate Professor of Mathematics **Dr. Tom Clark** and Professor of Statistics **Dr. Nathan Tintle** received a \$3,000 grant from the American Institute of Mathematics (AIM) to support the Northwest Iowa Math Teacher's Circle program.

Director of the Pro-Tech Program **Dr. Joel Sikkema** was part of a panel titled "What's ATE Doing Down on the Farm?" which took place at the 2019 High Impact Technology Exchange Conference in St. Louis in July.



In June, Associate Professor of Chemistry and Planetary Science **Dr. Channon Visscher** participated in a month-long interdisciplinary faculty program in Oxford, United Kingdom, focused on the interaction between science and religion. While in Oxford, Visscher presented a seminar entitled "Chemistry of the Forming Moon" at the University of Oxford Atmospheric, Oceanic, and Planetary Physics Department. In August, Visscher gave a talk titled "Strategies to Advance Geoscience Understanding and Engagement in Religious Academic Institutions" at the Goldschmidt 2019 meeting in Barcelona, Spain; the abstract was co-authored by Anna Vekony, a senior biology major at Dordt.

Assistant Professor of Engineering **Dr. Derek Chitwood** presented a talk entitled



"Improvements to Ceramic Water Filters: Manufacturing Methods and New Designs" at the University of Oklahoma International Water Conference in September.