Table of Contents

FEATURES

32

Q&A with Mike Ohlman

30

Student Life Helps New Grads Transition from College to Career

26

Excellence in Business Dinner Gala 2016
Get an exclusive look into the evening and take part in the celebration!

36

Quality is What I Live, Eat and Breathe—Creating a Family, One Child at a Time

Have something to add? Share your thoughts and images on one of our social media platforms.

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Sections

05 University News  News from around the University

10 Faculty  Get departmental updates and the latest news

12 Athletics  See highlights of the season and meet our MVPs

16 Giving  Get to know our donors and why they choose to give to DU

18 Students  See what our students have been up to and meet our scholarship award recipients

21 Alumni  Catch up with old classmates and save the date for alumni events

ON THE COVER 2016 EIB speaker Anderson Cooper with Peter C. Cook Excellence in Business Award Honoree Birgit Klohs and her husband Greg Northrup.
A COMMITMENT TO QUALITY

As we celebrate Davenport University’s incredible 150-year history, we remember the many ways this institution responded to the changing needs of the marketplace to not only survive, but also to thrive. Our focus has always been to prepare students for in-demand careers, requiring us to be responsive to employer needs. We’ve had to change with technology, respond to competitive challenges and meet the evolving desires of students, too.

Throughout Davenport’s history, we have responded to these shifts with an ongoing commitment to quality. Through our Vision 2020 strategic plan, we are committed to continually improving our outcomes through the use of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence, which help align plans, processes, decisions, people, actions and results. This continuous improvement begins with measurement as each year we set measurable goals and strive to provide better outcomes than the year before.

Over the past six years, we have continually improved student success factors such as retention and persistence, and have more than doubled our graduation rate. We have responded to student feedback to make changes to our student services and our campuses, resulting in the highest levels ever for student and graduate satisfaction. We have improved processes for developing new academic programs, and launched nearly 20 new degree programs since 2010.

Our focus on quality also has allowed us to demonstrate greater innovation. We announced one of the first higher education employment guarantees in 2014, with up to 25 percent of DU degrees to be included by 2020. In 2015, we launched the College of Urban Education to transform how teachers and leaders are prepared for service in urban school districts. A year later, the measurable results in classroom outcomes of those instructed by our Urban Education teacher candidates have been nothing short of amazing.

Earlier this year, we became only the second college ever to be recognized at any level by Michigan Performance Excellence, the state’s quality award. Our focus on quality is evident in all that we do. In this edition of DU Review, you will read about how our commitment to quality is seen at Commencement, at our annual Excellence in Business Gala, in our academic programs, in our athletic programs and in the lives and accomplishments of our alumni, faculty and students.

Davenport’s mission is to prepare students to achieve their career dreams, exceed employers’ expectations and transform communities. We remain committed to fulfilling this mission through quality. Our thanks to you for your continuing interest in and support of our quality journey!

Sincerely,

Richard J. Pappas, Ed.D.
President
Sunday, May 1, dawned bright and clear as graduating students, friends and family gathered at Van Andel Arena in downtown Grand Rapids for the 2016 Commencement Ceremony. More than 1,900 graduates earned DU degrees during the 2015–2016 academic year, with nearly 900 participating in Commencement festivities.

Michael Jandernoa, former Chairman of the Board and CEO of Perrigo Company, was the featured keynote speaker and was presented with an honorary doctorate degree. Jandernoa impressed upon graduates that the “sky is the limit” and encouraged them to design a plan for their future and write it down. In addition, he called for the graduates “to be the best you can be in making a positive difference in the lives of other fellow employees, families and friends.”

Jamie Cattran, the student speaker, also shared words of wisdom with his peers.

“Each of us here took very unique paths that led to graduation today. It shows that we have perseverance, dedication, hard work and the determination to reach a goal. But the hard work does not end here, it really is just the beginning,” stated Cattran. “Before we go, I wanted to leave you with this relevant quote from Henry David Thoreau, ‘Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have always imagined.’”
MBA Accounting graduate, Sonya Dobay, walked across the stage to receive her diploma. Photo by T.J. Hamilton.

Born in 1936, Sonya is DU’s oldest 2016 graduate. Five of her six children, along with many grandchildren, were able to travel across the U.S. to watch! Congratulations, Sonya!

The first graduating class from the Master of Occupational Therapy program. Photo by Kelly McCarron.

Congratulations to the first graduating class in the Master of Occupational Therapy program!

GRADS ON INSTAGRAM

Anxious. Photo and caption courtesy of @coopst4r.

I did that! Graduation Day 2016. Photo and caption courtesy of @jersalanee.

Loving the BSN graduates caps! Photo and caption courtesy of @dualumni.
Davenport University faculty, in partnership with admissions representatives, have ‘adopted’ local West Michigan high schools to acquaint area students with technology fields and with the offerings of the College of Technology at Davenport University. Once a month, faculty go to their adopted high schools and visit with students and the school’s administration to promote careers in technology.

“Davenport University is proud to partner with area high schools to show students the opportunity of joining the technology field with higher entry salaries and greater job opportunities than other career fields,” said Gabriela Ziegler, Department Chair, Computer Information Science.

“It is also a great way for us to show what technology programs we offer at Davenport, including Computer Information Systems, Technology Project Management, Network Management and Security and many more.”

Eight DECA students from the W.A. Lettinga Campus competed against 2,000 other college students from across the U.S. and Canada at the annual International Career and Development Conference in Washington, D.C. Competition was rigorous, but four of the eight students placed in the top eight in their events, and came home with several top awards.

Hannah DeJong and Jessica Likins earned first place in the Event Planning competition, which is in its inaugural year. Nolan Kinchsular brought home a third-place award in the Sales Manager Meeting competition, putting his sales experience to the test, and Tyler Triemstra placed among the top eight finalists again this year in the Travel and Tourism event.

“As a DECA co-adviser for 17 years, I am always impressed with the way our students compete at the state and national level,” said Todd Pitts. “It truly is a joy to watch these students mature, take what they’ve learned in the classroom and apply it to a competitive situation.”

In addition, Davenport University students from the Lansing and W.A. Lettinga Campuses took home 17 national championships, 12 runner-up finishes and 13 third-place finishes at the Business Professionals of America (BPA) 50th National Leadership Conference in Boston, Massachusetts, this May.

DU placed 82 finalists in the top ten. Over the last eight years, Davenport students have earned first-place awards in 100 national BPA events, which is an all-time BPA record.

“Davenport BPA students excelled this year at the National Leadership Conference (NLC) strengthening Davenport’s success as the leader in BPA, winning more than any other university in the nation,” said Scott Gumieny, BPA Advisor. “It is without a doubt that our students this year and in the future will continue the winning tradition!”
DU Becomes Newest Partner with Macomb Community College and Wayne County Community College District

Davenport University recently became the newest partner to offer classes at both Macomb Community College’s (MCC) University Center in Clinton Township and Wayne County Community College District’s (WCCCD) University Center in Belleville.

“We are very excited about our new partnerships with Macomb Community College and Wayne County Community College District,” said Dr. Rick Pappas. “Students benefit from new programs that will be developed and from the first-class facilities and services offered by MCC and WCCCD, as well as Davenport’s own student services and academic programs.”

This spring, Davenport began offering its Medical Case Management and Project Technology Management bachelor’s degree programs and its Technology Management master’s degree program at the MCC University Center.

And this fall, Davenport will begin offering its Accounting Fraud Investigation bachelor’s program at the MCC University Center. Bachelor degree programs to be offered at the University Center at WCCCD include Network Management and Security and Medical Case Management.

Both partnerships expand the footprint of DU and provide academic offerings and opportunities for students at Davenport and our partner institutions.

“Students benefit from new programs that will be developed and from the first-class facilities and services offered by MCC and WCCCD, as well as Davenport’s own student services and academic programs.”

Above: Dr. Rick Pappas, President, Davenport University and Dr. James Jacobs, President, Macomb Community College.

HONORING OUR RETIRED EMPLOYEES

As part of the Sesquicentennial celebration, the first annual event to honor Davenport retired employees was held on April 20 on the W.A. Lettinga Campus in Grand Rapids. More than 50 retired and former employees attended and heard an update on the University from President Pappas. Guests were invited to tour the campus and take a bus to the Farmers Insurance Athletic Complex to tour the new facilities. Chancellor Emeritus Donald W. Maine helped coordinate the event with Alumni and Development staff.

Above (l to r) Virginia Vander Wall, Marvin Vander Wall and Elmer Vruggink.
Davenport University cultivates a community where similarities and differences are understood, respected and valued. Not only has this mission been accepted by all employees and students, but also the community at large has recognized this acceptance.

Davenport University has been recognized for the fourth year in a row as a recipient of the INSIGHT Into Diversity Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award. This prestigious honor is awarded “based on [the] institution’s exemplary diversity and inclusion initiatives, and includes all aspects of diversity including gender, race, ethnicity, veterans, people with disabilities and members of the LGBT community.”

The Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce also recognized DU as the recipient of its 2016 Diversity Visionary Award, which recognizes individuals and organizations for their exemplary efforts, advancements and contributions to ensure diversity, inclusion and equity within their own institution or community.

In April 2016, Davenport University achieved Level I Partner Designation from the Partners for a Racism-Free Community. This partnership level recognizes the contribution and commitment the University has given to understanding the significance of racial justice in the workplace and the University’s efforts to become a racism-free community.

And most recently, INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine bestowed two awards on Davenport. Dr. Susan Gunn, Dean of the College of Urban Education, was recognized as a recipient of the 2016 Inspiring Women in STEM Award. This prestigious award is presented to those deserving women for their inspiring work in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) field. Dr. Rick Pappas was honored with the 2016 Giving Back Award, which honors presidents and chancellors of colleges and universities who go above and beyond their everyday leadership duties and “give back” to their campuses and communities.

For more information on Davenport University’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives, visit davenport.edu/dei

Recently, Davenport University announced the addition of the Focus One Bachelor of Business Administration in Management. This program is designed for students who have successfully completed an associate degree or the equivalent in transfer and course credits and who want to complete their degree in one year. The Focus One Learning Model is a new learning style in which multiple courses come together to build upon core concepts and application experiences to quicken a student’s path to understanding.

The curriculum weaves together content topics and builds natural connections that help students learn, while reinforcing concepts across different disciplines.

Within the College of Technology, the Computer Information Systems Cooperative Education (Co-op) program was created to couple classroom instruction with paid, application-focused learning in business and industry settings, arranged as part of a student’s course of study.

The Bachelor of Science in Computer Information Systems degree provides a broad range of computer programming skills to prepare students for fields such as application and web development, programming and computer information systems analysis. Students complete a total of 900 hours of paid, in-the-field, Co-op experience beginning in their first year of study. This ongoing professional immersion in the field provides students with a performance edge valued by employers.
DU FACULTY PRESENT AT THE LARGEST MATH MEETING IN THE WORLD

Two faculty members of the math department presented at the Joint Mathematics Meeting, the largest annual gathering of mathematicians in the U.S., held in Seattle this past January.

Mathematics Department Chair Dr. Timothy Pennings presented Mathematical Modeling: Dirac, Einstein and Barging the Big Easy. The presentation explained why mathematical modeling works and how to create a good modeling project.

“My presentation began by exploring the deep philosophical question of why it is that mathematics ‘works.’ That is, how can a bunch of symbols written down and manipulated on a piece of paper lead scientists to know in what direction and speed to shoot a rocket so that 10 years later it will pass by Pluto?” said Dr. Pennings. “Mathematical modeling, a course that DU will soon be offering, provides answers to these types of questions.”

Steve Bacinski, Associate Department Chair, presented Applied Mathlab Projects for Linear Algebra Students. Dr. Bacinski focused on two of his favorite projects for linear algebra, one involving puzzles and the other using a three-dimensional vector of an airplane.

MEET OUR DONORS

“\textit{I appreciate the opportunity to support the education of DU students, and in doing so, helping to ensure students from all backgrounds have access to a quality education. A post-secondary education has become the most valuable currency of the 21st century, and I believe everyone should do their part.”}
Davenport University recently hosted the West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum’s (WMSBF) April meeting that spotlighted six West Michigan companies that have earned B Corps Certification and included a dialogue on the impact that a Certified B Business has on the triple bottom line.

B Corps are for-profit companies certified by the nonprofit B Lab to meet rigorous standards of social and environmental performance, accountability and transparency. Today, there is a growing community of more than 1,600 Certified B Corps from 42 countries and more than 120 industries working together toward one unifying goal: to redefine success in business. Ten companies in West Michigan have earned B Corps Certification.

The event was co-sponsored by the WMSBF and DU Sigma Beta Delta. Dr. Jack D. Cichy, professor and Sigma Beta Delta Advisor at Davenport University, along with Daniel Schoonmaker from the WMSBF, determined the theme and speakers for the event.

“Davenport University is committed to being engaged with the business community and offering a forum for discussion of relevant business and leadership concepts,” said Dr. Cichy.

“This Certified B event enforced the idea of businesses as a force for good and what social, environmental and financial goals an organization can hope to realize from doing good while making it good business.”

“As a recent graduate of Davenport University, I wanted to give back to students who will attend DU in the future. I know how important scholarships are to student success after I received scholarships in my senior year. By participating in the 150th Founders’ Week of Giving Challenge, I felt honored to help future students of DU.”

Get involved like Rhae-Ann and Mitchell at davenport.edu/give
Few could have predicted that when Dominez Burnett picked Davenport in 2012, he would change the face of the University’s basketball program while becoming a national star athlete.

Graduating with honors this past spring, Burnett dominated the courts over the past four seasons to become the highest-scoring collegiate basketball player in Michigan history. He earned back-to-back NABC-NAIA Player of the Year Awards over his final two seasons, and capped off his DU career with the inaugural Bevo Francis Award, bestowed by Small College Basketball on the top player from NCAA Division II, NCAA Division III and the NAIA. Burnett was chosen over hundreds of other athletes not only for his success on the court but also for the character he demonstrated.

According to the Bevo Francis Award committee, “Burnett has exhibited character, athletic skill and enthusiasm that set him apart from all other players. He represents what the Bevo Francis Award is about. The standard has been set high!”

In addition to citing his accomplishments on the court and in the classroom, the committee noted Burnett’s leadership in organizing a bottled water drive to collect more than 5,000 bottles of water for his community of Flint. They also cited the support for teammates he demonstrated while sitting on the bench during the national tournament and the kindness he showed to others when he didn’t know he was being watched by committee representatives.

“Burnett has been a pillar of our program for the last four years,” stated Coach Burt Paddock. “He is a once-in-a-generation talent, and I’m glad he chose Davenport four years ago. He has been not only a sensational player but a terrific student-athlete as well. During his time here, he set a lot of records and took our program to new heights.”

Burnett is hoping to pursue a career in professional basketball and is in contact with a number of agents.
On Saturday, June 11, four Davenport University baseball players were drafted in the Major League Baseball Amateur Draft. This momentous event marked the first time any Panther baseball player was drafted from the program that just celebrated its eighth season.

Brandon White (Chicago, Illinois) was the first Panther ever selected in the draft as he was a 13th-round selection (pick 379) of the Atlanta Braves. White is a hard-throwing right-handed starting pitcher who turned in a great season in his only year with the team. He posted a 6–1 record with a 2.36 earned run average (ERA) in 61 innings. He fanned 64 and walked just 12 with a fastball in the low-to-mid 90s and a sharp breaking ball.

“This is a dream come true for me,” said White. “I played just one year at Davenport, but it has made such an impact on me. I’d like to thank Coach Tidey and the staff for their encouragement and support. My teammates were great to be around and I’m indebted to Davenport for allowing me to chase my dreams.”

Bryan Saucedo (Toronto, Ontario) was the second player taken as a 14th-round selection (pick 416) of the Chicago White Sox. Saucedo has a big frame at 6’ 6” and features a heavy fastball in the low 90s. He started 13 times this season and struck out 73 in 60 innings.

Corbin Clouse (Grand Ledge, Michigan) was the third player taken as a 27th-round selection (pick 799) of the Atlanta Braves. The left-handed starter had a great sophomore season posting a 5–0 record and led the team with a 1.62 ERA. He started eight times and tossed 50 innings allowing just 25 hits with 75 strikeouts.

Travis Bolin (Watervliet, Michigan) was the fourth player taken as a 32nd-round selection (pick 969) of the Texas Rangers. The center fielder was a NAIA First Team All-American and set several single-season records this year at DU. The Wolverine-Hoosier Athletic Conference Player of the Year slugged 16 home runs and 12 triples and sported a .412 batting average. He also drove in 62 runs and scored 69 times for the Panthers. He is a five-tool talent who can hit for average, has tremendous speed (17 stolen bases), exhibits arm strength (7 outfield assists), hits for power and fields his position well (.970 fielding percentage).

“This is a testament to the quality and growth of our program,” said Head Coach Kevin Tidey. “You can come to Davenport and realize your dreams of getting drafted. This is a great day for our program, and we wish the best for these guys as they move on. I’m proud of the progress and work they put in to get to this point.”
The Panthers finished the season with a record of 9–12 combining their 15s and 7s schedules. The team won their first game in the D1A Playoffs during April in 15s before falling in the second round. The team finished fourth in the USA Rugby 7s Nationals winning their first four matches before dropping their first two against American International and Arizona State players. Thomas Cheslek, Trevor Rothhaas, Dominique Bailey, Carl Smith, Anthony Welmers and Mike Houston were named to the Mid-South All-Conference Team.

The men’s lacrosse team finished the season with a 20–2 overall record. The team won the inaugural NAIA National Invitational in Greenville, South Carolina, with a 13–10 victory over Missouri Valley. The team was ranked No. 1 throughout the entire season in the NAIA national poll. Jarred Riley was named Most Valuable Player (MVP) of the National Invitational. Bryan Larocque and Jimmy Fata were named NAIA First Team All-Americans. Riley and Nick Mulcahy were named NAIA Second Team All-Americans. The team also won the Wolverine-Hoosier Athletic Conference (WHAC) Championship by an 11–7 score over Siena Heights.

Danielle Ordway was named Most Outstanding Player in both competitions. The team went 29–1 this season combining 15s and 7s between the fall and spring. They defeated University of Southern California 61–0 in the USA Rugby Division II 15s National Championship game and they defeated Bloomsburg University 24–14 in the USA Rugby National 7s Championship game. The team set a school record with a 158–0 win against Saginaw Valley State.

Women’s Rugby

Women’s Rugby celebrate their national championship.
WOMEN'S LACROSSE

The women’s team had a banner year as they were the 2016 WHAC Regular Season Champions and 2016 National Women’s Lacrosse League National Champions and captured the inaugural NAIA National Invitational. Brooke Knoll was named NAIA National Player of the Year and WHAC Offensive Player of the Year. Knoll, Mariah Newton and Sydney Gray were named NAIA First Team All-Americans. Hanna Bush, Jessica Lemcke and Tara Pluger were named NAIA Second Team All-Americans. Sara Kuzava, Hannah Maroe and Lemcke were selected to the NWLL Academic All-American Team.

BASEBALL

The Panthers finished second in the WHAC regular season and were 43–17 overall. The team was ranked No. 6 in the NAIA preseason poll. The team posted 40-plus wins for the third straight season. DU hosted the NAIA Opening Round Nationals and finished in second place just one win shy of the NAIA World Series. Travis Bolin was named the WHAC Player of the Year and set seven school records for hitting. Brandon Larkin-Guilfoyle, Matt Priebe and Bolin were named First Team All-WHAC. Brian Sobieski and Corbin Clouse were named Honorable Mention All-WHAC.

Clouse set three school pitching records this season. Corey Murphy and Alex Schulling were named Daktronics NAIA Scholar-Athletes, and Murphy was a College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) Academic All-District selection.

MEN’S AND WOMEN’S TENNIS

The men’s tennis team finished 13–14 overall and advanced to the WHAC Tournament semifinals. Matthew McClurg and Matthew Boyle were named First Team All-WHAC. McClurg was also named WHAC Newcomer of the Year. The team hosted the ITA Regional this year.

The women’s tennis team finished 25–6 overall, setting a new school record. DU finished 11th in the final NAIA national poll, which is the best in school history. The team went 6–0 to win the WHAC Regular Season Championship. DU won the WHAC Tournament title in Grand Rapids. Alyssa Fuentes and Puck Luttikhuis were named NAIA Second Team All-Americans. Fuentes was named CoSIDA Academic All-District. DU advanced to the second round of the NAIA National Tournament. Anne Douwes was named WHAC Newcomer of the Year, and Patrick Grashorn was named WHAC Women’s Tennis Coach of the Year.

Fuentes and Luttikhuis were both named First Team All-WHAC.

MEN’S AND WOMEN’S TRACK AND FIELD

Mallory Bont earned All-American honors by finishing seventh in the long jump at NAIA Nationals. Alexander Lake, Emily Michalski, Britta Ebels, Tessa Gryzen, Jenna Schumaker and Dan Bolvin also qualified for NAIA Nationals. Both teams finished fourth at the WHAC Championships.

MEN’S AND WOMEN’S GOLF

Jorge Benitez was named NAIA Second Team All-American and was a semifinalist for the Jack Nicklaus NAIA Player of the Year award. The team finished first at the Alice Lloyd Invitational, first at the Furniture City Classic at Stonewater Country Club, and finished second at the WHAC Championships by seven strokes.

The women’s team finished fourth at the WHAC Championships and finished first at the Kalamazoo Steven Tyler Intercollegiate. Frida Henningsson set an individual 54-hole school record (234), and the team set a 54-hole record (972) at the WHAC Championships.

COMPETITIVE CHEERLEADING

The cheer team had another stellar spring as NCA Cheer National Champions for the fourth straight year and won the inaugural WHAC Championship. They also were STUNT Division II National Champions for the second straight year.

SOFTBALL

The Panthers captured the 2016 WHAC Regular Season and Tournament Championships. The team finished the season with a 39–12 record and hosted the NAIA Opening Round of Nationals. Emily Maves was named WHAC Pitcher of the Year. Mallory Teunissen was named WHAC Newcomer of the Year. McCall Salmon was named WHAC Coach of the Year. Maves excelled in the classroom as well and was named CoSIDA Academic All-District. Seven Panthers were named Daktronics NAIA Scholar-Athletes this season. The team was ranked 11th at the end of the regular season. Maves and McKenzie Rowe were named First Team All-Great Lakes Region. Teunissen was named Second Team All-Great Lakes Region. Maves, Rowe and Teunissen were named First Team All-WHAC. Aby Brambila, Alyssa Eastman, Carli SanMillan, Lauren French and Lindsay Tasma were named Honorable Mention All-WHAC.

ABOVE: The DU softball team posing with their trophy after winning the WHAC Championship.
MIDLAND CAMPUS SAYS THANK YOU TO THE GERSTACKER FOUNDATION!

Davenport has been an integral educational service organization to the Midland, Saginaw and Tri-Cities area of Michigan since the early 1900s. One organization that has served as an important partner with our Midland Campus throughout the years, helping to launch new initiatives that impact Midland students, is the Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation.

The Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation was founded in 1957 by Mrs. Eda U. Gerstacker in memory of her husband. The Foundation’s primary purpose is to provide, indefinitely, financial aid to charities of all types, including homes for the elderly, healthcare, research institutions, colleges and universities, youth work and general community support. Among these grantees is Davenport University.

Most recently, the Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation generously granted Davenport’s Midland Campus $10,000 to help build the upcoming Medical Assisting Lab. The Foundation also created the Rollin M. Gerstacker Library and provides opportunities for Midland-area students through generous scholarships that have totaled more than $670,000 in support over the years!

Carl Gerstacker, son of Rollin and Eda, once said, “People should do good deeds because it’s the right thing to do. You’ll be much happier to give money to society and see it used while you are still alive.” That spirit, combined with a broad purpose and a diverse board of trustees, will enable the Gerstacker Foundation to ‘carry on, indefinitely’ its purpose for many years to come. Today, that legacy of giving is carried on by Rollin and Eda Gerstacker’s granddaughter, Lisa, with the loving assistance of Mr. E. N. Brandt and Mr. Alan W. Ott—two of the Foundation’s long-standing trustees and champions.

Davenport is grateful to the Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation for their ongoing support of our students—the future business and healthcare leaders of the greater Midland area.

FOR LUNCH, WE SERVED . . . NETWORKING, INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

More than 75 employees from neighboring businesses joined President Rick Pappas for the first annual Neighborhood Business and Friends luncheon on Monday, May 16 at the W.A. Lettinga Campus. President Pappas shared exciting news about Davenport’s accomplishments over the last five years and highlighted bold initiatives related to Vision 2020. Dr. Pamela Imperato, Dean of the Donald W. Maine College of Business and the College of Technology, invited guests to get involved by employing interns, touring the campus, speaking in classes and sharing their expertise with DU students and faculty.

Featured speaker and alumnus Mike Nelsen ’87 shared his story as one of the retail industry’s top experts, highlighting that Davenport and the ecommerce industry have a very similar path: “The risks, innovation and entrepreneurship of ecommerce has single-handedly changed the landscape of the retail industry. Those same ambitious attributes run parallel to Davenport. DU is changing the landscape of education.”

Mike Nelsen is the Chief Development Officer at CommerceHub in Albany, NY. He also helped launch QVC.com.

LEFT
Dr. Pamela Imperato, Dean of the Donald W. Maine College of Business and the College of Technology and Mike Nelsen ’87.
After 14 years as a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), Janet Veldhouse decided to move into private industry and joined Steelcase Inc., a company that challenged her with opportunities for growth through job rotations. She acknowledged, “Learning a new position or supporting a different function is challenging; however, in undertaking something you might not think you’re prepared for is when you get your break.”

One of those “breaks” came in 2011 when she was presented with the opportunity for a new role on the other side of the world: Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of Steelcase’s Asia Pacific operations. She felt challenged but also supported by a company that wants its employees to succeed and trusted her experience and ability to create success in her new role.

Today, Veldhouse is helping the next generation of professionals succeed as a member of the Davenport community and credits DU with helping remove barriers for students and creating innovative ways for them to begin new careers. Similar to Steelcase’s job rotations, DU’s Student Internship program allows students to try out new roles and push them to get out of their comfort zones.

Veldhouse’s philosophy is simple but profound: “It is not individual accomplishments and successes that will be a person’s legacy but rather the positive influence you have had on others.” Having someone else’s “back” is important at work and at school. In this spirit, she created the Gietzen Family Endowed Scholarship in honor of her parents. “Scholarships can make all the difference in making education affordable—enabling a student to get the right balance of work and school—as well as not graduating with an overwhelming amount of student loans,” she said.

Davenport is grateful for Veldhouse’s leadership and dedication as a member of the Foundation Board and for the legacy of support she has established for our students.

In honor of Davenport University’s 150th Anniversary, we have established an opportunity to endow an “anniversary scholarship” at the $10,000 level through the end of 2016. An endowed scholarship lasts forever, creating opportunities for students and honoring the generosity of the giver.

For more information on this initiative and other giving opportunities, contact Louise Kidd at 616.233.3413 or louise.kidd@davenport.edu
 Traditionally, spring break is a time when students enjoy a relaxing vacation, taking a break from the hard work of their studies. Davenport’s Alternative Spring Break (ASB) program, however, offers students an opportunity to use that time to serve others.

The 2016 ASB trip had students and staff travel to Manning, South Carolina, to help those affected by the 2015 floods. The group was split into two, with one section working with Samaritan’s Purse, an organization that provides international disaster aid, and the other assisting with local park cleanup and household mold remediation. The students working with Samaritan’s Purse performed home repairs and demolition in the towns of Kingstree and Andrews, while the park cleanup crew volunteered in Sumpter and Andrews. All worked with the goal of providing safe living conditions for the residents and providing hope for rebuilding communities.

Before the trip, site leaders worked with participants to better understand the social issues at play and to develop teamwork skills. The group participated in Issue Weekend, an overnight experience at which students volunteer and further develop group cohesiveness. ASB students also volunteered at Ditto Upscale Resale, a consignment store in Grand Rapids, where they assisted with cleaning, stocking and displays. ASB also created an exhibit to educate fellow DU students, faculty and staff about the social issues they were to address during the trip.

In South Carolina, the ASB students learned to cherish many things they usually take for granted and came to understand that true happiness does not reside in material items but rather in the relationships built with others. Students focused on the idea of hope, which was on display in meetings with the city government and the joy seen on peoples’ faces when they talked about their future in their new homes.

“The people we helped had lost nearly everything … everything except hope,” said Marissa Beadle, a two-year participant in ASB. “The love they showed toward others really built a sense of community; everyone was helping each other in any way possible. We even met the Mayor of Kingstree as well as a city commissioner who thanked us for creating a beacon of hope for the community after these floods.”

The residents of South Carolina were thankful for the work of the DU students and amazed they “gave up” their spring break to work for others. One student, Aaron Ensley, shared a different perspective. “We did not “give up” our spring break,” he said. “We had a blast and learned a lot!”

After they had returned to Grand Rapids, the ASB students reunited at Howard Christensen Nature Center to assist with grounds cleanup to prepare for the spring season.

The ASB program allows students of all backgrounds to come together for the common purpose of helping others and raising awareness of social issues. And, as the students make a positive impact on the community, the ASB experience affects each student in a positive, life-changing way.
Students, staff and faculty from across the state gathered together to celebrate the contributions of students and student organizations during the 2015–2016 academic year at the Student Recognition Awards Ceremony.

Extensively reviewed by a University-wide selection committee, more than 100 nominations were submitted for consideration, with top finalists invited to attend the exclusive awards banquet. Award categories focused on education, service, diversity and volunteerism. The winners represented each DU campus across the state.

Congratulations to the students and student organizations that were nominated for this year! We thank you for your hard work and dedication to the student body, campus and community!

**Student Leadership Award**
- Irma Garcia-Murillo*
- Caren Meerman
- Hannah Soules
- Julie VanBommel

**Student Employee of the Year**
- Sean Cox
- Emily Gatlin
- Dylan Kichak
- Jessica Waddell*

**Student Volunteer of the Year**
- Elizabeth Lehner
- Courtenay Tafel
- Jordan Van Oostenbrugge*
- Corey Westenbroek

**Campus Diversity Program of the Year**
- Celebracion Latina: Celebrating Hispanic Heritage – Lansing Campus
- Body Shaming: Tunnel of Oppression Display – Syneira Matthew*

**Educational Program of the Year**
- Go Bald for Cancer – Student Government*
- Stump the Pro-Lifer – Students for Life

**Service Program of the Year**
- Alternative Spring Break Trip 2016*
- Elves for Santa Toy Drive
- Making Strides Against Breast Cancer

**Outstanding RSO Officer of the Year**
- Hannah Bachert – Lansing Student Nurses Association
- Glenn Geurink – DU Swing Dancing
- Nermin Soliman – Active Minds*
- Stefana Rusu – Global Student Organization

**Unsung RSO Hero of the Year**
- Courtney Dewley – Lansing Business Professionals of America
- Patsy Howe – Global Student Organization*
- Tyler Triemstra – InterVarsity Christian Fellowship
- David Williams – Student Government

**Registered Student Organization of the Year**
- Active Minds
- Davenport University (New RSO of the Year)*
- DU Swing Dancing
- InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (Established RSO of the Year)*
- Lansing Student Nurses Association (Established RSO of the Year)*
- Student Occupational Therapy Association

**Michigan Campus Compact Honorees**
Two DU students received the Commitment to Service Award from Michigan Campus Compact (MiCC), a coalition of college and university presidents who are committed to fulfilling the public purpose of higher education. The Commitment to Service Award recognizes up to two students per member campus in the state of Michigan for the depth of their community involvement or service experiences. These awards were presented on April 7 at the MiCC Awards Gala, held at Michigan State University’s Kellogg Center in East Lansing.

Other DU students were honored with the Heart & Soul Award that recognizes students for their time, effort and personal commitment to their communities through service.

**Michigan Campus Compact Commitment to Service Award**
- Luke Grzybowski
- Julie VanBommel

**Michigan Campus Compact Heart & Soul Award (all recipients)**
- Cesar Aguirre
- Hannah Bachert
- Marissa Beadle
- Sumit Bose
- Sean Cox
- John Faulkner
- Prescott Gallagher
- Irma Garcia-Murillo
- Ethan Groenendyk
- Elizabeth Lehner
- Tatiana Lopes
- Syneira Matthew
- Rachel Parker
- Amina Smith-Starr
- Emily Suevey
- Courtenay Tafel
- Jordan Van Oostenbrugge
- Corey Westenbroek
STUDENTS

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING COURSE HAS STUDENTS CREATING NEW WORLDS

Soul Bound is a game in which “the Wight King rules over the land, harvesting the souls of man to prolong its own life. You alone survive the harvest and become the Soul Bound, the only being that can vanquish the Wight King ... Do you have what it takes to topple this darkness once and for all?”

Although this may sound like something you’d find at Comic-Con, it’s actually the creation of students in Brian Kowalczk’s Collaborative Gaming class, who created Soul Bound as their experiential learning project during the winter 2016 semester.

The Collaborative Gaming 15-week course offered students the opportunity to work together to create a video game from scratch. As a team, students were responsible for every detail, from the storyboard and design to the coding of the game itself. Students took turns in the role of project manager, keeping the work on-time and on-budget while preparing status reports for Kowalczk, who acted in the role of a potential investor. As they would in the real world, students needed to show their investor what they were working on at any given time, the problems they faced and their proposed solutions that would help them stay on target.

To test the game for quality and audience appeal, the team held a beta testing event at which more than 30 students, faculty and staff offered feedback and advice. The students fixed problems that had been identified and made other changes based on the feedback they had received so they could present the game to their investor.

Through collaboration, teamwork and applied project management skills, these students created a game not just for a class project but also to be purchased and played by others. They learned how to use software that is commonly used in industry, such as the project management program JIRA and a variety of source-code control programs. DU student Andrew South said the course taught him how to work with others and be flexible, and “really helped prepare me for a career in the gaming or technology industry.”

Experiential learning isn’t new to higher education, but academia has struggled to make it a legitimate part of the curriculum. According to the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AACU), “experiential education has value far beyond building the kind of social skills, work ethic and practical expertise that are important in professionally oriented programs.”

Check out davenport.edu for more information about the Collaborative Gaming course and other experiential learning opportunities at DU.
Kaylani Rubley’s passion for helping others stemmed from a personal experience. “I can still remember like it was yesterday my dad screaming from the other room, ‘Kaylani, call 911, your mom is having a seizure!’ From that day on, I knew I wanted to help people as an ER nurse.”

Her mother has had four brain tumors, three craniotomies and two rounds of radiation but is strong now. Rubley was able to put her passion for helping people, like her mom, into action right away thanks to the nursing program at Davenport University.

Today, Rubley works at Metro Health Hospital as an Emergency Nurse and says, “The pace of the Emergency Department limits the time we have to spend in each patient’s room, so I try to work by the mentality that I have 15 minutes to make a difference.”

On any given day, Rubley’s ER can see 150 patients or more. She starts her 12-hour shift at 2:45 p.m. and checks in with the current staff to receive patient reports. She then triages, assesses, treats and discharges patients accordingly.

Rubley says that her experience in DU’s hands-on nursing program prepared her for all the types of patients she sees, including one patient whom she will never forget. “I remember when I had a pediatric patient who had never been to the Emergency Department. As you can imagine, it is stressful and overwhelming, especially to a child. I asked the patient about different cartoon medical shows they had seen, like Doc McStuffins. The patient’s face lit up with excitement. As I listened to the patient’s heart and lungs, I could see the child’s apprehension. I first asked the patient to listen to my heart and lungs. The patient positioned my stethoscope and began to listen. I asked if I was doing OK, which brought a smile to the child’s face. The patient’s mom grinned and thanked me for my kindness. For me, it was the least I could do. It brought a smile to my face, and for the child, it made an overwhelming place seem a little less scary.”

Throughout Rubley’s nursing career, there have been patients and family members who have thanked her for her excellent care. She added, “Each and every ‘thank you’ I receive, I appreciate. Whether I discharge or admit patients, any time they take a brief moment to smile, shake my hand, say ‘God bless’ or offer a hug, it is special.”
A PASSION FOR PEOPLE AND TECHNOLOGY

Chris Vinton started NVINT in 2002 to address a need he saw in the business sector. He noticed businesses were in need of a service that could deliver quality technology infrastructure solutions in a personalized way. Vinton’s business took off, and he’s been helping others learn how to blend physical and virtual strategies into customized solutions in his tightly-knit company ever since.

One of the challenges Vinton faces is retaining talent. NVINT, and other technology firms in West Michigan, face a shortage of qualified workers. To help address this, he thought back to his own days as an intern and the value it provided for his career. Then, he reached out to Davenport University and its growing technology department.

“We started our internship program with Davenport more than 10 years ago,” said Vinton. “The relationship has been so successful because we both benefit. We are able to supply students with hands-on experience, while DU can offer an internship that helps students get a career.”

Vinton considers his co-workers family and is personally invested in each person. One of NVINT’s first employees was Chief Operating Officer (COO) Tammy Broderick ’92. She is integral to the business, and Vinton said, “Really, she runs the place!”

NVINT seeks employees with foundational knowledge, passion and personality fit. But most of all, they are looking for people who have initiative, like Chris Cook ’10.

“I started as a network security intern at NVINT six years ago,” Cook stated. “The part of the company I was working in wasn’t looking to hire a full-time person yet, but because the internship had highlighted my skills and work ethic they created a position for me, Logistics Manager. My degree opened the door for me to get a great job here at NVINT.”

As NVINT grew, they continued to grow their partnership with DU and expand the infrastructure they could provide to clients without losing the personal touch.

Nate Kindy ’16 excels in technical problem solving as well as customer service. Kindy started full-time at NVINT in 2014 as a Systems Engineer. Early on in his career at NVINT, Kindy was encouraged to continue his studies by other DU colleagues who recognized his potential. He knows that the customized solutions and customer service NVINT offers differentiates it from others and that clients come to him for personalized attention.

As an alumnus and manager of two staff members, Kindy appreciates the partnership with Davenport. “DU helps
For those who had the opportunity to experience this year’s Celebration of Scholarships, there is little chance the student testimonials shared will soon be forgotten.

This annual event brings together student scholarship recipients and the generous donors who help underwrite their education, and there was no shortage of gratitude in the room this year.

Irma Cecila Garcia-Murillo, a Davenport student and one of the evening’s speakers, shared how helpful donor support was for a first-generation student like herself.

System Support Engineers Nick Domico ’16 and Jason Lachmann ’16 are two examples of interns who have gone on to work at NVINT.

“I got serious about classes at DU because I figured out what I actually wanted to learn while interning at NVINT,” said Domico. “Systems and networking are like a puzzle, and I like fixing them.”

“As a student, I competed in team cyber defense competitions and made it to regionals,” said Lachmann. “I put up a network and defended against threats. I simulated reality by working under stress for disaster planning, just like what I am doing here at NVINT.”

Now, NVINT sponsors cyber defense competitions for students and hope that more will consider a career in cyber security.

“Our long-term relationship with DU is exciting,” shared Vinton. “I think it comes down to culture. Davenport’s culture and our culture fit well together. We both have a passion for people and making sure we can do whatever we can do make others successful.”

Let DU be part of your recruiting team! Contact Career Services at 616-698-7111 or careerservices@davenport.edu to post full- or part-time jobs and internships on the Davenport University Career Service’s Panther Jobs website.
Next Panther Forever Generation: Davenport’s Alumni Legacy Scholarship

Your pride is contagious! For many of our students, a friend or family member who attended Davenport has recommended DU based on their positive experience. Your recommendation may qualify a future student for a scholarship opportunity.

The Alumni Legacy Endowed Scholarship provides support for students who are children, step-children, grandchildren or step-grandchildren of a DU alumnus. Funded by generous alumni over the years, this endowed scholarship gives second and third generations of Davenport Panthers a chance to receive the same career-focused education their family members have benefited from. Incoming freshmen and transfer students may be eligible for this scholarship, which can provide up to $1,000 per year with the opportunity to renew support.

For more information on the Alumni Legacy Endowed Scholarship, along with other Foundation scholarship opportunities, please contact the Office of Financial Aid at 616.732.1130 or a financial aid counselor.

Let us know at alumni@davenport.edu for the opportunity to be featured in the next DU Review!
Alumni across the nation are taking the initiative to connect, network and engage with fellow Panthers.

The newest effort to connect DU grads is happening in Houston, Texas. With the assistance of many alumni, including Anthony Duangkaew and Caitlin MacNeil, who are spearheading the efforts, the newly-formed Davenport University Alumni Houston Chapter hosted its first event on April 27. Alumni and friends gathered at TopGolf, a premier golf entertainment complex, to kick off the new Houston Chapter. The group had fun while networking with other Houston alums, discussed future chapter plans, experienced TopGolf and had delicious appetizers.

Are you in the Houston area? Stay up-to-date on chapter events and happenings by checking out the DU Alumni Houston Chapter on LinkedIn.

If you are interested in creating an alumni chapter in your area, contact the Alumni Office at alumni@davenport.edu

We are launching several new chapters over the next year and ramping up current chapters’ offerings, providing opportunities for graduates to help current students and creating strong professional and social connections.
RT UNIVERSITY

Excellence

NESS DINNER GALA
More than 600 people gathered at the DeVos Place in downtown Grand Rapids on May 6, 2016, to honor Birgit Klohs as the 2016 Peter C. Cook Excellence in Business Award recipient and to hear Anderson Cooper as he bantered with President Rick Pappas in an interview-style keynote.

This annual black-tie event is the University’s largest annual fundraiser to support student scholarships. Generous donors provide the funds needed to help students achieve academic success and start on a career-focused path. More than $2 million has been raised to benefit student scholarships over the past 19 years.

Anderson Cooper brings wit and charm to the Excellence in Business Gala

A familiar face to many and known for his anchor role on CNN, Anderson Cooper was interviewed onstage by Dr. Rick Pappas, providing insights into a wide variety of topics inspired by his career and writings, including the changing landscape of journalism, this year’s tumultuous presidential campaign season and his work in Haiti. He also discussed his newly released book, The Rainbow Comes and Goes: A Mother and Son on Life, Love, and Loss, and the accompanying HBO documentary about Cooper and his mother, Gloria Vanderbilt.
Birgit Klohs, President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of The Right Place, Inc., was honored with the 2016 Peter C. Cook Excellence in Business Award, established in 1998 to recognize business and community leaders who exemplify the entrepreneurial spirit, success and generosity to community that are hallmarks of the Davenport University mission, vision and values.

Klohs serves as West Michigan’s leading economic development strategist, collaborating with local and county municipalities, as well as Midwest regional groups such as the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. Under her 28 years of leadership, The Right Place has spurred the creation of more than 40,000 new jobs and $4 billion in capital investment. Additionally, Klohs has set in place an economic development framework for long-term, sustained economic growth to position West Michigan for the future.

“As I think of Birgit, I think of someone who is a pillar in this community, who has served this community, who is a leader in this community…someone who has really lived it,” said Doug DeVos, President of Amway. “She’s somebody who didn’t grow up here, wasn’t born here, but she understood what it was and saw a way that she could be a part of making it better.”

Klohs is not only an economic development leader but also a community leader. She believes that a community’s quality of life is just as important as its quality of commerce.
Student Life provides many opportunities for student engagement, including campus programs and traditions, leadership development and community service.

Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) provide Davenport students with opportunities to network, develop leadership skills, work on a team, contribute to the DU community and so much more. There are approximately 35 RSOs across the Davenport system, providing students with the opportunity to join groups that are academic, cultural, professional, social, recreational, service or advocacy focused.

“Student Life supports campus involvement with its excellent programming offered,” said Corey Westenbroek. “InterVarsity Christian Fellowship has provided me, and other students, a great environment to partake in fellowship with one another.”

Although being involved during college is important, preparing for life after college is crucial, and no one knows this better than DU’s own alumni. That’s why in April, the Davenport University Young Alumni Council prepared a Life 101 class to help graduating seniors with the transition from campus to career.
Davenport alumni from various industries shared advice on investing for the future, how to pay back student loans, tips to help find a job after graduation, budgeting for the future and how to maintain a social life after school ends.

Providing students with the resources and knowledge for what to expect after college is part of the quality programming offered through Student Life.

“Participating in events like this is very important for me to do because it was a way for me to give back to students who are in the same shoes as I was at one point,” said Aldina Sejdovic ’11, Branch Manager at Lake Michigan Credit Union.

“My biggest advice to graduating students would be to utilize their connections and resources that they have gained throughout school, work or friends/family and to not be afraid to step out of their comfort zone and reach out. You will be surprised how far you can get in life by simply saying hello.”

“I was very impressed by the quality of the information that was given in such a short amount of time,” said Emily Gatlin. “My favorite topic at the event was about paying back student loans and learning that we will be able to pay them back quickly and efficiently once we get a plan.”

The Student Life 30 Thursdays program offers students the opportunity to participate in a new, unique event each Thursday throughout the fall and winter semesters.

Activities such as cookies & canvas, a bocce ball tournament or a night at the Grand Rapids Museum Planetarium offer students a fun way to engage and meet fellow classmates.

“Every 30 Thursday event by the Student Life staff is an event worth attending,” said DU senior Syneira Matthew.

“They result in laughs, smiles and sometimes tears because we have so much fun. I’m glad I can be an active participant in this program.”

2016 STUDENT GROUPS

- Active Minds
- Diversify
- InterVarsity Christian Fellowship
- National Society of Leadership & Success
- Student Government
- Student Veterans of America
- Young Alumni Council
- Women in Technology

Interested? Would you like to volunteer for events like Life 101? Email the alumni office at alumni@davenport.edu

[Image of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship students. Photo courtesy of Davenport InterVarsity Christian Fellowship Facebook page.]
Mike Ohlman ’89, combined two of his favorite passions, cars and accounting, to create a path to his dream job as the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) at Berger Chevrolet in Grand Rapids.
During his time at Davenport, Mike Ohlman worked in the parts department at Berger Chevrolet and used his hands-on accounting experience to earn a spot on the accounting team. Working his way up, Mike landed the CFO role a little more than 18 years ago. Now, he gives back to Davenport University because he knows first-hand the importance of a career-focused education.

Every donor has a unique and personal reason for choosing to make a gift to Davenport University. Mike shared why he has been inspired to support DU.

**Tell us about yourself, Mike!**
"I graduated from Davenport University in 1989 with my Bachelor's degree in Accounting. I have been working at Berger Chevrolet since college and started in the parts department. I was a parts manager for a few years, then worked my way up to be an accountant and was promoted to CFO in 1998. I have been married for 30 years to my lovely wife, Deb. We have three kids and four grandkids. I also enjoy volunteering my time at the Michigan Fire Soccer Club affiliate as the Club President."

**In a nutshell, what do you do?**
"As the CFO of Berger Chevrolet, I wear multiple hats. I focus the majority of my time on accounting and finance, but I am also responsible for the administrative, financial and risk management operations of Berger. My team and I develop strategies, create and measure metrics and maintain accurate reports. I also manage the relationships with many of our partners and suppliers. I get to do fun things, like go to ‘driving school’ to test out new cars and products."

You have an awesome job. Would you consider this to be your dream job?
"Yes! As a numbers guy who loves cars, it doesn’t get much better than this!"

How did Davenport help you get there?
"Davenport set me up for success. As a full-time student and a full-time worker, I really had to balance my time as a young man. Most of my classes were early in the morning or late at night, so I loved the flexibility. The real-life, hands-on experiences were beneficial as well. I really enjoyed my experience at Davenport."

Can you tell us about the GM Dealer of Year Award?
"Thanks to the great service of our 280 employees, Berger Chevrolet has received the GM Dealer of the Year Award. Out of the 4,300 Chevrolet, Buick, GMC and Cadillac dealers, only 123 were selected for this prestigious honor. Berger has been selected the past four years. The award honors superior performance in sales, service and customer satisfaction. It demonstrates quality, which parallels both Berger and DU’s missions."
Why does Berger support Panther Athletics?

“Berger Chevy has been supporting the DU Athletic program for years along with other charities and programs within our community. This is something I am proud to say I have learned from the Berger Family. Giving back to the community programs, churches and school has helped us get to be who we are today. Also, when I graduated in 1989, DU didn’t have the amazing athletic program it does now. As a DU Panther, student-athletes learn valuable business skills such as leadership, relationship building and customer service that will benefit our greater community. We want to help prepare students for experiences that will help them in the real world.

Knowing that our donation supports the development of students on and off the field makes us proud to support a growing athletic program.

Also, I have a personal interest. My son Lucas is on the men’s soccer team.”

Why do you invest in students at DU?

“Because I know that individual donations add up to something bigger. It is the collective power of all donations that is making a difference in the lives of students every day. I would not be where I am today without Davenport University.”

It is the collective power of all donations that are making a difference in the lives of students every day.

Mike Ohlman

Above Mike Ohlman and his son Lucas Ohlman.
Growing up in Grand Rapids, Corey knows the importance of philanthropy, and said, “It is in the culture of our community to give back. I have benefited from that support at DU.”

Corey was recruited to play baseball but made the decision to attend DU because of the small, community feel of the W.A. Lettinga Campus. He found success on and off the field and was selected as the WHAC Pitcher of the Year and First Team All-Conference in 2014. He was also named First Team Academic All-District by the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA).

Corey said, “Because of the support of people like Mike Ohlman and companies like Berger, I had the chance to excel as a student-athlete. The donations that DU received helped build the amazing baseball field we play on, provided us with brand-new equipment and allowed us to bond as a team on special trips. I will be forever thankful for my experience at DU because of the generous donors who supported our program.”
Quality Is What I Live, Eat and Breathe

CREATING A FAMILY, ONE CHILD AT A TIME
Bridgett Tubbs-Carlon is an entrepreneur, innovator and leader, but most importantly, a mother. Eighteen years ago, Bridgett had trouble finding a place for her young daughter, Anna, that she felt comfortable with, so she created it. Armed with a mother’s tenacity and determination, she faced the challenge head-on.
Bridgett Tubbs-Carlon opened the first AppleTree & Gilden Woods Early Care and Preschool on Monroe Avenue in Grand Rapids in 1998. Tubbs-Carlon was inspired to open it in part because she knew she had only one opportunity to do the best she could to raise her daughter, the “AppleTree Kid.”

Tubbs-Carlon’s passion for quality childcare in a safe, inviting environment took off. Quality in the childcare industry is paramount. Meeting the basic needs of children is priority number one, ensuring the children are safe, fed and nurtured. But Tubbs-Carlon believes in creating social, emotional and academic lives for the children as well, ensuring that growth and development begin as early as possible.

As the company grew, Tubbs-Carlon standardized the quality initiatives and created a quality assurance program called the Golden Apple program. Every quarter, each location undergoes a 380-point checklist that covers everything from the paint on the walls and the wood chips on the playground to the paperwork for the children and programming and curriculum implementation.

She’s proud of her facilities that are meticulously designed with heart, soul and sense. Welcoming, low-VOC paint colors greet the children upon arrival. Soft, antimicrobial carpet is installed in every facility to help prevent the spread of disease. Recessed lights create a calming, warm feel to the rooms.

“For me, quality wasn’t something that was ever an option in our business because it is the very essence of what I do.”

BRIDGETT TUBBS-CARLON
“You might ask why we use recessed lighting instead of fluorescent lighting—research! We have learned that white ceiling tiles are bad for the development of infant eyes. The PVC backing on carpet can impact the development of children’s lungs,” she says.

Tubbs-Carlon believes embracing innovation is the only way to provide a better quality program to children. AppleTree & Gilden Woods are some of the first preschools in Michigan that created a Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) program. She has redesigned the preschool buildings to accommodate a hands-on STEM lab where children can learn from live animals, such as lizards, iguanas and fish along with many other technology simulators.

Results from STEM studies have shown that kids who experience hands-on STEM learning early are the ones who will be best equipped to develop a strong understanding of concepts as they get older.

Tubbs-Carlon recalled being able to visit each learning center every day. Now with more than 20 centers throughout three states, she is in some of the schools once a month. Her fear of growth was really a fear of losing quality. In order to continue to offer quality programs, she had to expand her level of staff training.

“Our training program is ingrained in the culture. I had to find a way to pass my passion for AppleTree on to my staff. It came down to how we treat our people—like family. We use the word ‘family’ instead of team not only for the staff members but also for the children, so they feel like they are a part of our family versus an institution.”

As a part of their commitment to ongoing professional development, staff can earn an associate degree in child development in exchange for a two-year employment contract. This program allows staff members to apply what they are learning directly to the children at AppleTree & Gilden Woods.

“One of the best parts of my experience at Davenport was that I had teachers who had hands-on, real-life experience. I feel like after everything I have been through and done, I ask myself ‘What do I have to give back?’ And that is it. I want to give back my knowledge of what I have been through. It has been a journey of love, tears, struggles, trials, failures and success stories.”

Today, Tubbs-Carlon is proud of the accomplishments of the AppleTree & Gilden Woods “alumni.” Her daughter, Anna, is studying at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Dozens of others have gone to Harvard University, New York University and Wesleyan University.

AppleTree & Gilden Woods have served more than 20,000 children over the last 18 years, but for Tubbs-Carlon, they’re all family.
CARVE YOUR NAME INTO DU HISTORY!

As part of the Sesquicentennial celebration, we want you to share your experiences from the 150 years of Davenport University. Through your favorite social media channel, tag your photos with the hashtag #DU150Anniversary to help us build a catalog of memories. We’re also sharing photos from the DU archives—#TBT!

Have something to add? Share your thoughts and images on one of our social media platforms.
The DU Alumni Association jump-started the 2016 schedule of summer events with a night at Founders Brewing Co. On Friday, May 13, alumni and friends braved the cold rain to have a great time at the annual Alumni Summer Kick-Off in the exclusive Centennial Room at Founders Brewing Co.

Alumni toured the brewing facilities with the Founders’ Educational Department and tasted four newly released beers.

Delicious appetizers were served as alumni mixed, mingled and networked with fellow Panthers.

View photos from the event on the Davenport University Alumni Association Facebook page.

Visit our website for event details and registration

davenport.edu/alumni-development/events
DU Class Notes
Summer 2016

PROFESSIONAL

Tara (Fuller) Bartholomew, ’12 BAS Computer Information Systems, joined Dart Bank as a Mortgage Underwriter in Belding.

Charlene Bowen, ’13 MBA Strategic Management, joined Shoreline Fruit as the Director of Human Resources and Organizational Development in Traverse City.

Doug Brown, ’11 BBA Marketing, ’15 MBA Strategic Management, is now a Sales Representative at Homestead Timbers in Marne.

Marlana Cork, ’08 ABA, ’15 BBA Management, joined Adecco Staffing, USA as a Recruiter in Saginaw.

Jacob Engel, ’16 BBA Sport Management, joined the West Michigan Whitecaps as a Ticket Sales Consultant.

Aaron Engelbert, ’12 BBA Sport Management, joined New Holland Brewing Company as a Distillery Assistant in Holland.

Tyler Essenberg, ’13 BBA Finance, was hired as a Deployment Leader and Project Manager at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana.

Jack Finkelstein, ’84 AS EMS Systems Management, created an app called SmartEMS in New York.

Seth Hanenburg, ’14 BBA, ’15 MBA Accounting, joined Baker Holtz as an Associate in Grand Rapids.

Alexis Burbul, ’15 BBA Marketing, was hired as a Digital Inventory Editor at Beepi in Los Altos, California.

Erika Halvorsen, ’16 BBA Business, joined Porcelain Patrol Services as Office Assistant in Traverse City.


Skylar Hoke, ’16 BBA Sport Management, was hired as an Account Executive for Group Sales Selling for the Phoenix Suns (NBA), Phoenix Mercury (WNBA) and Arizona Rattlers (Arena Football) in Phoenix, Arizona.

Matt De Vries, ’13 BBA Accounting Information Management, ’15 MBA Finance, was promoted to Financial Analyst at Bronson Healthcare Group in Kalamazoo.

Tim Kalota, ’10 AAS, ’13 BAS, ’16 MS Information Assurance and Security, was recently hired by Ford Motor Company as an IT Systems Design Analyst in Dearborn.

Kristi Kuzdal, ’15 BSN Nursing, joined Spectrum Health Helen DeVos Children’s Hospital as a Neonatal Intensive-Care Unit Nurse in Grand Rapids.


Brian Maring, CPA, ’07 BBA Accounting Information Management and Public Accounting, is now a Senior Financial Accountant at Service Express, Inc. in Grand Rapids.
Talitha (Robertson) Mahome, '12 BA Paralegal Studies, joined the Wayne 36th District Court as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney in Detroit.

Russ Rose, '08 BBA Management, joined the women's basketball coaching staff at South Dakota University in Brookings, South Dakota.

Erik Schmidt, '15 BBA Management, was promoted to Product Specialist at Farmers Insurance Group in Caledonia.

Leah Sevcik, '13 BBA Health Services Administration, joined Continental Properties Company, Inc. as a Private Equity Assistant in Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin.

Will Snyder, '06 BBA Management, '09 MBA Strategic Management, is now an Information Technology Systems Project Manager at Davenport University in Grand Rapids.

Joanna Udo, '11 AAS Computer Support Technology, '14 BS Computer Networking, was promoted to an Associate Systems Engineer at Spectrum Health in Grand Rapids.
Kakha Urigashvili, ’11 BBA Finance, is now a Senior Business Intelligence Developer at Conversant, LLC in Chicago, Illinois.

Marcus Vazquez, ’12 BBA Sport Management, joined the Detroit Lions as a Consumer Sales Account Executive in Detroit.

Alli Veneklase, ’14 BBA, ’16 MBA Strategic Human Resource Management, was promoted to Talent Development Specialist at Amway North America in Grand Rapids.

Emily Veneklase, ’13 BSN, ’16 MS Nursing, accepted the Stroke Coordinator and Level 6 Nurse Educator position at Metro Health Hospital in Wyoming.

Engagements and Marriages


Drew Happie, ’10 BBA Marketing, and Nicolette Hilton, ’09 ABA Business Administration, are engaged to be married.

James Nelson, ’12 BBA Marketing, and Lily Scholl will marry in October 2016.

Holly Smith, ’09 BBA Corporate Finance, and Hunter Engel are engaged to be married.


Ivan L. Harris, ’72 BS Accounting, passed away on March 24, 2016.


Elizabeth Langlois, ’90 Certificate CIS/Programming, passed away on April 9, 2016.


Clifford B. Wenner, ’71 BS Accounting, passed away on March 7, 2016.

Marvin Wynalda, ’67 AS Acct./Sales & Marketing, passed away on April 4, 2016.

IN MEMORIAM

Marion Converse, ’71 AS Admin Technology Executive, passed away on April 17, 2016.


Clifford B. Wenner, ’71 BS Accounting, passed away on March 7, 2016.

Marvin Wynalda, ’67 AS Acct./Sales & Marketing, passed away on April 4, 2016.
NEARLY 80 YEARS AGO...

In celebration of Davenport’s 150th Anniversary, we sat down with Carl Eschels ’39, one of the oldest living Davenport graduates. Eschels walked down memory lane recalling the great experiences he had as a student of Davenport into his long career and retirement. Eschels is a true example of M.E. Davenport’s motto, “Make a Living, Make a Life, Make a Contribution.”
“Attending Davenport changed my entire life for the better,” Carl Eschels ‘39 remarked recently in the study of his Cook Valley Estates home. At 96 years of age, he has had a long, fulfilling life.

Carl Eschels grew up during the Great Depression in a family of five children on a farm near Scottville, Michigan. Because of the farm, they always had enough to eat, “but no money.” He attended school and was advanced a grade just because he was the only student in the first grade and it was easier for his teacher to move him up.

During high school, though, Eschels began to associate with the good students. He took business courses and loved them.

Clifton Wonders, then registrar at Davenport, spoke during an assembly at Scottville High, and young Eschels was inspired.

“So I just took off,” Eschels explained. “I was 17 years old. Nothing bothered me.”

He took the train to Grand Rapids to find Davenport although he had no place to stay and didn’t even know where the school was. He had saved $280. When he reached Grand Rapids, he asked a police officer for directions and had only a few blocks to walk.

The first person Eschels met at Davenport was Ty Wessell. Wessell worked for Davenport for 60 years, teaching and serving in various administrative posts. Wessell recommended a house on Cherry Street.

“I didn’t know you were supposed to at least look at the room first,” Eschels admitted. The house was close to school. Eschels could grab a long john doughnut and coffee at Frank Ferrell’s Hamburger Shop and get to class within 20 minutes.

The room cost him three dollars a week. Tuition was 20 dollars a month for as many classes as he wanted to take and he paid half that for books to start out.

Eschels took to accounting. He had a great deal of admiration for his accounting teacher, Robert McBain, who taught at Davenport in the mornings but also owned his own accounting firm where he worked in the evenings.

The man for whom our school is named, Michael Edward Davenport, left a lasting impression on Eschels. Eschels described M.E. Davenport as “likeable” and “a gentleman.” He also considered Davenport an excellent speaker who was able to translate his wisdom into memorable anecdotes. Eschels recalled Davenport predicting that the first time the students returned home, they would find that everyone back there had changed, but actually, the students themselves had changed in the short time they had been away at school.

To support himself after his initial savings ran out, Eschels, like most of his roommates, got a job in a “stag restaurant” frequented by local businessmen. A small steak was 50 cents, a larger one was 75 cents. This job supplied Eschels with his meals as well as a small income. Eschels was assigned to the pie counter, where he learned to slice pie into five pieces.

Eschels committed himself to his studies, completed his course in two years, graduated in 1939 and secured a position at Union Bank.
While working at Union Bank, Eschels met and married Lois Austin ’41, whom he described as “sharp” and popular during her school days. Lois, also a Davenport graduate, was voted ‘best dancer’ in her high school. “So who did she marry?” Eschels asked. “A klutz!”

Eschels worked at Union Bank for only a few years before the outbreak of World War II. During the war, he served in the Army Air Corps, including two and a half years overseas. He earned six battle stars and was promoted to captain in the finance department.

After the war, Eschels went to work for Rapistan (now Dematic) and advanced in the company for 38 years before retiring. He has traveled to all 50 states and visited 35 countries on five continents for business and in retirement. In addition to working at Rapistan, Eschels was involved in local government. He served on the Grand Rapids City Commission, Planning Commission and for 26 years on the City County Building Authority.

He claimed that, “All throughout my work, I used what I learned at Davenport.” Even now in his retirement, Eschels remains active. He started a forum program that has continued for eight years and currently brings in eight speakers a year. He also started a dinner bell program that ensures new residents are invited to a dinner. He attends exercise classes and is a part of a virtual bowling and golf league. When asked how he does the latter, he replied, “on the Wii.”

In 1969, Eschels was asked to give the commencement address for Davenport, and in 1994, he received the school’s Distinguished Alumni Award. He has remained interested in the school that did so much for him, attending alumni events and keeping in touch with other alumni, many of whom also live at Cook Valley Estates, and said that he is “proud of the progress” at the University.

It was from Clifton Wonders, that day at the assembly at Scottville High School, that Eschels first heard M.E. Davenport’s famous mantra, “Make a Living, Make a Life, Make a Contribution,” but he would hear it many more times, including from M.E. Davenport himself. Those words have stayed with Eschels throughout his life and career and still resonate with him today.
Join Us for Our 150th Anniversary Celebration!

**SESQUICENTENNIAL SIGNATURE EVENTS**

**Homecoming Week**  
September 19–24

**Alumni Awards Ceremony**  
Friday, September 23, 2016  
Robert W. Sneden Center, W.A. Lettinga Campus

**Homecoming Tailgate and Football Game**  
Saturday, September 24, 2016  
Farmers Insurance Athletic Complex  
davenport.edu/homecoming

**Founders’ 150th Anniversary Gala**  
Thursday, September 29, 2016  
DeVos Place in Grand Rapids  
davenport.edu/150gala