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February 2016

QuickBits

Southern Adds Summer Graduation



Due to the growing number of summer graduates, Southern will host a July graduation. In the past, summer graduates have marched in December ceremonies. Adding a third graduation will allow Southern to continue hosting December ceremonies on campus rather than in off campus venues thus saving significant expenses. The commencement will be held July 28, at 7 p.m.

Columns Magazine Reader Survey



_____ is Southern's twice-yearly magazine for friends and graduates of the university. Editors are seeking feedback to ensure publication content meets readers' needs. Anyone who receives the magazine is encouraged to take the 10-question _____; your opinion is extremely valuable! If you are reading this email and do not currently receive Columns magazine, simply contact _____ and we'll add your name to our mailing list.

Alumni Highlights

Bridge Builders – Alumni Connect with Students

By Evonne Crook, Alumni Relations director



Doug and Vickie (Greenleaf) Knecht, members of the class of 1977, returned to campus for _____ Weekend in October 2015. Reconnecting with former classmates, professors, family, and friends was certainly a highlight of their experience, but they also dedicated time to nurture relationships they had developed in the past with current students.

The Knechts serve as teachers at _____ (MVA) located outside of San Francisco, California. With 14 MVA graduates attending Southern this year, the Knechts made arrangements to meet all of them in the church lobby on Sabbath morning for pictures and to share personalized gift bags with them.

Vickie Knecht said she had a “fun time reminiscing, hearing about their plans and successes, and the great things they are doing. Great to see them. So proud of these kids!”

Alumni Association President Jay Dedeker, '88, encourages alumni to become involved in the life of the university, to stay connected in community with each other and with students, and to impact those seeking the Southern experience by sharing gifts of time, talents, and treasure. Think of the potential for making a meaningful difference in the lives of students for eternity if, like the Knechts, each Southern graduate and attendee committed to increasing their alumni involvement in 2016.

Campus Life

David Smith Named Southern's 26th President

By Rosana Hughes, senior journalism major



David C. Smith, PhD, has accepted the position as Southern Adventist University's new president after the Board of Trustees formally invited him on February 10 to serve via unanimous vote. Smith will replace Gordon Bietz, DMin, who retires in June.

"I am honored to follow Gordon Bietz, who has provided Southern with 19 years of distinguished leadership," Smith said. "I look forward to partnering with God and all who are associated with Southern to see how He will make a special school even more special."

There will be two start dates for Smith: one when he is put on Southern's payroll and attends meetings alongside Bietz to receive real-time, on-the-job training, and one when he takes over as president after Bietz's retirement. Bietz said he is hopeful to have at least a month or so of working together, but exact dates have yet to be determined.

"I have many good feelings about my 19 years as president, and because I will be able to let someone else do the 'heavy' lifting, that is also good," Bietz said. "I love my work, I love the people that I work with, I love Southern, and I particularly love all the students. I will miss it all."

Smith is dealing with similar emotions as he prepares to leave his position as senior pastor of the Collegedale Church of Seventh-day Adventists.

“I had the most special experience in this church,” Smith said, “but I’m excited about remaining a member here and coming over to the university.”

Smith said his long-term plan for Southern is to improve enrollment, find ways to make Adventist education more affordable, and reduce student debt. He also wants to give students more opportunities to experience leadership on campus, create a more authentic spiritual life for students and faculty, and increase Southern’s presence in the local community.

Smith worked as professor and chair in Southern’s English Department from 1981 to 1998. He left to become president of Union College, where he served for 13 years, before returning to Collegedale in 2011 as senior pastor for the campus church.

Student Week of Prayer 2016: Authentic

By Sheann Brandon, sophomore journalism major



Students were challenged to “be real,” during week of prayer, February 1-5. The theme was “Authenticity: of Undisputed Origin,” with seven students sharing their personal experiences during nightly programs in the campus church sanctuary.

“This year we’ve focused on the theme of authenticity,” said Chaplain Brennon Kirstein, DMin. “We’ve asked students to grapple with that question. What is it? How does authenticity and spirituality relate in your story and in your experience?”

Student speakers included: Yaniz Seeley, senior nursing major; Evron Stewart, junior theology major; Scottie Deal, junior religious studies major; Grace Bondurant, senior nursing major; Stephen Rogers, senior history major; Alex Gallimore, clinical mental health counsel master’s student; and Anthony Burrell, senior theology major.

Kirstein said student speakers were chosen through a committee that received student, faculty, and staff recommendations.

“What I love about week of prayer is that a variety of different students share their stories of how God has been real to them,” Kirstein said. “Authenticity is just a rich theme to emphasize that part of our spirituality: being real, being authentic, losing the masks, losing the facades that we throw up so easily.”

Student speakers each presented how authenticity related to his or her life through personal stories or spiritual insights.

“I think student week of prayer brings the campus together,” said Andrew Verrill, sophomore chemistry major. “We get to see a big picture by looking at the individual parts.”

Marie Darisme, junior nursing major, said Gallimore’s talk spoke to her personally due to her desire to share the gospel in a manner not abrasive to others.

“How can we go from *trying* to be an authentic Christian, to actually *being* an authentic Christian?” Gallimore said. “Stop trying and start letting the Holy Spirit work. Plant the seed. He’s the one who changes the heart.”

Grace Bondurant, senior nursing major, opened up to students Wednesday night about a past pregnancy, abortion, and the struggle to heal.

“I have carried this burden secretly, afraid to be open and authentic with anyone for fear of being judged,” Bondurant said. “When I was finally able to reach out to others, that’s when I was able to find true healing and come to this amazing conclusion: God is not disappointed with me, and I don’t need to hide anymore.”

Kirstein said a “Hope Reborn” retreat (with anonymous registration) will soon be held for any student who has had an abortion, taken an abortion pill, had a miscarriage, or is suffering shame from sexual abuse.

Along with the nightly testimonies, Campus Ministries provided other opportunities for students to refocus on God during the week, including student workshops on how to give effective Bible studies and how to start an outreach ministry, and a 12-hour time of prayer held in the student center Friday night through Saturday morning.

Click [___](#) to watch the seven students sharing their personal experiences.

Community Connections

Leading by Example

By Sheann Brandon, sophomore Journalism major



Southern students are not the only ones on campus participating in mission work all over the world. Faculty and staff also exemplify the university's focus on service. For example, here are just three such examples of professors and some of the mission trips in which they've led.

Sierra Leone, Peru, and Guyana. _____, associate professor in the School of Computing, has traveled to many locations on mission trips with Southern. Repurposing his skills, Dant has helped with evangelistic seminars, taught at schools, done medical work, and held computer clinics.

"I like to travel and show God's love in a practical way," Dant said. "It's also a great opportunity to get to know students, demonstrating to them the importance of both the academic and spiritual aspects of education."

Haiti, Nicaragua, Navajo Nation, and Venezuela. _____, PhD, dean for the School of Nursing, determined long ago to support missions both financially and with her skills. James said her goal was to demonstrate Christian caring in tangible ways.

"My husband and I wanted to be an example and demonstrate to young people that in serving others, we grow in appreciation for all that we have," James said. "A life of service follows the example of Jesus."

James encourages all employees to participate in mission trips.

"Mission service is contagious," James said. "Students can catch the vision and carry it forward long after faculty are off the scene."

Guatemala, San Salvador, Chile, Botswana, Dominican Republic, Colombia, Bolivia, and Brazil. This year, _____, professor in the School of Education and Psychology, will be returning to Bolivia and Guatemala, as well as traveling to Cuba for the first time. He's helped with evangelistic series, vacation Bible schools, medical and eye clinics, building construction, and building maintenance.

"It's one of the most rewarding experiences a professor can have," Fuentes said. "Students see you in different light as you lead using a servant leadership model; I do everything they do and the bonding is immediate. It's a one of a kind experience!"

To inquire about participating in or chaperoning a short-term mission trip, email the Evangelistic Resource Center (erc@southern.edu) or uQuest Missions office (_____).

Business Students Help Community Prepare Tax Returns

By Clementson Supriyadi, junior mass communications major



The _____ has begun its yearly free tax preparation service for the community of Collegedale and the greater Chattanooga area. Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) services began on January 31 and will continue until March 3 at _____. In 2015 they helped with 165 tax returns, and organizers hope to eclipse that mark this year.

According to the IRS, VITA was created in an effort to “offer free tax help to people who generally make \$53,000 or less, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and limited English-speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns.”

VITA is a collaboration between the IRS, Urban League of Greater Chattanooga, United Way of Chattanooga, and Southern Adventist University. With sites all throughout the city of Chattanooga, VITA offers many opportunities for students in training and service.

“It’s open to anybody to volunteer,” said Mark Hyder, CPA and dean for the School of Business. “We need greeters and preparers. You can even be certified by the IRS tax preparer; that’s a real step up if you’re trying to get a job.”

Those receiving help have expressed their satisfaction with the service. Glenda Bales, an Ooltewah community member, highly recommends VITA’s service.

“I’ve been coming here for eight years,” Bales said. “They help me fill out the forms cause I don’t know how. I give them a 10 out of 10 with two thumbs up; they’ve always been real nice!”

Angel Rhoades, also from Ooltewah, was pleased by how prepared the students at Fleming Plaza were to assist.

“My overall experience has been nice,” Rhoades said. “Students are pretty quick here so I like that, and we really need the money so everything helps.”

Upcoming Events

Kicking Off the 100th Anniversary Celebrations

March 17, 11 a.m.



Join students, faculty, and staff in kicking off the anniversary celebration of Southern's move to Collegedale in 1916 by listening to President Gordon Bietz, DMin, present his last convocation

while speaking as president. His talk will center on Adventist education and Southern's contributions. The convocation will be shown live online at _____ for those who cannot attend in person.

Gym-Masters' Home Show



The Gym-Masters Home Show will take place in the Iles P.E. Center on April 9, at 9 p.m. and April 10 at 2:30 p.m. Tickets are available at the Hulsey Wellness Center for \$5.

The Gym-Masters acrobatic team is a tight-knit group of Southern students who tour and perform for assembly programs, college and professional halftime shows, parades, fairs, and many other types of events. They are dedicated to the promotion of positive lifestyle choices.

Homecoming Weekend 2016



October 27-30, 2016 – Honor Classes: 1936, '46, '56, '66, '71, '76, '86, '91, '96 and '06.

Early highlights include: 60th anniversary celebration of the nursing program at Southern and a reunion for former Student Services staff, residence hall deans, and residence assistants.