Kuyper College professor teaches in Cuba

Gary Teja, professor of cross-cultural studies and dean of distance education at Kuyper College, recently spent a week in Cuba teaching Cuban pastors and lay leaders of the Christian Reformed Church.

Since 1959, when Fidel Castro took the reins of the government of this island nation, Cuba’s population has more than doubled from six to thirteen million. While religious institutions are carefully monitored by the government, there is a certain amount of freedom for Cuba

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Intercollegiate sports — a first for Kuyper College

"Establishing an athletic program is consistent with the mission of the College and would be beneficial to students, programs, and the greater College community." —Kuyper College Board of Trustees

In April 2006, after 18 months of study, the Kuyper College Board of Trustees overwhelmingly approved a recommendation from the College’s Athletic Taskforce to establish an athletic program as part of its co-curricular offerings.

The Athletic Taskforce’s recommendation was the result of extensive individual and group research, enhanced through input from athletic directors, coaches, and academic vice presidents of various Christian and Bible colleges throughout the country.

"The athletic program will have a focus that parallels our mission," said Kuyper’s president, Nick Kroeze. "We want the spiritual development of athletes to be as important as competition." With this in mind, Kuyper has applied for membership in the National Christian College Athletic Association, an organization dedicated to helping its member schools equip student-athletes and coaches with the necessary tools to make a positive and meaningful impact for Christ.

As the program begins to take shape there are certain objectives which must be met. These include:

- Bringing on board a Christian athletic director and coaches who understand

Sports

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Debby watched two young boys aged six and eight as they tried to get into their house after school. The door was locked. They kicked, yelled and swore for ten minutes trying to get in. They gave up and left when no one answered. This left her with a lasting impression of the unfairness of this situation. She also wondered what was out there for them. She was new to Winnipeg’s North End and the reports she’d heard were not very positive. "I remembered how my own mother was always home when we got off the bus," she said, "often waiting with a hug, tea and crackers. There needs to be a safe place for young people to go,"}

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Debby Smit, class of 1996, brings God’s grace into today’s culture through her work with children.

Kuyper College equips students with a biblical, Reformed worldview to serve effectively Christ’s church and his world.
What is correctly called our positioning line, you may more readily call a tagline—it’s the "catchy" way of grabbing people's attention so that they want to look deeper into what the College is about. While a positioning line should always be a sentence that summarizes the essence of an organization, many are anything but that. Colleges use taglines all the time. Often they come up with creative, humorous or matter-of-fact descriptors of themselves. Here are a few by way of example:

- Point Loma Nazarene University: A Journey of the Mind and Soul
- Ozarka College: A Short Drive to Great Distances
- Colorado Christian University: Peak Experiences
- University of Houston: Get A Life!
- University of Alaska: Latitude with Attitude

While some institutions enjoy writing taglines that are figurative or fun, the opportunity to use a positioning line to say something more about our institution’s mission is one we didn’t want to let pass. By now you’ve seen the Kuyper College positioning line in red below our logo: Bringing God’s Grace into Today’s Culture. I really like how this phrase speaks directly to our mission. I also like its emphasis on the straightforward, practical application of God’s Word.

In addition, when our positioning line is used in conjunction with our logo, its colors speak of our Savior. The gold in our logo symbolizes the kingship of Christ, the purple—his priesthood, and the red his redeeming blood.

Just like our positioning line and our logo, our newsletter is a way for us to affirm that we are clear on our mission and serious about our calling to be God’s instruments of grace. We love to share these stories with you! In this issue you will read accounts of various activities and people who are engaged in plans to further our impact in God’s kingdom by preparing students for ministry-directed vocations. As you read, please also pray...and rejoice that God has blessed us to continue his work through Kuyper College. Thank you for being part of his blessing to us!

Dr. Nicholas V. Kroeze
President

Kuyper College to host seminar on the emergent church movement

Dr. Mel Flikkema, provost of Kuyper College, announced that the College will host a three-part seminar—"Voices of Emergence."

"We seek to provide a forum for intelligent discussion on a wide range of issues confronting orthodox Christian thought," said Dr. Flikkema. “Our aim is to help others live and better communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ to our ever-changing culture."

"Many people today are considering a variety of ways to worship and follow Christ," continued Flikkema. "This has caused some to question long-held standards and practices of our faith. Is this cause for alarm? Is what is being taught and practiced heretical or should we take into consideration these concepts and actions? Is the Emergent Movement a threat to the historical church or a voice to consider?" "Therefore, we are offering an opportunity to the Christian community of West Michigan to learn more about the Emergent Church Movement."

The seminars will be led by Doug Pagitt, Tim Keel and Chris Seay—three experts on the subject of the emergent church. The first seminar was conducted on September 15th and 16th. The second is scheduled for October 20th and 21st. The final seminar will be held on November 10th and 11th.

For more information on the Voices of Emergence Seminar, contact the Kuyper College Admissions office at 800-511-3749 or e-mail dvanderkodde@kuyper.edu.
The Charitable Gift Annuity can provide a lifetime income, a tax deduction, and a gift to the college. In fact, a close look at the Charitable Gift Annuity reveals a true win-win proposition. The gift annuity makes it possible to receive high returns on an asset for the rest of an individual's life. But that is only half the story. The gift annuity ultimately results in a charitable contribution. So, while you can take steps to secure a high annuity payment for the rest of your life, you can also realize your philanthropic goals.

Once the gift annuity is established, a current-year income tax deduction is available. In addition, part of each annuity payment made may be tax free, while income payments are made for life. Annuity rates—the rate for income payments made—are based on age. See chart below for examples of rates at different ages.

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For more information contact Ken Capisciolto, vice president for Advancement at kcapisciolto@kuyper.edu or at 616-988-3670.

Social work in Liberia

Judi Ravenhorst-Meerman is an associate professor of social work and director of social work field practicum at Kuyper College

In July, I had the unique opportunity to travel to Liberia with two social work colleagues from Calvin College, Dr. Cheryl Brandsen and Dr. Beryl Hugen. We were invited and hosted by faculty and administrators from Mother Patern College in Monrovia. Mother Patern College of Health Sciences is a small Catholic College that survived Liberia’s 1989-2003 civil-war. Currently Mother Patern offers an associate degree in social work and wishes to expand the program to a four-year baccalaureate program. Ours was a fact-finding trip to discuss collaborative opportunities between Mother Patern, Kuyper and Calvin colleges in the area of social work education.

While in Liberia we were able to see first-hand the devastation the civil war has left on the lives of the people. Although Liberia is rebuilding, the country’s infrastructure is a long way off from recovery. There is no garbage collection system, no mail system, and limited water and electricity. The people at Mother Patern told stories of fighting and violence. Women were especially victimized and many were raped and tortured. This violence led women to be marginalized and disempowered. Liberia’s children have grown up thinking this is the norm.

Mother Patern began providing training in trauma awareness, and in 1997 began an associate degree of social work program. Students are now asking for a four-year baccalaureate program. This view is reinforced by Sister Barbara Brilliart, a senior administrator, who said, “the people of Liberia need social workers.”

The challenge with social work education in Liberia is that currently there are only four master’s-level social workers in the entire country. There’s also a lack of credentialed faculty, which is a barrier to starting the program.

There is no Western context that correlates with many of the things I witnessed in Liberia. It will be important for me to bring this perspective into my classroom at Kuyper to challenge our social work students on what we consider norms and best practices. It is so important to think beyond our personal lives and professional experiences to a world where life is very different. I am thankful for the opportunity to travel to Liberia and hope I can return. I was challenged to experience life in a less comfortable environment. Now back home, where my material needs are met, that experience continues to challenge me to evaluate my wants, my needs and my teaching.

“In My Words” is a feature of The Kuyper College News highlighting first-person stories by Kuyper College faculty.

GIVING OPTIONS

The Charitable Gift Annuity—a winning combination

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Sports

and are committed to Kuyper’s mission, the athletic program philosophy, and the accountability of their staff.

- Recruiting student athletes who understand and are committed to Kuyper’s mission and the athletic program philosophy.

Recruiting young adults who desire to be a Kuyper College student as their first priority, and an athlete as their second. In addition, there will be an outreach component built into the athletic program. Kuyper’s outreach will be extended to opposing teams and the community through sportsmanship, relationship building, prayer or devotions, and mission trips. As a unique institution of higher education with a calling to carry out God’s Great Commission, Kuyper College athletes can be “salt and light” as they travel, compete, and witness in Christian and non-Christian settings.

Sports continued from cover
Cuba
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churches to assemble and hold services, run youth programs and teach seminars such as those developed by Professor Teja.

During a five day period Professor Teja taught more than twenty 45-minute sessions on Non-Formal Education, which included a component on spiritual formation. The sessions took place in the city of Jagüey Grande in Matanzas province, where the Cuban CRC has its national offices.

He also visited three congregations with whom he shared some of his teachings. In addition, he preached during Sunday services in a church in Havana, Cuba’s capital city.

"In spite of many setbacks, including the destruction of worship centers due to several hurricanes in the recent past, the Cuban CRC continues to meet, to grow spiritually and numerically," said Teja. "With the passing of Rev. Erelio Martinez and the election of Rev. David Lee as general secretary, the church is going through a period of leadership transition which always has its set of challenges," he added.

According to Teja, there is a palpable spiritual hunger among the Cuban people. "The tougher things get, it seems the more need there is for the teachings of the Gospel. Many of the people in Cuba need and want to study the Bible. I could have stayed and taught many more sessions and it would not have been enough to reach all the people who wanted to participate."

Least
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she thought. It was then that the Lord gave her the vision to start a drop-in center, a place with a home-like atmosphere for poor children.

Born in Codrington, Ontario, in a small farming community 90 miles east of Toronto, Debby Smit spent the first 20 years of her life in what she describes as a very sheltered environment. After moving to a larger city she worked in the public school system as a teacher’s assistant. She also ran a before-and-after-school day-care program. According to Debby, it was during that time that the Lord began preparing her for what lay ahead. "I did not know what he had in mind, or where, but I knew that I would be working with kids."

The next step in her journey was a move to Winnipeg, where as a volunteer with the Christian Reformed Church’s Project SOW (Serving Our World), she committed to work for one year with mentally challenged adults. While in Winnipeg, she was part of the Hope Center Ministries, living with a group of believers under the oversight of a house couple. "I lived with five other women and the house couple," said Debby. "We had our meals together, did our chores together, and studied the Bible together. During this time I was able to develop a view of community from the inside out." Then one day, while looking out the window of her room at Hope Center Ministry, Debby saw the two young boys, banging and kicking at the door of their home.

The one-year commitment to Project SOW ended, and Debby decided to work with kids by starting a girls club for ages six through twelve. It was during this time that Debby realized that if she wanted to see her vision completely fulfilled she needed to take the next step. "I realized,"
Kuyper College International Invitational Golf Scramble

On September 11th, low and high—handicap golfers assembled for the 14th annual Kuyper College International Invitational Golf Scramble at the Crystal Springs Country Club in Caledonia, Michigan. Over 47 business and individual sponsors, as well as 120 players, the largest number ever for this event since its founding in 1993, helped raise over $55,000. Proceeds from this event help to partly fund the education of many international students. “The Kuyper golf outing is unlike other events because of the international students from around the world who benefit from the proceeds,” said Bob Pettijohn, golf committee member. “It’s also a joy to have so much interaction between the Kuyper College faculty and staff members who serve the golfers throughout the day. This event emphasizes building Christian community for the right reasons.”

Golfers Dave Moreno, Matt Barnes, Gary Koster and John Klein enjoying a good day on the course.

"I realized, that if the vision the Lord had given me was to become real I needed to get an education, I needed to go to Bible school."

— Debby Smit

she said, "that if the vision the Lord had given me was to become real I needed to get an education, I needed to go to Bible school."

Debby graduated from RBC in 1996 with a Bachelor of Religious Education. During her high school years and beyond she had never felt confident about sharing her faith. "At RBC I not only found new ways to live my faith, but to also openly share it," she said. "I was finally able to make a head-to-heart connection—between the factual knowledge that I had accumulated for many years in my mind and my yearning heart."

At RBC Debby found fellowship, connection, and affirmation. She said that the size of the school allowed her to intimately connect with students and professors, while the academic program and her course of studies confirmed her calling and gave her the confidence to continue to move forward. "I studied under a lot of great professors at the College," she said. "Professor Scott encouraged me in the social work aspect of my calling. Professor Shell made the minor-prophets come alive. He also helped me tremendously in my journey of spiritual transformation."

Upon graduation, Debby returned to Winnipeg and to her dream of starting a drop-in center. She was challenged by a friend to turn her dreams into a plan of action. The plan grew, attracting several people that shared Debby’s passion for inner city kids. After much work, much prayer and many miracles, Manitoba House became a reality in 1999. Since then, over 400 children have come through its doors. "They have a safe place to hang out," said Debby, "they are taught about the love and forgiveness of Jesus, and they also get to enjoy 'kid stuff.' Sadly, this is not the case for all kids," she continued. "Those two boys, the ones I saw banging at their door, the ones the Lord used to inspire me and lead me to this work—they’ve had a different experience. They’ve been in and out of the youth jail for various kinds of delinquent behavior. The reality for many children forced to live in poverty is that life can be unpredictable, unstable and even violent."

According to Debby, there have been times of heartache, tears, and worry while trying to figure out what to do with kids no one wants. "There are so many times I’ve felt like giving up—of wanting to get away from this never-ending, and at times overwhelming demand—of trying to understand why things are the way they are," Debby wants to see changed lives and renewed spirits. She wants to see kids and their families healed and restored. "I want them to have a personal relationship with the One who loves them more than I ever could," she said. "I see glimpses of God’s transformation when a boy sings about Jesus and then asks if I will pray for him, and when some girls wonder when VBS will start again. I know there will be a time when the things they’ve learned, when the love they’ve experienced, when the truth that was revealed to them, will bring them freedom to live the purpose God has created for each of them—these precious little ones. That is the hope that keeps me going; that hope, and the prayers of many faithful friends and supporters, and, above all else, the love of Jesus which compels me."
Not everyone is able to come to a college campus to take courses. Work commitments, distance—sometimes across the world—and many other issues prevent many from attending college. In an attempt to meet this rapidly growing need, Kuyper College has begun a distance learning program. Online learning will allow non-traditional students—some who have careers and families—to remain in their present communities and still work toward their degree.

Online courses allow students the opportunity to take college-level courses via the Internet from virtually anywhere in the world. While Kuyper plans to expand this program in the near future, some of the courses presently being offered are non-credit life enrichment courses, such as "Leading the Smaller Congregation," a seven-week seminar designed for pastors of small churches. Kuyper is offering this unique course in partnership with Christian Reformed Home Missions.

Online learning begins with qualified teachers. For example, the Leading the Smaller Congregation module will be taught by a team composed of Gary Teja, professor of cross-cultural studies and dean of distance education at Kuyper College, Dan Ackerman, smaller church ministry team leader at Christian Reformed Home Missions, Peter DeVries, pastor of a small Christian Reformed Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and Larry Meyer, a veteran small church pastor.

Online learning also requires interaction. All students in the course will take part in a discussion forum. The forum gives them the opportunity for sharing and commenting on what others are saying. It takes the place of the face-to-face discussion in the classroom. There is an advantage to using a discussion forum over a face-to-face environment. One student, writing of his experience in a discussion forum, said, "The biggest difference I noticed from typical classroom discussions was that, with time to edit our contributions and without other people waiting their turn to speak, we developed our thoughts more fully and addressed the complexity of topics instead of making a single point at a time."

Because all communication is conducted within a continually open discussion forum, participants can come online when it is most convenient for them. Whatever they post will be there for others in the class at the time they wish to enter into the discussion.

As part of the online experience, each student can also take advantage of "The Coffee House" real-time chat room. The Coffee House serves as a social venue and a place where students can get to know each other and discuss topics in a more casual environment.

Online learning at Kuyper College is available to everyone. All you need is access to the Internet. For more information contact Gary Teja at gteja@kuyper.edu.

A new and powerful charitable giving incentive

The IRA Charitable Rollover Provision, was signed into law this past August by President Bush. Included in the pension reform bill was the IRA rollover provision that provides an exclusion from gross income for certain distributions for charitable purposes of up to $100,000 from traditional individual retirement accounts (IRAs) or Roth IRAs, which would otherwise be included in income. The provision is effective for tax years 2006 and 2007 only. New incentives for gifts of food and book inventory, and S Corporation stock are also included. For more information please contact Ken Capisciotto, vice president for Advancement at kcapisciotto@kuyper.edu or at 616-988-3670.
Social work in La Republica Dominicana

This past May, Professor Greg Scott led a group of Kuyper College students on a 16-day trip to the Dominican Republic. The group, made up of students involved in the social work and missions programs at the College, traveled to the capital city of Santo Domingo to work with alumni Alex and Allison Brito. There, in the children's orthopedic hospital of CURE International, a worldwide ministry of physical and spiritual healing for disabled children, they provided care and comfort to young patients who can not afford medical care.

The group was also privileged to minister in the orphanages that many of the hospitalized children call home. The students were deeply moved by the poverty and desperate living conditions children experience in these orphanages. Yet, the group was humbled at the generosity of the people. "They gave to us out of their poverty," said Scott. "They overwhelmed us with their kindness. In a very real and palatable way it showed all of us how God's grace can still bring blessings even in the worst of situations."

While in Santo Domingo, Professor Scott was asked by CURE International and the University of Santo Domingo to teach a three-day seminar on social work techniques. While the Dominican Republic does not have an organized or sanctioned social work profession, every day dedicated individuals are doing social work the best they can. Ninety-six individuals attended the seminars. Afterwards, the University granted Professor Scott the highest honor by making him "Un Hijo de La Universidad,"—A Son of The University.

During part of the trip the entire group ventured to the mountains of Jarabacoa to visit New Horizons Youth Ministry and Group Homes, a tightly structured, residential facility for troubled, at-risk American teenagers who have struggled in other traditional placements. As part of their senior social work field practicum, Kuyper students Rebecca Fredricks and Kelli Haverkamp are at New Horizons providing individual counseling, group work, activity therapy and life skills education.

"Our lives have been changed, God's grace is bountiful and good. We can never take for granted all we have," said Scott. This small island has both broken our hearts and taught us how to love in a more passionate way."

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CLASSNOTES

2000s
Julie Elisa (pronounced "yulee", Elisa means "the Lord saves") was born to Geert (2003) and Eline (2003) de Boo on May 15, 2006, at 4:31 pm in Kiyose, Tokyo, Japan.

Jessie (Faber) Hendricks (2001) and her husband Brett Hendricks, welcomed a baby daughter to their home, Josie Leanne was born July 18, 2006, at 1:23 a.m. Katherine weighed 7 lbs 2 oz and was 18 inches at birth.

Tom Sterk (2007) and Kari Schierbeek (2006) were wed on July 29, 2006, in McBain, MI.


1990s
Linda Haveman (1998) successfully defended her dissertation on May 4, 2006, at MSU. She earned a Ph.D. in human ecology with a major in child development and cognate area in educational administration.

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Thanks to all who have sent information to let your classmates know about the exciting happenings in your lives. Please continue to keep us updated so your friends can celebrate with you. When you e-mail Jill at jheyboer@kuyper.edu, don't forget to include your contact information (address, phone, etc.).
STUDENTS TO WATCH

Jillian Bos
Hometown: Burlington, Ontario, Canada
Year: Class of 2008
Major: Pre-Seminary

Jill Bos grew up in a Christian home, with a mom and dad who loved the Lord, the teaching and fellowship of a great church, the nurturing care of teachers at a "wonderful" Christian school, and the "fun" of being one of three children. However, it was not until she was in 8th grade that her faith became her own after attending a youth conference. "What I learned there about commitment and the giving-up of self for the cause of the gospel revolutionized my life," she said. "It has had a continual effect in everything I think and everything I do as a Christian."

It was a college fair at her school that she first heard about the College. Many students were looking at the big universities, so she decided to check RBC. "It turned out that what RBC offered is exactly what I was looking for," said Jill.

At Kuyper, Jill has found much more than just a course of studies. "There are so many things I love about this school," she said. According to her, the tight, yet open and caring community of students, staff and faculty, the fact that she can spend time talking to professors outside the classroom, the high academic standards, and the spiritually enriching environment have confirmed her decision to come to the College many times over.

Although she still has two more years to go, Jill has decided to attend Calvin Seminary after graduating from Kuyper. To think it all started by the Lord directing her to talk to an RBC admissions counselor!

KUYPER COLLEGE EVENTS

We went out to the ball game
Alumni, students and staff got together at a Michigan Whitecaps baseball game during a special Dutch Night celebration. The evening turned out to be special indeed for Rachel Arens, a senior at the College. After being invited to come down on the field to participate in a between inning activity, Rachel was named Dutch Queen. Rather than donning the customary tiara of royalty, Rachel honored ballpark tradition by putting on a pair of wooden shoes.

Save the date for next year's Spring Celebration Gala — April 19, 2007