



WENDT CHARACTER INITIATIVE
UNIVERSITY OF DUBUQUE

**Character ... and Social Media
New Research Team**

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Wendt Center for Character Education
Myers Teaching and Administration Center
University of Dubuque
2000 University Avenue
Dubuque, IA 52001
563-589-3440

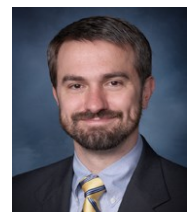
What does it mean to our identities to be “networked?” How is our character formed on social media? Can the church use social media in healthy ways to foster positive community? How do we understand friendship in the context of social media experiences like Facebook or Fantasy Football? What responsibilities do parents have when they post on behalf of their babies or young children? Are they leaving digital footprints that will haunt their children into adulthood or using those postings for parental self-gratification?

These are some of the questions that the 2013-2014 Wendt Research Team are currently asking. Formed this year as a pilot program in response to the Wendt mission to “promote intellectual understanding of . . . lives of purpose and excellent moral character,” this team expects to publish an on-line journal entitled *Character and . . . Social Media*. The spring publication will include a campus presentation in conjunction with our Spring Wendt Lecture.



Jenn Supple Bartels,
Teaching Specialist,
Communication

Last year the Wendt Center solicited applications from the undergraduate faculty, the Seminary faculty, and the faculty-nominated students. The result is a team of two faculty and two students.



Matthew Schlimm,
Assistant Professor
of Old Testament,
UDTS



Terri Jo Crego,
MDiv student



Gary Panetta,
MDiv student

A unique dimension to the weekly team meetings includes the fact that Terri Jo is in Florida as a Distance student. She attends the meetings via Skype on a monitor. The group challenges each other to think deeply and explores the topics together sharing resources. Truly, a community of scholars engaged in and engaging character formation!

The Mission of the Wendt Character Center reads in part that we will seek to *promote intellectual understanding of and personal commitment to lives of purpose and excellent moral character*. The mandate covers all of campus including curriculum. This year the World View Seminar I engages the Wendt mission through its focus on lives of purpose. Dr. Mark Ward, Vice President of Academic Affairs, describes the course below.

A Life of Purpose ~ by Dr. Mark Ward

World View Seminar I is a course required of all first year students, and is being presented in a new format this fall. The course is structured around the theme “A Life of Purpose: Perspectives and Pathways.” There are three major components to this course:

- A weekly large group session for all 480 first year students. Each session is led by a full-time faculty member and employs varying pedagogies to help students explore the foundations of purpose-filled lives and to begin to design their own life of purpose. This format allows all of the freshmen to experience the very best of our college faculty.
- A weekly small group session, where 13 students meet with a full-time faculty or staff member. These groups process the content of the large group sessions. They also serve to form a positive community of support for new students and to provide guidance on how to be successful in academic work.
- A reading club, where 10-14 students read and discuss a book with a full-time faculty or staff member. Students selected one of five possible books, all of which explore themes of purpose. These groups are designed to address the general lack of reading experiences and skills of incoming students.



Character is an important component of living a life of purpose. One of the large group session will focus on the topic of character and introduce students to the Wendt Character Initiative.

I am pleased to see our first year students respond to the

discussion of purpose. We have an opportunity to help students see that their lives have meaning and that living a life of character contributes to meaning and purpose.

“We have an opportunity to help students see that their lives have meaning and that living a life of character contributes to meaning and purpose.”

UD Alum Returns as the Fall Wendt Lecturer

Current figures suggest that there are more than 45 million displaced people around the world--an 18 year high. What is our responsibility with respect to the refugee, the asylum seeker, the internally displaced, and the undocumented alien? Research suggests that we can have a dramatic impact on these "strangers in our land."



Dr. L. Ripley Smith, Professor of International & Media Communication at Bethel University in St. Paul, MN, is a frequent speaker at national and international conferences on the subjects of intercultural social support networks, refugee resettlement, cross-cultural partnership development, and the role of trust in post-conflict regions.

Dr. Smith graduated from UD with a major in speech communication and a minor in business administration. He went on to complete a Masters degree and a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota. He will speak at UD on Monday night, October 14, 7:00 p.m. in Butler Hall on "God's Heart and Our Part in the Lives of Displaced Persons." He will also be speaking with students and faculty more informally both in and out of classrooms.

His recent research has explored identity reconstruction among KaRen and Somali refugee populations and partnership criteria in German and American NGOs. A Fellow in the International Academy of Intercultural Research, he is the author of book chapters and journal articles. Dr. Smith currently serves as the Chair of the board of directors for World Relief, MN, a non-profit refugee resettlement agency.

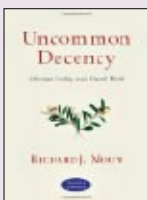
**Michael Lester Wendt
Character Lecture**

L. Ripley Smith, Ph.D.

***God's Heart and Our
Part in the Lives of
Displaced Persons***

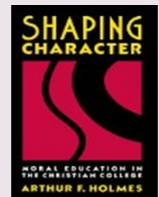
**October 14, 7:00 p.m.
Butler Hall**

Campus Book Discussions



Two groups of faculty and staff from UD and UDTs gather on Tuesdays or Thursdays to discuss Richard Mouw's *Uncommon Decency: Christian Civility in an Uncivil World*. Sharing stories, laughter, and reflections, these community members challenge and encourage each other to practice civility.

New faculty worked through Arthur Holmes' *Shaping Character: Moral Education in the Christian College*. Using the book as a jump start to conversation, we explored ways for diverse disciplines to think about and further character development in our students.



Who Are We? Wendt Character Scholars

The 2013-2014 academic year is upon us and the Wendt Center is off to a great start! The 2013-14 Wendt Character Scholar's theme is *Who Are We? Integrity, Truthfulness, and Honesty*. Scholars will learn and build a greater understanding of character and ethics throughout the fall semester. Integrity, truthfulness, and honesty will then be applied to technology during the Spring semester.

This year's Scholars average in age from 17-53 years old. They represent 9 states and 4 countries. With 10 different religious affiliations and 4 races, we have a great mix of extraordinary students who represent good character.

"This is my second year as a Wendt Scholar," says Brenda Nava, "and I can honestly say that it has opened many doors for me. I have made friends in different fields of study that I would have otherwise never had the opportunity to meet. I thank the Wendt Scholars' program also for bringing me closer to God and allowing me to understand that there is a greater purpose in life for each and every one of us than just forming a family and having a good job."



"This year's Wendt Scholars Kick Off Picnic was personally my favorite year," observed Jeremiah Ziebert. "I'm sure it has to do something with the fact this is my third year as a Wendt Scholar and I feel comfortable here. I feel like the way we did the picnic this year helped a lot of us interact well and get to

know new people part of the program. When someone found that they had something in common with the person talking, they would run up and link arms. I really feel like it shows how we are all connected with one another."



Who Are the Wendt Scholar Mentors?

The Wendt Scholar Mentors bring experience and knowledge. They guide the students with passion and heart, encouraging and teaching them the importance of integrity, honesty, and truthfulness.



Dr. Brian Halstoos,
Assistant Professor of History



Dr. Adam Hoffman,
Associate Professor of Environmental Science



Dr. Timothy Slemmons,
Assistant Professor of Homiletics and Worship



Ms. Lindsey Konken,
Director of First Year Experience



Dr. Franklin Yartey,
Associate Professor of Communication

A Curriculum for Integrity, Truthfulness, and Honesty

Have you ever wondered what the Character Scholars do in their weekly meetings? Do they just have picnics and parties? The answer is decidedly no!

Each year a theme is selected that intersects with the mission of the Wendt Character Center and engages at least one or two of the four virtues that the Character Initiative stresses: Truthfulness, Honesty, Fairness, and the Golden Rule.

Typical meetings include opportunities for announcements for things such as service projects, assignments, or events. This is followed by sightings of character in the news—good or bad. Next we often have a speaker. These speakers include Wendt Mentors, University and Seminary faculty, and outside guests. The evening concludes with small group time to discuss the lecture and homework assignments.

Recently, we were privileged to hear from Board of Trustees member, Kent Peterson, who shared stories of challenges to his integrity and honesty and what he learned in those situations.

Student reflections showed he had a deep impact. “What I really took away from this discussion,” says Maria Mondragon, “was just how important it is to think about your decisions because what you do now will always shape who you will become. Honesty is the best way to go even if there may be ‘bad’ consequences.”



Dr. Slemmons leads devotions at the picnic

I had three take-aways from Mr. Peterson's discussion:

- 1) Integrity matters no matter how difficult the situation you face.*
- 2) If you act without integrity, a snowball effect can quickly result where you get deeper and deeper into deception.*
- 3) Although integrity can be difficult, the results of your integrity can have a lasting positive effect on your relationships with others.*

Tiffany Garcea
Wendt Scholar

Dubuque Area Youth Leadership Council (DAYLC)



Last spring 100 area high school leaders came to campus for a daylong workshop in character and leadership offered by the Wendt Center. These same students spent a day at Clarke University in September.

The DAYLC Board then evaluated scores and selected a top five. Annalee Ward along with a Clarke representative and a community leader interviewed the five at the Wendt Center.

September 12, at a community Awards Ceremony, Board member and UD professor Dick Smith and Annalee Ward had opportunities to speak and to present awards to students who exude leadership and competence. As Admissions follows up we hope we'll see many here at UD next year.



Sara Sroka
Administrative Assistant

Sara joined the Wendt Center for Character Education. She currently works half time.

Character Matters and Athletics



"Work, Connect, Believe, Think—these are the 4 building blocks of character," urged Wade Salem, President of Character Matters. Salem delivered his motivational speech to over 600 athletes and coaches Thursday, September 12 in Butler Hall at the new Heritage Center.

**Reserve the
Date!
March 10**

Spring Wendt
Character
Lecturer
Nicolas Carr
author of



*The Shallows:
What the
Internet is
Doing to our
Brains*



"Character is the difference maker not only to improve performance, attitude and teamwork, but also to produce quality people on and off the field or court."

Athletic Director, Dan Runkle, works with Salem to integrate character concerns into the coaching as well as to further encourage student athletes to rise to high standards of excellent character. This is an exciting extension of the Wendt Character Initiative!



To support the hard work of coaches and athletes striving to be not only excellent in their sport, but excellent in the core of their identity, the Wendt Center, working with the coaches, gives Character Athlete awards for each sport.

The athletes who best exemplify a positive attitude, honesty, discipline, hard work, team-focus, compassion, fairness, and live by the Golden Rule are recognized. In the spring, male and female Character Athlete of the Year awards are presented at the Honors Convocation.



Salem concluded by reminding us that we are more than our sport and if that's taken away from us, do we know who we really are and who we really want to be? "Who are you," he asked, if you can no longer be an athlete? Character is the difference maker not only to improve performance, attitude and teamwork, but also to produce quality people on and off the field or court."

People of character persevere and even thrive when things get tough. People of character—those are whom we aspire to graduate from UD.

Watch for Gratitude Week November 11-15!

During this week, Wendt Scholars choose ways to say thank you to a variety of people who have made a difference in the scholars' lives. They came up with the idea. They identify projects to do and people to thank. And they hope this spirit of gratitude will catch on across campus!

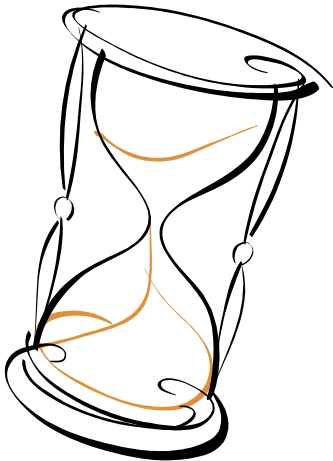
Think about how you can create your own ways to participate. Express your gratitude!

Time Management Tips

As a college student, I am often asked what kind of things I do at the University of Dubuque. Along with being a biology student, I have three hour practices everyday for UD's Cheer and Stunt team, I work in the library at the circulation desk, I work in the Academic Success Center as a science tutor, and I lifeguard at the YMCA.

When I tell people about my busy schedule, many times they wonder how I manage to keep up with all these things. For me, the key was figuring out how to time manage so I am able to do everything I want to do.

The most important part of time management is prioritizing. Many students, myself included, sometimes struggle balancing all the things going on in our lives. Prioritizing what is most important in my life and what is least important helps me stay on track.



I try to always remember that, as a college student, I am here for school first. If my grades were to slip, I would have to give up some of my extra-curricular activities. I don't want to give up the things I do here, so when it comes to getting things accomplished, I always try to put my grades first. If I work to accomplish my school things first, I still have plenty of time for my other commitments, such as cheering and working.

Along with prioritizing, another important aspect of time management is fully utilizing every hour of the day. Between classes, instead of taking naps or relaxing, I try to get my work and studying accomplished. By taking an attitude that every hour is important, I am able to juggle school, cheer, and paying for school. Working early shifts before school or late shifts after school is my sacrifice in order to continue cheering.

One final thing I try to remember about time management is finding room for fun. If I didn't have time to hang out with friends, I would get burnt out and probably start to struggle in school, cheer, or work. I try to find at least one hour every school night to wind down and relax. Additionally, on weekends I try to use the mornings and afternoons to work and study so by evenings I can hang out with friends.

Time management is very important for me to be able to accomplish all of my goals. By prioritizing, using every hour of my day, and making room for fun, I am able to find time for all the things in my life.



By Mia Carnes,
Wendt Character
Scholar

“When I tell people about my busy schedule, many times they wonder how I manage to keep up with all these things.”

FALL 2013

WENDT CENTER FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION

Wendt Center for Character Education
2000 University Drive
Dubuque, Iowa 52001

Phone: 563-589-3440
Fax: 563-589-3243
E-mail: wendt@dbq.edu

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University of Dubuque
Wendt Character Scholars

A Note from the Director

Deconstruction and Character

We watched eagerly expecting a big collapse. As the backhoe dug into the roof, we thought the house would fall in. Nope.

Methodically, the machine attacked pieces of roof, one wall, interior floors—until all that was standing were two pieces of the corner.



And they stood strong—no giving way, no collapse! Those remaining pieces had to be forced down. They certainly built it to last!



When we think about building character, we sometimes imagine that we begin with a grassy field. But the truth is, all of us (not just our students) have some structures, some habits that are built to last which might be full of mold and actually be harmful.

Consider the importance of self-inspection—of searching for traces of asbestos and of doing lead abatement. The Christian tradition calls it self-examination and repentance. It can be hard work to deconstruct our bad habits, but needs to be done if we're to have progress.



Today, we enjoy a beautiful green space and a more unified campus. Today, we have the opportunity for a fresh start. Happy deconstructing!

Dr. Annalee Ward

