

The Academic Bulletin

from the Office of the Provost of Calvin College

Friday, February 23, 2018

Think But This, and All Is Mended

A few years ago, Calvin-matters participants were invited to write six-word stories about Calvin College. I submitted this: “Onetime school sought transformation, students, leadership.” As an institution, we are still living in the middle of that story, hoping the day is still far off when our obituary is written for real. After all, we still have visions of what we want Calvin to accomplish. Hence the recent focus on survival strategies that will secure our place in the competitive ecosystem of higher education.

According to the emerging vision statement, the college will become a university by 2030. Such a change, we may hope, will yield survival benefits and allow us to become a thriving organization. The “organism” metaphors I am using here should remind us of how the Reformed tradition envisions the Christian university. When describing the fledgling Free University in Amsterdam, Abraham Kuyper himself often employed images of an organism. Don’t be fooled by the “every square inch” line; Kuyper didn’t intend to parcel off pieces of the academic landscape and grant them permanent autonomy. Rather, he suggested that academic departments in a Christian university should understand themselves to be interdependent, parts of a single living body, all sharing the same lifeblood. In his convocation address of 1889, he explicitly held up this ideal of “a community of teachers and learners united in a single, corporate body,” and he lamented the secular university as a mere “community of the sciences.” The Reformed image of a Christian university will always be thus: a vital gathering of people learning to follow the call of Christ and refusing to become individual, drone-like servants of disciplinary or professional interests. May Calvin’s future state align with this vision.

Incidentally, my six-word story doesn’t have to be read as an obituary. It could be a story of profound vitality and growth. Instead of referring to the corpse of a school, it may describe a caterpillar college that has developed into a chrysalis—something seemingly immobile yet experiencing radical transformation from within. Maybe historians will look back and describe the current era at Calvin as a period of just this kind of renewal.

Matt Walhout, dean for research and scholarship

Results of Divisional Elections for COG and PPC

The Committee on Governance (COG) announces that Corey Roberts (Germanic and Asian Languages) has been elected to the Planning and Priorities Committee (PPC) by the ALE division and that Richard Whitekettle (Religion) has been reelected to COG by the SSCD division. Both terms are for four years, beginning September 1, 2018. COG thanks all candidates for agreeing to appear on the ballots.

Message from the Career Center regarding Interviews

For this month’s Calvin LifeWork activity, students are exploring potential majors and career paths by conducting an informational interview with someone working in a career that interests them. Some students may ask to interview faculty for this assignment. If the student is hoping to be a professor, that makes sense and you’re more than welcome to oblige if you have time to do so. However, we wanted to let you know that the Career Center has a list of alumni in a variety of fields that students

can contact, so feel free to direct students to the Career Center for help finding someone to interview. Our intention with this activity was not to have students burden faculty with informational interviews.

From the Faculty Activity Reports

- Brian Cawley (Business), “How Can We Support and Empower College Students in Their Vocational Pursuits?” (lecture, 8th Biennial Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood Conference, Washington, DC, November 4, 2017).
- Vicki De Vries (French), “Complex Voices, Simple Labels: The Early Feminist Press in France” (lecture, Women in French 2018, Tallahassee, FL, February 8, 2018).
- Matt Heun (Engineering), “From Theory to Econometrics to Energy Policy: Cautionary Tales for Policymaking Using Aggregate Production Functions” (lecture, Energy Symposium, Austin, TX, November 9, 2017).

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

Coming Up on Campus (Check the [campus calendar](#) for a full list of events)

Monday, February 26

- Chapel. Kate Kooyman (CRC Office of Social Justice). 10:00 a.m., Chapel
- World Affairs Council lecture. Amitav Acharya (American U), “Is American Global Leadership Waning?” 12:00 noon, CFAC recital hall

Tuesday, February 27

- Chapel. Taizé with Karen Saupe and Debra Rienstra. 10:00 a.m., Chapel
- Sexuality Series panel discussion. Cal Jen, Richard Frances-Coe, Kasey Stevens, Kristen Du Mez, “Exploring Masculinity.” 3:30 p.m., Commons Annex lecture hall
- Faculty Senate meeting. 4:30 p.m., Hoogenboom 280

Wednesday, February 28

- Chapel. Drum circle with Eric Nykamp. 10:00 a.m., Chapel
- History Department colloquium. Bobbi Sutherland, “Not for the Cook of a Bourgeois or Even a Simple Knight: Class Identity in the Late Middle Ages and the *Menagier de Paris*.” 3:30 p.m., Meeter Center lecture hall

Thursday, March 1

- Chapel. Sounds of Korean worship with Heh Jin Lee. 10:00 a.m., Chapel
- Mathematics and Statistics colloquium. Tim Pennings (Davenport U). 3:40 p.m., NH 276

Friday, March 2

- Chapel. Student worship team. 10:00 a.m., Chapel
- Biology seminar. Sharon Gill (Western Michigan U), “Exploring Patterns and Drivers of Song Variation in Songbirds.” 1:30 p.m., SB 010
- Christian Perspectives in Science seminar. Loren Haarsma, “Beyond the Free-Will Defense: Natural Evil, Theodicy, and Sacrificial Love.” 3:30 p.m., SB 110