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### Daniel Lunney : Distinguished Achievement Award - Religion

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  - [Past Recipients](#)
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# 2005 Distinguished Achievement Award - Religion

## Daniel Lunney '90

“So, what can you possibly do with a degree in Global Peace and Social Justice?” a parent might ask of their child who’s considering such a major at St. Norbert College. For a convincing answer, one need only look at the still-young career of Dan Lunney.

In January of 2004, Dan was appointed as Executive Director of the National Catholic AIDS Network, based in Chicago. Administering and managing this non-profit organization is a challenge that Dan truly enjoys: “HIV/AIDS touches so many issues that people do not want to deal with—poverty, sexuality, homophobia, racism, suffering, illness, injustice, the inequitable distribution of resources.” With all these serious issues to face, how did Dan ever arrive at this particular mission in his life?

Dan credits his St. Norbert education and experiences as a student with helping “open my mind, my eyes and my heart to the world around me. My curiosity was reinforced; my education was infused with Catholic and Norbertine values,” and his academic base was complemented by many opportunities to learn outside the classroom. Dan continues, “I cannot stress enough how thankful I am for a liberal arts education” that “gave me tools for life, not just for a job.” Dan gives special accolades to Dr. Shawn Copeland, one of his teachers at St. Norbert, who helped give him a solid foundation in theology, one that “has allowed me to experience life more fully.” Their interchanges prompted Dan to explore the deep questions of faith and theology that went beyond the classroom.

Dan’s education didn’t stop with St. Norbert, but enthused by his studies here, he went on to study Clinical Pastoral Education at Chicago’s Rush - Presbyterian - St. Luke’s Medical Center in 1995; earn a master's degree in Theological Studies from St. Norbert College in 1996; become a Board Certified Chaplain from the National Association of Catholic Chaplains in 1997; and earn a certificate in graduate studies in Health Care Ethics from Rush University in 2003.

These educational experiences, coupled with his work as a chaplain, have caused him to “place greater value on one-to-one interaction with people as well as the need for addressing social issues.” The principles of Catholic Social Teaching have been a great influence on, and have provided the guiding principles for, Dan’s life work. The many people he has met, helped and worked with have all taught him “the importance of hope even in the midst of despair,” and that we need to be acutely “aware of how our decisions and actions affect the most vulnerable.”

Dan has worked as a chaplain at several Illinois health facilities; as an intern for Network, a Catholic social justice lobby in Washington; and in world mission services for the Green Bay Diocese. Before assuming his present position, Dan also served the National Catholic AIDS Network as web editor, annual conference staff member and as interim executive director.

His awards include the 1999 Spirit of St. Norbert Young Alumni Award; the 2000 Annual Mission, Values, Philosophy Leader for Equality Award from Advocate Ravenswood Medical Center; and the 2002 Annual Mission, Values, Philosophy Leader for Compassion Award from Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center.

## St. Norbert College

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