

Willamette University
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The campus is strangely quiet the week after graduation. Not only have the graduates departed (334 bachelors, 146 law, 60 management, and 94 MAT degrees) and the cheering died down, but also Assistant to the Chaplains Holli Davenport is looking uncharacteristically relaxed . . . since Annual Conference is taking a brief vacation from Willamette this year.

Nevertheless, your church-related University has been characteristically busy all year long. Here are a few bits of news that the Conference will enjoy knowing about.

Multicultural work. A delegation of Maori weavers visited us in September and opened a show in the Hallie Ford Museum. The visitors from New Zealand not only exhibited their textile art, but also met with Willamette Valley tribes to discuss common issues of indigenous peoples in postcolonial situations. Later in the year Willamette's student Native American Enlightenment Association hosted the Fourth Annual Pow Wow. And Prof. Rebecca Dobkins has organized a for-credit mentoring program that allows undergraduates to work with students at the Chemawa Indian School. The campus honored Black History Month by holding the school's first Africa Day Celebration February 23. The Salem community was invited to eat African food, dance to live African music, shop in an African market, listen to African stories, view an African film and participate in a panel discussion on Africa today.

Notable presentations. Among visitors to campus this year were Atkinson lecturers Azar Nafisi, author of the national bestseller *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books*, and Ira Glass, host and producer of the National Public Radio program *This American Life*; the Grammy-award winning a capella group, *Sweet Honey in the Rock*, who highlighted our week-long celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; Mark Danner, a nationally recognized politics and foreign policy journalist who focused on the war in Iraq; and former Ambassador Joseph C. Wilson IV, author of *The Politics of Truth: Inside the Lies that Led to War and Betrayed My Wife's CIA Identity* and *What I Didn't Find in Africa*.

Interesting student honors. Willamette students are always winning fascinating national grants and scholarships. One of particular interest to Oregon and Idaho UMs is the SHEAR/Mellon Undergraduate Fellowship recently awarded to Elizabeth Humphrey '07. One of 10 college students nationwide to receive it, she will spend three weeks in Philadelphia this summer doing research with historians from the McNeil Center for Early American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Humphrey, who grew up in Dallas, Oregon, plans to delve into Jason Lee and the Oregon mission. She is seeking to learn more about Lee's background and the larger missionary culture of his time in hopes of discovering his world view and motivations.

Lilly-related news. Two Lilly Project “poster kids,” have just graduated with theological flare. Mike Le Chevallier, a 2003 Lilly Summer Intern and a 2005 Lilly Scholar, won a prestigious Watson graduate fellowship to examine “A Faith of Their Own: A Study of Inculturation in Africa.” He plans to visit Uganda, Tanzania, Burkina Faso and Ethiopia and find how Christianity – particularly Catholicism – has blended with traditional African cultures. Closer to home, senior Kirsten Wesselhoeft, a 2004 Lilly Scholar, won a Willamette presidential scholarship, allowing her to focus on a major project, a stunning essay on the continuing relevance of Reinhold Niebuhr in the current political and theological situation. Kirsten will be attending Harvard Divinity School in the fall.

Lilly also helped fund the “Take a Break” program again this year, highlighted by a student trip to the Louisiana coast devastated by Hurricane Katrina. Working with the United Methodist Storm Recovery Center, the students, including Lindsey Mizell '07, a member of the Seaside UMC, lived simply, slept on the floor of a local church and cooked their own meals. They worked side by side with homeowners and spent days shoveling mud and tearing out walls and floors. “The destruction was overwhelming,” reported Mizell. “We were in areas that had seen extreme water damage, but there was a possibility of saving them, so we struck the houses down to the studs.” Mizell was so moved by the experience she declared a leave of absence for the 2006-07 school year, and will return to the area to do volunteer work.

Finally, the Project continued its summer intern program, giving vocational experience last summer at five Salem churches or chaplaincies: Morningside UMC, First UCC, First Presbyterian, Salem Hospital, and the Willamette Valley Hospice. This summer interns are ready to experience ministry at Morningside UMC, First UMC, First UCC, First Presbyterian, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and Salem Hospital.

By the way, the Project received good news this past year that Willamette University has received an additional \$500,000 matching grant from the Lilly Endowment to extend it and make it self-sustaining. The Project offers multiple opportunities for students to identify their life’s calling.

Mainstream Christian Fellowship. Spearheaded by several bright and avid undergraduates – UMs and other “mainliners” – the Chaplains have sponsored a new fellowship/study/service group on campus. Know by the acronym Q.U.A.D. – Quite Unusual Approaches to the Divine – and with a nod to the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, the group has met a perceived need on campus, and has leadership who can carry it on into the 2006-07 school year.

Professorial pre-eminence! Two faculty members received special notice this year. Economics professor Jerry Gray became Oregon Professor of the year in 2005 – the eighth time Willamette University has been so honored since 1990. And last summer Hatfield Professor of Politics Richard Ellis published, *To the Flag: The Unlikely History of the Pledge of Allegiance*. “The Pledge speaks to the American values of



liberty and justice for all, which resonates with people to this day,” said Ellis, “but it also speaks to American anxieties about inadequate patriotism and newcomers.”

We look forward to Annual Conference on Willamette’s campus in June 2007!

Meantime check us out at

www.willamette.edu/

www.willamette.edu/dept/chaplain/

www.willamette.edu/dept/lilly/