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Happy students, great graduation rates, a new professional studies site, and *Collegian* online.

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**COVER**

Our center story on pages 6-7 examines how scholar-athletes become leader-athletes during their years at SC. Outstanding alumni coaches include Jerry Kill '84 (large photo), and clockwise from upper left, Marvin Diener '82, Jim Helmer '71 with Amy (Tiger) Givens '04, Linda Hargrove '75, and Jim Littell '77.

**SECOND COVER**

Student photographer Shan Szetho '05 captures the essence of spring on the Southwestern College campus.

*Photos in this issue are by Shan Szetho '05, Charles Osen '94, and Sunni Sheets. Stories are by Sara Weinert, Charles Osen '94, and Christy Hopkins '05.*

# From the President



Dear friends,

People go to college for lots of reasons, and they accomplish lots of things while doing it, but the name of the game is simple: GRADUATE. That's why we are pumped up about recently released statistics about graduation rates at colleges and universities.

The Education Trust recently launched a website ([www.collegeresults.org](http://www.collegeresults.org)) that uses information reported to the U.S. Department of Education to compare college graduation rates. The data track cohorts of incoming freshmen and report how many of each cohort have graduated from the school they started at by the end of four years, five years, and six years.

Looking at the private and public colleges and universities in Kansas, the Web site shows that:

- Southwestern is one of the two top institutions in Kansas in terms of the four-year graduation rate of students. Our four-year graduation rate is 10 percentage points higher than the best score by a public institution in Kansas. A higher percentage of our students graduate in four years than graduate in five years at half the colleges and universities in Kansas.
- Southwestern has the highest five-year graduate ration of any higher education institution in Kansas.
- Southwestern has the highest four-year and five-year graduation rates for minority students of any higher education institution in Kansas.

The message is clear, and I encourage you to share it with young people you know and their parents: your best chance of graduating, and graduating on time, is at Southwestern College. And you'll have a fabulous experience while you do it!

Best regards,

*Dick Merriman*

Dick Merriman  
President

## Administration Viewpoint



As dean of students, I love happy students.

Happy students tend to be the ones using their energy to do the kinds of things we like to see at SC— going to class, eating Moundbuilder Classic hamburgers in the Java Jinx snack bar, cheering in Stewart Field House, instant messaging their friends on their laptops.

When students are unhappy, the energy tends to go in less positive directions.

Last fall, I had a feeling that our students were happy. The campus simply felt good.

Right before Christmas, we got news that this gut feeling was reality.

The Student Satisfaction Inventory, an annual survey associate dean of students Tami Pullins conducts, revealed this year that our current students are extraordinarily pleased with their experience at Southwestern College.

The 98-question inventory focused on what is most crucial to the students themselves, and SC was ahead (often by a large margin) of levels of student satisfaction nationwide on what really matters to current Moundbuilders—instructional effectiveness, financial aid, academic advising, campus climate, and student-centeredness.

This report is a victory for every person connected with SC, from the admission counselors who are the first contact the student has with SC, to instructors in the classrooms, to the plant maintenance folks who shovel the sidewalk.

And because we know happy students tend to grow into happy alumni and donors who can help us continue to provide the Southwestern experience for new generations of students, we are happy right along with them.

*Dawn Pleas-Bailey*

Dawn Pleas-Bailey  
Vice President for Student Life

**SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE PRESIDENT**

Dick Merriman

**THE SOUTHWESTERNER**

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