

Report of Northwestern College

We are pleased to report a fifth consecutive year of record enrollment at Northwestern College. Fall 2023 total enrollment was 1,715. Our Graduate and Professional Studies division continues to grow, achieving another record-breaking semester with 543 students across master's degree programs in counseling, education, and physician assistant studies.

Strategic Planning and Campus Master Planning

This academic year, trustees, faculty, and staff have been engaged in discussions on strategic planning and campus master planning. We completed the most recent five-year strategic plan with much success, including exceeding every enrollment goal; increasing diversity among our faculty, staff, and Board of Trustees; and exceeding every fundraising goal. As we envision the next five years, we are consulting with proven strategy experts at TGThree. Our strategic vision:

Northwestern will become the StandOut Christian College in Iowa, attracting a diverse community of students to an educational experience that counters today's isolation, division, and anxiety from being over-scheduled and over-stimulated through belonging, community, and rich, reflective, unhurried opportunities to learn and discern how to follow Christ and pursue God's redeeming work in the world.

In addition to developing our next strategic plan, we are also partnering with CMBA Architects to create a new campus master plan. The recently completed ten-year campus master plan included the RSC four-court renovation, soccer field construction and renovation, North Suites, DeWitt Learning Commons, Ramaker Center renovations, Juffer Fieldhouse, DeWitt Family Science Center, Van Peurse Hall renovations, Vogel Welcome Center, and Christy Suites. Since 2012, we have invested more than \$62 million in new and remodeled campus facilities. Praise the Lord for the generosity of our friends and donors! The new campus master plan will address additional space needed for academic program growth, replacement housing, and deferred maintenance in some of our older facilities.

Both the strategic plan and campus master plan will be brought to the Board of Trustees for approval at the annual board meeting in April 2024.

Academic Program Updates

Bachelor of Science in Engineering

Development of our newest undergraduate major is being led by Dr. Young-Ji Byon, engineering program director. Dr. Byon came from Khalifa University in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, a top-100 engineering university, where he served as associate chair of the department of civil infrastructure and environmental engineering.

During his 11 years at Khalifa, he was involved with the initial launch of civil engineering programs and helped secure ABET (Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology) accreditation for those programs in 2019. Dr. Byon received his master's and doctoral degrees in civil engineering from the University of Toronto, where he also earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering. He completed post-doctoral research at the University of Calgary and the University of Chile.

Dr. Byon has shared his excitement about the opportunity to use his passion for Christian engineering education—along with his research expertise and administrative skills—to build a program that meets the growing demands of students and industry. Our vision for Northwestern's engineering program is for it to be Christ-centered and to equip students with an excellent engineering foundation, creative and innovative minds, and hands-on experience with a missionary mindset.

Pending final approval from the Higher Learning Commission in April, Northwestern's first cohort of undergraduate engineering students will begin classes in the fall.

Master's in Business Administration

Northwestern's new master of business administration (MBA) program will enroll its first cohort this fall. The faith-informed program will be customizable with electives in project management, entrepreneurship and innovation, and digital marketing. It will be geared toward young professionals who have two to ten years of work experience. The curriculum will cover accounting, finance, economics, and marketing while also developing students' critical thinking, teamwork, and leadership. The program is 100 percent online so students can enroll from around the world. It may be particularly attractive for international applicants, as we have designed the program so that it can fulfill the international residency requirements for an F1 visa.

StandOut Students and Faculty

Nursing and Physician Assistant Graduates Achieve 100 Percent Exam Pass Rate

Northwestern's 2023 bachelor's of nursing (BSN) graduates recorded a 100 percent pass rate on the NCLEX-RN board exam. The pass rate is a benchmark for analyzing a nursing program's quality and is evidence of our standout nursing program. Northwestern's nurses are working at the University of Iowa Hospital in Iowa City, Sanford Children's Hospital in Sioux Falls, and Baptist Memorial Hospital in Memphis, to name only a few.

Like our nursing graduates, our physician assistant (PA) master's graduates have recorded a 100 percent first-time pass rate on the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination. All 29 of the PA students who graduated in August passed the exam on their first attempt. Our standout PA graduates are working in family practice, trauma surgery, psychiatry, dermatology, otolaryngology, neurosurgery, gastroenterology, and emergency medicine.

Dr. Laird Edman

Dr. Laird Edman, research professor and professor emeritus of psychology, has received a \$234,000 grant from the Templeton Religion Trust. The grant covers two years of studying the impact of religious faith communities. Edman's work will study how people of faith—in particular, church leaders—leverage the way human minds work in order to better support faith development. His goal for his project team is to study which rituals achieve those results, test the team's hypotheses, and then share their findings through articles, podcasts, blogs, presentations, and a book. Their research will draw on the cognitive science of religion (CSR), an academic discipline that studies the mental capacities and processes that underlie recurrent patterns of religious thought and behavior. Overall, Edman hopes this work will lead to better understanding of the ways in which the human psyche is designed for worship, what psychological needs are fulfilled in worship, and what approaches to worship and discipleship will make the most profound, lasting impact.

Dr. Robert Hubbard

Dr. Robert Hubbard, professor of theatre, is the author of a recently published book titled *Scenes With My Son: Love and Grief in the Wake of Suicide*. Hubbard's purpose in sharing his family's story is twofold: He felt called to celebrate the life of his son and to let other people know about him. He also hopes the book is helpful both to people who have experienced great loss and difficulty as well as to those who haven't, but who would like to understand more about what it's like to endure suicide. Hubbard structured his book into three sections. "Beautiful Boy" introduces the reader to Auggie, "The Family Monster" chronicles his battle with clinical depression, and "The Life After" recounts the aftermath of Auggie's suicide. The book is not a work of apologetics tackling the problem of pain, but rather a story of great loss and hope.

Dr. Rachael Wittern

Dr. Rachael Wittern, assistant professor of psychology, was granted a \$3,000 Early Career Global Psychology Grant from the American Psychological Association. The grant supports her data collection on the mental health of Ukrainian refugees living in the United States. Wittern first became aware of the need for psychological data on refugees while running a free, bi-weekly therapy group open to the more than 100 Ukrainian refugees living in Sioux County. Four senior psychology majors are assisting Wittern with her research. From the data, Wittern will assess potential factors related to mental health outcomes, such as demographics, feelings of loss and guilt, and spirituality/religiosity. Knowledge of these factors and their impact on refugees' mental health will give psychologists a greater understanding of refugees' needs, allowing for more specialized treatment.

Raiders Stand Out

The Northwestern experience impacts students' lives and the lives of their families. The following is an excerpt from a letter written by two siblings thanking a donor for his family's investment in Northwestern (NWC).

The summer of 2021 our parents took us to numerous small Christian colleges for visits. To be honest, we only looked at Northwestern College to appease our mother, who is an alumna. We grew up in Charleston, SC, so the thought of northwest Iowa did not breed enthusiasm. Northwestern was our last college visit, and we did not expect much. However, we decided on NWC the day we visited. We are extremely thankful to be part of the Northwestern community.

We are both in the Honors Program, pursuing majors of biochemistry/pre-med. We benefit daily from your generosity through the [DeWitt Family] science facilities. The resources that you put into making NWC a top-tier institution impacts our lives on a daily basis. Thank you. This past summer we spent time with friends who are attending various colleges and universities. We are confident that our education is more rigorous and personable than what our friends are experiencing. Moreover, we are learning and growing in an environment where we are encouraged to ask difficult questions in light of the reality of who God is and who God is making us to be. We know our professors and they know us.

In addition to our studies, we are active playing baseball for the Raiders and participating in discipleship groups. Our freshman year was beyond expectation, and we look forward to the next several years at NWC. We are thankful for [supporters] like you who make NWC a place that truly Stands Out.