

# PROGRESS 2008

## Community enriched by William Penn University

**W**illiam Penn University is in the business of shaping tomorrow's leaders. The university mission statement maintains that diversity, continuing education and providing leadership opportunities to help students develop socially and academically, in addition to learning to make constructive decisions, are an essential part of every student's education. William Penn makes these elements a daily part of student life.

Every year, the university hosts many distinguished guests to lecture and participate in events that also benefit the Oskaloosa community. Guest speakers at fall and spring convocations in recent years have included Dr. R. Sentwali Bakari, dean of students at Drake University and instructor in leadership development; His Excellency, James Kimonyo, the Ambassador of Rwanda to the United States; and Dr. Mary Chapman, vice president for community and work force partnerships at Des Moines Area Community College.

Bakari discussed Martin Luther King Jr. and highlighted the legacy of the civil rights leader and minister. Ambassador Kimonyo spoke about the status of the Rwandan government and his experience with international relations and social reform. Chapman addressed the topic of William Penn University serving as a leader academically, socially and morally.

William Penn has also had the opportunity to host a World Food Prize laureate each year. Most recently, the speaker was Catherine Bertini, who was named as the World Food Prize recipient in 2003 for her work in humanitarian relief. Another World Food Prize laureate to address the community in recent years was Dr. Gurdev Kush, the 1996 World Food Prize recipient. Kush and his mentor, Dr. Henry Beachell, were recognized with the award for their work in enlarging and improving the world supply of rice.

Dr. James North, chair of William Penn's Health and Life Sciences Division, always looks forward to the visits by the laureates. "William Penn University has been blessed with our association with the World Food Prize organization and will continue to benefit from



this association in the years to come," North said.

Also hosting an international guest on campus was Campus Ministry when Friends United Meeting Africa Ministries Representative John Muhajji spoke during chapel in 2006. Originally from Kisumu, in Western Kenya, Muhajji was involved with the banking industry for 16 years before resigning to become a full-time minister with Friends United Meeting. He has made a strong commitment to supporting leadership training and renewal in the Friends churches in East Africa.

Campus Ministries has also hosted Ebo "The Extreme Machine" Elder as seen on "The Contender." Associated with the North American Boxing Association, Elder spoke to the community with Pastor Mel Rolls of Rescue Atlanta Church. This event was part of Spiritual Emphasis Week on campus.

The Fine Arts Department has had their share of visitors on campus as well. Carol Rosenfeld and Michael Masee worked with students on techniques in theatre and also had the opportunity to lecture in class. Rosenfeld is the chair of the Artistic Council at the Herbert Berghof Acting Studio in New York City and also works as an actress and director. Masee is the head of production at Fordham University at Lincoln Center and also works as a professional set and costume designer. Head of Fine Arts at William Penn, Scott Steel, said this opportunity was exciting for the students and William Penn.

When students come to William Penn to study theatre, they may have the opportunity to write and direct their own theatrical

production. Penn 2007 graduate R.J. Jarvis wrote and directed the production, "Moment of Clarity." This is the story of two men discovering that what they wish to do in their lives and what they are called to do are completely different.

Penn's Fine Arts Department also reaches out for interaction with the community. Oskaloosa High School and William Penn have teamed up to present DYE-VERSE CITY at George Daily Auditorium. Steel was approached by the high school's theatre director about having a joint production, which Steel said intrigued him greatly. The idea behind DYE-VERSE CITY is found within the title. The word "dye" represents color. The word "verse" represents the types of literary genres chosen to represent the cause of diversity and "city" represents the diversity of populace.

"Embracing our diversity is a cause that is most certainly worth taking advantage of. Even though we may not always agree with each other, I believe that if we start to cultivate the richness of our diversities, we can then begin to make real and positive changes in the world," Steel said about the message behind the production.

This wasn't the first or last time the high school and university would work together. Oskaloosa High School's drum line visited Penn's arts and society class and introduced Penn students to the various sounds of percussion instruments. The arts and society class offers students the opportunity to study art, theatre and literature and the impact these subjects have on society. The students are

introduced to the works of many artists who have influenced the world and they also learn about early major movements and style periods. The class includes lectures, guided listening, small group discussion, attendance at cultural events and field trips to museums and/or concerts to engage the students with the arts at a personal level.

This year William Penn University hosted a variety of events celebrating Latino heritage. During the festival, audience members were entertained by performances that included Peruvian panflutes, Spanish flamenco, Argentinean tango and Brazilian Capoeira — a combination of dance and martial arts. Free dance

lessons were also offered for those wishing to learn how to dance to Latino music.

Also offered to the Oskaloosa community is a reading clinic providing tutoring in reading for children in grades kindergarten through sixth-grade. William Penn students majoring in education tutor the children. To help encourage reading during the summer months, Penn's Education Department hosts a Summer Reading Adventure for students in kindergarten through fifth-grade. Each year, Penn students come up with a theme and coordinate two weeks of activities for the children.

"This program is structured in a positive way

that also keeps reading fun. We organize it as a camp-like event where reading is practiced in a really positive environment," said Assistant Professor of Education Kathryn Roe.

Many members of the community enjoy Penn sporting events and each year the university hosts events such as "Fill the Stands" or "Fill the Gymnasium," where admission for area students is free and adult admission is the donation of a canned good, which is given to charity. During this year's "Fill the Stands" for soccer, members of the teams wore pink jerseys in recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month and sold pink ribbons to raise funds for breast cancer research. The games were also designated as Mahaska County Youth Soccer Night, and all youth soccer players had the opportunity to meet some of the men's and women's soccer team members and walk out on the field with their starting line-ups.

An education at William Penn University goes far beyond the books. It is an experience that not only prepares students for their futures but also defines who they will become. Faculty and staff at William Penn work hard to insure students receive the best experience possible. This mission will continue as the future continues to look brighter — not to mention bigger — for William Penn.

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