A Step Along the Way

A Note from the Provost

“One can never see, or not till long afterwards, why one was selected for any job. And when one does, it is usually some reason that leaves no room for vanity.” —C. S. Lewis

By the time you read these words, the news of my plans to conclude my service to the University at the end of the current academic year will have been announced. It seems appropriate to offer some reflections on the occasion.

Just a few years ago, I was able to spend the day with some Pepperdine students in Barcelona, Spain, where we toured a magnificent church still under construction—the basilica of La Sagrada Familia, which was begun in 1882. While I have toured many churches and cathedrals around the world, this Antoni Gaudí-inspired structure is truly one of the most original and captivating. It was all the more impressive because we saw it while the construction was very much underway. This magnificent edifice was taking form before our eyes as stone masons, carpenters, and welders were busy at work in various sections of the massive structure.

The Sagrada Familia reminds me a lot of Pepperdine, which is also a sacred structure—a cathedral of learning—also unfinished and very much under construction. The current builders of the Spanish church are working from designs first

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conceived in the 1880s, and then imaginatively revised by the young architect Antoni Gaudí, who spent much of his life on the project. Many of his plans were destroyed in the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s, but the work continues even today. Pepperdine is also a magnificent, though unfinished, project, not unlike the Barcelona church. Its beauty derives from its unique mission of educating heart, mind, and soul; and its future is bright because the labor is overseen by dedicated artisans of learning who work with skill and passion, according to a sacred purpose. As with the Sagrada Familia, the architects and builders of Pepperdine come and go over the generations, but the mission remains essentially unchanged as each generation of laborers works the plan to build a singular, internationally recognized Christian university.

The day I received a letter from President Andrew Benton in 2000 inviting me to consider the possibility of a post at Pepperdine is firmly fixed in my memory. The invitation seemed implausible at the time; but here I am 13 years later. The role has blessed me, stretched me, and challenged me in countless ways. If one’s true vocation is found at the intersection of one’s own deep gladness and the world’s deep need, as Frederick Buechner maintains, then I found my vocation at Pepperdine. The opportunity to help faculty and students experience the best possible learning environment has far exceeded anything I could have imagined. I am overwhelmed as I recall the endless waves of opportunities to dream dreams, help others launch new programs, hire new faculty, support faculty scholarship, forge friendships, collaborate with academic leaders, mentor colleagues, engage in soul-stirring conversations about faith and learning, teach the most motivated and gifted students imaginable, and share the unique Pepperdine story around the globe.

So why am I planning to do something new and different at Abilene Christian University beginning next fall? The answer to that question leads me back to the question of calling. There is a time for everything under the sun, a time to stay and a time to go, as the Preacher of Ecclesiastes might have written. I can say that after a long period of discernment, I think it’s time to invite someone else to work on the “cathedral of learning” that is Pepperdine. No one has expressed my convictions better than Bishop Ken Untener, who composed a beautiful prayer called “A Step Along the Way” (often incorrectly attributed to Archbishop Oscar Romero). I will share some of the prayer here because it expresses my own sense of calling and purpose:

“It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view. The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision. We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God’s work. Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us. No statement says all that could be said .... No program accomplishes the Church’s mission. No set of goals and objectives includes everything. This is what we are about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities. We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord’s grace to enter and do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and

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When I walked out of the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona that summer day a few years ago, I was not at all disappointed that the structure was unfinished. Instead, I was thrilled that such a beautiful structure could exist at all, even in its unfinished state. I was further moved to imagine what a magnificent structure it will one day become—perhaps in my lifetime, if I’m lucky.

I feel similar emotions as I consider my years at Pepperdine. I am grateful beyond words that I have been allowed to water seeds others planted, to have been allowed to lay foundations others will build on; to have provided a little yeast for dreams that continue to flourish in ways I never imagined. I am light-hearted knowing that it is not my responsibility to do everything. My task has been to do a few important things for a little while. I take comfort knowing that other talented workers, ideal for the tasks that lie ahead, will follow; and that divine grace will bring it all to glorious completion. I like being reminded that I am only a worker, not a master builder; a servant, not a messiah. I am dazzled by the vision of what lies ahead—a future not of our own making, but one of God’s design.

The Best Class I Never Taught

By: Lee Kats

The New Media Consortium, a group that for 10 years has focused on trends in technology and education, recently released their 2013 Horizon Report. No group has a better handle on changes in higher education than does this group. Want to know the future of MOOCs, online courses, 3-D printing, and augmented reality for higher education? Check out this report.

In particular, I am struck by one key trend: that “the workforce demands skills from college graduates that are more often acquired from informal learning experiences.” Yes, informal learning is where things are headed; learning that takes place outside of a structured, time-limited, lecture-focused room with chairs, desks, and whiteboards. If you think about the great teachers through history, from Plato, to Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa or even John Wooden, you see individuals who understood informal learning. Their “students” were people who admired them, observed them and learned from them by getting to know them and exchanging and sharing thoughts, ideas and activities with them.

A few years ago I discovered that I did not have time in the normal classes that I teach to brainstorm with students about their scientific passions and ideas for new and creative experiments. I asked three students if they wanted to meet once a week in the evening to share ideas. A few years later that group became 10 and last year the room where we met was full, as 20 of us gathered to “talk science.” These students are not earning units, nor making formal progress toward their degree, but they are encouraged to “experiment, play, and explore topics based on their own motivations.” This is informal learning: time for students to learn, side-by-side with their teachers... informally.
Garrett Pendergraft and Candice Ortbals recall their experience in participating in the AAC&U Institute on General Education and Assessment in Vermont:

In June we joined a group of Seaver faculty who participated in the AAC&U Institute on General Education and Assessment at the University of Vermont. This was a five-day intensive workshop, and the schedule included concurrent sessions, meetings with a designated mentor, and large chunks of time working together as a team. We used our time together to produce the first draft of a new plan for assessing the GE curriculum at Seaver College. This plan includes a set of revised GE Learning Outcomes that correspond to three assessment categories: Knowledge, Perspectives, and Skills. These new learning outcomes align with Pepperdine's Institutional Learning Outcomes, and our hope is that they will provide a comprehensive, sustainable structure for future assessment efforts. We also formed a committee to oversee GE assessment, establish a timeline for assessment reports, and work with faculty in deciding how the specific GE courses fit within this new assessment structure. Our group also included Brad Griffin, Tom Reilly, Julie Smith, and Constance Fulmer.

Khanh Bui, along with Graciela Boruszko, Robert Kaufman, Robert Lloyd, and Christina Littlefield, attended a C. S. Lewis conference in San Diego, California. Professor Bui recalls her experience in the program:

I thank the Center for Faith and Learning, the Office of the Provost, and the Social Science Division for the privilege to attend the C. S. Lewis Summer Conference in San Diego, June 21-23, 2013. At this conference, I learned that although Lewis did produce scholarly works, Oxford University refused to grant him a professorship because he also published for the masses. (Cambridge University, however, awarded him the Chair in Medieval and Renaissance English later in his career.) I am grateful that Lewis chose to forego prestige and title to expound his message of “mere Christianity” to laypeople like me. His writings demonstrate insight into human weaknesses while reminding us of God’s grace in the most compelling manner. I see Lewis as a stained glass window through whom God has shined gloriously and brilliantly. Since the conference, I have accumulated nearly all of Lewis’s published works. My favorite so far is The Great Divorce.


In early June, Pepperdine’s Provost’s Office and the Nootbaar Institute on Law, Religion, and Ethics sponsored a panel at the 2013 Christian Scholars’ Conference in Nashville. The panel was composed of contributors to the forthcoming book, Law and the Bible: Justice, Mercy, and Legal Institutions, due this fall from Intervarsity Press. Each panelist addressed what a section of the Bible says about law, drawing from their chapters in the book.

David A. Michelson, assistant professor of early Christianity, Vanderbilt Divinity School, provided a response to the panel, noting: "The very existence of this book is a significant accomplishment. It may seem startling to those outside of academia, but for legal scholars and theologians to come together in dialogue is not a frequent occurrence due to the fragmentation of the disciplines. The success of this book is largely due to the epistemological humility of the authors who are willing to allow that their own expertise may not be the last word on a topic...This book is as an invitation in a discourse. I hope it can serve as an opening for further reflection on law and theology and also as a call for other disciplines to be in conversation as well.”

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Did you know? Since 2011, Pepperdine has served as an associate university of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation’s Faith and Globalization Initiative—a worldwide network of leading universities that analyze the role and impact of faith in our globalized world. Recognizing that faith can be both a powerful force for good in the world as well as a source of tragic conflict, this initiative supports educational opportunities that advance global understanding through responsible dialogue and the serious examination of the religious dimensions to contemporary global issues.

Today Pepperdine is recognized internationally as a place of deep faith that welcomes persons of all faiths into constructive dialogue about the urgent problems of our time. Through its Faith and Globalization Initiative, the University will advance understanding through interfaith dialogue, education, and research in fulfillment of our commitment to the conviction that serious scholarly inquiry and the faith quest are ultimately compatible and beneficial to human flourishing.

The Faith and Globalization Initiative naturally aligns with the University’s existing mission and vision statement that “Pepperdine University will be a preeminent, global, Christian university, known for the integration of faith and learning, whose graduates lead purposeful lives as servant-minded leaders throughout the world.” Professors such as Joel S. Fetzer and Christopher Soper already have an established record of highlighting the interface between religion and politics in their courses and publications, including their new book Confucianism, Democratization, and Human Rights in Taiwan. (Read an interview with the authors, here, on Pepperdine’s new Research site.)

Featured Faith & Globalization Events:
- October 10, 4 p.m.: Reuven Firestone’s “Jewish Perspectives on Globalization,” PLC 125
- October 30, 7 p.m.: “Religion in the Public Square”: Interfaith Panel with Maryam Mohiuddin and Rabbi Yosef Kanefsky, PLC 125

Spotlight on Glazer Institute for Jewish Studies

Founded in 2008, the Glazer Institute was established based on the understanding that as a Christian University Pepperdine’s students are especially open to discussions of faith and identity, but they are often unacquainted with Christianity’s historical and ongoing relationship with Judaism. Through work in the classroom, international opportunities, and co-curricular programs, it continues to expand horizons, challenge stereotypes, and foster lives of service, understanding, respect, and faith. Below are some events, courses, and programs sponsored by the Glazer Institute.

Fall Speaker Series: The Glazer Institute will host 15 lectures which will introduce students to Judaism and Jewish Studies topics.

Sponsored Courses: The Glazer Institute awards Faculty Teaching Grants every year to Pepperdine professors who wish to develop Jewish Studies courses (full grant), or to incorporate a substantial Jewish Studies component to a course they regularly teach (half grant).

International Programs
- Brenden Mann Israel Internship Program
- Archaeology in Galilee
- Buenos Aires Program: In the summer of 2015, the Glazer Institute will launch a Diaspora Studies program in Buenos Aires, Argentina, home to the largest Jewish population outside of Israel and the United States. Students will experience firsthand life in a Jewish home, paralleling these personal experiences with classes and wider cultural programs. The three principal courses will be “The Jewish Diaspora in Latin America,” “Diaspora Studies in Historical and Comparative Perspective,” and “Human Rights in Latin America.”

Glazer Scholars Program: The Glazer Institute granted seven scholarships this year to undergraduate students who demonstrate an interest in learning more about Judaism and the history of Jewish-Christian relations.
University Announcements

Waves of Innovation Submissions Roll In

On September 15, the Waves of Innovation Committee closed its initial call for applicants, collecting a total of 160 proposals from the Pepperdine community. Submissions came from students, faculty, and staff from all five schools. The Committee is pleased with the response and looks forward to hearing everyone’s ideas about how to make Pepperdine even better. Future opportunities for funding will be available too.

Remembering C.S. Lewis

November marks the 50th anniversary of the death of C. S. Lewis, arguably the most influential Christian thinker and writer of the 20th century. To commemorate his life and work, the Pepperdine University Center for Faith and Learning is sponsoring a number of events centered on Lewis’s life and work.

As part of the Seaver College Convocation Program, Seaver students will be invited to participate in a “C. S. Lewis Club Convo Reading Group,” where 12 student groups will join with a faculty or staff member or student leader for six weeks of reading and discussing one of Lewis’s books. In addition to the club convos, the Center for Faith and Learning hopes to sponsor other faculty and staff reading groups focused on various C. S. Lewis works.

One of the high points of the fall semester will be a performance on October 2 of C. S. Lewis on Stage, Tom Key’s critically acclaimed one-man show, which brings to life the beloved author of the Chronicles of Narnia book series and Mere Christianity. Drawing on C. S. Lewis’s spiritual autobiography, Surprised by Joy, as well as on characters from such works as The Great Divorce and The Screwtape Letters, Key’s performance puts the audience in the presence of Lewis himself, as though they are attending one of his popular public appearances. Though the performance is free, tickets are necessary and may be picked up at the Smothers Theatre box office.

The Payson Library also plans a panel discussion in November that will bring together different members of the Pepperdine community to discuss the impact of Lewis’ thought and work on their lives and on society as a whole.

Research@Pepperdine Website Launch

The Office of Research and Strategic Initiatives is developing a Research Page on Pepperdine’s website. It will feature stories and interviews about current student and faculty scholarship, awards, and publications. If you have Research news, we want to feature it! Please send an email to research@pepperdine.edu and/or make a SelectedWorks profile to make your publication profile more visible and searchable.

Pepperdine Digital Commons featuring SelectedWorks is the University’s new centralized platform for Pepperdine journals, faculty publications, conference proceedings, exemplary student research, and other e-scholarship. Click here to find out how Pepperdine Digital Commons can increase access to your own scholarship or that of your students. The new Research site will draw its research publication news from here as well.

We’re looking for C.S. Lewis fans!

As a part of our commemoration of C. S. Lewis’s life and work, Pepperdine Magazine is doing a spread focusing on the way that Lewis has influenced the lives of different members of our community.

If you are one of those people, we are looking for brief (200 words, maximum) “testimonies” of how Lewis has influenced you. A few of these testimonies will be included in the magazine itself, and those not in the magazine will be included in the magazine’s on-line version.

If you are interested, please send your testimony and a photograph of yourself to Megan Boyle. Deadline for submission is Monday, Oct. 7.

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Welcome New Faculty!

Seaver College
1. Dr. Jason Blakely, Assistant Professor of Political Science
2. Dr. Tomás Bogardus (began Spring 2013), Assistant Professor of Philosophy
3. Ms. Delphine Broccard (MA ’12), Visiting Instructor of Communication
4. Dr. Timothy Dong, Visiting Assistant Professor of Organic Chemistry
5. Ms. Tera Harmon, Visiting Instructor of Religion
6. Dr. Matthew Highfield, Visiting Assistant Professor of Mathematics
7. Dr. Tuan Hoang, Visiting Assistant Professor of Great Books
8. Ms. Amy Johnson (’90, MA ’13), Executive in Residence of Business Communication
9. Dr. Riggs Klika, Visiting Assistant Professor of Sports Medicine
10. Dr. David Lemley (’94), Assistant Professor of Practical Theology
11. Ms. Marya Mazor, Visiting Instructor of Theatre
12. Mr. Matthew McKissick, Visiting Instructor of Media Communication
13. Dr. Duane Myer, Assistant Professor of Marketing
14. Ms. Tiara Na’puti, Visiting Assistant Professor of Media Communication
15. Mr. Jeffrey Schultz, Visiting Instructor of English
16. Dr. Fiona Stewart, Assistant Professor of Italian
17. Mr. Bill Szobody, Visiting Instructor of Dance
18. Mr. George Trammell, Visiting Assistant Professor of Physics
19. Dr. Alessandro Varotto, Visiting Assistant Professor of Chemistry

Graduate School of Education and Psychology
1. Dr. Natasha Olmos, Assistant Professor
2. Dr. José Santos, Associate Professor, Education

Graziadio School of Business and Management
1. Dr. Max Elzey, Practitioner Faculty of Applied Behavioral Sciences
2. Dr. Bob Emrich, Lecturer of Decision Sciences
3. Dr. Jaime Salas, Assistant Professor of Marketing

School of Law
1. Jeff Baker, Clinical Director and Associate Clinical Professor of Law, School of Law
2. Paul Caron, Professor of Law
3. Richard Chen, Visiting Assistant Professor of Law
4. Ann Ching, Assistant Professor, Legal Research and Writing
5. David Han, Associate Professor of Law
6. Victoria Schwartz, Associate Professor of Law
7. Ahmed Taha, Professor, School of Law

Group photo from new faculty orientation:
Back row, left to right: Tomás Bogardus, Paul Caron, Jaime Salas, Ahmed Taha, José Santos, Fiona Stewart, and Jason Blakely
Middle 3rd row, left to right: Riggs Klika, Jeff Baker, Natasha Olmos, Tiara Na'puti, David Lemley
Middle 2nd row left to right: Timothy Dong, Amy Johnson, Victoria Schwartz, George Trammell, Duane Myer
Front row, left to right: David Han, Anne Ching, Marya Mazor, Tuan Hoang