



wt feature

By Lori Essig

Embracing Change

Change.

It's a word that causes shoulder slumping, eye rolling and collective groans from good and positive people everywhere. There is just something uncomfortable about the prospect of change.

And yet, without change, we would not be listening to musical performances in the Sherman Center. We would not be pausing for quiet reflection in the Wagner Chapel. We would not be enjoying a variety of made-to-order food in the Weston Food Court. And we would certainly not be communicating with prospective students via computers and cell phones.

In short, we would be standing still ... which looks a lot like moving backward in today's lightning-speed world.

And yet, there is tension.

How do we stay true to our liberal arts tradition when we know incoming students are pragmatic and career oriented?

How do we upgrade and build new facilities with the reality of building costs?

And finally, most importantly, how do we effectively remain relevant without wavering in our mission and core values?

Students enter Hughes Science Hall (1955 and 2006)

1955 photo: Jerry Ptak '58, Curtis Rolfe '57, Harry Dutt '56, Harvey Hopkins '58, Joyce Higgs '58, Sue Schroeder '57, Harold Mitchell '55 and Dave Sutton '57. **2006 photo:** Reid Suellflow '07, White Lake; Troy Holleman '07, New Holland; Nathan Graves '07, Mitchell; Jory Hansen '07, Lakefield, Minn.; Kirsten DeWall '09, Okabena, Minn.; Sarah Mortenson '09, Selby; Heath Eggleston '09, Howard, Colo.; and Ben Floyd '09, Sioux Falls.

Working the plan

Following several years of small and large group meetings, data analysis, and good, old-fashioned instinct, the DWU community recently put the final touches on a comprehensive strategic plan. The Wesleyan Strategic Plan was approved by the DWU Board of Trustees at their spring meeting, making way for implementation.

The Wesleyan Strategic Plan hinges on six strategic imperatives:

1. Deliver academic quality and rigor in our students' pursuit of a liberal arts education.
2. Provide a vibrant, student-centered experience.
3. Unite knowledge, reason, Christian faith and a commitment to service in curricular and cocurricular activities.
4. Build a population of students that complements our academic profile.
5. Align a comprehensive advancement effort with our institutional vision.
6. Enhance the financial position of the university.

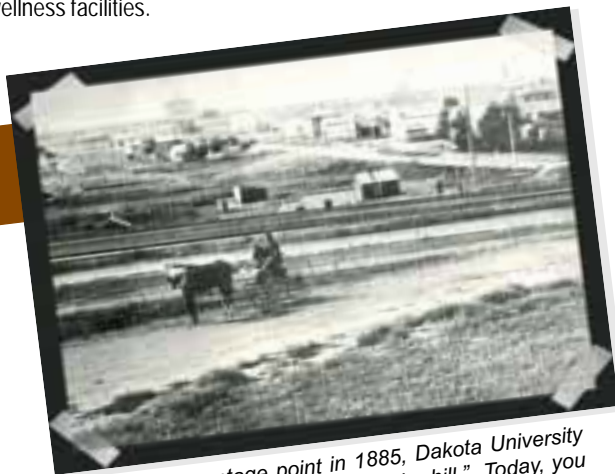
See the Executive Summary of the Wesleyan Strategic Plan at www.dwu.edu/info/stratplan.pdf.

DWU President Bob Duffett sees the approval of the Wesleyan Strategic Plan as the first step in a bright future.

"Like the old '70s jingle said, today is the first day of the rest of our lives," said Duffett. "Creating this plan has caused us to focus, with laser-beam precision, on what we must do to create our destiny as an institution of higher education."

In addition to approving the strategic plan, the board empowered the administration to move forward in planning for future facilities needs as related to the Wesleyan Strategic Plan. With the opening of the McGovern Library in the fall, the Layne Library space in Smith Hall will be vacated, creating a domino effect of facility renovation needs. Top priorities include new science labs and expanded athletic and wellness facilities.

View the McGovern Library on a webcam at www.dwu.edu/webcam.



From this vantage point in 1885, Dakota University was known as the "college on the hill." Today, you might be able to catch a glimpse of the flag waving in front of Smith Hall. Otherwise the view from here is filled with green trees and rooftops.



A postcard of Memory Lane from the 1940s features College Hall and the dedication sign "... in recognition of the services of faculty and students in World War II." Today's view of Memory Lane and Smith Hall shows the campus community paying tribute to a fallen soldier of the war in Iraq by flying the flag at half mast.

When is a dorm not a dorm?

A significant facility facelift was underway even before students left campus this spring. Renovation to Allen Hall began in late April, morphing the traditional dorm into a living space that offers suite-style living, allowing six students to share four rooms and a bathroom. Attached to Allen Hall are the student apartments that opened in 2004.

Why isn't traditional dorm living, including sharing a small bedroom with a stranger and a bathroom with 40 others, acceptable for today's students?

The answer, says Susie Hadrick, director of residential life, has to do with competition ... and parents.

"We are seeing constant change in living options on other campuses," said Hadrick. "Today's students are less likely to have shared a bedroom and they and their parents are not as comfortable with the communal aspect of the traditional dorm. We need to offer options to keep up with our competition."

Incoming freshmen will still have the conventional campus living experience in Dayton Hall, but for upperclassmen, the new suites and campus apartments offer an appealing option.

See plans for Allen Hall and construction photos at www.dwu.edu/campuslife/residencehall/allen.htm.

The new classroom

For many years, DWU was known to the Mitchell community as the "college on the hill." Now, with satellite nursing programs in Huron and Sioux Falls, and the wide world of online classes, DWU can be virtually everywhere. Regardless of location, however, the student experience must be relevant. Hands-on opportunities are the most popular way to provide that relevance.

During the spring semester, students in the entrepreneurial leadership class had the opportunity to establish their own businesses. The class instructor, Bryan Hisel, executive director of the Kelley Center for Entrepreneurship, gave each student a \$100 bill and a challenge on the first night of class. Students were to create a plan to make a profit with their "start-up" funds.

"The students had to follow three rules," said Hisel. "They had to return the \$100 to the Kelley Center at the end of the project; they had to risk the money to make a profit; and their project had to benefit someone other than themselves."

Projects ranged from running a raffle to selling snacks in the dorms. One student chose to use his start-up funds to purchase a used chain saw. In the aftermath of a devastating ice storm, he saw a widespread need for tree trimming. His business took off and he was able to invest in more equipment and eventually added firewood sales to his venture. At the end of the semester, he returned \$268 to the Kelley Center endowment fund.

Change in the learning environment extends across campus. In biochemistry, students are working with high-tech equipment, including a new DNA sequencer. In multimedia classes, students are creating digital video programs. Accounting students do free tax preparation for the community, adding service to their learning experience.

"Reading a textbook is good, getting a lecture is good," said Nick Gianou '06, following an internship with a software firm. "But having the real-life experience of putting it into practice is even better."

Old-fashioned values

Although living with changing student expectations can be challenging, there is a renewed interest in traditional values. Today's prospective students are more likely to have a strong faith commitment and be service oriented than their Generation X counterparts.

"Research tells us that our prospective students are family, service and team oriented," said Gwenda Koch, vice president for campus life. "We know that Dakota Wesleyan will offer these students the experiences they are looking for."

Benjamin Bonnett-Brooks, 2006 Scotchman, offers an example of faith and service in action. Bonnett-Brooks participated in three international mission trips, and he serves as a youth leader, tutor and mentor.

"DWU has taught me that faith and service are intertwined," he said. "Being educated helps me to live out the aspects of faith and service. I have to be involved intellectually and physically in order to truly make a difference."



The Class of 1912 Rock today, and the students from the Class of 1912 bringing it to its new home from the banks of the James River.

The more things change

In August, a few hundred freshmen will load their worldly possessions into the family car, make the trek to Mitchell, S.D., and meet their roommates for the first time.

They'll go to orientation sessions, try campus food service and anxiously say "goodbye" to Mom and Dad.

They will feel a surge of excitement at their independence. They will team up with new friends and work on a community service project. They will gather for their first campus dance. They will worship as part of a new community. They'll call – or e-mail – Mom, just to let her know everything's OK.

On Monday, classes will begin at Dakota Wesleyan University.

Some things never change.