

KUYPER

College News

A Publication for Alumni & Friends

The Work of Faith

KUYPER BECOMES A WORK COLLEGE

Central to learning at Kuyper is the Word of God represented in the Kuyper College Seal by the symbol of a light-giving lamp. Surrounding the lamp are traditional Christian symbols, including the crown of faith, the anchor of hope, and the cloak of service—all positioned above the phrase *Ora Et Labora*—from the Latin for “Pray and Work.”

From the very beginning, this idea has been infused into every part of life at the College. The community is defined by both prayer and work, seeking to live lives of worship by loving and serving both God and each other. To further this vision, Kuyper College is entering an exciting period of growth as it becomes a work college. Currently, nine federally recognized work colleges in the nation meet the requirements for operation as overseen by the U.S. Department of Education. Kuyper College has become the 10th and the only one in Michigan.

When Dr. Patricia Harris, Kuyper's president, came to the College as provost eight years ago, she immediately began engaging in conversations about serving the students better. She and the other members of the president's cabinet agreed. Soon after that, she had the opportunity to assemble a task force to brainstorm ways to make these dreams a reality.

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JOIN THE CONVERSATION



KUYPER.EDU

The Five Principles of *KuyperWorks*TM

As our cover story describes, from our founding, *ora et labora* “has been infused into every part of life at the College.” Prayer permeates and punctuates our work, and our work enables us to love and serve God and others. Prayer and work create a balance in the way we live as Christians and educate at Kuyper.

We've kept this balance in mind as we've developed *KuyperWorks*, the College's educational work program built on a biblical and theological foundation of work. Throughout scripture, we witness God at work. God created the world and then created humans in his image to cultivate and care for his creation. God the Father demonstrates to His people what dominion and governance of creation should look like. The New Testament shows us that while on earth, Jesus assumed various vocations as a laborer and a teacher or rabbi, and now he serves as our mediator. The Holy Spirit works in powerful ways in the hearts and minds of Christians so that we grow spiritually amid the Christian community.

Seeing how God works, Christians are called to model faithful work in all areas of our lives. The work of Christian ministry is not more spiritual than the work of

Christians in social work, business, education, or other venues.

As a newly designated work college, *KuyperWorks* will allow our students to grow in appreciation of this reality. This program instills in them the dignity of all work and a passion for joining in with God's work faithfully in and through their various work placements.

In his book, *Every Good Endeavor*, Timothy Keller points out, “the purpose of work is to create a culture that honors God and enables people to thrive.” The five principles of *KuyperWorks* align with this purpose as we: Encourage students to value work as learning; Develop students' biblical perspective on work; Enhance students' learning by integrating work and academics; Prepare students to be workplace ready; and Provide students



with an affordable education. Ultimately, our aim is for our students to give glory to God through their complementary education—academics and work—as they love and serve their neighbor.

We are very excited about being only one of 10 work colleges in the country and the only one in Michigan. May your prayers permeate and punctuate our work, and may your gifts provide the resources for our students to thrive.

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord.” (Col. 3:23)

Grateful to serve,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patti".

Dr. Patricia R. Harris
President

Kuyper Community Notes

Marriages

Ben Hoekman (2017) and Elizabeth (Conway) Hoekman were united in marriage on June 26, 2021.

Births

Trevor and **Andrea (Ludwig) Farrell** (2008) welcomed Tucker John on January 17, 2021.

Brent (2006) and Jana **Lamberts** welcomed twins, Mollee Joy and Megan Sue, on February 18, 2021.

Jonathan and **Heather (Ritzema) Woods** (2012) welcomed twins, Luke and Brooklyn, on February 22, 2021.

Professional Development

Darrell Delaney (2005) is now a co-host of *Groundwork*, a weekly podcast of ReFrame Ministries.

Dylan O'Brien Pahman (2009) was promoted to executive editor of the *Journal of Markets and*

Morality. He is also writing a series of essays for *Ancient Faith Ministries*.

Brianna DeWitt (2012) was promoted to marketing and social media manager at Baker Publishing Group in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Eric Kas (2012) joined CRCNA's Safe Church Ministry as a ministry consultant focusing on abuse prevention and response and catalyzing restorative practices.

Expanding Horizons

DUAL ENROLLMENT WITH POTTER'S HOUSE



Potter's House High School

The Potter's House Christian School and Kuyper College have long held similar visions for educating the next generation. Both schools value equipping students with a biblical foundation for serving God and impacting the world for His kingdom. They also know the importance of making this accessible to students of all backgrounds.

These shared values have led The Potter's House and Kuyper to create a dual enrollment program, expanding over the next several years. Alf Clark, Principal of The Potter's House High School, said, "It started with a dream of offering diverse options to our diverse student body. That could mean a four-year college, an associate degree program, entering the workforce, mission work or even a gap year."

Creating new possibilities through dual enrollment allows Kuyper to serve the predominately Hispanic community around The Potter's House. Miles Colago, Assistant Superintendent, said, "One of the program's major goals is to attract more students from the neighborhood. The whole reason The

Potter's House started was to be in community with, live with, and serve the Roosevelt Park neighborhood. We wanted to better serve our Hispanic students by giving them access to Christ-centered higher education." Upon completion of high school, dual enrollment students will be able to transition to Kuyper full-time, so the program has the potential to reach those who might not have otherwise considered attending.

The Kuyper program provides a thorough introduction to the business leadership degree. Professors travel to The Potter's House to teach in the classrooms where students are used to learning their high school material. Currently, one Kuyper course is available each

year. Over the next two years, this will expand to include two courses each semester. After that, the program will grow to four Kuyper courses each semester. If students begin in their sophomore year, they could finish up to eight courses over their high school career, earning them nearly a year's worth of college credit by the time they graduate.

Those in the program have the opportunity to learn through unique, hands-on experience. Kuyper professors often bring in speakers and take their classes on field trips to move beyond the realm of pure concepts and ideas. "They bring the textbooks to life by putting flesh and blood examples in front of the kids. They also take them out of the classroom and into the community so they can put their feet where the things they are learning about are happening," said Mr. Clark.

One of the most important benefits of dual enrollment with Kuyper is countering false narratives surrounding higher education. Some students have come to believe that college would be too difficult or that they would not be able to keep up with the pace of the classes. However, when they take college-level courses in the familiar setting of high school, they discover new skills and capabilities. "They learn to use their voices for self-advocacy. They learn time management. Being in a college course and getting familiar with it helps their future college experience," Mr. Clark noted.

The dual enrollment program opens up many exciting options for high school students. Wherever they choose to take their new knowledge and experiences, they will do so with a solid, Christ-centered foundation.

Philip VanderWindt (2012) has taken a call to be the lead pastor of Champlain Valley CRC in Vergennes, Vermont.

John Blom (2013) graduated with an associate degree in Nursing from GRCC and was promoted to RN on the psychiatric medical unit at St. Mary's Mercy Health in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Matthew Hochhalter (2014) became the executive pastor at Calvary Church (CRC) in Holland, Michigan.

Jonathon Waterbury (2014) is now lead pastor of Emmanuel Evangelical Church in Langdon, North Dakota.

Jacob Morse (2016) is the new youth director at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Palm Bay, Florida.

Rachel Potter (2020) joined NorthArrow ABA of Traverse City as a registered behavioral technician.

As alumni, we invite you to get involved and stay in touch by calling the Alumni Office at 877.229.0941 or sending us an email to alumni@kuyper.edu with your contact information or the most recent news about you.

“At our first meeting, we talked about the idea of becoming a work college,” recalled Dr. Harris. “We wanted to integrate the work students do in the classroom with the work they do in a job placement. We also recognized that this could be a way to make college more affordable and accessible to students of all backgrounds. So, we thought, this model fits Kuyper.”

Gathering Insight from Innovative Institutions

Dr. Harris and her think tank needed to develop a plan for building this type of program, so they began learning everything they could. “We researched and visited several work colleges around the country. We also put together various other task forces and met to discuss all the issues that would go into developing this idea,” she said.

One of the institutions they began learning from was Paul Quinn College, located in Dallas, Texas. Paul Quinn is a private, historically Black Methodist college. Today, the College is recognized as one of the most innovative in the country and proudly educates students of all races and socio-economic backgrounds. Paul Quinn reduced student tuition and fees through its growth into the nation’s first



Senior Isaac Taher, a student success coach, mentoring a fellow student

urban work college and enabled students to graduate with less than \$10,000 in student loan debt.

Another work college Kuyper looked to for guidance was College of the Ozarks, a private Christian college located in Point Lookout, Missouri. Nicknamed “Hard Work U,” College of the Ozarks offers students a liberal arts education emphasizing Christian values. The College actively recruits those who desire to attend college but lack sufficient financial means, so all students work on campus to reduce the cost of their education.

From all gathered information, Kuyper, as required to become a federally recognized work college, developed an educational work program and implemented it over the next two full years. In addition, during this time, Kuyper had to show a solid commitment to service and the value of learning through work across the institution. Kuyper’s program, now known as *KuyperWorks™*, accomplished those objectives.

Students Develop Skills Valued By Employers

KuyperWorks formally links participants’ on-the-job learning with their in-classroom education. They begin their first year in the program by working 10 hours each week, or one hundred and fifty hours each semester. As they progress, opportunity for more hours and leadership roles are made available. Work on campus includes positions in different areas such as administration, service crews, event planning, academics, and others. All of their compensation is applied directly to their student tuition, allowing them to significantly reduce the cost of their education.

Through their participation in *KuyperWorks*, students will build new skills. Some of these will undoubtedly vary according to their roles within the program, but everyone will develop specific skills, no matter their job title. Dr. Harris recalled, “When we were designing the program, we decided that we wanted to foster four specific core competencies: Collaboration; Critical Thinking; Effort and Productivity; and Professionalism.”



Senior Doriene McCalister, performing routine maintenance to keep the College's equipment in working condition

“As a work college, Kuyper will offer our students an expanded educational experience because *KuyperWorks* and our academic curriculums are designed to complement each other, resulting in a more holistic experience than anywhere else.”

Each semester, students receive a formal evaluation from their supervisor, focusing on identifying opportunities to continue developing their professional qualities. In addition to the competencies and skills students develop and the financial advantages they receive, *KuyperWorks* provides participants with a work transcript upon graduation. 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.

Offering a More Holistic Educational Experience

At the helm of *KuyperWorks* is Curt Essenburg, Kuyper College's dean of students and work. Over the past several years, he has contributed countless hours to implementing the work college model at Kuyper. Most recently, he was in charge of submitting Kuyper's official work college application to the Department of Education. The application demonstrated Kuyper's commitment to service and education through work as a vital component of a student's education and commitment to making college more affordable.

But Essenburg considers the process to be well worth the effort. “As a work college, Kuyper will offer our students an expanded educational experience because *KuyperWorks* and our academic



Sophomore Lucas Walters, a member of the Grounds-Keeping crew, keeps the campus looking beautiful

curriculums 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 for them.”

Students have three different options to choose from when deciding how many hours to work: 300, 450, and 600 hours each year. This equates to approximately 10, 15 or 20 hours per week

All student jobs are part of *KuyperWorks*, and because of a special work college designation, all compensation is tax-free. “The designation allows us to consider the *KuyperWorks* funds as a special form of financial aid, which goes directly to paying off the student's tuition, which depending on the hours worked could reduce tuition anywhere from \$4,050 to \$8,100 per year,” said Essenburg. “It also means that students will be able to keep \$500-\$1,500 tax-free per year.”

Properly ordered work has always been part of God's good design for His creation; it is integral, not incidental, to His mission. Being a work college will allow Kuyper to take this holistic, biblical approach to new heights. “It has taken a great deal of effort and cooperation by supervisors, faculty, staff, and students to make this happen. Now, we are ready for takeoff,” said Dr. Harris. Kuyper College desires to further God's kingdom on Earth by participating in what He has been doing all along. In recognizing that work is integral on a cosmic scale, Kuyper College and its students are taking part in the much bigger and grander story of the whole of creation.



Sophomore Cali Culbertson, working in the campus venues rental reservations office

Three Simple Questions to Protect Your Future

In a small town, the volunteer fire department's telephone rang one morning. The volunteer fire chief happened to be going by, picked up the phone and said, "Fire department." A frantic voice said, "Send the fire truck!" and hung up. He immediately thought what he would say to keep the caller from hanging up if she called back. Sure enough, when the phone rang again, he quickly asked, "Where's the fire?" The caller screamed, "In the kitchen," and hung up again. (Source: "A Patient Faith" by Nathan Johnson)

Sometimes even our best intentions can miss the mark if we don't have all of the facts. The same is true with estate planning. Many well-meaning individuals have left their family members with a heap of details to sort out after their death, either because of an out-of-date will or no will at all. So, what can you do to ensure your will is in tip-top shape? Begin by considering these three primary areas: family, finances and ministry.

1. Has your family situation changed?

Perhaps your family has recently grown or a loved one has passed. Maybe your children are already financially sound and do not need the funds.

2. Has your financial situation changed?

Sometimes life milestones occur that cause your financial status to shift. This could include retirement or the selling of a business. Consider checking into how recent changes could affect your estate plan.

3. Does your current estate plan reflect what's most important to you?

Proper estate planning is one way to communicate a heritage of faith. Plus, a will is an ideal opportunity to bless the ministries that are close to your heart while leaving a legacy for your family.

To learn more, about estate planning or other giving options, please contact the Kuyper Advancement Office at 616-988-3662 or email advancement@kuyper.edu.

In My Words

SERVING OTHERS THROUGH FOOD

I have always had a love for food, and as a young missionary kid running around the streets of Monte Carlo, Monaco, I would often do the shopping



Jeffery Bettig
Food Service Director

for our family at the fresh market. My mom was an excellent cook, and she helped shape my cooking interests. As a teen, I attended a missionary boarding school in southern Germany, where I often worked in the kitchen preparing meals for our dorm. I frequently traded other chores with my dorm brothers and took their kitchen prep because I liked working in the kitchen best. I would hang around the kitchen and offer to taste test whatever was being made. I still remember the fabulous

smells coming from the local bakeries and restaurants as I roamed around our small village in Germany. Being exposed to so many different cultures and cuisines, I often thought about how God could use me and my love of food for His kingdom. After graduating from high school, I came to America and pursued a Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management degree.

I have always sought to live out the verse Colossians 3:23: "Whatever work you do, do it with all your heart. Do it for the Lord and not for men."

Now, 36 years later, I have enjoyed working in many area colleges and for the past 17 years here at Kuyper College. God has blessed me with many great relationships with students over the years, as I have always sought to honor Him in all that I do according to 1 Corinthians 10:31: "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." This verse sums up much of what I do as Food Service Director at Kuyper. I know that while it is considered "work," much of my job is to help bring glory to God by feeding students who are training to reach our world for Christ. Knowing that we are all the hands and feet of Christ and that each of us has a role to play in God's bigger plan makes it all worthwhile!

It is my privilege to serve God by serving the students, staff and faculty at Kuyper. I look forward to seeing all that God will do through every one of the students as they go and reach our world with the love of Jesus! May God bless you all and use you to do great things for His glory!

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

A New Calling

When Karla Velis-Brito was just 10 years old, she accompanied her family on a journey from her native El Salvador to California. While there, they visited a ninety-nine-cent store. She had never seen anything like it and was entranced by the wide variety and affordable prices of the items. Immediately, Karla began thinking of ways she could emulate this store back home. Though she was only a young child, she borrowed 30 dollars from her parents and bought as many items as she could fit in her suitcase to resell at school and in her neighborhood. Within a week of returning home, she sold all her inventory and made a profit of 70 dollars. This was her very first business model, and she was hooked.

Though Karla was raised in a Christian home, she didn't always see a connection between the worlds of faith and business. Her parents were pastors and missionaries, so she thought God would only call a person to these types of vocations. But when she came to Kuyper in the fall of 2012, her perspective started to change. "It was at Kuyper where my eyes were opened to the concept that my faith could be part

of the way I operated a business. Before, I didn't think doing that could be my calling from God," she said as a guest presenter in Kuyper's speaker series, Ora Et Labora.

As she attended classes for her business leadership major, Karla began learning that, in fact, work and worship need not be divided. "Our jobs, our businesses take on more meaning and have more impact when we see them as ways of glorifying God," she said.

Karla has already had several opportunities to embody this philosophy, and her job as a social media consultant is just one of them. She also works for Partners Worldwide, an organization that coordinates efforts around the world to combat poverty by providing business opportunities. They assist individuals living in poverty with loans, mentorship and hands-on training to empower them to start and run businesses in their local communities. This helps foster self-worth as well as much-needed jobs and resources.

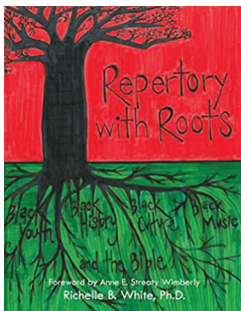
Karla also runs a successful photography and videography business called Velis K Photography. She seeks to glorify God



Karla Velis-Brito during a photo session

through her company by striving for excellence in every aspect of it. She works hard to ensure the quality of her craft because it is a way for her to live out her calling.

"At Kuyper I realized there is a difference between a business owner who is a Christian and a Christian business owner," Karla said. "We need to include God in all of the pieces of our jobs and our lives. It's all His, and we're His instruments."



A Professor's Authentic Voice

Since early in her life, Dr. Richelle White, professor of youth ministry and director of field practicum, has been drawn to working with young people. "I taught at every grade level. I did counseling and workshops. I also worked as a youth pastor for a number of years," she recalled. Since then, in addition to her

work inside the classroom, Dr. White has authored several books and curriculum resources that focus on the often overlooked and underserved experiences and needs of Black young people.

One of these resources is "Repertory with Roots: Black Youth, Black History, Black Culture, Black Music, and the Bible." "It grew out of my doctoral dissertation, which was about using hip-hop music as a tool for discipleship education, but I shifted to using all forms of Black music," said Dr. White. Each session in this curriculum incorporates Black history, culture, music and the Bible. It promotes engaging youth in a manner that fosters their identity formation as unashamedly Black and unapologetically Christian.

Last year, Dr. White had the opportunity to detail this important work in one chapter of the book "From Lament to Advocacy: Black Religious Education and Public Ministry." Each chapter of this publication details a different form of ministry done by Black religious educators across the country. The book grew from the 2015 meeting of the Religious Education Association, where Black religious educators, scholars and activists from around the country lamented recent racially instigated killings of Black men and women.

Dr. White believes such dialogue is essential for Black scholars and educators to flourish amid the predominately white field of academia. One way she works toward this is by participating in a digital salon hosted by the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion.

Throughout her career, Dr. White has desired to help young people reach their full potential. "No matter where they are, I want to see their potential and for them to be the best they can be," she noted, "not just in their careers, but in the whole of their Christian lives."

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

STUDENTS TO WATCH

Madelyn Elders

I grew up in a Christian home with devoted Christian parents. However, it wasn't until the end of fifth grade when I started wanting a relationship of my own with God. During that year, I participated in a 30-day devotional challenge with my whole class. After spending this amount of time in the Word and asking God questions, I knew that I needed a real relationship with Him and to do everything I did for Jesus.

That decision was tested through my first year in high school. My parents and I decided that I would attend a Christian high school, a school where all my friends were going. In the spring of my freshman year, I was at an all-time high in my faith in God. I knew where He was in my life and was on what some may call a "Jesus high." I made new friends and continued to pour into the friendships that I already had, my grades were really good, and I was building strong relationships with my teachers.

This was a perfect time in my life—until I heard God's voice; it was as clear as day. It wasn't a command to do something, but more of a discomfort in my heart. I knew what God was trying to say to me, but as a 14-year-old freshman, I quickly ignored it. I laughed at the thought of leaving all my friends and everything I knew to attend a public high school. I didn't want to leave what I knew to tell people about God. It wasn't until the end of my freshman year when, out of the blue, my mom asked me if I felt my school was where God wanted me to be. I remember sitting in complete shock that God would speak to me through my mom. After telling her how I was feeling, my parents and I spent the entire summer praying about this and looking at different options. Two weeks before school started, I felt called to attend Zeeland West High School. Although scary, in my heart, I felt a total peace which I knew came from God. This decision accomplished much—it brought me closer to God, allowed others at Zeeland West to find Jesus, and opened my eyes to see God work in such powerful ways.

I heard of Kuyper from my grandpa. He told me that it was a small school in Grand Rapids. I came on a visit with my mom during my junior year of high school and instantly fell in love with the entire school atmosphere. I remember meeting with professors, students and even the college president. I knew that it was the school for me when we attended a chapel. Kuyper was where God wanted me to be. It was one of the best decisions I have ever made!

Campus life at Kuyper is one of my favorite things about college. Everyone here works together to create a fun campus experience. Here, I also found a small, caring and supportive community made up of students and professors. On the first day of classes, my professors gave me their phone numbers in case I needed help or had any questions. They want to make sure you're doing okay both in class and in your day-to-day life. Here, through the professors' teaching and their application of Bible and theology to our curriculum, I've gained a better understanding of what it means to be a social worker in this broken world.

Kuyper has taught me how to live out my life as a Christian and build healthy relationships, and it is now equipping me to be a successful social worker. After graduation, I would love to work as a social worker in the orphanage where I volunteered in high school. However, I am still waiting to hear from God on that one.

Kuyper is a unique college with incredible opportunities and beautiful people. I am so blessed that this college was part of God's plan for me!



CLASS **2023**
HOME **Zeeland, Michigan**
MAJOR **Social work**