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Former CNS Director Returns as Board Chair

Andrew Ciferni O.Praem.

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The Rev. Andrew Ciferni '64 is back at SNC and excited to tackle his new role as chair of the St. Norbert College Board of Trustees.

Former CNS Director Returns as Board Chair

The Rev. Andrew Ciferni '64 is back at SNC after spending most of the last two years at Daylesford Abbey – his home community – in Paoli, Pa. He's excited to take on his new role as chair of the St. Norbert College Board of Trustees. A popular figure with the student body, he's definitely looking forward to returning to rejoin the campus family in his new role.

Dear Parents,

Recently, I had the opportunity to attend an SNC swimming and diving meet for the first time. During the meet, I met the college's strength trainer. He asked me how long I had been associated with the college. I responded, "For 55 years!" He asked what he might have to do to remain here that long. I replied, "Show up."

I first showed up at St. Norbert College as a Norbertine seminarian student in 1961, graduating in 1964. In 2002, after teaching at Catholic University of America and Washington Theological Union, among other endeavors, I was elected to the college's board of trustees, where I served until 2009.

Then, from August 2013 to May 2018, I had the great blessing of being sent to St. Norbert to serve as director of the **Center for Norbertine Studies**, plus work with other Norbertines on the **college parish's** ministry team.

In the summer of 2018, I returned to my home community at Daylesford Abbey in Paoli, Pa. I was appointed to the board of trustees soon after that and, at the same time, was appointed to the board's executive committee.

Leaving St. Norbert in 2018 was a painful break because I love our students. I loved, and continue to love, teaching them, counseling them, responding to their searching questions of faith, leading them in prayer, joining them in Trivial Pursuit at Old Chicago Pizza in Ashwaubenon, preparing some for marriage and presiding at their weddings, and guiding others toward lifelong service in the Church as priests and/or in consecrated life.

But, paradoxically, it was leaving St. Norbert that made it possible for me to become a member of the board of trustees and, today, its chair.

I have often pointed out to students that, when they went on their high school tour of potential colleges and universities, they – with you – were attending to reports on the quality of academic programs of their interest – reports on the quality of teaching, the beauty of the campus, possibilities of financial aid, residence hall facilities, athletic programs, etc. Neither you nor they asked the question, "What kind of friends will I make in this place?" Friends for life maybe, or perhaps the man or woman with whom they will spend the rest of their life.

But the blessings of lifelong friendships are gifts freely given here. Most, I suspect, are among peers. But at St. Norbert, many are also between students and their coaches, professors, staff and administrators.

When I was a graduate student at the University of Notre Dame, I was also the rector of a men's residence hall. Not surprisingly, especially at Notre Dame, many of these guys were interhall athletes. As a young priest, I learned that creating an atmosphere of trust allowed them to feel comfortable coming to speak to me about issues deeper than sports or even academics. Creating that trust often grew from simply showing up to cheer them on at soccer, football, ice hockey and basketball.



From the President

In the forthcoming issue of **St. Norbert College Magazine**, out mid-March, President Brian Bruess '90 uses his regular letter to speak to the radiance of the college's mission, identifying it as the force that drives the special experience students and parents encounter from their first visit to the St. Norbert campus.

He writes: "Our mission is vibrant, understood and actively lived in every building, every residence hall, every area of campus, and in the good works of our 24,000-plus alumni serving their communities and families around the world. And while we are proud of the work being done to radiate mission – work that began 900 years ago – we also know that only when we actively invest in mission each day – asking how it can be expressed and made manifest in ever new ways – will it flourish for another 900, and beyond. Be assured, we joyfully accept this charge."

Also in This Issue

This article first appeared in the March 2020 issue of *Parents of St. Norbert College*. Other features in this edition included:

**SNC's Academic Centers
Focus on Equality, Service,**



My showing up there, and then in recent years here at St. Norbert for students' musicals, academic presentations and Division III sports events, has enriched my life. I've been able to enjoy the kinds of friendships that I see happening between grandparents and their children's children.

I never imagined myself as chair of the St. Norbert College Board of Trustees, but I am honored to have been asked to serve in another way at St. Norbert – the place that helped transform my life from the grandson of immigrant Italians to a Norbertine priest, academic and cheerleader for our students.

March 12, 2020

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