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A radical welcome

By Tony Staley

For new faculty arriving at St. Norbert, a sense of community begins right away



Bonnie McVey (Computer Science) and Terry Jo Leiterman (Mathematics) were paired as faculty mentor and mentee when Leiterman arrived at St. Norbert five years ago. It was a meaningful connection that saw the start of an ongoing and productive friendship.

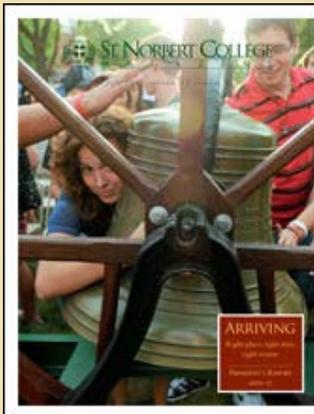
Thanks to a unique faculty development program, new professors arriving on campus forge quick connections and find common ground in their new environment.

Tomas Bogardus (Philosophy) and Mara Brecht (Religious Studies) discovered a mutual interest while chatting at the college's New Faculty Orientation Program this summer.

Both had written doctoral dissertations on epistemology – the study of knowledge. Soon they were discussing potential collaboration on a conference or workshop examining religious disagreement and religious diversity.

That's not a lone example of the relationships the program fosters.

Bob Pyne (Peace and Justice) says he made close friends when he participated in the program in 2009: "I discovered some natural connections between others' work and mine. A couple of them have gotten involved in the peace and justice minor, which none of us had anticipated, and I have helped out in their classes



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SNC Day

It's our annual fall open house, and a chance to share our cherished tradition of radical hospitality.



Getting in the game

Photographer Evan Siegle says that shooting sports is about preparation, timing – and a little good luck.



Somewhere in time

A forgotten time capsule, rediscovered, reveals what was top-of-mind at St. Norbert College half a century ago.



A warm welcome

Tour the new building that is transforming the arrival experience for our visitors.



The move-in

Join **Haley Bass '15** on her very first day of college, as the first-year and her family set up her room in Madelaine/Lorraine.



Teach me your ways

Retired educator the **Rev. Gery Meehan, O.Praem., '57** remembers **Abbot Bernard**

and programs. There is a strong sense of collegiality, largely formed during those first few orientation times together.”

Other sorts of bonds are also forged.

Bogardus and other new faculty set play dates for their young children, while Brecht says connections she made with new biology, sociology and library faculty mean “we can get to know each other more and have an impetus to get together more throughout the semester and the coming years.”

Second-year faculty member **Ryan Cordell** (English) agrees. “The biggest benefit really is creating a cohort. I made a lot of friends with the other faculty who are coming in. They’re my staple group who I always see at faculty meetings and other events. I think that really builds that sense of community here, to have not just your own discipline but also this group of people from other disciplines who you associate closely with.”

Third-year faculty member **Tynisha Meidl** (Education) says her cohort met informally for lunch to discuss various issues. “You feel you have this bond and sense of connection with others who are coming in at the same time.”

Cordell also found a racquetball partner – **Blake Henson** (Music) – and says discussing challenges they face is a big part of their games.

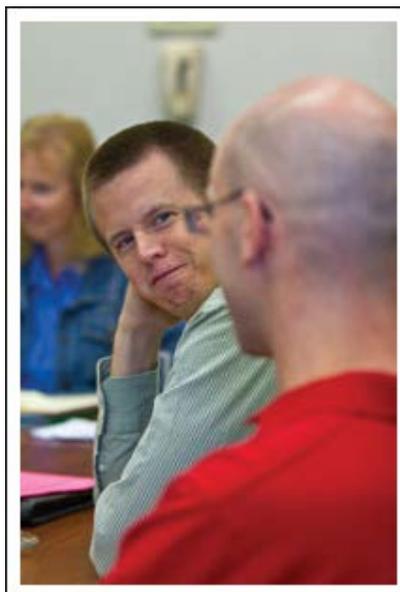
Building a cohort and encouraging collaboration have been aims of the New Faculty Orientation Program since it started in 1985, says **Linda Beane Katner** (Modern Languages and Literatures). The program fits into the office of faculty development’s mission of assisting in the professional and personal growth of full- and part-time faculty throughout their careers. The office does this by providing voluntary, confidential, individual consultation; a 1,800-volume library of professional materials; information on successful grant-writing; and funding for professional development conferences.

The college places such importance on faculty development that Beane Katner meets individually with each tenure-track candidate for 45 to 60 minutes. “It’s a privilege to be able to tell our story to the faculty candidates. They will see when they compare us to their other potential offers, wow, they’ve got something going on there.”

Several say the services described in those meetings were a factor in their decision to come to the college.

Once they arrive, new faculty gather in August for an intensive two-day workshop starting with breakfast at St. Norbert Abbey, where the **Rev. Jay Fostner, O.Praem., ’84** (Mission and Student Affairs) discusses the college’s Norbertine roots and leads a tour.

Participants then move to the college for talks about student demographics, building a syllabus, surviving the first few weeks and other basic information. **President Tom Kunkel** and **Dean Jeff Frick** welcome them and host lunches.



Erik Brekke (Physics) connects with Jamie Lynch (Sociology) during one of the first workshops held for the 2011-12 cohort of new faculty members.

Pennings – founder of both abbey and college.

Memories you can touch

A First Communion dress, a family drawing and an early biography of Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt – all speak to a life full of meaning.

Ready for primetime

Sir Norby Knight stars in promo spots for live TV broadcasts of Green Knight athletic events – and more.

Alumni Award Winners 2011

Each year the college is privileged to honor a few among its many outstanding alumni. Meet this year’s winners, recognized at a celebratory dinner in October.

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Their considerable involvement in the program surprised Bogardus. "They were really around quite a bit, which was nice," he says.

Kunkel says the program's purpose is "to connect these important people to the heart of the community right from the start, and it works very well."

The orientation allows administrators to talk about the college's mission and why faculty are central to it, and to thank them for choosing St. Norbert. It also increases understanding of expectations, helps faculty learn the college's culture, allows them to interact with experienced faculty, administrators and students, and gives them a taste of radical hospitality, Frick says.

Ed Ridsen (English), who participated in the program in 1990, says: "Probably for me the most useful part of the orientation was the extended process of welcome, a way of saying to new faculty and staff, 'We care about you, we want you to succeed, we want you to be happy here,' rather than any specific advice about things to do or things not to do. It was that sense of entering a community and feeling welcome there."

Ken Zahorski (English, Emeritus) was the office's founding director from its start in 1985 to 2006, when Beane Katner came on board. He says the program has always included new administrators and all new full-time and part-time faculty: "Whether it was through new faculty orientation or any other program, I've always strongly believed that when faculty are given an opportunity to grow professionally and personally, the ultimate beneficiaries are the students."

Beane Katner calls her role with the program the best job on campus. "This is all good," she says. "I don't evaluate people. It's just about helping people achieve their full potential. We give out money. We offer these training opportunities. It's very, very rewarding to help people reach their full potential."

Faculty orientation also includes six 90-minute workshops during the first year and assignment of a mentor with whom to discuss professional and personal concerns.

Bogardus says his mentor, **John Neary** (English), was among the faculty members who helped his family move into their house.

Brecht's mentor, **Shalisa Collins** (Modern Foreign Languages), texted her before her first class wishing her good luck. "That was really nice. It's a simple thing, but it's a really good way to start the day knowing that somebody here who has more experience is paying attention to you and keeping you in their thoughts."

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