Endings and Beginnings

Tomorrow we celebrate commencement on our Calvin campus, and Monday we will celebrate on our Handlon campus. These events mark the end of an academic year and the successful conclusion to a program of study for many of our students. In July, we will complete our nearly 100-year run as a college, and we will close the books on our current 2013–2019 Strengthen, Support, Secure strategic plan. In this season, we will also say goodbye to some of our co-workers who are retiring or moving on to other positions, or whose positions are ending. Sometimes publicly and sometimes privately, we will be celebrating what has been accomplished and lamenting what has been lost.

In the midst of these mixed emotions, we begin new things: We will inaugurate Calvin University, a vision statement to guide our work through 2030, and a strategic plan to implement the first few years of that vision. We will hire new co-workers, perhaps into positions for which we currently have no names. We will create a university structure through which we will live out that vision statement and strategic plan. We will develop a new core curriculum that helps us prepare students to think deeply, to act justly, and to live wholeheartedly as Christ’s agents of renewal in the world. These new things are not small, and they can seem daunting. Are we strong enough, clever enough, wise enough to accomplish all this?

Upon the recent death of my father, a dear colleague shared with me these words from George Eliot’s Middlemarch, where Eliot asserts the power – in ways we cannot even fully discern – of ordinary people:

But the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive: for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.

Eliot’s words ring true about my father, and they are equally true of the people that make up this place. So much of what makes Calvin excellent is the work of ordinary people who are living out their calling to be faithful in steady, unassuming ways. They are kind, meticulous, persistent, and thoughtful. When these people talk about the success of their work, they point to God, who is faithful and present; to wisdom that has felt like a gift; and to colleagues, who have offered encouragement and help. Alone, none of us could accomplish the work we are beginning. Together, and with God’s help, we can bring it to a good end.

Cheryl Brandsen, provost

July 10 Calvin University Dedication and Celebration

On July 10, 2019, the 510th birthday of Reformer John Calvin, Calvin College will officially become Calvin University. To mark this historical milestone, you’re invited to a day of dedication, thanksgiving, and celebration. If you’re in town on July 10, we’d love to have you and your family join us!
Congratulations

Joe Kuilema was named professor of the year for 2019 by vote of Calvin’s senior class.

Upcoming Conference

The Association for the Advancement of Dutch-American Studies (AADAS) will hold its biennial conference at Calvin (PCC) June 14–15. The conference theme is Dutch Americans/Canadians and Education. If interested in attending the conference or pre-conference activities (genealogical research workshop or field trip to Dutch-American sites in Grand Rapids) visit the website or contact Herm De Vries.

Fall Faculty and Staff Conference

Please mark your calendar now for the annual Fall Conference for Faculty and Staff on August 22, 2019.

From the Faculty Activity Reports

- Frans van Liere (History), “Approaches to the Medieval Bible” (lecture, Center for Medieval Studies Seminar, York, United Kingdom, May 7, 2019).

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