



# Parent Update

An Occasional Newsletter for Parents of Southwestern College Students

**February 2012**

Just before the holidays you received a letter from Southwestern's president, Dick Merriman, in which he stated that the college would be stepping up the quality and frequency of our communication with you. Although many people at the college will be involved in making this a reality, he has asked me to take the leading role in this effort, so here we go!

This newsletter is intended to give you a mix of news from the college and "heads up" notices about upcoming deadlines and opportunities that are important for you and your child. (I'll mark those items with an arrow, like this: ➡) It's also intended to "prime the pump" and get you talking to the college about your expectations and needs.

You'll soon be receiving a survey questionnaire that will help us fine tune our communication with you. It asks what kind of information you want to receive from Southwestern and in what format (print, e-mail, Facebook, etc.). I hope you will take a moment to complete the survey.

All the best,

Dawn Pleas-Bailey  
Vice President of Student Life  
Special Assistant to the President for Community Engagement

## **FOCUSING ON AFTER-GRADUATION OUTCOMES**

The college's Future Task Force, which is convened once every three years to help chart the long-term future of the college, is focusing this year on concrete steps the college can take to improve the after-graduation outcomes of our students. We know what you and our students want after graduation: jobs, admission to graduate schools, and meaningful and fulfilling lives. The big challenge for the college's people, at times, is to get students to think NOW about what they need to do to get to those great outcomes LATER. Given the cost of attending the college, the difficult job market that awaits new graduates, and the fact that the competition for jobs and advancement now involves ambitious and energetic people from around the world, our students need to be doing more NOW that is focused on LATER. Some students don't want to think about life after college, honestly, but most simply need a better road map, more tools, and some encouragement. President Merriman says they need the college to "get in their face" a little more often. The Future Task Force will complete its work this spring and implementation of recommendations will begin next fall. Meanwhile . . .

## **DID YOU KNOW? After-Graduation Outcomes For Our Students**

Since 2009, Southwestern College has conducted an annual survey of the prior year graduates who earned degrees from the main campus undergraduate programs. We have three years of data with an overall response rate of 30% and are currently collecting data from the 2011 graduates. Included in the survey are questions about enrollment in a post-graduate degree program and employment immediately following graduation.

Of all the respondents, 46% enrolled in a graduate program immediately following graduation and 42% were employed. Of the 42% who entered the work-place, 76% were employed in a job that was directly related to the degree they earned from Southwestern. Those are good results, particularly in a sour economy, but there's clearly room for improvement.

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## LEARNING THROUGH INTERNSHIPS

The business division is currently working with area businesses in an effort to create more and more valuable internships for our junior and senior students. Internships place students in business environments and allow them to get practical experience with principles studied in the classroom. In addition, they provide students an opportunity to make assessments about career choices.

The businesses providing internships range from a local bank to a global technologies firm that manufactures precision tooling instruments for the plastics and aerospace industry. Several small firms, including a non-profit retail store and an insurance agent, are also providing students an opportunity to experience the challenge and rewards of owning their own business.

These results reflect the leadership of James McEwen, Southwestern's Director of Business Internships, with good cooperation from the Winfield Chamber of Commerce and local business owners, who endorse the idea that learning is not limited to a professor in a classroom. ➔ If your child is interested in an internship, McEwen is the person to see.

Recent success stories include a 2011 fall internship in technical writing for a local meat processing facility that earned James Davis the Outstanding Intern award for the semester. Christian Butler and Meredith Chavers currently assist a Winfield bed-and-breakfast as business manager and coordinator for Murder Mystery dinners, respectively. Austin Sacket performs business manager functions for an auto repair business in Augusta and Misty Teague is an intern with county emergency management services, supporting a public awareness project. Jacob McGuire is assisting a lawn and landscaping firm with regulatory compliance.

## STUDENTS ACCEPTED TO TOP GRADUATE PROGRAMS

One of the highlights of the spring semester at the college is the happy news of students who have been accepted into exceptional graduate programs. Here are some great examples:

**YALE UNIVERSITY** Lucas McConnell has been accepted into the Master of Divinity degree at the Divinity School. Lucas is a graduating senior from Newton, majoring in philosophy and religion at Southwestern. He plans to complete his graduate degree while working toward being an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church. He is a contender for full-ride scholarships and graduate assistantships announced in March.

*"My parents, Mike and Carla McConnell, are very excited about me not only going to Yale, but pursuing a career in full-time ministry. Since my younger brother will be going to school next year at Army's West Point military academy, my parents look forward to visiting him and me on the East Coast. My parents, grandparents, and brothers have been very supportive throughout the application process and I am thankful to have their support in all my future endeavors - however challenging they may be."*

**JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY** Katie Bipes was accepted into the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing, ranked #1 as America's Best Colleges from *US News and World Report*. A Topeka native, Katie graduates in May with a degree in psychology. After completing her degree at Johns Hopkins, she plans to take the NCLEX to become a registered nurse and enter the Master of Science in Nursing Pediatric Nurse Practitioner program.

*"My parents are very proud of me. They are proud of the efforts I have made thus far to achieve my goals, even when the odds have not always been in my favor. They are also delighted that I have had the opportunity to attend an undergraduate institution that provided me with the education and experience that will help me flourish at Johns Hopkins University."*

**DUKE UNIVERSITY** John Badley was admitted to Duke Divinity School for his Master of Divinity degree. He is excited about obtaining his graduate degree in Christian religious studies. He is also currently finishing up his application for Princeton University and will know his status there next month.

*"The really helpful thing was that I got an education (in the English and philosophy and religion departments) that put me in the same ballpark with Duke and Princeton through the teaching of Steve Rankin, Matt Thompson, Ashlee Alley, Alice Bendinelli, John Scaggs, and Elisa Hedrick."*

**VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY** Caitlin McCurdy was welcomed by the prestigious Peabody School of Education at Vanderbilt for a master's degree in community development and action. The Peabody School of Education is ranked #1 for America's Best College for *US News and World Report*. She is currently considering additional graduate school possibilities. Caitlin is currently a graduating senior from Overland Park, and majored in psychology and leadership studies.

*"Everyone, including my parents, is very supportive of me and my decisions. I chose to apply to schools that were mostly outside of the Midwest because I think that this is a great time to gain experiences elsewhere. At this point, I plan on moving back to the Midwest after receiving my degree."*

## RAISING FUNDS FOR NOTHING BUT NETS

Southwestern basketball fans donated over \$850 to send life-saving anti-malarial bed nets to Africa as part of the United Nations Foundation's Nothing But Nets campaign. The event took place during Southwestern's men's and women's games against Friends University on Feb. 2 and was organized by Bishop in Residence Richard Wilke, with assistance from athletic director David Denly.

Long-lasting insecticide-treated bed nets are one of the most cost-effective methods of preventing malaria, a leading killer of African children. They create a protective barrier against mosquitoes at night, when the vast majority of malaria transmissions occur. One bed net can protect a family of four, and lasts up to five years. It costs just \$10 to purchase, deliver, and educate the recipient on its proper use. Fans that donated were admitted free into the games.

## COMMUNICATION THROUGH THE MAIL AND ONLINE

Starting next month, you will start receiving *The Southwesterner*. The college sends this feature magazine out to alumni, friends of the college, and now...to YOU. It is our hope that you enjoy reading a variety of articles that feature neat stuff happening at the college. In addition, these popular website links connect you with various parts of the college.

Academics: [www.sckans.edu/academics](http://www.sckans.edu/academics)

Admission: [www.beabuilder.com](http://www.beabuilder.com)

Alumni: [www.sckans.edu/alumni](http://www.sckans.edu/alumni)

Athletics: [www.buildersports.com](http://www.buildersports.com)

Twitter: [twitter.com/Moundbuilders](https://twitter.com/Moundbuilders)

Online giving: [www.sckans.edu/makeagift](http://www.sckans.edu/makeagift)

Webcasts: [www.moundbuilder.com](http://www.moundbuilder.com)

Campus news: [www.sckans.edu/news-and-events/news/](http://www.sckans.edu/news-and-events/news/)

## CREATION CARE CONFERENCE

Each year the college's religion department focuses on a challenging theme for its Builders in Ministry conference. This year the emphasis is on how the church cares for the Earth. "The church's role in sustainability is crucial, as it must demonstrate and live in a way that will preserve God's resources for future generations," said Steve Wilke, executive director of the sponsoring Institute for Discipleship at Southwestern College.

This year's keynote speakers are Rev. Rebekah Simon-Peter and John Hill. Rev. Simon-Peter (an ordained United Methodist minister) worked as an author, acid rain researcher, and naturalist, and teaches the green gospel for churches, interfaith groups, and community groups. Mr. Hill worked as a lobbyist for the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society and has served as program director for environmental justice since 2002.

## 'THE STUDENT LOANS' MUSIC GROUP

A new jazz combo called "The Student Loans" came together this school year under the direction of Brandon Blackburn, scholar in residence at Southwestern College. The combo has been such a huge hit that it performed live on the Eyewitness News "This Morning on the Kansas CW." The television station is part of the Kansas-wide KSCW. According to Blackburn, "they were playing at a 'high profile' event and while they were playing some Christmas tunes I met someone from KWCH 12 [Wichita]. He was very impressed by them and since then we have been communicating and it has finally worked out."

The Student Loans includes Southwestern students Hunter Rockhill, trumpet, Derby; Tanner Seidel, guitar Arkansas City; Nick Hofmeister, drums, Winfield; Tony Gropper, saxophone, Winfield; and Nathan Johnson, bass, Wichita.

## FACULTY AND STUDENTS TRAVEL TO CHINA

Over the last four years, the college has partnered with Huangshan University in China to create a unique student exchange. As sister schools, Southwestern and Huangshan have agreed to send students and faculty to the other institutions. The program gives Southwestern students an excellent opportunity to study abroad in the company of SC faculty. This semester, the three Southwestern students are Cooper Hart, junior, theatre and music major, Nortonville; Andy Stanfield, junior, history major, Wellington; and Krista Cross, junior, biology education major, Shidler, Okla. Joining them are Southwestern faculty member Dr. George Gangwere and his wife, Patricia, and Dr. Terry Barnett and his wife, Cheryl (an SC library staff member). George and Terry will teach physics and chemistry, and Patricia and Cheryl will be teaching conversational English and American culture. ➔ This is a great opportunity for students during their SC years—you might ask your Moundbuilder if (s)he is interested in study abroad.

## KCAC CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES

On Monday, Feb. 27, men's and women's KCAC basketball championships will be played in Hartman Arena in Park City. The women play at 6 p.m. and the men at 8 p.m. As of this writing both the men and women have a shot to play in that game. If you can't attend, the games will be televised live on public television stations statewide in Kansas.

## SPRING THEATRE SCHEDULE CELEBRATES CREATIVITY

The theatre department has planned a variety of performances for the spring semester. The line-up, including a classic drama, a heart-felt musical, and improv comedy, celebrates and examines creativity, its nature and importance. The first production will be a staged reading Feb. 23-26 of Henrik Ibsen's classic work *Hedda Gabler*. The second major production will be April 12-15 and will be Stephen Schwartz's musical *Children of Eden*. Freely based on the first nine chapters of the Bible, *Children of Eden* uses powerful music to explore our culture's most central creation story and the age-old conflict between parent and child. Nine Lives Laughatorium and Good Times Improvisational Comedy Troup performs throughout the semester for its college and community audiences. For more information on these shows and others, or to make reservations, call the Southwestern College performing arts office at (800) 846-1543 ext. 6272, (620) 221-7720, or visit [www.sckans.edu/theatre](http://www.sckans.edu/theatre).

## **COMMUNITY MUSIC SCHOOL**

The college has a Community Music School that nurtures the fine arts community of South Central Kansas and North Central Oklahoma with rich, musical experiences for people of all ages. The mission is to encourage excellence in the arts by offering a wide array of private lessons, master classes, ensembles, performance opportunities, and more on the campus of Southwestern College.

It is located in the Darbeth Performing Arts building on-campus and offers an array of musical activities for students, teachers, and performers of all ages. Any ensemble is welcome to join and be coached. A wide variety of classes are available semester by semester. All band and orchestra participants are invited to join the Southwestern College Concert Band or the South Regional Kansas Symphony by audition with Professor Daniel Stevens. Also, Southwestern has several software programs available for composition and aural skills. There is also a large piano lab available for accompanists and group piano classes.

## **ADDITIONAL MUSICAL EVENTS THIS SEMESTER**

Friday, March 2, Jazz Band Concert

Monday, March 12, Choral Concert

Saturday, March 31, Solo and Small Ensemble Festival

Friday, April 20, South Kansas Symphony on the Praire--Bonfy Ranch

Saturday, April 21, Choral Concert

Wednesday, April 25, Jazz Band

Friday, April 27, Band Concert--Red Carpet

Sunday, April 29, SC Youth Symphony Orchestra and Youth Concert Orchestra Concert

## **NOTICES—Remind your child of these important deadlines, please!**

### **⇒ FINANCIAL AID - It's tax time and time to file your FAFSA**

It's time to renew financial aid for the 2012-2013 academic year. Members of the financial aid team have been meeting with student activity groups to remind individuals of the April 1 priority deadline for renewing. Starting in mid-February, we will begin sending letters to individual students about completing their financial aid file. What can you do now? The FAFSA is much easier to complete if your taxes are filed. If you can, file your taxes in February so you can use March to complete your FAFSA. If you can't, don't wait until your taxes are filed. Go ahead and complete the FAFSA by the April 1 deadline so that your son or daughter's aid is guaranteed to renew at the current amounts. Missing the deadline can mean a drastic reduction in grant aid for some people – especially those receiving the Kansas Comprehensive Grant. Remember also that some financial aid (like the Perkins loan) is available on a first-come, first-served basis; the earlier you renew – the better your chances of receiving this precious resource. Please remind your student to watch their e-mail for reminders and to come in to the financial aid office if they have questions. We're here to help you and your family get the paperwork completed for next year.

### **⇒ GRAD FINALE**

If your son or daughter is a graduation candidate he or she is eligible to walk in Commencement ceremonies May 6, 2012. They prepare for this event by attending Grad Finale. It is their one-stop-shop to make plans for 2012 Commencement at Southwestern College. They can purchase their caps and gowns, order announcements or class rings, find out about alumni programs, and meet with SC staff to tie up any loose ends.

The spring Grad Finale is being held the following times and locations:

Thursday, March 1, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.: Winfield Main Campus, Student Center Pounds Lounge

Thursday, March 1, 3:30 p.m.-6 p.m.: Professional Studies Wichita East Center, 2040 S. Rock Road

Refreshments will be served and a drawing will be held for all participants who complete a check-off sheet and enter the drawing. Students should expect to spend about 30 minutes at the event (s)he chooses to attend. Students unable to attend the scheduled events should watch their e-mail for further details.