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## Professors and Professional Confabs

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# FOR THE RECORD, incidentally. . .

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by James Koldenhoven

## PROFESSORS AND PROFESSIONAL CONFABS

The Dordt College faculty is encouraged to attend professional meetings, though time and costs make attendance a matter of selecting the best conferences available. The English Department alone, for instance, receives as many as a half-dozen invitations a year from conference organizers, but the average faculty member in the department attends only one or two such meetings, in addition to our eleven-college CMA conferences.

A small financial incentive from the college is provided faculty members for attending professional meetings, with the remainder of the cost coming from the members themselves. A Minneapolis-based conference, about 250 miles from Dordt College, will cost between \$75 and \$125, depending on the fees and the length of the conference. Each faculty member is granted \$50 by the college, per year, for professional meetings. The college budget this year for confabs was \$2,500.

The quality of professional conferences varies considerably and is often inconsistent from year to year. A good conference one year by an organization does not mean, necessarily, a good conference the next year. Selection of conferences tends to be hazardous, and often disappointing, since it is not possible to select an alternative once the money and time are spent.

Members of the English Department, Professors Reynolds and Veldman, recently attended the annual conference of the National Convention of Teachers of English. Top billing went to lecturer Margaret Mead who criticized teachers of literature for the low interest level among students regarding period literature. Without having a sense of "historical continuity," Mead noted, teachers can not convince students of the relevance of eighteenth-century English literature, for instance. Also in the lecture line-up was the young black radical poet, Jonathan Kazol, whose mien, according to Reynolds, was "bitter and lonely," having lost the revolutionary context of the 1960's.

One of the greatest benefits of conferences such as the NCTE is its extensive exhibit of books and educational materials. Dordt conferees said they spend at least half their time at the exhibition. Lectures, exhibits, and other informal aspects of professional conferences provide educators with information about what is current in their fields.

Professors Mennega, Parker, and Vander Zee, of the Biology Department, reported mixed reaction to their attendance of the Creation Convention in October. This Conference, sponsored by the Bible-Science Association, emphasized the "need and importance

of the teaching of creation in the nation's schools---both public and private," according to one of the Dordt conferees. "Though much of what was said at the conference was not acceptable from a Reformed Christian perspective," noted the reporter, "the conference did sharpen our own views on Creation and helped us to bring to the classroom more clearly the mind of Christ regarding origins."

Scientists at the Creation Convention lectured on such subjects as "The Scientific Method," "Radioactive Dating," and "The Fossil Evidence." This Milwaukee conference was attended by educators, ministers, laymen, and students from many parts of the country.

Dordt is a member college in an organization called Colleges of Mid-America Consortium. This eleven-college organization is funded mainly with federal funds and has proved to be a popular source of conferences. Many of the sessions are interdisciplinary, and the Consortium has managed to provide a quality program. A good percentage of the Dordt faculty attend these meetings.

A workshop conference recently attended by Professors Maatman and Vander Zee resulted in setting up a Pre-Medical and Nurses' Training Advising Committee at Dordt. The workshop

held at the University of Nebraska in September was designed to aid institutions such as Dordt in providing counsel to students in pre-professional programs. Assisting in the workshop was an official from the American Association of Medical Colleges.

Dr. Maatman explained that the newly-formed committee at Dordt is prepared to perform these services:

(1) Advise students on proper procedures for entrance into the appropriate schools.

(2) Help the students choose schools.

(3) Guide the students in proper selection of courses at Dordt.

(4) Aid students in actually visiting schools they might attend.

The committee has already made it possible for a group of pre-professional students to visit the University of Iowa Medical School. This trip was made in connection with the annual Pre-Medical Conference at the Iowa City campus.

Despite some disappointment registered by faculty members contacted, it might be said that their general reaction was quite positive. A college community must stay abreast of what is happening in the academic world, and conferences continue to be a way to get in on the most recent academic thought and opinion.

## BOOK REVIEW

Insight, Authority, and Power: A Biblical Appraisal by Peter Schouls (Wedge Publishing Foundation, Toronto, 1972--paperback, \$1.95). Reviewed by Merle Meeter.

In this 46-page booklet, Dr. Peter Schouls (author of Man in Communication and chairman of the philosophy department at the University of Alberta) explores the relationships between insight, authority, and power. His

thesis is that, "Insight or knowledge always gives one authority, and authority is never gained except through obtaining insight or knowledge." What Dr. Schouls is really getting at, as he says, is "what I believe should be involved in our concept of office" (p. 13; p. 14).

Schouls maintains that unless a man has Word-guided discernment or understanding, he has "no authority": "Those who are in positions