

PRESS RELEASE

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Kuyper College Becomes a Work College—The Only One in Michigan

GRAND RAPIDS, MI, July 12, 2021: Dr. Patricia Harris, president of Kuyper College, announced today that the U.S. Department of Education has recognized Kuyper College as a Work College. Thus, Kuyper becomes one of only ten federally recognized work colleges in the nation and the only one in Michigan.

"Anyone who has spent time at Kuyper College will recognize the words in our official seal that form our school's motto—Ora et Labora—Pray and Work. From the very beginning, this idea has been infused into every part of life at the College," said Dr. Harris. "To further this vision, Kuyper College is entering an exciting new period in its history as it now becomes a work college."

Work colleges are institutions committed to the purposeful integration of work, learning, and service, which has been part of Kuyper's DNA since its founding in 1939. "When I came to Kuyper, I saw both excellent and dedicated faculty and staff, and also students who were learning not only inside the classroom but outside as well. And I'm not just talking about internships," said Harris. "Many of the jobs available on campus are filled by students. So, Kuyper College has always been a place that offered work positions to our students," she added.

As required, to become a federally recognized work college, Kuyper developed and implemented a two-year educational work program that included a commitment to service and the value of learning through work across the institution. The program, now known as *KuyperWorks*[™], accomplished those objectives.

KuyperWorks formally links students' on-the-job learning with their in-classroom education. And while a traditional program might require students to take on short internships as part of their degree, work-based learning is a core component of study under *KuyperWorks* for a student's entire educational experience at the College. Students

work on campus or at off-campus organizations 10 hours each week during their first year in the program. As they progress, the opportunity for more hours and leadership roles are made available.

According to Curt Essenburg, Kuyper College's dean of students and work, participation in *KuyperWorks*, will help students build new skills. "When we were designing the program, we focused on fostering four core competencies: Collaboration; Critical Thinking; Effort and Productivity; and Professionalism," said Essenburg. To that end, each semester, students receive a formal evaluation from their supervisor, focusing on identifying opportunities to continue developing each of the core competencies. "In addition to the competencies and skills students develop and the financial advantages they receive, *KuyperWorks* provides participants with a work transcript upon graduation," added Essenburg. "Having an official document from an organization certifying that the student is a good and skillful employee provides graduates with a significant advantage in the job search process."

The designation of a work college allows all Kuyper students to receive tax-free compensation as a special form of financial aid towards students' tuition. "Depending on the hours worked, tuition could be reduced anywhere from \$4,050 to \$8,100 per year," said Essenburg. "It also means students will be able to keep \$500-\$1,500 tax-free per year.

Essenburg considers the process to be well worth the effort. "As a work college Kuyper offers our students an expanded educational experience because *KuyperWorks* and our academic programs are designed to complement each other, resulting in a more holistic experience than anywhere else," he said. "It will also benefit students financially, allowing them to concentrate on their studies while opening pathways for those who may think Kuyper is financially out of reach."

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Founded in 1939 and accredited by various regional and national agencies, Kuyper College is a leading Christian leadership College focused on effectively training students to make a difference in God's world. Kuyper offers bachelor and associate degrees in a variety of ministry and professional fields. The College is located on a beautiful campus a few miles from downtown Grand Rapids, Michigan—one of the top 50 metropolitan areas in the United States.