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Dayton at Bat!

UD celebrates baseball — and Babe Ruth’s autograph is just the start ▲ Page 7
Math professor named to MAA leadership post

Mathematics professor Aparna Higgins has accepted a five-year appointment as director of the Mathematical Association of America’s Project NExT program, dedicated to improving the teaching and learning of undergraduate mathematics.

Project NExT, short for New Experiences in Teaching, provides one-year fellowships to 70 to 85 new or recent doctoral mathematics graduates each year, giving professional development in teaching, research and service in academia. It also sponsors the fellows’ attendance at three national meetings of the MAA and matches each fellow with a mentor/consultant in the profession but outside the fellow’s department. Higgins, who has been at UD since 1984, has been a co-director of Project NExT for 10 years.

UDit staff honored for United Way participation

On Jan. 30, UDit managers served breakfast to their employees in recognition of the division’s strong participation in the United Way fund drive in October.

In all, 62 percent of UDit employees contributed to the campaign. Karen Bull’s business services team had 100 percent participation, followed by Susan McCabe’s systems, networking and data management group with 74 percent, said Kim Conde, UDit communication coordinator. Altogether, UD faculty and staff contributed $129,500 to the 2008 United Way campaign, reported campus campaign chair Mary Ann Dodaro.

Senior administration ‘cautiously optimistic’

Although the University is not immune from the effects of the worldwide economic slowdown, the mood at the Jan. 30 faculty meeting was cautiously optimistic.

Underlying the optimism were facts reported by Joseph Saliba, interim provost. Undergraduate applications for the fall have surpassed 11,000, a record. And, they are geographically and ethnically more diverse than in the past as well as better qualified academically. For the first time, there are more applications from out-of-state than from Ohio. Saliba encouraged the faculty to help convert accepted high school students into University of Dayton students.

Thomas Burkhardt, vice president for finance and administrative services, noted that the University’s endowment was hurt by the economic decline but that the University’s budget is affected far more by tuition income than by its endowment. Exercising caution, the University has delayed some capital projects and is developing the budget with conservative assumptions. And individuals need to watch how they spend UD’s resources, Burkhardt said. But he also pointed to the record applications, normal retention figures, a tuition low in relation to peer and major Catholic institutions and a strengthening University reputation as signs that the University is doing well. And, he said, “places doing well when other places aren’t have a great opportunity.”

Both Burkhardt and Saliba reinforced what President Daniel J. Curran said to the faculty: “I’m asking you to continue to help (in student recruiting). We do not intend to lose momentum. We are in a strong financial state and in a position to move forward, and that is what we intend to do.”

UD experts explain Hudson River airline crash

Major media turned to the University of Dayton to explain the bird strikes that downed a US Airways Airbus 320 into the Hudson River Jan. 15. UDRI impact physics research group leader Kevin Poormon, whose group tests airplanes’ abilities to withstand bird strikes, told NBC Nightly News and the Associated Press that aircraft are designed to withstand such events — just not to both engines at the same time.

“It’s a pretty significant problem,” Poormon told the AP. “There have been over 200 fatalities in the last 20 years due to bird strikes worldwide, and there are 5,000 impacts that are reported every year. … But once you get to large flocks or large birds striking at a critical moment, that’s where these events hit the news.”

UD associate mechanical and aerospace engineering professor Aaron Altman, once a contractor with Airbus, talked to USA Today and on radio about how the plane was able to stay afloat long enough for an evacuation.

“Think of it as a large aluminum boat, or canoe, with a lot of surface area to offset its weight,” Altman told USA Today. “Also, the fuel in its tanks is lighter than water, so that helped it to stay afloat for a while.”

Cover photo: Among the artifacts in UD’s Dayton at Bat! exhibition are rare baseball cards, books and a ball autographed by George Herman “Babe” Ruth. The exhibition opens Feb. 15. See Page 7.

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Alumni land UD among Peace Corps’ top 25

The University of Dayton, for the first time, is among the Peace Corps’ top volunteer-producing colleges and universities.

UD ranked 23rd among medium-sized schools in the annual list, with 20 alumni serving as volunteers in 2008.

“This Peace Corps ranking is among many great examples of how the University’s learn, lead and serve ideals get lived out among our students and our graduates,” said Nick Cardilino, director of UD’s Center for Social Concern. “We are intentional about forming young people who are committed to working for the common good.”

Senior biochemistry major Katrina Duckett will be among the 2009 Peace Corps contingent.

“I have always felt that I had a calling to volunteer,” said Duckett, who expects to be assigned to sub-Saharan Africa, teaching math and science and assisting with health care. “I want to be involved in something that is bigger than me, and the Peace Corps is the doorway. The idea of being completely submerged in a drastically different culture is exciting and new.”

UD tied for third of five Ohio schools making the Peace Corps’ list this year. Ohio State University had 57 volunteers in the field; Miami University had 39; Oberlin College had 20; and Denison University had 17.

—Cameron Fullam

Grad ‘found niche’ in social justice at UD

Since the Peace Corps’ founding in 1961 under President John F. Kennedy, 316 UD alumni have served in the program. Recent graduates in the field report rewarding experiences:

—“Social justice issues have always been important to me, and I found my niche at UD,” said Teresa Winland, a 2008 graduate with majors in international studies, history and French. “After spending four years learning about all the inequalities in the world, I knew I couldn’t just sit at a desk following graduation.” Winland serves in Boghe, Mauritania, where she works in a girls’ mentoring center. Read her blog at http://teresa08.blogspot.com.

—“It is almost hard not to get involved in service at UD,” said Maureen Knorring, a 2007 international studies and business leadership graduate serving in Guatemala. “From Into the Streets, Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week and the dozens of service clubs, UD is a very service-oriented campus. Once you experience these programs, there is a desire to do an extended service, like the Peace Corps.” Knorring is working in women’s health, agriculture and microfinance.

—“The summer after my junior year, I was doing a semester of service at Daybreak shelter, and I loved it,” said Jess Kyle, a 2007 international studies graduate providing public health services in Guinea, West Africa. “The Marianist tradition of volunteerism and service permeates all aspects of life at UD.”

Workplace survey to assess climate, satisfaction

With a March survey about the workplace climate on campus, UD’s top leaders hope to determine not only what the University is doing well as an employer, but also where it needs the most work.

In order to gather a comprehensive data set and ensure that all at UD have a voice in the survey, UD has tapped ModernThink of Wilmington, Del., to survey all employees rather than a representative sample, said Joyce Carter, vice president for human resources. President Daniel J. Curran is supporting the endeavor and asks that all employees participate. The survey will be sent electronically to benefit-eligible employees on March 16; employees will have until March 30 to complete the survey online. Employees who don’t have access to computers at work will be given paper surveys.

ModernThink did the research for the Chronicle of Higher Education’s Great Colleges to Work For feature in July 2008; in it, UD received recognition for being among the top five institutions in the survey for professional/career development, tuition reimbursement and disability insurance (see http://campusreport.udayton.edu/News_Digest_Article?contentId=15226).

The survey, in which individual respondents will remain anonymous, addresses core beliefs about UD, benefits satisfaction, general demographic information, what makes UD a good place to work and what could make it a better place to work, said ModernThink co-founder and senior consultant Rich Boyer. ModernThink’s trademarked Insight Survey will include additional questions on diversity, institutional values and UD’s Marianist identity. After analyzing the data, the firm will present it to members of the president’s council. It will then be shared with the UD community, Carter said.

One of the greatest benefits of the survey is that it will provide benchmarks that will help gauge whether UD’s responses to the survey are bringing about improvements, Boyer said.

Curran said the survey also will support some key University strategies. By having a positive workplace climate, UD can better recruit, support and retain an outstanding faculty and staff, promote learning, strengthen UD’s Catholic, Marianist character and improve diversity.

UD has conducted workplace climate surveys before. In 1997, UD assessed the climate for women, and in 1998, UD surveyed undergraduates, faculty and staff on their attitudes about diversity. Another survey in 2004 examined diversity and inclusion. UD has responded with programs that address the concerns raised in the surveys. For example, diversity and inclusion have been given high priority in UD’s strategic planning, and each unit submits a diversity plan every year. In January 2003, UD also opened the Women’s Center, which promotes equality, understanding and mutual respect on campus.

For more news, see http://campusreport.udayton.edu

Feb. 6, 2009  Campus Report  3
Family spirit permeates Ferguson’s work

Susan Ferguson, director of the Center for Catholic Education, sometimes apologizes for her effusiveness when sharing her affection for the University of Dayton and the Society of Mary.

“I can’t help it,” said Ferguson, who came to UD as a student in 1972, graduated in 1975 and joined the teacher education faculty in 1990. “UD and the Marianists made me who I am. They helped me become what I was meant to be. I am so, so grateful for that.”

Ferguson has made it her mission to do the same for the legions of students she has helped usher into education professions.

“To receive this award — I’m not sure there could be a higher honor,” Ferguson said. “The place that helped me grow up as a person and a professor is honoring me for understanding its mission. That is so touching, so humbling.”

That humility, plus deep faith, prudence and a gift for hospitality, are Ferguson’s trademarks, said Maura Donahue, a member of the Rector’s Council and a fellow Marianist Educational Associate.

“If you think about the Lackner Award as set aside for people who emulate Mary, that’s what she does,” said Donahue, director of UD’s Program for Christian Leadership. “She’s quiet and caring, with a very gentle manner. One great mystery of the charism is the role of hospitality in forming a community around shared values. Susan is always open to meeting, to talking about issues, bringing people to the table and including all the voices that need to be there.”

In Ferguson’s advising work, her family spirit is apparent in the warm welcome she gives to students and in her commitment to helping students find their gifts, said Barbara Miller, a colleague in the Center for Catholic Education.

“Many professors are given the task to advise,” Miller said. “Susan takes that very seriously. She gives focused advising in support of their mission to teach, but she is more than that to our students. Even if they’ve just had a tough day, they come to her.”

In her work with the Center for Catholic Education, her years as a professor bring a vocational component to her work with students that she wants them to carry into the profession.

“I learned to be a teacher at UD,” Ferguson said. “I came to see that every child who comes into a classroom is a gift to unwrap. Well, in a way, every person is a gift to unwrap. Seeing God in each person, and seeing that God gave that person potential — that’s the role of the teacher. I use the same metaphor with students now. I want the students to find what gifts God gave them and how they can share those in the communities they are going into, and I want them to leave UD with that notion that they are to be servant leaders for their charges in the classroom.”

That perspective is what fuels Ferguson’s verve to help Catholic schools in the region to not just survive, but thrive, said Thomas Lasley, dean of the School of Education and Allied Professions.

“Susan Ferguson is an individual who understands the important role that Catholic education plays,” Lasley said. “Even more significantly, she understands how committed Catholics work together to strengthen the communities in which they work. Susan evidences a community spirit both in her relationships at UD as well as in her interactions with the larger Catholic and secular communities.”
For Saliba, signs pointed to UD, Marianists

When 2009 Lackner honoree Joseph Saliba talks about his 32 years at the University of Dayton, it is apparent that he believes in providence and is driven by gratitude and a call to serve.

Providence

For Saliba, signs seemed to point to this Marianist institution. When Saliba was born in Lebanon, his grandmother prayed for the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mother, for Saliba’s own mother had lost another child just a short time before. As a boy, he accompanied his mother to Marian shrines to pray where Mary herself had prayed. And later, as a young man trying out for a soccer team in Bordeaux, France, he regularly walked right by the Madeleine, where Father William Joseph Chaminade had co-founded the Society of Mary’s first lay faith community. While there at Christmastime in 1976, he also visited Lourdes. Though more than 5 million people make pilgrimages there, Saliba recalls, “I had the whole shrine to myself.”

“I promised the Blessed Mother that I would one day return with my children,” he said. Years later he fulfilled that vow with his three children, Elias, Maria and David.

Though Saliba cites many reasons for coming to UD, the most powerful one, he said, was his faith in the same Mother Mary to whom his grandmother once prayed.

Gratitude

When Saliba arrived at UD, his English was rudimentary, he said. But seeing potential and a strong work ethic — Saliba had 17 hours of credit awarded in advance and registered for or tested out of another 27 credit hours of calculus, differential equations, chemistry, physics, statics, strength of materials and philosophy that first summer — his professors were accommodating.

“The hardest course for me was business ethics,” he said. “I didn’t understand a word, and my first paper was terrible. But when my professor asked me where I was from and I said Lebanon, he immediately began speaking French to me. … After every class, he went over the whole of the material in French, and he permitted me to write all of my papers in French. That was my introduction to Marianist education, an introduction that made UD home for me.” Other professors and Marianists helped in similar ways.

“People all across this campus went beyond the call of duty to help me out — every single person, without exception,” he said. “I had a custom-made education. At the time I thought this was extraordinary; I soon learned that this was just how the Marianists gave of themselves.”

Service

Since 1977, Saliba’s work at UD has been both diverse and dynamic, said visual arts professor Sean Wilkinson, Graul Chair in Arts and Languages, who team-taught an interdisciplinary course with Saliba for several years in the Humanities Fellows program. Saliba’s been a student, a grounds and kitchen worker, a graduate student, a faculty member, a department chair, a dean and an interim provost.

“He doesn’t look at any of his work as a job,” Wilkinson said. “To him, it’s service. … Joe is exemplary in the way he brings other people into a conversation, and he understands that it’s a much richer and rewarding conversation when you bring other perceptions to it. … It would be hard,” Wilkinson said, “to find anyone else so thoroughly devoted to the University.”

Lent 2009: Grow in faith

Encouraging faculty and staff to prepare spiritually for Easter, campus ministry is offering many opportunities for prayer, faith formation and service. Lent begins Feb. 25 with Ash Wednesday Masses at 8 and 10 a.m., noon, and 4:30, 6 and 8 p.m. in the Immaculate Conception Chapel and at 9 p.m. in the McGinnis Center, said Emily Strand, campus minister for liturgies.

Sunday Masses during Lent are at 10 a.m., noon, and 6 and 8 p.m. in the chapel and 9 p.m. in the McGinnis Center with two exceptions: On March 1, Mass will not be held at noon or 6 p.m., and on April 1, the 10 a.m. Mass will be the only one offered.

Scrutinies for the elect will be held at noon Masses on March 15, 22 and 29.

Interdenominational worship services will be held at 6 p.m. Sundays in the Marianist Hall chapel.

Those interested in finding out more about prayer and retreat opportunities may contact the campus ministers for faculty and staff — Sister Mary Louise Foley, F.M.I., or Father Chris Conlon, S.M.

Weekday Eucharist: 12:05 p.m. Monday through Friday in the Immaculate Conception Chapel; 9 p.m. Tuesday in Stuart Hall; 9 p.m. Wednesday in Marianist Hall; and 9:30 p.m. Thursday in Marycrest Hall.

Reconciliation: 11:30 a.m. Tuesdays and Fridays in the Immaculate Conception Chapel.

Taizé prayer and reconciliation service: 8 p.m. Tuesday, March 10, in the Immaculate Conception Chapel; priests available for individual confessions.

Vespers (evening prayer): 8:30 p.m. Mondays in Marianist Hall chapel.

Stations of the Cross: 3 p.m. Fridays; locations to be determined. See http://ministry.udayton.edu.
take a break with…

Daria Graham
Alumna, singer makes diversity a vocation

Though Daria Graham ‘94 came to work at UD in 1999, she never really left UD. During the five years between her graduation and her employment, the business management grad continued singing in UD’s Ebony Heritage Singers and provided support to its director, music professor Donna Cox, “in any capacity needed,” said Graham, now assistant director of leadership initiatives in the office of multicultural affairs. In January, she spent a half-hour with Laura Edwards, a graduate assistant in University communications.

Tell me about your work with the Ebony Heritage Singers. I was in the group for all four years as an undergrad and sang for an additional four years after I graduated since I lived in the area. I have been back in a supportive capacity since then. Last semester, I stepped in for Dr. Cox as co-director while she was on sabbatical, but I am really her support person. I am actually the longest-standing member of the group — 19 years.

What brought you back to UD? God brought me back. I was gone for five years, teaching high school, working at a bank and working administratively for the county, and I can now see that each of those places has fed into the roles I now play at UD. There’s nothing in my past that doesn’t play a part in what I do, and I think that’s unique.

Is there a moment from your time at UD as an undergraduate that stands out? I learned my biggest life lesson from Dr. Sister Judith Martin, S.S.J. She asked me to do a paper on the gender of God, and I wrote an eloquent piece stating that God’s gender doesn’t matter, only that we should be exemplifying who God is — and she gave me my first F. She explained to me that I did not do what she asked me to do. This is a lesson I’ve had to state to my students over and over: Get a good understanding, and follow the directions. Do what is expected of you.

What is different about the minority student of today, as compared to when you were in school? The millennial student has clear ideas of what her experience will be and does well with those who support it, whereas I believe our generation was more open to allowing our experiences to “become.” We have to show students of color the value of those things that don’t necessarily fit into their plan — even experiences that they shouldn’t have to go through — that there is value there, too. The student of today has clearly defined expectations, while the student of our generation was more open to the unexpected.

What’s on your iPod? Tons of children’s music because my children are 2 and 3 — so the Backyardigans, gospel music and movies like Horton Hears a Who. Right now, you have a huge pool of individual gospel artists, and the gospel choir is not as popular, but my favorite choir leader is Dr. Charles G. Hayes, and some of my favorite singers are Jamie Foxx and Kierra “Kiki” Sheard.

—Laura Edwards

MLK speaker:
Seek justice for all

At the Martin Luther King Jr. prayer breakfast Jan. 20, activist, author and political hopeful Kevin Powell implored students, faculty and staff to study the past, to give honor to the work of civil rights pioneers, and to continue in the pursuit of civil, social and economic justice for all.

Powell asked the audience to model the slain civil rights leader and to know and understand his words — all of them, not just the sound bites from his most famous speeches, for though the United States was about to inaugurate its first black president, much work remains.

“Racism is not over in this country,” Powell said. “Racism is not over when we have folks lining our borders and purposely shooting at Mexican folks trying to come into the country. Racism is not over when you still have folks in 2009 who call someone an Indian giver when they ask for something back. … Racism is not going to end unless we become so intellectually and spiritually curious that we begin to root out racism, sexism, patriarchy and misogyny.”

Part of the work for economic justice will require a new selflessness, a conversion from being “thing-oriented” to being “people-oriented,” said Powell, who also encouraged students to develop as virtuous leaders — a value UD holds dear.

“Every one of you in this room has the potential to be an incredible leader,” he said. “Be a leader in your family, volunteering in your community, doing something for the less fortunate in your community. It should be part of your value system.”

To truly lead, he said, we must see one another as equals. We must, as a culture, see every job as dignified. We must turn mere tolerance into respect. And we must, he said, respect the humanity of all people.
Dayton at Bat!

Baseball treasures from two local collections

From Feb. 10 to June 14, the University of Dayton will be among the few places in the world where baseball fans can see two hall-of-fame-quality exhibits and hear Major League Baseball veterans talk about their time in the game.

An exhibition of photography from the minor leagues opens Feb. 10 in the Rike Gallery. The exhibit, by Roger Freeman, was on display in 2008 in the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y.

Opening Sunday, Feb. 15, is the University’s own Dayton at Bat!, a four-month-long celebration of baseball history featuring “bat chats,” vintage baseball games and a first-ever public exhibition of rare baseball memorabilia from the UD archives and the collections of the late National Baseball Hall of Fame sportswriter Si Burick of the Dayton Daily News and lifelong baseball enthusiast and Dayton philanthropist Miriam Jacobs. Among the 140 items on display is the only known baseball autographed by three of the world’s top four home run hitters — Sadaharu Oh, Babe Ruth and Hank Aaron.

Other highlights include baseballs autographed by Warren Spahn, Johnny Vander Meer, Lefty Grove, Bob Feller and President Woodrow Wilson. The exhibit will be open through June 14. See http://library.udayton.edu/baseball/exhibits/dayton.php.

Archivist and baseball historian Christopher Burton is the exhibition’s curator and designer. An outfielder with the Clodbuster Base Ball Club in Dayton, Burton, whose nickname is “Sawdust,” also is a member of the National Historic Preservation Trust and the Ohio Historical Society.

—Shawn Robinson
Sunday, Feb. 8
Faculty Artist Series: Brass, Song and Bernstein
3 p.m., Sears Recital Hall; performance features John Benjamin, Richard Che-noweth, Phillip Farris, Michael Keener, David Sievers, Jennifer Shoup and Linda Snyder. Free.

Wednesday, Feb. 11
‘Liederabend’: An Evening of German Poetry and Song
8 p.m., Sears Recital Hall; student singers and pianists perform German Lieder by Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, Fanny Mendelssohn, Franz Liszt, Richard Strauss and others; German studies students will read poetry. German pastries will be served at a reception afterward. Free.

Through Friday, Feb. 13
Human Rights Week exhibition: Ashley Cecil
8 a.m. to midnight Monday through Friday, noon to midnight Saturday and Sunday, ArtStreet Studio D. The artist, a 2003 visual communication graduate, is known as “the painting activist”; exhibition features “celebratory portraits of women who have been touched by charitable organizations.” Free.

Sunday, Feb. 15
Dayton Jazz Ensemble/ Jazz Lab Band
3 p.m., Kennedy Union ballroom; Willie L. Morris III and James Leslie, conductors. Free.

Wednesday, Feb. 18
Faculty Recital: David Sievers, tenor
8 p.m., Sears Recital Hall; David Sievers and collaborative pianist Jennifer Shoup present works by Reynaldo Hahn, Johannes Brahms, Paolo Tosti, Gwyneth Walker, Joaquin Turina and L. C. Hicks. Free.

Friday-Saturday, Feb. 20-21
UD Dance Ensemble Winter Concert
8 p.m., Kennedy Union Ball Theatre; tickets $10 general admission, $6 for faculty, staff and students; call 229-2545.

Sunday, Feb. 22
Symphonic Wind Ensemble and University Concert Band
3 p.m., Kennedy Union ballroom; Patrick Reynolds and Nicole Gross, conductors. Free.

Monday, Feb. 23
Diversity Lecture Series: Sweet Honey in the Rock
7:30 p.m., Benjamin and Marian Schuster Performing Arts Center, downtown Dayton; Grammy Award-winning a cappella ensemble rounds out UD’s Diversity Lecture Series. Tickets start at $15; call 228-3630.

Monday, Feb. 23-Thursday, March 26
Images from Science
8 a.m. to midnight Monday through Friday, noon to midnight Saturday and Sunday, ArtStreet Studio D. This traveling exhibition, organized by the Rochester Institute of Technology, features 61 scientific photographs from around the world — including one by Scott Streiker, an associate research electron microscopist in UD’s Nanoscale Engineering Science and Technology (NEST) Laboratory. Opening reception 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 25. Free.

Wednesday, Feb. 25
Ash Wednesday
Masses at 8 and 10 a.m., noon, and 4:30, 6 and 8 p.m. in the Immaculate Conception Chapel and at 9 p.m. in the McGinnis Center.

University Orchestra
8 p.m., Boll Theatre; Jiang Liu, conductor. Free.

Friday, March 6
Honors student symposium
Noon to 5 p.m., Kennedy Union.

Saturday, March 7
Strength, Courage and Wisdom: The 2009 Annie T. Thornton Women’s Leadership Conference
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Kennedy Union; conference gathers multiple generations of women to develop leadership skills, discuss critical women’s issues and build a sisterhood that transcends race, religion and socioeconomic status. Letitia Perry, a news anchor on WHIO-TV, will give the keynote address. Information: http://campus.udayton.edu/~udwlc or 229-3634.

Monday, March 9
Black History Month keynote speaker: Jeff Johnson
7 p.m., Kennedy Union ballroom; Jeff Johnson is host and producer of BET’s The Jeff Johnson Chronicles and former national director of the youth, college and young adult division for the NAACP. Free.

Marianist Heritage Celebration

Tuesday, Feb. 17
Mary, Faith and Justice program and social
7:30-8:30 p.m., Kennedy Union Torch Lounge; prizes awarded to service clubs and breakout trip participants; sponsored by campus ministry and the Marianists.

Friday, Feb. 20
Lackner Award dinner
By invitation; honorees are Joseph Saliba, interim provost, and Susan Ferguson, director of the Center for Catholic Education.

Friday, March 13
Maureen O’Rourke Marianist Student Award dinner
Honoring Emily Klein; invitation only.