Kuyper College equips students with a biblical, Reformed worldview to serve effectively Christ's church and his world.

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Three years of enrollment growth

Kuyper College total student enrollment has increased by 16 percent over the last three years. There are several reasons for this increase in student growth. Two of them are the awareness program and recruitment program developed by Kuyper’s advancement and admissions departments to take advantage of the new positioning of the College. As always, academics at Kuyper continue to be the centerpiece of the school’s foundation through a program that integrates the Bible with a curriculum undergirded by a Reformed worldview. That program continues to be strengthened and to grow—three years ago it offered 16 ministry and professional degree programs; it now offers 24. In addition, Kuyper professors and staff are in demand as speakers at academic and other collegiate forums. That, plus a new intercollegiate athletic program that

At the edge of death there’s life

“We are gathered here today to remember Liam. To remember how he touched and impacted our lives. All men die, but few men ever really live. Liam was a man who really lived. He lived life as a courageous man. Liam lived a life of reaching. He reached out to serve his country as a member of the elite 1st Battalion Parachute Regiment. He reached out to serve the people of Iraq so they could realize a better life for themselves. Will they remember him? Probably not, but there is no doubt their children will live in the freedom he helped to provide. We mourn the loss of a brother in arms. We know that the bonds of friendship we share are strong. Bonds forged by the fire of shared hardship, shared loss and a desire to care for the men on our left and right flanks. Yes, we will continue to feel Liam’s reach; however, it is not only his reach we feel, but God’s. Today is Good Friday, a day of great meaning for Christians. It is a day when we remember God reaching down in love to us through the cross. And so, God reaches down to comfort us as we mourn. He reaches down to strengthen our weakness. He reaches down to carry our load. I take comfort in the fact that Liam believed there was a better life after this one. We know he lives on in a better place. On this day, we ask almighty God to grant us patience and steadfast resolve in all that is to come.”

The International Student Scholarship Fund

One of the reasons Kuyper College has been very intentional over the years in bringing international students to Kuyper is the understanding that when they graduate, they can go places that will never be open to Americans, at least not in the same way.

“Research shows that nationals make the best missionaries because they are intimately familiar with and at ease in the culture and customs of their country,” said Mary VanderMeer, international student services coordinator at Kuyper. “They do not need to go to language school, nor spend a couple of years getting acquainted with culture, food, currency, historical or national customs.”

According to VanderMeer, it is because Kuyper integrates the Bible with a high-quality academic curriculum and a distinctively Reformed worldview that it can provide these students an educational experience that is not only life-changing, but world-changing. “It is also because the knowledge that they will be able to make a difference in the lives of people in their own countries, that students from all over the world—identified as leaders by Christian organizations in their own countries—come to Kuyper every year,” continued VanderMeer. “At Kuyper they learn how to understand and live Christ so they can bring him to their respective home countries when they graduate.”

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How exciting to begin a new school year! My friends at Rotary Club tell me how fortunate we are in education to have the opportunity for a “new beginning” each year. They’re right—there is something about a fresh start that energizes us all as we anticipate the character and impact of a new class of students entering Kuyper College. Very evident in this is the gracious and generous blessing of God as we strive to encourage more students into lives of service and ministry: this year is our highest enrollment ever! Praise God!

Our new beginning, however, is couched in a much bigger context than a fresh, annual flow of new events. We are in our third year of the repositioning of the College in which we have promoted and explained the mission and programs of the College like never before. The message we are sending about being a Christian leadership college is being well-received and responded to. This is particularly exciting for us as we see our Bible-based, Reformed curriculum combined with our fresh emphasis on applying those programs in a new manner to bring God’s grace into today’s culture, resulting in heightened interest in the programs we offer—while our students continue to demonstrate a strong commitment to ministry and service. What a blessing!

The context of our new school year and the College’s repositioning goes further back yet as we continue to recognize the work and dedication of many trustees, professors, staff and students all the way to the time of our founding in 1939. We are grateful that we are able to create a new place on campus—The Heritage Wall—to recognize, honor and celebrate the people and programs that have helped make it possible for us to have the exciting future we are looking at today.

Yes, it’s true that having a fresh start with a new school year is a wonderful benefit. Even more, however, is the energy and motivation we derive from being part of an unbroken chain of intense activity stretching back 2000 years to the Great Commission. That is the greatest blessing and benefit in it all—that our new year is nestled within the context of “the old, old story of Jesus and his love.” There is a freshness—not just every new year, but every new day—in that, which makes our lives and our College a wonderfully fulfilling experience to be part of. I am very glad that you can share in this with us as you embrace the mission of Kuyper College!

Dr. Nicholas V. Kroeze
President

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Return to Liberia

Two years ago, Dr. Judi Ravenhorst Meerman, associate professor of social work and director of social work field practicum at Kuyper, traveled to Liberia—a country recovering from years of civil war and unrest—with Drs. Cheryl Brandsen and Beryl Hugen, colleagues from Calvin College. They went at the invitation of Mother Patern College of Health Sciences in Monrovia, Liberia’s capital. At that time, Mother Patern was offering an associate degree in social work and wished to expand the program to a four-year baccalaureate program. (Trained social workers who practice in Liberia have been educated elsewhere.) During that trip, discussions were held regarding collaborative opportunities between Mother Patern, Kuyper and Calvin colleges in the area of social work education.

This past June, Drs. Meerman, Brandsen and Hugen returned to Mother Patern College to assist in the start of the baccalaureate program that will offer a B.S.W. with concentration in the areas of HIV-AIDS and post-civil-war-traumatized women. What they found was very encouraging. “Our work consisted of refining curriculum and identifying field placement options with the program director of the social work program at Mother Patern,” said Meerman. “Twenty freshmen were admitted into the program in the fall of 2007,” she continued, “with the hope of adding 20 more in the fall of 2008.” According to Meerman, the first class to graduate from Mother Patern with BSW degrees will do so in the spring of 2011.

Professor Meerman and colleagues review curriculum needs at Mother Patern
I always enjoy people

Teresa Renkema  
Associate Professor of Intercultural Communication

I always enjoy people’s reactions when I tell them that I teach English. Many of them say, “Oh, I had a hard time with English” or “Well, I’d better watch what I say now.” Although many others do not see the joy of grammar and writing, I love it! What I find most rewarding is Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL) and passing on this passion to others. This kind of teaching combines the need for language teachers, my professional interest in language and my calling to welcome the stranger in God’s world.

As a world language, the demand for well-trained, knowledgeable English teachers is tremendous not only in the United States—because of our large recent immigrant population—but also in developing countries around the world. English opens the door to better jobs and, therefore, a better life.

For Christian English language teachers, the opportunity to teach English well and to answer the call of Christ to be a witness of his love is a tremendous opportunity. Especially in the United States, where new immigrants live in our communities, a church-based ESL program can become a very effective answer to God’s command to “welcome the stranger within our gates.” Combining English language teaching with hospitality meets needs. It opens doors to friendship, adjustment to the culture and the sharing of values and lives.

Not long ago, several of my students heard a woman speak on how she was introduced to Christianity and God’s love for her through a church ESL class. They came away convinced of God’s call on their lives to do this. It is a way to open the doors to evangelize people we otherwise would not reach. While I caution people not to view TESOL as simply an evangelism tool, the very action of teaching English well and caring enough to do so is also a witness to the one who has called us.

It is in that calling that I see the sense of belonging that is characteristic of God’s kingdom. God calls us to belong to him and to call others to that belonging. It is the essence of our Christian mission. Teaching English to non-English speakers gives them the tools to belong in our society and also, in many Christian programs—to become familiar with the work of God in their lives.

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

S T E W A R D S H I P

At Kuyper College, we place special emphasis on making a high-quality Christian college education as affordable as possible. As a matter of fact, as a result of our cost reduction program, Kuyper’s tuition is significantly lower—on average $6,000 less per year—when compared with other Christian colleges. At Kuyper over 90 percent of Kuyper students receive financial aid and scholarships.

One of the ways by which Kuyper keeps our education within the reach of many is by offering an abundance of scholarship opportunities. Many of these donor-funded scholarships are based on financial need, course of study, area of interest or country of origin. They include:

- The Kuyper Achievement Awards, Presidential Honors Award, Provost Honors Award, Dean’s Honors Award and Faculty Honors Award—which offer from $1,000 to $6,000 depending on scholarship and requirements.

In addition, Kuyper offers a variety of endowed scholarships that are awarded on the basis of several criteria including financial need, career interest, academic achievement and special status. Added to this list are the Christian Leadership Scholarships sponsored by Kuyper alumni and several multi-cultural scholarships designed to encourage a more diverse student body and a community that celebrates cultural diversity.

Kuyper also offers scholarships through the International Student Scholarship Fund. These scholarships allow students from all over the world to come to Kuyper to be equipped to bring the message of Christ back to their home countries. On average 95 percent of the cost for these students is met by the Fund.

For more information on how to sponsor or contribute towards a Kuyper College Scholarship, please contact Ken Capisciolto at 616-988-3676 or by e-mail at kcapisciolto@kuyper.edu.

Heritage Wall update

The Heritage Wall project is nearing completion. The Wall has been developed to recognize and uphold the rich and unfolding history of the College. On the ground floor, between the Administration building and the hallway, leading to the Vos Chapel, the continuing biblical and Reformed legacy of the institution will be viewed by present and future generations through the combination of archival material and state-of-the-art audio and visual presentation.
Captain Peter Hofman, chaplain, 3rd Battalion 6th Field Artillery, United States Army, spoke those words during memorial services for a fallen comrade. A member of the College’s class of 2002, Peter is currently stationed at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Warrior, in northern Iraq—a long way from the family farm in the small town of Waupun, Wisconsin, where he grew up as the ninth child in a family of 11 children. He describes those early years of his life as having had a profound influence on his desire to serve others and his commitment to the gospel. “I was raised in a solid Christian home filled with plenty of love,” said Peter. “My father and mother had a secure faith in God that they passed on to all of us. They not only taught us the Bible, but lived it before us through a life of obedience and total dedication and service to God, family and the church. That example showed us how to live it as well.” Church was a very important part of Peter’s family’s life. He remembers how he and his 10 siblings would follow his parents as they would file into their church and fill a whole bench during Sunday morning and evening services. “Although my dad had a smile that rarely left his face, he kept us in line at church,” Peter continued. “One time I acted up in church and before my father could even get me out of the sanctuary I remember yelling out, ‘Don’t spank me!’ ” However, it wasn’t all smooth sailing during Peter’s childhood years. At the age of eight his father died after a painful two-year battle with cancer. While Peter’s older brothers managed the dairy farm, the workload increased for every member of the family. “We all pitched in,” said Peter. “I had a paper route, and like the rest of the family, more chores to do on the farm. Yet all these challenges helped us grow even closer together.”

During Peter’s high school years, he always thought that he would be a farmer. But every now and then he would feel God’s prompting to become a preacher. However, whenever the thought came, he would quickly dismiss it as preposterous. “After all, I was supposed to take over the family farm,” he said. Four years after high school the thought continued to swirl in Peter’s mind until one night when his pastor came over to his house and asked him about his future plans. Peter shared how God was leading him regarding ministry, but that he had concerns about being too old and that farming was all he knew. “Through the course of the evening, he answered each one of my concerns,” said Peter. “That night I knew that I was going to college to pursue the ministry. I distinctly remember looking up into the starry heavens and crying to God that I was his to use.” Peter’s oldest brother, Henry, had a couple of friends that had graduated from Kuyper, so Peter decided to find out more about the school. After visiting, he enrolled in 1998 as a pre-seminary major. “At the College I received a great well-rounded education that included math, science, psychology and other courses,” said Peter. “But I credit my Christian doctrine and Bible courses for shaping my Reformed identity and worldview.” Peter also credits his professors for the influence they had in helping him grow and be passionate about his relationship with Jesus Christ and the ministry of the gospel. The impact of Kuyper’s professors in his life is illustrated by a story shared by Peter’s wife, Kristi, who is also a Kuyper graduate—class of 2003. “Before he left for Iraq, Peter began mentoring a young neighborhood boy who came from a single-parent home,” said Kristi. “To tell him about Jesus, in addition to the Bible, Peter decided to use Professor Felch’s History of Redemption course. As a matter of fact, during this time he consulted several times with Professor Felch, always finding an attentive ear and insightful suggestions.” During the summer between his freshman and sophomore years, Peter joined the Army Reserves. According to him, that was when he started to feel God’s pull in the direction of the Army chaplaincy.

After graduating, Peter entered Calvin Seminary to pursue a Master of Divinity degree. He also applied to the Army to be a Chaplain.
“My job is to represent Christ to the soldiers...by nurturing the living, caring for the dying and honoring the dead.”

—Peter Hofman

Candidate. Over the next four years he completed three Army summer assignments. After graduating from seminary and being ordained and welcomed as associate pastor of the First Christian Reformed Church of Waupun, Wisconsin, Peter became an active-duty chaplain in the United States Army. His duties as an Army chaplain are varied. “As a chaplain I am more than just a pastor who wears the uniform—I am a soldier as well. I have two roles: religious leader and staff officer,” said Peter. “What we do as chaplains can be summed up in three major functions: we nurture the living, care for the dying and honor the dead. My job,” he continued, “is to represent Christ to the soldiers. I listen to them and comfort them when they are hurting, give them guidance when they are straying, and encourage and challenge them in their faith.”

Peter is due home from his tour of duty in Iraq in late October. That is none too soon for Kristi and the couple's three children: Mark, Petra and Andrew. “While I've been carrying the message of Christ halfway around the world, Kristi has been courageously holding up the home-front,” said Peter. “What attracted me to her when we first met still does today—her faith in God, her strong, independent spirit, her love for her family, her intelligence and her inner beauty. She is a wonderful wife and mother, and very gifted and dedicated ministry partner.”

What is next for Peter? He has applied for Ranger School—one of the most elite leadership and physically demanding schools in the Army. As a chaplain in the Special Forces Rangers, he would serve alongside other Rangers on forward combat lines. In answering a question as to why he wanted to put himself in harm's way by becoming a Ranger, Peter said: “I have a distinct leadership responsibility through my faith in Jesus Christ who said, ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me.' Therefore, following Jesus as a chaplain means serving my fellow soldiers no matter what the cost.”

The Ben Boersma Commemorative Putter

The Annual Kuyper International Invitational Golf Scramble is held every year, with proceeds from the event going to the support of the International Student Scholarship Fund. One of the traditions of the tournament is the awarding of the Ben Boersma Commemorative Putter to the player making the longest putt. Named in honor of Ben Boersma, former Chairman of the Kuyper Board of Trustees—the putter is a one-of-a-kind original, handcrafted every year by Nick Kroeze, president of Kuyper College. According to Kroeze, the putter was designed to reflect the message, symbolism and appearance of the College’s Vos Chapel Unity Communion Table. One of the two scripture verses carved on the front of the table comes from the following text:

*You are worthy to take the scroll and open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.*

Revelation 5:9-10

The woods used in the head of the putter are of the same configuration and type found in the table,” said Kroeze. “In order, as they radiate out from the black ebony in the center, are: Mexican rosewood, English walnut, Honduras mahogany, red oak, honey locust and hard maple. The Presidential Seal and date are laser-etched into the putter's head.”

Kroeze added that “Through this symbolism, we at Kuyper wish to connect, with sincere gratitude, those who support the mission of the College with the people who benefit from that support—those whose contributions have directly enabled Kuyper College, through the International Student Scholarship Fund, to train more international students for ministry in the global community.”

Note: Due to weather, this year's Tournament was canceled. However, the annual auction will be held online. For details, please go to www.kuyper.edu.
Enrollment Growth

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has also turned a fresh spotlight on the College, have increased recognition of the school. However, at Kuyper, it is the institutional responsibility of the advancement and admissions departments to respectively increase awareness, favor-to-institution, and student and parental interest in the College. With the help and support of the Kuyper staff and faculty, they’ve been able to do these tasks well.

For starters, there is the College Website which, in a little more than two years since its debut, has had two major makeovers. Research shows that Websites are one of the major tools used by prospective students to gather information on colleges. Kuyper research, based on last year’s incoming freshman class, indicated strong approval for the ease of use of the College’s site and for the information it provided. Yet, Kuyper is not resting. Presently, the advancement department is working on a new Website makeover that will be effective during the first quarter of 2009. In addition, as part of the integrated marketing communications plan, Kuyper is expanding its media reach. The program, scheduled for the ’08-’09 year, includes the use of denominational publications, general and business newspapers, magazines, radio, homeschooled and Christian school publications and Websites, airport electronic messaging, billboards and Internet. These media outlets will be featuring new ads developed to share the Kuyper central graphic and copy message, which matches the message used in all of the admissions materials. This integration allows for the reinforcement of the Kuyper message to one of our most important audiences—prospective students and their families.

Taking advantage of the increased awareness of Kuyper, the admissions department’s program continues to innovate. Through dedicated research, they have been able to keep abreast of prospective student preferences. This has allowed them to craft the relevancy of the Kuyper message-delivery mediums to achieve maximum impact. For example, later this year they will start using Google AdWords, which will allow Kuyper to direct prospective students from specific zip codes who are searching for a Christian college to the Kuyper Website. This will help Kuyper to focus part of its recruitment budget on the geographic areas that historically have yielded the greatest student enrollment numbers. The admissions department has also developed new banners that match the media and brochure messaging which will be used for off-campus engagements (college fairs, high school and church visits, etc.) and a new way to print materials that will allow for more extensive individualization of message.

Finally, there’s one new and unique item that has been developed by the admissions department—an original, commissioned poster. This poster will be placed in both Christian and public high schools. A new original will be issued every year. The first one in the series—emblematic of Kuyper College—is simply titled “Leadership.”

Scholarship Fund

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To reinforce her point, VanderMeer shared the stories of one alumnus—Arbin Pokharel, and one present student—Rachel Goulart.

“Arbin was born in Kathmandu, Nepal, to Hindu parents. He was orphaned at a young age, and with his sister went to live in a Christian children’s home. He came to faith during those years. As a teenager, he applied to Kuyper for support from the International Scholarship Fund, was accepted and graduated with a major in cross-cultural studies in 1999. After Kuyper, Arbin attended seminary and then returned to Kathmandu, where he pastors a church and also serves as dean and professor in a seminary. Once a week, the young people of his church have the opportunity to invite their non-believing friends to a special gathering. On average, over 80 young people attend, discussing topics such as drug addiction, abortion and AIDS, among others. Arbin closes each session with a summary of the Christian perspective on the discussed subject and by sharing the gospel.”

“Rachel Goulart is a senior in the social work program. Born in Brazil, she moved to Senegal, West Africa, as a 2-year-old with her missionary parents. After 15 years in Senegal, the family returned to Brazil. Rachel is fluent in her native Portuguese, French—Senegal’s official language, and English. Last year, Rachel led Harambe, the international and multi-cultural group on campus. Rachel recently spent four months in Brazil completing a social work internship. After graduation she intends to serve as a social worker in Africa working with refugees.”

According to VanderMeer, as a result of the generosity of hundreds of individuals who, on a yearly basis, contribute to the Kuyper College International Scholarship Fund, international students are ministering all over the world. “However,” she concluded, “sadly, every year Kuyper turns down many applications from qualified international students because we lack the funds to help them with tuition, room and board.”
First Hurricane Gustav hit. Then tropical storm Hanna packed a second wallop as it tore through the north coast of Haiti—the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere—leaving over 150 dead and isolating the city of Gonaives where over 100,000 spent days without food or water. With barely enough time to catch its breath, the country could only watch as Hurricane Ike came in, causing more death and destruction. Heather DePooter, class of 2004, is serving under Christian Reformed World Missions as second grade teacher at Quisqueya Christian School in Port-au-Prince, Haiti’s capital. Following is her report:

“There’s no electricity and many of the roads are flooded. In Port-au-Prince, we mostly got rain, lots of rain. The south coast of Haiti got even more rain, and the road from Port-au-Prince to the city of Jacmel in the south is impassible due to mudslides. After Gustav, Tropical Storm Hanna hit the north coast, with high winds and driving rain which flooded many areas, leaving hundreds dead. Many people lost everything in this storm. And now, we are feeling the lasting effects of Hurricane Ike. Mercifully, the center of Ike passed to the north of Haiti, but the whole northern peninsula continues to be flooded, as is the southern part of the Island. We need to pray for the people in Haiti—especially in low-lying areas and the mountain sides that are affected by the flooding and landslides. We also need to pray for the food crisis here. Relief agencies are doing their best, but food prices continue to rise, even more now that the country has lost most of the annual crops.”

Let’s keep the people of Haiti and Heather in our prayers, doing what we can to help as the Lord leads.
A sophomore in the Kuyper journalism program, Tuyata was born into a Buddhist home in Mongolia. Her grandfather was a Buddhist lama (priest) and her brother a Buddhist monk. “I grew up in what until 1990 was a communist country, controlled by the Soviet Union,” said Tuyata. According to her, she came from a loving home where education was paramount: “My mother was an executive in the Mongolian Mining Company, while my father was director of housing, food distribution and business for our city—the third largest in Mongolia. Therefore, they knew the value of an education, so it was expected that my two brothers and I would excel at school.” According to Tuyata, religion was also very important in her home. “With my grandfather’s example, we were definitely a Buddhist home, where the tenets of our religion were practiced,” she added.

Tuyata first came in contact with Christianity while attending a summer camp at the age of 14. “I saw a group of kids who seemed very nice. The melody and the lyrics of the songs they were singing attracted my attention,” she said. “I wondered, ‘Who are these people?’” Tuyata approached them during a time when they were praying and after a brief conversation asked them if they could pray for her. They did, and also invited her to visit their church. “I began to visit the church, and at first, while I liked the music, I really did not understand the Bible. But after a while I did begin to understand and accepted Christ,” she said. She was baptized four months later.

Tuyata’s conversion created major tension in her home. Her parents forbade her to attend the church. “My brother became so angry that he threatened me with physical violence. But through all of this, God protected me,” she added. “After a few years of seeing the growth in my Christian faith and the difference that it made in my life, my father, during a time of illness, began to read the Bible. Today, their devotion to Buddha is much less, and my Christianity is no longer an issue at home.”

Tuyata, entered The University at Ulaanbator, Mongolia’s capital city, but left in her junior year to join the Far East Broadcasting Company. There, she quickly rose through the ranks fulfilling long and short-term journalism assignments in Australia, Finland, Germany, the Philippines and China. While at FEBC, she attracted the attention of the chairman of the board, who suggested that she go to the United States and study at a Christian College. After much research, Tuyata chose Kuyper.

“It wasn’t until I began to take Bible courses at Kuyper that I realized that God wanted me to know him more,” said Tuyata. “Studying at Kuyper is helping me to grow in my profession, but more importantly, in my spiritual life. Unlike Mongolia,” she continued, “where the professors have no interaction with students, here at Kuyper professors and staff are approachable and loving.”

Regarding the future Tuyata said: “When I leave Kuyper and go back home, I will not only have the knowledge of journalism but also of the Bible. I want to use what I’ve learned here to be a better broadcast journalist, and to reach the youth of Mongolia with the gospel of Jesus Christ through the production of Christian programming and films.”