

The Academic Bulletin

from the Office of the Provost of Calvin College

Friday, June 2, 2017

Thank You

On Tuesday and Wednesday of last week, department chairs gathered for a workshop. We started off by reviewing the enrollment challenges that Calvin is facing, a review that was especially somber because we had just learned the day before that we would be losing some beloved colleagues. We are grateful for their many contributions to this place, and we will feel their loss keenly. At that workshop I had opportunity to thank the chairs for the countless ways they serve the students and faculty in their departments.

And as the campus settles into summer work, I want to thank each of you, too, for all that you have done this past year. Sometimes your work is obvious to students, but often it is not. For example, I continue to be amazed by and grateful for the everyday thoughtful work carried out by faculty on governance and advisory committees. I am grateful for the 30+ faculty and staff who worked on various issues related to the future of the arts at Calvin, work that culminated in a two-day workshop with the Arts Council this week. I am grateful for the groups of faculty who worked on ad hoc committees to reimagine the Honors Program, to develop a philosophy for faculty compensation, and to improve academic interventions for “at-risk” students. I am grateful for the cross-divisional work this year to re-imagine orientation, to revise Passport advising, and to rethink convocation. And so on.

Many good things are happening at Calvin that will enable the college to live out its mission long into the future. As President Le Roy reminded us at the president’s coffee, Calvin will be fine, even as Calvin will be different.

Cheryl Brandsen, provost

Associate Director for Honors Appointed

Craig Hanson, of the Art and Art History Department, has been appointed as the associate director for the Honors Program. In this role, he will work closely with the current director, Amy Wilstermann, of the Biology Department. In recommending Craig, the committee noted that Craig is an experienced administrator, has strong collaborative sensibilities, and is very thoughtful about the goals of the Honors Program and the students’ experiences in it. Congratulations, Craig! We look forward to seeing your imprint on the Honors Program.

Passports III and IV

At the recommendation of the Reimagining Orientation task force, the schedule and structure of Passport advising has been changed. As many of you know, Passport I and II already occurred in April 2017. We thank those of you who volunteered to meet with these advisees in April. We hope that earlier contact with you will reduce the first-year “melt” (student withdrawal from the college) that sometimes occurs during the summer months. Passport III and IV are happening on June 23 and July 7, 2017, and thank you in advance to those serving as advisors for these groups also.

Fall Faculty and Staff Conference

Please mark your calendar now for the annual Fall Faculty and Staff Conference on August 24, 2017.

Convocation Is Moving

Yes, you've heard correctly, and if you are a regular reader of the Academic Bulletin (particularly March 31, 2017), you have read this already: the opening convocation is moving to a different date and time. Convocation will be on Thursday, August 31, 2017, at 4:30 in the afternoon. It will be followed by an all-campus picnic, to which all faculty and staff—and families—are invited. The recommendation to change the day and time of convocation came from the cross-divisional Reimagining Orientation task force. Noting the tepid turnout at previous convocations and the kink it puts in the first-day-of class schedule, convocation 2017 will be shaped to welcome new students (and their parents) into this academic community and to serve as a proper bookend to commencement. We will share additional details about the event as the summer unfolds.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Joel Carpenter for a successful \$2.2 million grant award, titled African Theological Advance, from the Templeton Religion Trust. This grant will enable the Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity to support theological research and curricular development projects at sixteen postgraduate African theological seminaries and university theology programs. Joel and his colleagues plan to create a research and curricular development project in African Christian theology that will pursue topics of strategic concern and interest among African Christian leaders, focusing on (1) African spirituality and values, (2) science and religion—particularly health and healing, (3) religious innovation and competition, and (4) forgiveness, peacemaking, and reconciliation.