



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY UPDATE

March 3, 2008

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Good morning. On Friday I will travel with a number of faculty, staff, and students to Concordia College in Moorhead for the 20th annual Nobel Peace Prize Forum.

Founded in 1988, this annual event is a partnership among five colleges founded by Norwegian immigrants (Augsburg, Augustana [S. Dak.], Concordia, Luther, and St. Olaf) with the Norwegian Nobel Institute. It brings together Nobel Peace Prize laureates and world leaders around topics of global concern. The forum's goal is to inspire and engage students in issues of peacemaking, giving them a chance to interact with leaders committed to peace and justice who strive to bring about change.

This year's forum focuses on the work of Muhammad Yunus, the founder of Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, which has made thousands of low-cost loans to help individuals overcome the entrapment of poverty. Also speaking at the forum are Greg Mortenson, who has built schools in poor areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan enabling more than 25,000 children to get an education; and Jeffrey Sachs, director of The Earth Institute at Columbia University and special adviser to UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon.

Muhammad Yunus will also speak in Minneapolis on Saturday evening, March 8, at a sold-out event at the Humphrey Institute, University of Minnesota.

The 13th annual Nobel Peace Prize Festival, which involves young people celebrating the work of Peace Prize laureates, will take place at Augsburg on Thursday. More than 600 students from 18 schools will gather with their teachers, families, and friends in Melby Gymnasium to celebrate the work of Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank.

Next weekend also marks the NCAA Division III national championships in wrestling. With a win last week at the Great Lakes regional championship, **seven Auggie wrestlers qualified for the national tournament, March 7-8, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Good luck, Auggies!**

CAMPUS PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

ACTC presidents announce a new academic initiative

I'm pleased to join with my ACTC colleagues to announce an initiative to create a stronger academic identity for the five ACTC colleges and universities (Augsburg, Hamline, Macalester, St. Catherine's, and St. Thomas), rooted in our common urban location and identity. We will seek to translate that shared urban identity into a new set of collaborations that enriches the academic programs of each member institution.

This presidential initiative will be carried out by a new council of the chief academic officers of the member institutions, who will work with their deans and faculties on an ACTC-wide basis to flesh out the collaborative possibilities in the Twin Cities-based consortium. The first "summit" of chief academic officers, deans, and faculty will take place on March 11, centered

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on the theme of sustainable urban development. Dean Barbara Farley will lead an Augsburg delegation to this summit.

Chapel talks focus on themes of inclusion/exclusion

Chapel talks on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday this week continue the series begun last week, "The Ins and Outs of the Bible: Inclusion and Exclusion in Holy Scripture." Focusing on particular Bible texts each day, members of the Religion Department faculty present perspectives on themes of inclusion and exclusion. See the list below for this week's Chapel speakers.

Professor Phil Quanbeck is recording the talks in this series, which will be available as .MP3 files in the Religion Department's public folder in ORGS.

Press conference to announce biodiesel process discovery

On Friday, **a press conference on campus will announce the discovery of a process to make biodiesel fuel that makes it far more readily available at a lower cost.** The discovery began in 2006 with the URGO-funded summer research of chemistry major Brian Krohn, who, working with chemistry professor Arlin Gyberg, wanted to study different catalysts to make biodiesel. Gyberg connected Krohn to alumnus Clayton McNeff '91, with whom he then collaborated. Based on this research, a team of three scientists (McNeff, Gyberg, and McNeff's colleague Ben Yan), invented a new process, which they named the Mcgyan process, from a combination of their three names.

Currently, 100,000 gallons of biodiesel are being produced per year at a local plant using the Mcgyan process. A new plant under construction will increase that capacity by 30-fold when it opens later this year.

KUDOS

Many thanks to **Garry Hesser**, sociology and metro-urban studies, for his leadership and hard work to make this year's Batalden Seminar in Applied Ethics a success. Speaker Robin Lovin's interpretation of theologian Reinhold Niebuhr's thinking on current global and political events gave us insight as we listen to invocations of Niebuhr in current political discourse.

The Thursday night StepUP gala dinner was a great success, with 285 people attending. My congratulations to **Patrice Salmeri and the StepUP staff and students**, especially Drew DeGenarro, for providing special help; to Leslie Larson and Event Services; to Kevin Healy, the gift officers, Alumni Relations, and others in Institutional Advancement; to

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Regan Murray and Sodexo catering; and to former StepUP staff person Eileen Mitchell, for a very successful evening!

U.S. Congressman Jim Ramstad was honored with the Toby LaBelle Award, which was accepted on his behalf by his aide, Heather Renner. This annual award honors people who have made significant contributions to the recovery of young people and the StepUP program.

Congratulations to senior English and political science major **Kari Aanestad**, whose paper, "Ragnvald Aanestad and the Lutheran Sermon," was accepted for presentation at the Academy of Religion's annual Upper Midwest conference. Her research details changes in the 20th-century Lutheran homiletic form by specifically focusing on the sermons of Aanestad (her grandfather). Only three undergraduate papers were accepted in her category.

Kudos to **Geoffrey Gill**, who was selected as Mr. Pan-Afrikan at the Pan-Afirkan Leadership Conference in Mankato last week.

Congratulations as well to Augsburg alumnus **James Mastro '73**, who was named a finalist for induction into the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame. A pioneer in athletics for the blind, he is a former Augsburg wrestler and four-sport competitor in seven Paralympics. Members of the public can vote for the one Paralympian who will be inducted. For information, go to <http://www.augsburg.edu/athletics/sportsnews/022908mastro.html>.

NOTABLE EVENTS

March 3-4

Inter-Religious Dialog—Theologians from the Muslim, Jewish, and Christian traditions discuss "Creation: The Common Story"

March 3—7-8 p.m., Hoversten Chapel

March 4—10-11 a.m., 1:30-2:30 p.m., various locations

March 5

Wednesday Gathering for faculty and staff

11 a.m.-1:30 p.m., East Commons, Christensen Center

March 5

ACTC Visiting Writer—Anne Panning '88, reading from *Super America*

7:30 p.m.—Lindell Library 301

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March 6

13th annual Nobel Peace Prize Festival

11 a.m.–1:30 p.m., Melby Gymnasium

March 6

National History Day in Minnesota Metro, with more than 200 senior high school students showing tabletop exhibits

4–10 p.m., various locations on campus

March 7-8

20th annual Nobel Peace Prize Forum, “Striving for Peace: Investing in Community,” at Concordia College, Moorhead

For information, go to <http://www.cord.edu/Academics/Events/Peaceprizeforum/>

March 8

Neighborhood Sustainability Conference

8 a.m.–4:30 p.m., on campus

For information, go to <http://sustaincommunity.net/>

DAILY CHAPEL SPEAKERS

M,W,F–10:20 a.m.; T-Th–11:20 a.m.; Wed–9:09 p.m., Communion; Sat (when weekend classes meet)–7:30 a.m.

Tues., March 4—Interfaith worship service

Wed., March 5—“**The Ins and Outs of the Bible: Inclusion and Exclusion in Holy Scripture,**” Russell Kleckley, “Word of the Lord, Thanks Be to God?” (Joshua 10:29-42, Acts 10:34-36)

Thurs., March 6—Brad Holt, “Christian Mission and God’s Inclusive/Exclusive Choices” (Revelation 7:9-17)

Fri., March 7—Lynne Lorenzen, “Well-Behaved Women Rarely Make History” (Mark 7:24-30)

Mon., March 10—Pastor Phil Ruud, First English Lutheran Church (intern pastor Charlie Ruud’s father)

Sports schedule— <http://www.augsburg.edu/athletics/schedules/winter0708.html>

Have a great week—and remember to set your clocks ahead one hour by 2 a.m. next Sunday, March 9, when Daylight Saving Time begins. Spring is indeed on the way!