

# From the President's Desk

West Virginia Wesleyan



December 12, 2011



Larry Parsons

The time between Thanksgiving and Christmas is extremely busy on campus. I always marvel at our faculty and students' abilities to manage academic demands with a wide range of activities. From the annual Festival of Lessons and Carols, poetry readings, jazz concerts, men's and women's basketball games, and community engagement projects, our campus community is alive with activity.

This year's Festival of Lessons and Carols was particularly special for the Wesleyan campus. It was Dr. Larry Parsons' last Advent performance as director of the Concert Chorale. Larry has conducted choral groups at the College since 1968 and his influence can be felt in schools, churches, and community music programs throughout the country. This spring, we will celebrate Larry's tremendous music career with a special chorale reunion



Festival of Lessons and Carols

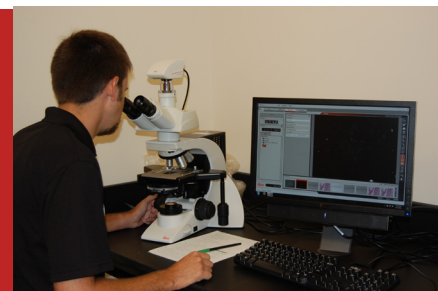
on April 14-15. While Larry will be stepping down from his music responsibilities, he will continue to serve the College as the dean of academic affairs through the next academic year.

Larry has also profoundly influenced our academic program through the organization of departments into schools. This new structure fosters intellectual discussions across the curriculum that has led to exciting new research and international travel opportunities for our students. The key to each School's success is the leadership provided by the directors. For the past several months, we have given careful consideration to selecting the Director of the School of Business. We are pleased to inform you that Dr. Susan Aloï '80 has accepted this important assignment. Susan has done a great job leading the growth of our graduate programs in Education.

Former long-time education faculty member and department chair, Dr. Lynn Rupp will return to Wesleyan to lead our School of Education graduate programs. Lynn was instrumental in leading the College's efforts to be approved for accreditation by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) several years ago.

Wesleyan faculty members strive to provide a high challenge-high support academic environment. They also constantly seek ways to provide new and exciting opportunities for students. One avenue in which they achieve this objective is by successfully securing grant funding for equipment and research projects.

Recently, three members of the School of Science faculty were named grant recipients. The Division of Science and Research of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission awarded one of its two Innovation Grants to Dr. Ed Wovchko, associate professor of chemistry. He received the grant in the amount of \$40,000 for a new gas chromatograph-mass spectrometer to conduct unique experiments, perform analysis, and provide practical work-study experience to become better trained for direct employment and post-graduate study. In addition, the instrument will significantly enhance our research capabilities, offer new insight, and strengthen faculty and student presentation and publication potential.



Nathaniel Linger works on research.

Dr. Kim Bjorgo-Thorne, assistant professor of biology, received one of five instrumentation grants in the amount of \$15,000 to augment a grant that the College received in 2007. The new instruments will allow Wesleyan students to stay current with research techniques in two fields—remote sensing /GIS analysis and water chemistry. As you might imagine, water testing is an integral part of the laboratory experience for biology, chemistry, and environmental science majors. The ability to collect and analyze water samples is relevant to job skills of science graduates and an important component of understanding environmental change. Finally, Dr. Jeanne Sullivan, associate professor of biology, received a \$21,000 sabbatical grant from the Appalachian Colleges Association to support the department's research on stinkbugs.

Wesleyan is nationally-known for its community engagement program. Our students dedicate many hours each week to a wide-range of projects. Many students also give up days during official college breaks to help others in need. After final exams this week, seven students, Allison Clausen, director of compliance and academic services, swimming coach and director of aquatics April Staniszewski, and dean of the chapel Angela Gay Kinkead will work on home repair in the west Nashville area. The group will stay at Hillcrest United Methodist Church, where James Cole '85 serves as pastor. They will work each day installing drywall, priming and painting, and tiling kitchen floors.


We have been very proud of the success of the athletic program for the past several years. Many of our teams have been ranked nationally and we are always in the thick of the race for a conference title. For the past two years, we have ranked fifth among NCAA Division II schools in the number of Academic Achievement Award winners. This past week, our men's soccer team was recognized by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America for their performance in the classroom. The 39-man team carried a 3.03 GPA for the academic year. We were the only West Virginia Conference school to be recognized by the NSCAA.

We continue to draw closer to reaching our fund-raising goal to complete the funding for the construction and equipment for the David E. Reemsnyder Research Center. We are now only \$85,000 away from meeting the April 30 Reeves Foundation Challenge. We are grateful to everyone who has supported and will continue to support this project.



The holiday season reminds all of us the importance of family and friends. We are deeply appreciative of Wesleyan's alumni and friends. We see your support each day through the transformation of our students. Patrick and I thank you for all that you do for Wesleyan and we wish you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

In Friendship,

  
Pamela Balch '71



*In last month's newsletter, we incorrectly identified Hank Ellis as the Head Football Coach of the 1961 team. Sam Ross was the Coach of that WVAC Championship team and Hank was the assistant coach. We apologize for our error.*