

# The Academic Bulletin

from the Office of the Provost of Calvin College

Monday, September 12, 2016

## Two Convocations

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I participated in two convocations last week. Most of you were at the first convocation, so I will say a few things about the second, where only a handful of Calvin faculty were present. This convocation was held at Handlon Prison. We welcomed another cohort of 20 students, bringing the total number of Calvin College students at Handlon to 39 students. They, along with an additional 20 students in an unaccredited program run by Calvin Theological Seminary, were present at convocation. The music was provided by Handlon students in the Calvin Jam Band and the Handlon Tabernacle Choir. Prof. Gary Schmidt of the English Department delivered the convocation address, which was accompanied by verbal reinforcements from audience members for whom Gary's message was hitting hard. Several students also spoke in the ceremony. One student reflected on his first year in Calvin's program. He spoke of the hope he now had for the future that was not present in his life a year ago. He delighted in newfound ways to read Scripture. He gave tributes to the faculty who had taught him this past year, tributes that sometimes evoked bursts of appreciative laughter from other students that pointed to shared and sometimes vulnerable learning. Another student delivered a forceful and beautiful prayer, a prayer that included thanksgiving for and blessings on every single Calvin faculty member and staff. A third student presented Professors Todd Cioffi and Christina de Groot with a drawing of John Calvin for the college. The student explained that the college could not yet have the drawing, because it had been accepted for a gallery showing in New York City; but when that showing ends, the drawing will come to Calvin as an expression of deep gratitude from all of the Handlon students. The convocation concluded with remarks from the associate warden who spoke of, among other things, a changed and changing culture at the entire prison for the better.

A brief time of informal conversation with the students occurred after convocation. Students expressed, over and over again, their gratitude for the college and seminary's support for the program, for the faculty who teach in it, and for "being kind." Many spoke to what a privilege it was to have an opportunity to receive a college education (yes, it was hard not to wonder whether our Knollcrest campus students felt the same way) and promised "not to blow it." Students spoke to us of the pride their families have for them now. They spoke of hope and joy for their futures, and renewed relationships with God. For a few students, words came hard but tears came easily.

We embody and enact our Reformed commitments in many excellent ways at the college, but as one faculty member said to me after this convocation, "This is Calvin at our best."

*Cheryl Brandsen, provost*

## Sabbaticals and CRFs

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Faculty who are eligible and planning to apply for a sabbatical or Calvin Research Fellowship during the 2017–18 academic year can access the forms and all current information online ([here](#) for sabbaticals and [here](#) for CRFs). Please note that sabbatical applications are due by September 20 and CRF applications are due by October 1.

## Program Directors for Off-Campus Programs

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The Off-Campus Programs Office invites faculty to apply to direct one of the following programs: Britain (spring 2018 or spring 2019), Ghana (spring 2019), Hungary (fall 2018 or fall 2019), and Washington, DC (spring 2018 or spring 2019). Additional information about directing a semester program as well as the application procedure can be found [online](#) or by contacting [Don DeGraaf](#), director of off-campus programs. Applications are due Friday, September 30, 2016.

## From the Faculty Activity Reports

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- Kristin Du Mez (History), “Hillary Clinton’s History of Faith Is Long and Rich. This Week, She Should Talk about It,” [Washington Post](#), July 26, 2016.
- Pennylyn Dykstra-Pruim (Germanic and Asian Studies) and David Smith (Education), *Christians and Cultural Difference* (Grand Rapids: Calvin College Press, 2016).
- Matt Heun (Engineering), “Energy and Economy: Five Propositions” (lecture, Centre for Renewable and Sustainable Energy Studies Forum, Stellenbosch, South Africa, August 19, 2016).

Be sure to [fill out](#) your Faculty Activity Reports regularly. If you have questions, see the [FAQ page](#).

**Note:** FEN activities are now called Intercultural Competency Professional Development Activities and are entered in a new system—not as FARs. You can report these types of activities via [this new link](#). Contact [diversity@calvin.edu](mailto:diversity@calvin.edu) if you have questions.

## Coming Up on Campus

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### Monday, September 12

- Chapel. Reginald Smith. 10:00 a.m., Chapel
- Faculty Senate meeting. 7:00 p.m., Commons Annex Alumni Board Room
- Center for Faith and Writing speaker and book signing. Jim Wallis, “Racism and the Bridge to a New America.” 7:30 p.m., CFAC

### Tuesday, September 13

- Chapel. “A Revelation for Us.” 10:00 a.m., Chapel

### Wednesday, September 14

- Chapel. Sounds of gospel worship. 10:00 a.m., Chapel

### Thursday, September 15

- Chapel. Drum circle with Eric Nykamp. 10:00 a.m., Chapel
- CALL noontime lecture. Will Katerberg, “American Scripture? The US Constitution and American Political Culture.” 12:00 noon. Chapel Sanctuary

### Friday, September 16

- Chapel. Student worship team. 10:00 a.m., Chapel
- Biology seminar. Judy Bode, “Resilient, the Story after the Cure.” 1:30 p.m., SB 010
- Christian Perspectives in Science seminar. Julie Yonker (Psychology), “Primed Analytic Thought and Intrinsic Religiosity: The Importance of Individual Characteristics.” 3:30 p.m., SB 110