

A Time to Give Thanks

Living into Advent, we prepare to celebrate Christ's birth and all His coming means for us and our salvation. And that leads to thanksgiving—this past month, the Wendt Center focused on gratitude and giving thanks.

We were encouraged by the gratitude expressed in Facebook posts sharing what scholars, mentors, advisory board are thankful for; by the track and cross country teams spreading gratitude through social media and individual challenges; and by colleagues' work on and off campus—Professor Craig Marty writes an annual thanksgiving letter to his students, and this year he shared a poem he wrote, a meditation on thanksgiving and the personal ups and downs he experienced over the year.

This Christmas, take a moment when you can to give thanks, express gratitude. Thanksgiving may be over, but gratitude can be a way of life.

*For everyone who helped me start
And for everything that broke my heart
For every breath, for every day of living
This is my Thanksgiving*

—Prof. Craig Marty



Kote Batonisashvili is thankful for the love and guidance of his parents:

"They had shown me what is right and wrong, taught me valuable life lessons and they are always there for me when I need them most."

—Week of Thanks Facebook Post

We want to thank our incredible maintenance and ground crews. Each and every day, they help us to provide the best possible resources we can for our student-athletes.

—UD Track & Field/Cross Country Facebook post



IN THIS ISSUE

A Time to Give Thanks	1
Character in Disciplines	2
Business	2
Faculty Grants	3
Book Discussions	3
Gratitude Week 2018	4-5
Character Scholars	6-7
Alumni	6
Christmas Banquet	6
Staff Note	8

Coming up: Spring 2019 Wendt Character Lecture



Sarah Theborge, author of *The Invisible Girls and Well*, physician assistant, volunteer, and cancer survivor

March 25, 2019
7:00 p.m.
John and Alice Butler Hall
No ticket necessary

Character in the Disciplines

Character and the Business Environment



By Dr. Ricardo Cunningham, Business & Accounting Department Chair; Director of Master in Management Program

The business environment is dynamic and composed of organizations that make complex decisions to survive. The decisions organizations make are complex in nature because there may not be a clear right or wrong, decision-makers may not have perfect information, and unsuccessful outcomes can cost the jobs of individuals. With all this being said, why should organizational decision-makers make ethical decisions when so much pressure is placed upon them, and so much is on the line?

According to Warren Buffett, “When looking for managers, look for three things—integrity, intelligence, and energy. The truth is that if you don’t have the first, the other two will kill you!” Integrity is loosely defined as doing the right thing when no one else is watching and is an integral piece of defining a person of virtuous character. When acts of virtuous character permeate through an organization’s culture, a phenomenon called Organizational Citizenship will occur. Organizational Citizenship behaviors are those behaviors that affirm decisions that contribute and hinder decisions that do not contribute to the organization’s long-term viability. Research has shown when individuals buy into Organizational Citizenship, a greater commitment to the organization and increased trust will occur. As a result, organizational integrity comes when all members are committed to organizational behaviors that embrace moral decision-making practices.

Referring back to the original premise—with so much on the line, why should organizational decision-makers make ethical decisions—the response should be, how can they not!

A good leader in the business world is someone who is looked up to by many. Showing character and good morals will set a good example to follow by others.

—Bo Ganea
Wendt Character Scholar
Accounting/Business Undergraduate C’19

Character builds and shapes relationships with your customers, employees, and community.

—Prof. Rafic Sinno



Prof. Rafic Sinno and graduate student Dalton Garst

Character Sightings . . . in Business

“Professor Sinno’s character is second to none.”

This was the response from Dalton Garst, graduate student and G.A. in the Business Department, when asked about faculty members who exemplify good character for students. He explained, “Professor Sinno leads by example when it comes to treating students and other faculty members with respect. Anyone that has a conversation with him can easily tell that he is fully engaged and genuinely cares about the person he is communicating with.”

The Business Department is taking steps to include character in its curriculum. With UD’s stellar Business faculty, we look forward to seeing students continue to grow in understanding and practice of good character in all areas of life and work.

Wendt Faculty Grants

Our faculty have been busy this fall, organizing student trips and hosting speakers who challenge and encourage students to think and practice excellent character.



Drs. Sean Benson, Jon Barz, and Jeannine Pitas organized a trip to American Players Theatre for English students. They saw *Blood Knot*, a play set in apartheid South Africa and concerned with issues of racial justice.

Drs. Christine Darr and Brian Hallstoos took students in religion and history classes to Detroit, Michigan, for an in-depth, hands-on exploration of African-American history and race relations in Detroit to cultivate greater compassion and sensitivity for justice.



Director of the Library Chris Doll and Seminary Administrative Assistant Joy Lee, with the Asian Student Union, hosted filmmaker Tiffany Hsiung, who spoke to a large crowd of UD students, faculty, and staff, as well as members of the Dubuque community, about her film, *The Apology*, examining the continued injustices suffered by militarized sexual slavery survivors of WWII.



Dr. Adam Smith organized a book discussion group on *The Existentialist's Survival Guide* for interested Honors Students and invited the author, Dr. Gordon Marino, to speak at UD.

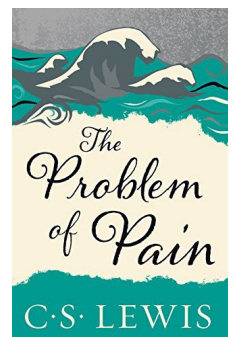
Prof. Ben Bartels invited Darryl Burton to speak at UD. Mr. Burton, an innocent man who was exonerated after spending 24 years in prison, shared his experiences with the criminal justice system and his faith.



Book Discussion Groups

C.S. Lewis's classic treatise on *The Problem of Pain* guided our discussions on the seemingly problematic existence of pain in a world created by a loving God.

Our discussions, though not always conclusive, continue to draw us closer together, supporting us as we seek to foster community among UD faculty and staff.



Gratitude Week



Gratitude Week 2018

On-campus Audiences

- IT Department
- Security Office
- Financial Aid
- International Studies Office
- TRIO/ASC



Off-campus Audiences

- Presentation Lantern Center
- Dubuque County Dispatch
- Hospice of Dubuque
- Teachers at Jefferson Middle School
- Dubuque Regional Humane Society





Gratitude is important because it not only allows us to reflect on our lives and the wonderful people that surround us, but it also gives us the opportunity to make other people feel appreciated.

**—Hope Enck
Wendt Character Scholar**



Seeing the joy and happiness on the faces of each person on the receiving end of gratitude week was the best reward of all!

**—Anna Dunson
Wendt Character Scholar**



I really enjoyed seeing some of the school faculty who may be “under-appreciated” get some well deserved recognition from the Wendt scholars.

**—Brandon Ramos
Wendt Character Scholar**



Wendt Character Scholars

Notes from Alumni

Being a Wendt Scholar taught me the importance of helping others with anything I have, whether that be advice, a helping hand, or just simply my time.

—Brenda Nava



The effect of gratitude is probably the biggest impact the Wendt program had on my life.

—Kyle Neisius

Boundless Compassion

Following Warden Claude Chester's Character Lecture, Professor John Shook, former Assistant Warden at USP Leavenworth, shared his experiences working in the criminal justice system and emphasized the need to treat inmates with compassion.

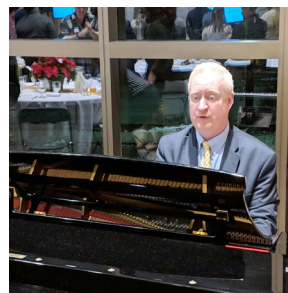


Scholars spent their final Wendt meeting of the semester sharing their Gratitude Week experiences with each other and led a review of topics covered during the semester.



Christmas Banquet

We joyfully celebrated Christmas and the end of the semester with a festive banquet. Dr. Annalee Ward led the opening prayer and Dr. Chuck Barland and Mary Bryant provided music. After feasting on delicious food, we ended the evening with traditional Christmas carols.



I want to be a Wendt Scholar because . . .

Interested in applying for next year's Wendt Character Scholarships? Learn more about a few of our current scholars and why they wanted to join the program.

Applications are online at <http://wendt.dbq.edu/Applying.cfm> and are due January 31.

Zach Elias



I knew that I wanted to be involved with a group that resembled my personal values and actively served the community.

Roody Joinvil



I heard my coach talking about all the good things it does for students at UD. I would like to help other people, too, like you guys help me.

Joshua Nsenga



Because of its values such as character, compassion, justice and so other many others which I believe were very core to the mantra of us as human beings.

Carissa Brown

Wendt values resonate with me. I also didn't want to just go to college, I wanted to be a part of something bigger, which the Wendt program provides.



Christine Lurhuma

I wanted to not only give back to my community but to see how my faith influences my way of thinking. Wendt allows you to think deeper in yourself and your morals and values. It is an experience that is so beneficial.



Daniel Bacskai

I saw it as a great opportunity to get more involved around campus as well as the Dubuque community. It was an opportunity for me to learn more about myself through small group discussions and the various guest speakers.



Shelby Hibbler

I felt like I was missing something in my life. . . the program has done more that meet my expectations, it was more than a scholarship. It was a life changing experience.



Shabnam Schmidt

Being a Wendt Scholar requires me to be a better person and live selflessly through community service work. I want to leave the University of Dubuque knowing that I made a difference, not only on campus but in the community.



Staff Note

A Rose in the Cold of Winter

Our lives go through winters that have nothing to do with the Earth's position around the Sun. I'm speaking of winters of pain, of unwelcome change. Existing in our vulnerable bodies, living in community with each other, loving one another—all of these inevitably lead to pain at some point, be it physical, mental, or emotional.

Sometimes pain can be a good motivator. It gets us to act, to remedy the problem. Pain can alert us when we have gotten too comfortable, so comfortable that we've let ourselves believe that all is well and we're in total control. It helps us remember that misfortune is not something anyone can just avoid if they are only vigilant enough. It is a common human condition. And this reminder of shared humanity rekindles our compassion for others and ourselves.

But when pain and discomfort overwhelm us, when we've exhausted our options and all that's left is waiting for the pain to subside, how can we keep going through this cold winter? I look to the lyrics of a certain German Christmas carol, translated by Theodore Baker in 1894:

*Lo, how a rose e'er blooming,
From tender stem hath sprung.
Of Jesse's lineage coming,
As men of old have sung;
It came, a flow'ret bright,
Amid the cold of winter,
When half spent was the night*



Of course, the song is referring to the miracle of Jesus' birth, but I think it's an apt metaphor as well for the good that can appear in our lives even while we wrestle with serious calamity. Goodness, unlooked for and startling, isn't on a schedule. You may wait a long time for it to appear. But don't

despair. Practice compassion for others and yourself even in the midst of pain. Live in hope, so that when the good comes, you can recognize it and allow it in to light your life.

I wish for you all a Christmas full of hope and love.

—Mary

WENDT CENTER FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION



Dr. Annalee Ward
Director



Mary Bryant
Administrative
Assistant



Cassandra Berger
Graduate Assistant



Like us on
Facebook!

www.Facebook.com/WendtScholars



Follow us on
Twitter!

@WendtCenterUD
#WendtCharacterInitiative
#WendtScholars

