

Science and Faith Club

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SCIENCE AND FAITH CLUB

Most college students are asleep at 6:55 a.m., but six students are bucking that trend on a Friday morning.

They, along with a biology professor, have claimed some couches outside of the faculty offices on the second floor of the Science and Technology Center. Chloe Hansum, a junior biology and environmental science major, sets a box of donuts from Casey's Bakery on the coffee table.

"Help yourself!" she says cheerily. She settles into a blue chair, grabs her laptop, and pulls up a *National Geographic* article about living tree bridges in India. This is Donuts and Discussion, an event held by the Science and Faith Club.

Everyone is wide awake as Hansum dives into the discussion.

"The living bridges are rubber trees whose roots intertwine to make steel-like structures and bridges. The author talks about how creation impacts culture and how the native people have a relationship with creation. I guess we can start with a quote: 'Creation moves us.' Why do you think creation moves us? And how does God fit into that?"

Dr. Jeff Ploegstra ('99), a biology professor, mentions how, when we're in the wild places, nature can praise God independently of humanity—"nature doesn't exist strictly for us, and that causes us to push outside of our sense of self-importance." A student mentions how often Dordt professors and students



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Hansum is considering the possibility of attending graduate school, perhaps to study marine biology.

talk about nature and creation—"here at Dordt, we try to emphasize what it means to connect with God through nature, and that's something I never experienced growing up." All the while, Hansum nods, encouraging others to speak up and share their thoughts.

This year, Hansum and her co-leader, Victoria Kollbaum, have chosen to focus most of their Science and Faith Club events, including Donuts and Discussion, on topics related to creation care. While studying abroad on the Creation Care Program in New Zealand last semester, Hansum witnessed firsthand how environmental degradation has done irreparable damage.

"While studying abroad on the Creation Care program, I saw a glacier that had melted. I saw coral that had been bleached," she recalls. "Climate change is a huge problem we need to talk about, because God loves creation."

Donuts and Discussion is just one of the many events held by the Science

and Faith Club. They have had a panel discussion and film screening about climate action; she and other students also attended a leadership conference on the subject. And, later this spring, Hansum and the Science and Faith Club will bring April Cordero Maskiewicz, a biology professor at Point Loma University and a respected voice on climate action, to campus.

"There is a perceived conflict of science and faith, but I think we can be strong Christians and have sound science," says Hansum. "These two things are connected deeply."

And that is the purpose of the Science and Faith Club—to provide students with a space where they might learn and grow together on topics related to science and faith.

"Students are usually busy with homework and classes, so it often feels like there isn't enough time to talk about these issues. But, with the Science and Faith Club, we want to create a space to talk about science and apply our faith," says Hansum.

Originally begun by Lydia Marcus ('17) and Biology Professor Dr. Robbin Eppinga several years ago, the Science and Faith Club was inactive until Hansum and another student brought it back last year. Now, the Science and Faith Club has about 60

members, 20 of whom regularly attend the club's events. Gathering in the early morning hours of a Friday morning for Donuts and Discussion—to talk about land bridges in India and creation care—shows just how dedicated these students are to science and faith.

"Often faculty and staff are given credit for making Dordt such a vibrant learning environment, but it's the students, too," says Eppinga. "Great things can happen when passionate students like Chloe are given a little direction and some donut money."

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COLOSSIANS FORUM

Read about how the Science and Faith Club fostered civil discourse on science and faith through the Colossians Forum: dordt.edu/colossians.



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"I appreciate how Dordt professors stress that science and faith are connected together and that God is sovereign over all, including science," says Hansum.