



# BEACON FAMILY NEWSLETTER

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## WISDOM, FAITH AND SERVICE

By: Rev. Troy Dean, M.A., campus pastor & assistant professor, Christian ministry



Wisdom, Faith and Service. It is what we want to be about. Even though the category that seems most relevant to a campus pastor is Faith, there is a lot of overlap. In order to grow in faith, we seek wisdom in Holy Scripture; which includes both study and personal reflection. In order to serve, we lean into faith; believing we can be the people that can both be a help to those who are hurting and in need and what we do engages the power of hope and thriving.

At NCU we have a Beacon for our symbol and mascot. A beacon is a light, a guiding and profoundly helpful light. I always imagine a lighthouse from the days of old when ships did not have GPS and satellites to direct their course. A lighthouse was both a warning of possible danger and a reminder that we are almost home. In scripture, Jesus describes himself as the Light of the World (see John 9) and then proclaims that those who follow him are also the lights in the world (see Matthew 5).

How can a Christian university be a catalyst to both reminding the world that there is a light sent from God to help and that those who devote themselves to following God can be a guiding force in our world today? First, I do not believe a university can be “Christian”. Universities don’t go to heaven (though I believe dogs do). A university can only be Christian as those individuals within its community devote themselves to following a representing Jesus in their studies, callings, and relationships. That brings us back to

Wisdom, Faith, and Service, and specifically Faith. Many who go to college will gain knowledge and through practice and experiential learning, hopefully, wisdom. Many who graduate with their degree with see it as a call to further the common good, to serve others through their field.

So, how does one grow in faith so that they can both live with wisdom and sustain a life of service? The students at NCU would show you in terms of hand motions; at least, I hope they would remember. We use a beacon/light motif to represent how we grow in faith and how to keep a balance that allows for constant flourishing. Three keys to a devoted life of faith that makes a difference in the world:

**Spark the Flame** – Posture your life so that God has access and put practices in your life that connect you to God. Examples: Bible reading, prayer, journaling, and wonder

**Stoke the Fire** – Pursue community where you can be authentically known and know others deeply. Examples: communal worship (Chapel/church), small groups and mentorship/discipleship relationships.

**Shine the Light** – Engage consistently in community service both locally and globally. Examples: serve the poor (the ignored and avoided), advocate for justice, serve on a mission team, and give time and resources to ministries and organizations.

As we find a cadence and balance to our spiritual growth, we will indeed, shine as individuals and as a university community.

# ADULT DEGREE PROGRAM

By: Kacie Gerdrum, dean of admission

I felt an incredible amount of pride as I walked across the stage at Commencement. I had worked hard over the past four years and was overwhelmed with the sense of accomplishment knowing that my education and experience at NCU had culminated into a bachelor's degree, a passion for people, a stronger relationship with the Lord and a vision for where God was calling me. But the sweetest thing about Commencement was having the privilege and honor of walking across the stage with my mother.

My mom, too, was earning her bachelor's degree that day. She had spent two years at NCU completing her bachelor's degree through NCU's Adult Degree program. She was concerned about walking at the formal ceremony and in fact was hesitant to wear her cap and gown that day in fear of taking the spotlight away from me. Isn't that the true heart of a mom? But, the reality was that I was so incredibly proud to walk across the stage with her. While taking courses, My mom was working full time, she still had two of her four children at home, and she spent so many evenings and weekends studying, writing papers, and working hard to earn her degree. The flexibility of the program allowed her to maintain her responsibilities and commitments, but it absolutely came with sacrifice. Earning her bachelor's degree in Business Management wasn't easy, but for her and for our family it was an opportunity for her to advance her career and increase her salary.

Like many parents, it was hard for my mom to make the decision to invest in herself. She spent and continues to spend her time, resources and energy taking care of everyone else. Walking across the stage that day, my eyes filled with tears---because I knew the sacrifices that she made for herself and for our family...and I was so incredibly proud.

If you or someone you know could benefit from one of NCU's flexible evening and online Adult Degree or Graduate Programs we want to help you make that a priority. See all available Adult Degree or Graduate Programs at [nwcu.edu](http://nwcu.edu)



# GET TO KNOW : INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

By: Brian Mills, director of assessment & assistant professor of humanities



"There Is No Case for the Humanities," the Chronical of Higher Education read—staring at me from the second floor landing at NCU's Pomajevich Faculty Building, only paces from my office door.

Moments before, I had lectured on the nature and importance of general education, liberal arts education, and the humanities to some 85 NCU students in the first floor classroom,

where IDS courses meet twice a week for topics such as, "American Thought and Culture" and "Presidential Leadership."

The title of the article caused me to pause: what is the nature of my work as Assistant Professor of humanities, bible, and general education classes for the past decade plus?

...Upon reaching my office I received an email from Student Development asking me to explain the growing program at NCU called "IDS." In other words: what is IDS?

Rather than making an argument about the necessity and importance of these topics, I created a dialogue—among students of IDS. I asked of the rapidly growing group of them: why are you in this program? Why did you choose IDS?

Flexibility. Individualized learning. Among others, those two responses ranked highest; encouraging to hear, as best learning occurs when interest and motivation are bred...

In Western education, and in most public research institutions, the institutions of higher education have developed into a set of distinct academic fields that range in focus. Often arranged into broad categories of the "natural science" and others into areas of "moral philosophy," these educational systems can be described as a machine comprised of parts and cogs that somehow and collectively create a "university." To some, this can lead to differentiation or even fragmentation in learning; a knowledge that is broken down into parts of parts and disciplines and sub-disciplines. Perhaps in this we have lost a sense of our collective unity. What can bring this together? To me, an interdisciplinary Christian approach to knowledge, discovery, learning, and all in the motto: doing life together.

At NCU, the essence of IDS is expressed through the balance of community, research, experience, aesthetic beauty, leisure, faith, and its application into life, all rooted in a Christian worldview and with a deep appreciation for seeking God's imprint in all of creation. An example of this can be seen in the many students who have a calling in social services, leadership, and nonprofit administration—and all with a firm foundation in the teachings and principles of Jesus. By being able to combine Christian Ministry, Communication, Business, Leadership, Psychology, and Bible courses, their flexible and individualized program represents the synergy possible through IDS.

That's the case for humanities. In Jesus's name. #IDSatNCU

# PREPARING (YOURSELF) FOR GRADUATION

By: Aaron Pruitt, director of records and traditional undergraduate programs

May 12, 2018. How long have you had the date circled on your calendar? Since you bought your 2018 planner? Have you been looking forward to that day for four (or five, or six ...) years? Maybe you have (figuratively) been waiting for decades for this day to come. If you are the parent of a graduating student, the days of holding your breath and crossing your fingers are quickly diminishing. At least for this stage of life!

Your graduating student is fully aware of May 12, 2018. It may not be circled on a calendar or written in a planner (who actually buys planners these days), but the countdown to graduation probably began a long time ago. Despite any concerns you may have about senioritis, and admonitions about finishing strong, the day will come—ready or not! As a parent what should you expect and prepare for? Here are a few tips to help you prepare for that day.

**Be ready for mixed emotions.** Fear. Hope. Joy. Disappointment. Anxiety. Exhaustion. Exhilaration. Depression. I know, it sounds like what you, as a parent, might be feeling about your child's future, but it is also what your child could be going through—all in one day. Graduation can be confusing. It is supposed to be (and in many ways is) a happy time, celebrating an achievement. But is also the end of a familiar life and a gateway into the unknown. The beginning of a new adventure, and the separation from friends. A change of routine. Each graduate responds differently, so be ready for anything.

**Help preserve memories.** Sometimes graduates do not know what will or will not be meaningful down the line. Try to capture things that might go forgotten. Save the commencement program. Collect and be ready to store the cap and gown. Take pictures—lots and lots of pictures. When your graduate wants a selfie with every graduate and professor in the Morse Event Center, don't try to rush her. Suggest serious as well as goofy pictures! Try to capture as much of the moment as you can.

**Sometimes with gifts, it is the thought that counts.** It is OK to be on a budget. Of course you want gifts to be meaningful. Your child might simply want something practical. So a new car might not be manageable—not if you have been paying tuition!—but something useful in the life transition, whatever the size, will be appreciated down the line. If family members or friends don't know what to get, do not be afraid to suggest money. It is always appreciated in any amount. You could also do something practical AND something your graduate is not likely to do for himself—such as a decorative diploma frame.

**Make the day about your graduate.** If you have after-ceremony plans, it is OK if you are late because your graduate wants to hug and say goodbye to everyone at the ceremony. Are you going to be there with family members and friends you do not get along with? Bury the hatchet for the day. Be excited, but not jealous of all the people infringing on your graduate's time. There are too many people to thank and say goodbye to, so try not to add unnecessary stress.

**Be proud!** Try to yell the loudest as your graduate walks across the stage. Get complete strangers around you to yell with you. Tell your graduate in as many ways you can how proud you are of the accomplishment. Some day you might get the thanks you deserve for all of your love and support. Or more likely, your graduate will pay it forward to her loved ones.

May 12, 2018 is one day in a long journey. It is not the beginning or the end, but it is a good day to celebrate. So make sure you have the date circled on your calendar!



# NCU ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT: THE BRABURYS

## LIVING A LIFE OF PURPOSE, MEANING, AND SERVICE

Mark and Sarah Bradbury are NCU alumni who now live on a small farm in Fruitland, Idaho and are the owners of Signet Marketing and B&B Printing in Ontario, OR. Sarah concentrates on graphic design and Mark specializes in websites and commercial drone photography.

Mark and Sarah met at NCU and graduated in 2003. Mark graduated with a bachelors in Interdisciplinary Studies (pastoral, youth and film production) and Sarah with a bachelors in Psychology. Sarah always imagined meeting her husband at NCU. After all, that is how her parents, Dwight and Barbara Olson, met in 1970. Sarah and Mark have many fond memories of NCU. Mark was the co-leader of the chapel band his senior year. Both Sarah and Mark served in student leadership throughout their years at NCU. Sarah as an RA, ASB President and Student Ministries Coordinator. Mark was a Peer Counselor. These experiences as well as courses such as Ethics with Dr. Mick Bollenbaugh, Homiletics with Dr. Ed McIndoo and Biblical Theology with Dr. Dennis Lindsay still come to mind in everyday life for Mark and Sarah. Mostly it was the walks not far from the NCU campus that are often recalled for the couple. Sarah remembers walking with Mark on the bridge over the Willamette River one evening, “we discussed our personal interest in adoption and missions. Little did I know how those two seeds would grow in our life.”

One certainty for Mark and Sarah was their heart for children and desire to have a family. Like many couples, the Bradburys struggled with infertility. After several years, the couple decided it was time to pursue adoption. In 2011, Mark and Sarah received the fateful call that they had been selected by a birth mother! Five days later they were on a plane to Georgia to meet their seven month old daughter, Avi. The couple claims it was the best week of their life!

A year into raising Avi, Mark and Sarah felt called to missions abroad. It was no surprise that missions would be part of their life. Both Mark and Sarah had been touched by missions before

their marriage. Before attending NCU, Mark lived in Romania for six months, serving at a ministry startup for girls who age out of orphanages. Sarah served through short-term missions to the Philippines with a NCU team in 2001.

In 2012 the couple followed their hearts and God’s call to Belize to serve at a mission and retreat center that hosted church teams from the US. Just a few months prior to their move to Belize, Mark and Sarah discovered a Belizean orphanage online and immediately felt compelled to visit it once in the country. During their first visit to the orphanage, the couple met two brothers and their sister. Mark and Sarah immediately fell in love with the sibling group and began to look into adopting them. However, Mark and Sarah were informed it wouldn’t be possible. The next year the Bradburys moved to that orphanage to serve. While there Mark and Sarah again looked into the possibility of adopting the sibling group, and faced another closed door. It seemed that it simply wouldn’t be possible to realize the dream of adopting the three kids who had stolen their hearts. Eventually Mark, Sarah and Avi returned to the states and started life over, with their new business and an unanswered prayer to expand their family.

In January of 2016, Sarah was invited back to the orphanage to provide staff training. While there she again was able to spend time with the sibling group. She also heard they were legally adoptable! That same week Mark and Sarah hired an adoption attorney and started the process. The door was finally opening! The adoption continues to move forward and the couple hopes to bring the children home to join their forever family this year.

Mark and Sarah are grateful for their time at NCU, not only because their paths first crossed there, but especially due to the investment of faculty, staff and administration who provided a Christ-centered environment and education that assisted the couple to launch a life of purpose, meaning and service.



**“We discussed our personal interest in adoption and missions. Little did I know how those two seeds would grow in our life.”**



# Congratulations to the 2018-19 ASNCU Executive Cabinet Members.

(From top, L-R)

Jacob Pitts - Vice President for Environment

Taylor Irons - President

Tomas Carradero - Vice President for Activities

Kevin Kaelin - Vice President for Academics

## ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF NCU

By: Lindsey Vermillion, senior, asncu vp for environment 2017-2018



Hello all! My name is Lindsey Vermillion, and I am the 2017-2018 Vice President of Environment. This means that I am a member of ASNCU, which stands for Associated Students of Northwest Christian University. In other words, we are the student government group on campus, and are made-up of two key parts. First, we have the executive cabinet members, which include the Student Body President, Controller,

Vice President of Environment, Vice President of Activities, and Vice President of Academics. Each VP has a committee assigned to them that consists of the second group of ASNCU members: the representatives. There is a representative for each class, and then two at-large representatives from any class.

Each committee has a specific task for the school year, and a budgeted amount allotted to them to accomplish that task. The Activities Committee is in charge of planning our school's annual Halloween dance and Spring Formal. The Academics Committee puts on events that allow the students and faculty members to have

beneficial conversations, and build meaningful relationships. Lastly, but not least, is The Environment Committee. Our job is to work with students and faculty on making improvements to campus that will make it safer, and more comfortable to live on away from home.

Willing candidates run for each position during an election we hold in the middle of March, and will then be sworn in during the last week of spring term. So now you know each committee's job, but what's ASNCU's purpose as a whole? The main purpose of ASNCU is to give a voice to the student body. We strive to be people that students feel comfortable coming to if they need help, or have a concern about something/someone on campus. Our job is to then make sure that these issues are brought to the attention of faculty and staff members, in order to get a solution facilitated as quickly as possible. We are a group of students who care deeply about our fellow peers, the well-being of NCU, and upholding our institutions motto of wisdom, faith, and service.

Being a part of ASNCU has been a wonderful experience for me, and I have learned skills that will help me even after my college education.