

UD Faculty Advance Character

An April celebration highlighted individual faculty's work and character advancement in the disciplines. Posters displayed the importance of character in the disciplines and highlighted how departments instill and assess character formation and knowledge in their majors.

The event served not only as a celebration of character education among faculty and in departments, but also as a relaxing social event for faculty to stop in and mingle with one another. While some faculty caught up over a cup of coffee, others had the opportunity to meet for the first time, making new character connections on campus.

Students nominated 23 faculty for their work in advancing moral character! Student comments highlighted caring faculty who model good character.

Faculty Character Advancement Award Nominees:

Charles Barland
Ben Bartels
David Birkett
Mary Emily Duba
Tyler Carlson
Roger Ebertz
Ken Godwin
Linda Hanson

Kelly Grussendorf
Kim Hilby
Adam Hoffman
Lalith Jayawickrama
Craig Marty
Kate Meyrick
Jill Mulford
Chaminda Prelis

John Shook
Rafic Sinno
James Sizer
Dick Smith
Rich Smith
Ken Turner
Dennis Yergler

Rafic Sinno, Associate Professor of Business, received the Faculty Character Advancement Award at Honors Convocation.



Rafic Sinno

Prof. Sinno embodies character in the way he teaches and in the way that he guides his students. He teaches students to do what is right and understands the importance of his lessons and how they will apply to your post-college career.

—UD Student

If you would like to discuss how to incorporate character education in your work, contact us at wendt@dbq.edu or visit www.dbq.edu/Wendt/ for ideas.



Faculty (above) conversed and read about Character in the Disciplines on various posters (below right).



Linda Hanson finds her nomination certificate at the faculty celebration.



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Character in the Department

Character in Vocation, Career, and Community

The Office of Vocation, Career Services and Community Engagement offers many programs to serve students on their path to find meaningful engagement:

- Résumé assistance
- Mock interviews and employment connections
- Professional clothing closet
- Professional head-shots
- Career exploration support
- Community involvement initiatives

Dr. Amy Baus, Director of Vocation, Civic Engagement, and Life Services, believes the three facets of character (integrity, compassion, and justice) are constants to strive for in a complex and fluid world. She challenges students to think about how they choose to apply them within their day, week, month, year, and even when no one else is watching, as key guides within their lives.

Ellen Carr, Associate Director of Vocation, Career Services, and Community Engagement, adds that their office helps students prepare for the next part of their life journey. Their UD experience helps them develop transferable skills they will take with them after graduation as they continue to explore, consider and find new ways to engage in their communities, their professions, and their relationships.

We work to inspire students to find not only meaningful careers but also to navigate the challenges and pressures in professional settings.

**—Ellen Carr
Associate Director of Vocation,
Career Services, & Community Engagement**

Through the training Dr. Baus provided I am able to recognize and use that strength of compassion within my daily life.

**—Andrew Newberry
Wendt Character Scholar**



I challenge students to think about how they treat others and to learn more about people who do not look like them, sound like them, or live like them, as that opens the door and helps us in society to move the needle, break down barriers of fear, and promote social change.

**—Amy Baus
Director of Vocation, Civic Engagement,
and Life Services
Assistant Professor of Psychology**



Above: Ellen Carr helps UD senior Callie Yearous select a professional outfit from the professional clothing closet (**below**).



Faculty and Staff

SPRING 2021



Discussion Groups

This spring, the Wendt reading groups added a single article session for those who might not be able to commit to a full book: “America is Having a Moral Convulsion,” an article by David Brooks that appeared in *The Atlantic*. Brooks argues that social trust in institutions has declined and identifies changing values in today’s climate that have contributed to this distrust. He challenges us to undertake small heroic acts to rebuild or create new institutions.

The book selection, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, reminded us of the powerful need for people to have a home. Matthew Desmond suggests some strategies, such as universal housing vouchers, for solving the U.S.’s housing crisis. Most of all, he helps us understand the complexity of the problem and the reality of human need.

We benefit from these discussions by growing community between various generations, disciplines, and perspectives.



The book was a great reminder we never really know what someone's life is like aside from the small glimpse we get to see.

—Discussion Participant

Icle Freeland Graduates!

When you have a moment, stop in the Wendt Office to congratulate and say goodbye to Icle Freeland. He has served as the Wendt Character Initiative’s graduate assistant for the past two years and finishes his Master of Management in Communication this summer.

Icle revived our Instagram account as well as oversaw our social media outreach. He also organized our Character Day activities, designed posters depicting character in the disciplines, and helped with our Character Scholars Program in many ways.

We’ll miss you, Icle! We can’t wait to see where your path takes you from here.



Character Scholars

Curriculum—Loving Justice

Our spring curriculum continued the theme of *Loving Justice*, applying it to current issues and events.

- Kick-off and group service project with Resources Unite
- Christian Justice: Lovingly Doing Right By Others, Beth McCaw
- *I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness* by Austin Channing Brown
- "What to Do in Red Sea Moments," Rev. David Bailey
- Restorative Justice, Officer Sade' Pointer
- Poverty Simulation, Beverly Maas, Hawkeye Area Community Action Program
- *The Norm of Greatness - an MLK Jr. Tribute*, Darryl Van Leer
- Environmental Justice, Mary Emily Duba and Ken Turner
- Food Justice, Leslie Shalabi, Convivium



Scholars continued to meet in person, following social distancing rules.

The Norm of Greatness helped me realize the sense of hope that people who were oppressed felt when Dr. King spoke out. His words are so uplifting and encouraging of what can come to be.

—Olivia Miller



Olivia Miller and Alyssa Klawitter show off the candy cane information "bombs" they prepared for Resources Unite.

Delivering the candy cane bombs went well. I wasn't aware of the incredibly diverse economic situation in Dubuque, so delivering the candy canes really opened my eyes to problems that people face here in our own community.

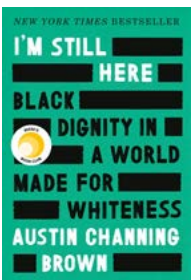
—Logan Loitz



Beth McCaw highlighted the story of the good Samaritan and encouraged scholars to lovingly do right by others.

[I'm Still Here] was a hard read and it was also difficult to grasp how much Brown has to go through on an everyday basis. I am in awe of her strength and thankful that she has gathered all of the pain and anger at the world and wrote her story on paper. Speaking out and getting the attention of others is a great way to start that change that needs to happen.

—Katelyn Howe



Character Scholars

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David M. Bailey virtually delivered the Michael Lester Wendt Character Lecture.

Rev. David Bailey was a Character Lecture that I will never forget.... Sitting in that auditorium, with the voice of Martin Luther King Jr. echoing off the walls was a time I won't forget. I felt so moved, like I had just witnessed the past and the impact that he has made.

—Emily Swanson

This [session] really put into perspective the effects of environmental justice and justice in general. I never really thought about justice in terms of the environment before. I think it has made me think more about how justice plays a role all over society and many people do not even realize it.

—Emma Powell



Mary Emily Duba and Ken Turner presented the topic of environmental justice.



The poverty simulation revealed many unexpected struggles and challenges that people with low income and insecure housing face on a daily basis.



Leslie Shalabi of Convivium discussed food insecurity, challenging scholars to get involved in the issue locally.



Scholars revealed their inner artists as they creatively reviewed the year's topics together.



Officer Sade' Pointer shared her work in restorative justice.

I grew up in a small town and if you bullied someone or did something wrong you were forced to confront the victim face to face to resolve the issue. Growing up, if I broke or damaged my neighbors' property my parents would make me go over and knock on their door to apologize in person and right whatever wrongs I made. I like that larger public school systems are using this method of [restorative] justice to teach kids valuable lessons and give them second chances.

—Nathan Brinker

Character Scholars

End-of-Year Awards Banquet

Congratulations to our completing Wendt Scholars and Mentor!



First row: Emily Entsminger, Savannah Jones, Katelyn Howe, Alyssa Sommerfeld, Madison Bowers, Elena Krasowski, Lauren Howe, Shabnam Schmidt, Alyssa Klawitter; second row: Brooke Goodman, Zach Elias, Austin Butson, Dominic Mulcahy, Joshua Raby; third row: Andrew Newberry, Morgan Meerstein, Daniel Bacskai, Nathan Brinker



Wendt Character Scholar Alumnus Jack Lindsay (left) spoke to scholars about the importance of normalizing excellence in one's daily life and striving to go beyond minimum expectations.



Luke Weber, Sammi Tolnai, Emma Powell, Olivia Miller, Andrew Newberry, Joshua Raby, Katelyn Howe, and Dan Bacskai

Our Scholars of the Year (above) demonstrated exemplary dedication to the program, fulfilling all commitments on time.



Ben Bartel's group



Katie Boyer's group



Mary Emily Duba's group



Emily Entsminger's group



Ken Turner's group

Emily Entsminger, Wendt Mentor

For three years, Emily Entsminger has served as mentor to many Wendt Character Scholars. She has been a steady presence, serving as a faithful encourager and a gentle challenger when needed.

Thank you, Emily, for modeling your faith commitments, for your leadership, and for your compassionate engagement with us.



Character Scholars

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Service



Alyssa Sommerfeld (left) received the Wendt Community Service Award, having performed 189 hours of service this year and distinguishing herself with her passion for service and dedication to her nurturing vocation. This year she volunteered as a responder on a crisis textline, organized a Be the Match drive, as well as fundraised in support of a colleague diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia.

Four scholars received honorable mentions for community service, for 50 or more hours of service: Lauren Griffith, Katelyn Howe, Brady McIntyre, and Bradley Buechel (right).



Andrew Newberry (above) faithfully assisted with technology and remote options during this year's Wendt Scholar meetings. He received the "Above and Beyond" award for his outstanding dedication.

Doing acts of service for others is something I have always felt passionate about. As an aspiring physician, I plan to devote my career to helping others through some of their toughest, most vulnerable situations they may face.

—Alyssa Sommerfeld

Wendt Character Scholars performed more than 1,940 hours of service this year!

Service Spotlights



Maddy Huschitt (left) served as the freshman representative for UD's Student Nursing Association. This spring she stepped up to organize their February meeting, when Valerie Garr, Diversity Director and Supplemental Instruction Coordinator at the University of Iowa, presented "Healthcare Disparities Through the Frame of Bias."

Maddy coordinated the virtual event, including recruiting and organizing volunteers who led subsequent discussions in breakout rooms for the 40 attendees.

We wanted to plant that seed in future healthcare providers' minds so that when they get out in the professional world as nurses, they aren't causing that disparity and . . . they aren't afraid to speak up.

—Maddy Huschitt



Savannah Jones (above left) collected donations and, with the help of Raquel Navarrete, Kayla Schween, and Elizabeth Swan, put together bags of hygiene items. These bags, also known as blessing bags, were given to people at the Grab and Go dinner on Palm Sunday at St. John's Episcopal Church.

Athletics

Character Awards

Wendt Character Athletes of the Year

This year, our Wendt Character Athletes of the Year are Abigail Smith (Women's Outdoor Track & Field, Volleyball) and Jacob Sonnefeldt (Baseball). Congratulations to you both! Thank you for embodying excellent moral character on and off the field.



Abby demonstrates integrity and compassion in her daily life through her servant leadership, always putting the good of the team first.

—Coach April Elsbernd

Abby is honest, fair, and has a fire that burns to work for and find the best in every situation.

—Coach Chad Gunnelson

Jacob treats his teammates with respect and compassion, and is always quick with a word of encouragement to his fellow players.

—Coach Paul Wyczawski



The Wendt Character Athletes of the Year best demonstrate qualities of excellent moral character, good sportsmanship, and the virtues of integrity as characterized by truthfulness, honesty, and stewardship; justice as characterized by treating all people fairly, respecting diversity, and practicing Christian love; and compassion as characterized by living by the Golden Rule in service of others.

Wendt Character Athletes of Each Sport

Congratulations to the recipients of the Wendt Character Athlete Award for each team, as well! We look to you to be character leaders in athletics and in your daily life.

Baseball: **Jacob Sonnefeldt**

Women's Basketball: **Morgan Meerstein**

Men's Basketball: **Joshua Hammer**

Men's Cross Country: **Noah Forrey**

Women's Cross Country: **Stacey Kloft**

Football: **Adam Steingraeber**

Men's Golf: **Matthew McQuillen**

Women's Golf: **Sarah Fergus**

Men's Lacrosse: **Nathan Mueller**

Men's Soccer: **Zach Elias**

Women's Soccer: **Carissa Brown**

Softball: **Brooke Goodman**

Men's Tennis: **Maxwell Flaten**

Women's Tennis: **Kyrach Jernigan**

Men's Indoor Track & Field: **Clayton Hahn**

Women's Indoor Track & Field: **Alivia Auer**

Women's Outdoor Track & Field: **Abigail Smith**

Men's Outdoor Track & Field: **Tyler Cernohous**

Volleyball: **Abigail Smith**

Wrestling: **Brock Radeke**

Character Sightings

SPRING 2021

On Campus



Wendy Kish, Housekeeping staff for Cassat and Donnell Halls, loves meeting students. She leaves treats as tokens of appreciation and greets everyone as they return to their dorms. She wants students to know there is always someone there for them.

Wendy is one of the kindest people I have ever met. She always has a smile on her face and is always full of energy. She truly does make my day and makes me feel very appreciated and seen.

—Olivia Miller

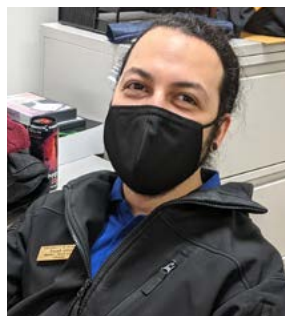


Pictured: Charles Barland on organ, Kristen Eby on piano, Jill Klinebriel on piano, Katie Gallart singing, Cassie Bechard on bassoon, Nolan Hauta on trombone.

Music faculty have given of their time and talents to support and rejuvenate weary colleagues and students with lunchtime concerts open to all at UD.

The influence of UD's music faculty extends beyond UD. Peter Binder, a student at Loras College and a Catholic seminarian at St. Pius X Seminary has been taking organ lessons from Charles Barland. He says, "Playing the organ . . . has been really important for me during this past year both as something which I can privately do for myself, but also as something which I can offer to others for their enjoyment and edification."

Let's never overlook the value and potential of practicing good character through creative pursuits.



Joe Letriz, Electronic Systems Librarian, maintains UD's online publication system ([Digital UD](#)) with persistence and grit. His work has transformed the publication platform into a reliable, attractive site that supports the scholarship of numerous UD students, faculty, and staff.



As Dennis Stillmunkes removes trash from campus buildings in the mornings, he greets people with an encouraging smile and positive attitude.

Have you sighted excellent moral character in action at UD? We'd love to hear your story. Email wendt@dbq.edu.

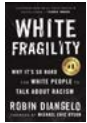
2020-21 Highlights

August

Scholars' Kick-off Picnic



September



Faculty/Staff Book Discussions

Character Day

October

Journal Issue:
Character and Identity

November

Scholars' Christmas Celebration

Gratitude Week

December

racial injustice

just mercy

proximity

grace

privilege

white fragility

neglected
neighborhoods

health care disparities

dignity

loving justice

gratitude

racial reconciliation

lovingly doing
right by others

service

sphere of
influence





sacrifice
restorative justice

systemic racism in the
criminal justice system



poverty your life's blueprint

economic injustice

food justice

food deserts

presence

food swamps

environmental justice

Scholars' Spring Kick-off and
Service Project

January

Scholars' Book Read



social, creative,
and economic
capital

Character Lecture:
David M. Bailey

February

Faculty/Staff Reading
Discussions



Poverty Simulation

Chilly Cheer-up Days

March

Faculty Character
Advancement Celebration



April

Scholars' Spring Celebration

Director's Note

Listening as Loving Justice

Deep listening lies at the heart of pursuing justice, growing civility, treating others fairly, and yes, even practicing Christian love. But listening takes a quiet effort and we live in a loud, exhausting culture.

So much of culture's noise emanates from humans' echo chambers, which constantly up their own volume trying to be heard over all the other voices. With that kind of surround sound shaping our environments, stress rises and impatience grows. Trying to understand others' voices taxes our strength, urging us to focus on self-care, on self-interest.



Do we ever stop to ask why people clamor to be heard?

Human beings pulse with deep longings to be heard, to be seen, to be recognized and acknowledged as individuals who have worth. Under all the noise, our insecurities amplify our own shouting.

Imagine if we could eliminate that noise and open ourselves up to listen to one another, to affirming that we hear each other by first summarizing what we have heard before we assert our own thoughts. Imagine our own hearts touched by another's pain before expressing our own.

In a speech to Congress in 2003, Thich Nhat Hanh, world-renowned Buddhist spiritual leader, calls for us to create compassionate communities as a foundation for justice. Recognize that so much violence is a result of suffering. We need to listen to others in a way that gives space to expressing the source of their suffering.

In the words of Croatian theologian Miroslav Volf, "You will have justice only if you strive for something greater than justice, only if you strive after love."

Friends, each one of us bears the precious image of God (Gen. 1), and we belong—we have incredible value, inestimable worth as God's own precious children (1 Jn. 3). We are known and loved—deeply (Ps. 139). Today, rest in that knowledge as we seek to practice loving justice.

—Annalee

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