

## Dordt Tops List for "Best Undergraduate Teaching" in Midwest

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# FACULTY NOTES

Professor of Art **Matthew Drissell** has completed an elemental kingdom chemistry project, where he made a painting for each of the 118 elements of the periodic table. It has been installed in the Chemistry Department.



Professor of Mathematics **Dr. Valorie Zonnefeld ('97)** and Professor of Education **Dr. Ryan Zonnefeld ('97)** co-presented at the International Congress of Mathematical Education. They presented two talks: "Competitions Promoting the Mathematical Sciences" and "Building a University-School Partnership."

Professor of Nursing **Dr. Debbie Bomgaars** collaborated on a research project titled "Investigating Rurality as a Risk Factor for State and Trait Hopelessness in Hospitalized Patients with Ischemic Heart Disease." The project was published in the *Journal of the American Heart Association* in September.

Professor of Education **Dr. Gwen Marra** presented at the Transformational Language Arts Instruction conference in Pella, Iowa, in June. Her talks included "Book Share 2021," "Social Emotional Learning and the Brain," and "Implementing Dialogic Discussions."



At the Fall Music Festival on October 15, the combined choirs—Chorale, Concert Choir, Canons of Dordt, and Bella Voce—debuted a new choral work that Professor of Music **Dr. Ryan Smit ('99)** composed this past summer, which is titled "Soli Deo Gloria." The piece focused on the Dordt University motto as well as Romans 11:33-36.

Professor of Economics **Dr. Jan van Vliet** recently published a book review of *The Keynesian Revolution and our Empty Economy: We're All Dead* by Victor V. Claar and Greg Forster in the *Journal of Markets and Morality*.

# DORDT TOPS LIST FOR 'BEST UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING' IN MIDWEST

Dordt University ranks number one for "Best Undergraduate Teaching (Regional Colleges Midwest)" in the *U.S. News and World Report's* 2022 rankings. This means that Dordt "faculty and administrators are committed to teaching undergraduate students in a high-quality manner," according to the rankings' methodology statement.

"I am excited and proud that our talented and hard-working faculty are being recognized in this way," says Dr. Teresa Ter Haar, dean of curriculum and instruction and a theatre professor. "Given the challenges that Covid-19 presented our campus community over the last year and a half, it is especially encouraging that our faculty are being recognized for teaching excellence. It reveals the commitment Dordt's faculty make—and continue to make every day—to connect with students and provide robust learning experiences."

Rankings come and go, says Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Leah Zuidema, but Dordt students know that faculty are here for them.



L. Zuidema

"Faculty are committed to our students and to teaching with excellence and with biblical truth," says Zuidema. "This ranking is a public recognition of what our students already know—that they have faculty who are invested in them, who are skilled at what they do, who care deeply, and who want to create meaningful learning experiences."

One of Ter Haar's favorite responsibilities is to visit classrooms across campus as part of Dordt's faculty development program. She watches as faculty shepherd rich discussions, engage in hands-on activities with students, give lectures, facilitate labs, and ask great questions. She sees how great teaching can inspire students to learn well.

"Without inspirational teachers to model inquiry, intellectual determination,

JAMIN VER VELDE ('99)



**Instructor Tayler Hoekstra, like his Dordt colleagues, prioritizes engaging his students in ways that enhance learning.**

creative problem-solving, and openness to other perspectives, our students might complete their undergraduate degrees prepared for a job, but not be as prepared to think deeply, question appropriately, or act justly in our increasingly fraught culture," she says.

Faith shapes how Dordt faculty approach teaching—which is different from how teaching might be approached at some colleges and universities, says Zuidema. Dordt faculty teach with the *Educational Framework* in mind, specifically focusing on how students "should be able to discern, evaluate, and challenge the prevailing spirits and worldviews of our age in the light of God's Word and our reformational perspective."

"At Dordt, we talk about being scripturally rooted and understanding the themes of God's Word as revealed to us in Scripture. Whether it's our Core Program, majors, residence life design, academic enrichment, or student services, we recognize the guiding role of the Bible," she adds. "There's a beginning and an end that's different for a Dordt professor, and it starts with God's good design as outlined biblically and an understanding that we're participating in the kingdom of God."

SARAH MOSS ('10)