

MID-AMERICAN

THE JOURNAL OF MID-AMERICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

THE SCHOOL OF

Wesleyan Studies

The Optimism of Grace

*Dream BIGGER.
Do GREATER.*

SPRING 2016
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A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

DEAR FRIENDS,

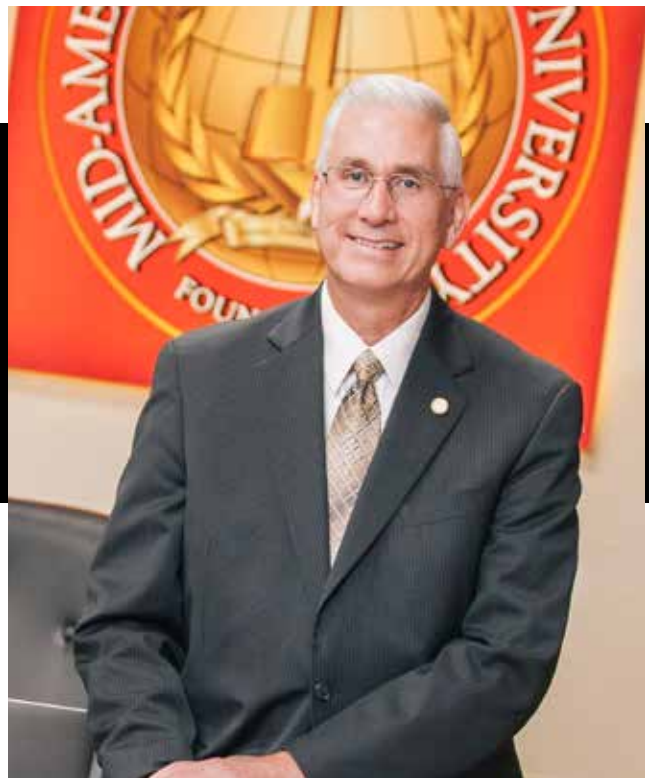
We have all faced the challenge of living a consistent Christian life. Education may enlighten us as to our personality types, family dynamics or even the impact of modern culture upon our faith journey.

However, knowledge alone is of little help against the onslaught of temptation or the nagging frustrations of having a checkered calendar showing spiritual wins and losses.

This is why I am both pleased and excited to announce the establishment of the School of Wesleyan Studies (SWS) within the Dr. J.E. Massey Center for Ministry and Leadership. The lessons and resources offered through SWS are not entirely new to the subject of living a consistent, holy life. On the other hand, these resources are unique in the way they explain the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

When asked why followers of Jesus have experienced difficulties in living out their faith, Dr. Cliff Sanders observed, "I think new believers ask how they can experience the consistent power to resist temptation. The message they have often received from well-meaning Christians is simply, 'Try harder!' Such counsel will not bring about the transformative spiritual growth they desire and need. We must understand that not only has God provided pardon for our sins, but he has also provided the power for consistent and victorious living."

Along with the launch of the School of Wesleyan Studies, we are establishing the Dr. David Grubbs Scholarship Fund. The family of Dr. Grubbs wished to provide qualifying individuals and congregations with scholarships that defray some of the monthly subscription costs in accessing these emerging resources. Dr. Marty Grubbs,



Senior Pastor at Crossings Community Church, reflected, "My father and Dr. James Massey had a deep friendship and a commitment to serving the church. Together they formed a preaching clinic that, for years, taught ministers the art of expository preaching. This scholarship fund is one way to honor my father's love for the biblical teaching and for the Church of God, as well as his deep appreciation for the leadership of Dr. James Earl Massey."

Dr. Sanders and Dr. Wendell Sutton provide annual training for the university's faculty, staff and students, explaining the beliefs of Wesleyan theology. These studies have created opportunities to provide similar materials for use by local church staff and congregations. On March 28, these resources will become globally accessible through the School of Wesleyan Studies. I hope this issue of the Mid-American will inspire you to discover the university's commitment to providing vibrant resources on how the Holy Spirit will bring both pardon and power in your life!

"I continue to dream and pray about a revival of holiness in our day that moves forth in mission and creates authentic community in which each person can be unleashed through the empowerment of the Spirit to fulfill God's creational intentions."

— John Wesley

How To Pray: The Best of John Wesley on Prayer


Dr. John Fozard, President



Dream BIGGER. Do GREATER.

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On the Cover

Dr. Cliff Sanders and Dr. Wendell Sutton

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WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY AT 10 A.M.



DO YOU HAVE AN ALUMNI UPDATE OR STORY IDEA?
PLEASE SEND IT TO
COMMUNICATIONS@MACU.EDU



LEADING THE WAY

Beyond the classroom, MACU prepares students for what comes next.

"WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO?"

The leaders in the Student Affairs office focused on this question throughout the summer of 2015. The office serves and supports students by enriching their growth and development academically, spiritually and personally. These members plunged into the planning stages of student-life enhancement for the upcoming school year.

"We had a lot of ideas, but student leadership was the gap that we needed to have filled," said Alison Walls, Director of Student Life. "From there, we became focused on how we could better train the rich selection of student leaders that we already had been building on."

In the fall of 2015, the Office of Student Affairs partnered with Campus Ministries and Student Success to create MACU's Petros Student Leadership Program.

The program is designed to meet the needs of every MACU student wanting to further develop their leadership skills, specifically targeting students already in leadership positions throughout the university. The leaders of MACU also sought to have the program certified as a CRLA International Mentor Training Program, becoming the only university in the state of Oklahoma to acquire this level of certification.

To become and remain certified through CRLA, the program requires students to log specific hours of training. Students are required to take 15 hours of classroom training, 10 hours of logged mentoring and record 50 hours of mentoring to others. Individuals from both MACU and the community are invited to engage students with intriguing topics designed to develop leadership skills needed as a professional.

"Students are receiving the education to have the job they want when they graduate, but there are other steps

they can take right now that would help prepare them to exceed their employers' expectations," said Walls.

"We designed our training sessions to focus on skills needed in the workplace, but that are not always included in curriculum. Some of our topics include how to execute goals, manage conflict, receive feedback and peer accountability. We incorporate GiANT Worldwide leadership training tools, such as 'Knowing Yourself to Lead Yourself', into every conference and it really makes an impact on the students."



Jerriek Massenburge, Senior

MACU wrapped up another Petros Student Leadership Conference on Saturday, March 5 with Dr. Claude Robold, MACU Chairman of the Board of Trustees, engaging students on the topic of having vision for their lives.

Senior Jerrick Massenbuge, a forward on the MACU men's basketball team, has put his knowledge to use by incorporating it into the game of basketball.

"Joining the Petros program has changed my life," exclaimed Jerrick.

"I have to know myself to lead myself. I am now focused more on getting to know what makes me work and to know my strengths and weaknesses so that I can become the best leader I can be on the court and, eventually, in the workplace."

Morgan Thompson, Dean of Student Success, is both excited and optimistic about the future of the leadership certification program.

"There are three levels of certification through this program, so we want to continue to pursue certification

at higher levels," said Morgan. "This opens up more learning opportunities for our students and expands some of the content on which we hope to focus on. Additionally, we would like to include students as co-instructors on topics in which they have shown evidence of strength."

So far, Petros has helped train 112 students at MACU, almost 30% of the student body, in the program's initial year. The program has logged 514 hours of student leadership training and 227 hours of mentor development. It is estimated that students will take one and a half years to complete the training and become certified through CRLA and the Petros program.

There is no doubt that the Student Affairs office has created a successful program that students are excited and thankful to be a part of. The program will continue to develop over the summer months with hopes of training the next generation of world leaders, focused on solving local and global issues, beginning here at MACU.

MACU TO HOLD INAUGURAL SCHOLARSHIP GALA

Ninety percent of the students at MACU receive some sort of financial assistance.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, MACU is able to ensure that our students are not held back by financial constraints.

On Thursday, April 7, MACU will hold the inaugural Dream Scholarship Gala to help raise scholarship money and continue to make a difference in the lives of our students. Please join us and our keynote speaker, Congressman Tom Cole, for an inspiring night of making dreams come true for students at Mid-America Christian University.

It is with your help our students remain inspired to not only follow their dreams, but also to follow God's vision for their life. Become a sponsor or reserve your seat today to inspire students to dream bigger.

Table and corporate sponsorship packages are available.

To learn more about the gala and purchase tickets, visit dreamgala.macu.edu or contact the Office of University Advancement advancement@macu.edu or (405) 692-3191.



Congressman Tom Cole

dream

APRIL 7, 2016 | 7:00 P.M. | PETROLEUM CLUB OF OKC

For more information, please visit

DREAMGALA.MACU.EDU



Thomas School OF International Studies



Dr. Fozard and Florentina Mesa



Onesimo Muñoz and Dr. Cepeda

The Thomas School of International Studies (TSIS) celebrates its ten-year anniversary this year. TSIS serves local and international Hispanic populations as an accredited learning institution.

The school has developed a prominent outreach throughout Latin America the past ten years. Dr. Enrique Cepeda, Executive Director of TSIS, and his team have delivered learning opportunities to 11 Latin-American countries during this time.

Degree and certificate programs are available online including a Master of Leadership degree in Spanish as well as certificate programs for pastors.

The program also has a significant local Hispanic outreach, using activities, media, conferences, pastoral counseling and retreats.

The Master of Leadership degree program is the same program available in English. The program is taught by professors from Venezuela, Chile, Mexico, Ecuador and the United States. Fifty-two students have graduated from the master's program and ten students are currently enrolled. Sixty students have completed the certificate program.

"This past year alone, we graduated 22 students from seven different countries," said Dr. Cepeda. "The ceremony was right here at the campus of MACU in Oklahoma City. To God be the glory!"

Dr. Cepeda hopes to continue to expand the TSIS program in the coming years. A native of Monterrey, Mexico, Dr. Cepeda built this impactful program from the ground up. He has a resounding passion for both TSIS and for God.

"We want to continue to cultivate the next generation of leaders," exclaimed Dr. Cepeda. "We have students from 11 different countries that have graduated from our programs. I pray that God continues to expand our program and to help make dreams come true."

Plans to expand TSIS are in the works. These include the addition of a representative office in another country, a Master and a Bachelor of Christian Ministries degree in Spanish and the development of a minor degree in global perspectives or global studies.

For more information, please visit www.macu.edu/tsis/



Graduates of the Thomas School of International Studies on January 15, 2016.



Josh Soto

CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES MAJOR
CLASS OF '16

If you ask Josh Soto if he is a traditional student, he won't be able to give you a definitive answer. Though he is a student in Mid-America Christian University's traditional program and will graduate in May with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology - Christian Ministry degree, he is also 39 years old and a father of four.

Raised in Morristown, New Jersey, Josh received his high school diploma in 1994. He went straight into the workforce after graduation, which led him to his wife, Dana. The two became parents to Gabriella in 2007 and Richard in 2009.

Josh grew up attending church, but he didn't truly believe. Financial troubles caused him and his family to recommit their lives to the Lord.

"I made a lot of bad decisions with my life then. I made a lot of bad financial decisions and bad spiritual decisions. I hit rock bottom, and it brought me closer to Him. I didn't have anywhere else to turn."

In 2010, things started looking up for the young family of four. Dana came home with a solution to get the family back on track and move them to Oklahoma.

"One day she came home and said she was thinking about enlisting in the Navy. I was shocked, but I was for her. That was not a normal thing, either. She was over 30 with two kids and joining the military. We knew it wasn't going to be easy."

"I was able to send one letter home to Josh and the kids during my time at boot camp. In the letter, I said that I have

never cried out to Jesus more than now," Dana said.

Dana received orders in 2011 that would relocate the family to Tinker Air Force Base (Oklahoma City). The move inspired Josh to find a more suitable career path for himself. He enrolled in traditional classes at MACU to pursue a degree in Christian Ministries and Psychology.

"I'm 39 years old and I attend class with 20-year-olds. It's different, but I like to think I'm able to help them out a little. I've seen the other side. The classes mean something to me now."

The family continued to grow in several ways including Josh's two nephews, Elijah and Nehemiah, for foster care from Josh and Dana.

"As soon as we learned they were in foster care, we knew we had to get them. It hasn't been as easy as I thought it was going to be, but I love them and I love this family. We made it work, and God helped guide us," said Josh.

Josh and Dana became the official adoptive parents of Elijah and Nehemiah in August of 2015. Though Dana leaves for deployment on occasion, she rejoices in the fact that she gets to spend the majority of her time with her family. Josh will graduate this May, hoping to become employed in the foster care system.

"I want to continue my education, and I want to work in the foster system. I want to use what God has taught me to help others. I want to help the heartbroken, the broken ones and the weary ones. I have been there, and I want to help others."

WESLEYAN THEOLOGY provides a crucial understanding of the optimism of God's grace. It is often missing in the teaching of the Holy Spirit's presence in the life of the Christian disciples. It exists in light of the fallen human condition.

The Lord's Spirit invites everyone to experience God's grace as a means to experience a new relationship with Jesus.

This spring, the Mid-America Christian University James Earl Massey Center for Ministry and Leadership unveils The School of Wesleyan Studies.

Created to provide an understanding of Wesleyan theology, studies for The School of Wesleyan Studies include video-based lectures, reproducible lessons and electronic resources that will assist Christian disciples in understanding the transformative ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The school will use social media and distance learning methods to engage students in understanding this

on this optimism of grace. The School of Wesleyan Studies endeavors to make Wesleyan theology accessible to those interested and to encourage thoughtful discussion and exploration of the distinctive teachings of John Wesley.

Dr. Cliff Sanders, School of Ministry Chair, and Dr. Wendell Sutton, School of Ministry Professor, are key components in the development of the school. The Wesleyan scholars have been teaching together at MACU for over almost twenty-five years and will develop the lessons and material for the Wesleyan curriculum.

A second generation ordained minister in the Church of God and a graduate of Gulf Coast Bible College (now MACU), Dr. Sanders was first introduced to Wesleyan theology during his time at GBC. This introduction came with the teaching of a beloved professor, Dr. Kenneth E. Jones. Dr. Jones' life and teaching ignited an interest in understanding more about Wesleyan theology for Dr. Sanders that continues today. It was Dr. Jones that inspired Dr. Sanders to attend Asbury Theological

THE SCHOOL OF

Wesleyan Studies

The Optimism of Grace

theology. Students will be able to post their insights from personal studies, as well as pose questions about the Spirit's ministry and role within the believer's life. Consequently, this school will provide a network of learning where Christian scholars and even new disciples of Jesus can interact in mentoring and vital discussions



Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky to further his theological studies and earn a master's and doctorate degree.

In the early 1990's, Dr. Sanders connected with Dr. Sutton. Sutton, a licensed attorney, had a private law practice when the two first met. It was Dr. Sanders who introduced Dr. Sutton to Wesleyan theology. Dr. Sutton went on to become an ordained minister in the Church of God in 2008 and graduated from Southern Nazarene University in 2010 with a Master of Arts in Theology.

Today, Dr. Sanders and Dr. Sutton identify themselves as followers of Jesus that consider John Wesley and Jacob Arminius as faithful witnesses to the truths of the Gospel.

"Wesleyan theology causes me to have an optimism about grace – to both pardon one from the penalty of sin and to empower a person from power of sin," exclaimed Dr. Sanders.

"With The School of Wesleyan Studies, we are attempting to engage others in this project. We want to engage their minds (knowing the distinctive truths of Wesleyan theology), their hearts (to value these truths) and their hands (to include practices from a Wesleyan



Dr. Cliff Sanders



Dr. Wendell Sutton

“It cannot be that the people should grow in grace
unless they give themselves to reading.
A reading people will always be a knowing people.”

– John Wesley

tradition). MACU’s tradition being Wesleyan emphasizes that we must know the truth, value the truth and do the truth. We want others to not only know the truth about Wesleyan theology, but we want their hearts to be moved and it to matter to them and to certainly practice these truths in daily living.”

The School of Wesleyan Studies will be available as a subscription-based resource on March 28, 2016 and will include monthly videos on various aspects of Wesleyan studies. Each video-based lesson is paired with an accompanying downloadable lesson book. The videos, taught by Dr. Sanders, provide a much needed resource in the church today. An individual member subscription to the School of Wesleyan Studies provides access to monthly videos and access to a private Facebook group to dialogue with Wesleyan experts and others studying Wesleyan thought.

Individuals have the opportunity to subscribe to this exciting program for a monthly charge of \$15 or an annual rate of \$165. This service will be made available as a subscription service to churches through congregational memberships beginning in the spring of 2017.

“So often, people misunderstand the teaching of their religious heritage,” said President Fozard.

“The summary of their theological beliefs are inadequate or simply in conflict with what one would classify as Reformed theology or Wesleyan theology. Such misinterpretations characterize these heritages as always being in opposition to one another, while at the same time, being unable to correctly state each theological position. The School of Wesleyan Studies will exemplify the continued commitment to excellent biblical interpretation of the scriptures, especially as it relates to the ministry of the Spirit with and within humans.”

WESLEYANSCHOOL.MACU.EDU

Michael Foote

Michael Foote helped make history at MACU. The 34-year-old father of four was part of MACU's first Master of Business Administration graduating class. He earned outstanding student with a 4.0 GPA and his class competed and placed at an international capstone simulation.

Growing up in Missouri, Michael attended First Church of God in St. Robert. After taking a year internship in Texas, Foote enrolled in classes at MACU.

He graduated from MACU with a Bachelor's degree in Specialized Ministries in May of 2004 and married his wife, Ashley, in June of 2004. Michael returned to MACU that summer as an employee in the library.

As a MACU employee, Foote found himself encouraged to enroll in MACU's initial MBA class – a program that is celebrating its ten-year anniversary this year.

"There were 12 of us that graduated in that initial class. A lot of us still keep in touch," said Foote.

"I have loved every chapter I have been in at MACU," said Michael. "It has been a pleasure to be able to serve the MACU community by helping ensure that library users have great resources and services."

Foote still loves to come to work everyday at MACU, serving as co-director of the Charles Ewing Brown library. He and his wife, Ashley, and their four children, Zane, Sadie, Xander and Ethan, attend Shartel Church of God in Oklahoma City.



Celebrating Ten Years!

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

The Master of Business Administration (MBA) program was initiated in 2006 at MACU. Since its inception, the program has graduated 258 students both online and on campus.

Tiffany Clary, a Senior Technical Trainer at CACI Incorporated, a multinational professional services and information technology company, was also part of the inaugural MBA class at MACU that graduated Michael Foote.

"I chose to attend MACU for my MBA degree because the university is based on Christian values and the program is ideal for the working adult," said Clary.

"The program allowed me to focus on one course at a time and attend class one night a week, which gave me plenty of time to complete assignments while balancing a life outside of work and school."

Another graduate, Jon Rehbein, put the knowledge he gained from the graduate program to good use and started his own business after graduation.

"The best thing about this program is the instructors that I had throughout," said Jon.

"Each one of my instructors were practitioners in their field of business or related fields. They were able to take the course information and use it in real-life situations that made sense for us as students. For instance, my Legal Environment instructor was not only a lawyer and former judge, but also a very successful businessman in the community. When he taught us how business interfaced with the legal system nationally and internationally, he was speaking from personal experience and not just book knowledge. This is just one example. Upon the completion of my degree I went out and acquired my own business and was able to return to each one of these instructors for advice and for mentoring me through my business experience," Rehbein added.

"The other thing that made my MBA experience so rich at MACU was the cohort size. The cohorts were large enough to have good group interaction, but small enough to really connect with one another. I made invaluable connections with fellow students in my cohort that remain to this day. We went through it all together. Many of them were professionals in their field and I was able to network with them for our mutual benefit."

Jake McElhany, an admissions counselor at MACU, loved the flexibility of the program being available online.

"Going through the online MBA program allowed me



Jake McElhany, MBA Graduate - Class of 2015

to connect with other students around the country," said McElhany.

"That brought great discussion depending on their location, because of different economies and professions. I also enjoyed that the professors were credible in their subject field because of the time they served in that specific occupation. The program fit my work schedule perfectly since I travel a lot. It also helped me become more comfortable with online communication and taught me to instill strong values in myself such as discipline and time management. Those values have helped sharpened me in my own profession."

For more information about the MBA degree program or any MACU degree program, please visit programs.macu.edu/



Ministry Advancement Program

Did you know there are more than 300 students at Mid-America pursuing ministry programs? MACU remains at the forefront of schools by continuing to educate and train our students as the next generation of Church of God leaders through the Ministry Advancement Program (MAP) Scholarship.

The scholarship program provides ministry students with opportunities to serve in Oklahoma City area churches and hospitals, summer internships in churches nationwide and in a multitude of community service projects. Through these experiences, students are trained in mentoring, preaching, evangelism, church administration, church operations, discipleship and much more.

Much of the Church of God's future and leadership rests in these students' hands. We are proud of and excited for these young men and women who are committed to a purpose beyond themselves.



"The Lord called me to MACU when I was a freshman in high school. I could not have made it on my own, but He has provided the financial aid I needed and He continues to provide for me!

That's why I'm so grateful to the MACU friends and partners who give to the Ministry Advancement Program (MAP). Your help has been a blessing, and without it, I know I would not have been able to attend school at MACU.

After much prayer, fasting and a lot of phone calls, God blessed me time and time again with unexpected gifts. My time at MACU has changed my life and has allowed me to fulfill my dreams to become a minister and serve the Lord!"

- Ed Stewart, Junior, MAP Recipient

GIVE.MACU.EDU

STUDENT SUCCESS

FOUNDED BY DR. MELVA CURTIS in 2005, the Student Success Center is one of the best-kept secrets of the MACU academics program. What began as a tutoring service used by athletes has now flourished into a multi-functional academic support system used by both traditional and adult and graduate studies students.



Morgan Thompson, Dean of Student Success

"The Student Success Center is a place that helps students develop the skills that they need to be successful as a student at MACU and beyond," said Morgan Thompson, Dean of Student Success.

"We all need help sometimes, and the Student Success Center is a place that can help students grow."

The Student Success Center provides academic aid to students through subject-specific tutoring sessions, around-the-clock online tutoring and study sessions for tests. Services for the Student Success Center include tutoring, a writing center, live and on-demand tutoring, time management, career services and accommodations for students with disabilities. MACU students that take advantage of these services, on average, will score ten to fifteen points higher on a test.



Masood Alipour and writing consultant
Zach Kordic

Evangel Advanced Academic Ability – or Evangel AAA – is a dynamic program required for students at MACU that have demanding schedules to help develop the time-management and study skills needed to fit their busy lifestyles. Student athletes, student leaders and traditional students that are new to MACU, regardless of GPA, as well as any student with a GPA of 2.5 or lower, are all required to enroll in Evangel AAA.

The program requires five hours of tutoring each week. One-half hour consists of time-management strategies - or planning out a homework schedule that fits into a busy week, three hours of supervised study and one and half hours of independent study.

"The Evangel AAA program has been a huge success for our soccer players," said Coach Zach Bice, Co-Head Coach for Men's and Women's Soccer and Assistant Athletic Director. "We have noticed a significant increase in our teams' GPAs and success in the classroom. The Student Success Center has been tireless in their efforts to support our soccer players and athletes."

The Student Success Center has an extensive outreach for every type of student at MACU, offering seminars for test anxiety, stress management, MLA/APA, plagiarism, disability awareness, career services and advanced learning technology.

"It is said in Psalm 139:5 that 'You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me'. As God surrounds us, we also think that it is our place as Christians to surround others and support them. We want to provide the support needed for a student to be successful," said Thompson.

Whether a traditional, graduate or online student, the Student Success Center is open, accessible and well used by a variety of students at MACU today.

ISSUES WEEK

STUDENTS AT MACU recently had the opportunity to team up with the international charity headquartered in Oklahoma City known as Feed the Children for MACU's spring edition of Issues Week.

Developed by the Campus Ministries department, Issues Week occurs every semester and is designed to identify ways in which students can help with certain local and global issues. Chapel services, Bible studies and interactive activities are planned throughout the week to motivate students to get involved.

For this year's spring edition, students, faculty and staff were given the chance to learn about food and hunger.

"Unfortunately, poverty and hunger are on the rise," said Kevin Richardson, Director of Church and Volunteer Engagement at Feed the Children.

"According to the 2014 Hunger Report, the total poverty rate in the U.S. has increased from 12% to 15% in the last 10 years. Children represent one-third of those who live in poverty. Nearly 22% of American children live in homes with very low food security. We see the same picture globally. Nearly half of the world's population — more than 3 billion people — live on less than \$2.50 a day."

"Unfortunately, poverty and hunger are on the rise... The generosity and volunteer service of MACU students and faculty are helping to address poverty both domestically and internationally."

In addition to hearing speakers from Feed the Children, students also heard from leaders at City Care on local food and hunger issues and from the Church of God missions team on global issues.

Students helped pack over 1800 child sponsorship packets for Feed the Children, hosted a pancake dinner fundraiser and participated in a concert in the chapel with Christian recording artist John Tibbs who recently toured with The Newsboys as their opening act. The pancake dinner and the concert required an admission fee and all proceeds were donated to Feed the Children. Students also donated their time on a Friday afternoon to pack two large crates full of food boxes in the warehouse of Feed the Children to be

distributed to families in need.

"Our Spring Issues Week was a great success," confirmed Johnny Bland, MACU Campus Pastor.

"Anchored around two challenging chapel messages, this Issues Week really emphasized the action necessary to help promote change, and our community responded. We had over 60 students, staff, and faculty take part in the community service opportunities



Jillian Powell and Jesslyn Spells serve at Pancakes for Poverty



Gabbi Licklider packs boxes for distribution at Feed the Children




113
TOTAL FAMILIES HELPED

to benefit Feed the Children. That was almost 100 hours of volunteer time. Partnering with the Campus Activities Board, we also raised over \$500 for Feed the Children. I am excited to see how we can build on this momentum in upcoming Issues Weeks."

Issues Week stems from MACU's unique curriculum - an Issues Based Curriculum (IBC) - that was introduced in 2013 and seeks to educate and prepare every MACU student on how to help solve local and global issues that are related to their specific profession.

"Not only are students learning the material they need to know for their studies, but they are also learning how to make a difference in the world," said Esther Rehbein, Assistant Professor and Chair for the School of Teacher Education.

"We are just in the beginning stages of the IBC, but Johnny Bland and the Campus Ministries department have added a key element with community service opportunities throughout Issues Week."

Richardson was grateful for MACU's partnership with Feed the Children, thanking students for their generosity and willingness to serve.

"The generosity and volunteer service of MACU students and faculty are helping to address poverty both domestically and internationally," said Richardson.

"The students who assembled child sponsorship packets are making it possible for those children to gain access to nutritional meals, safe drinking water, educational support and community development initiatives. The students who volunteered at the Feed the Children distribution center helped to provide much needed food and essentials to families throughout the Midwest."



Students, faculty and staff assemble child sponsorship packets

SPORTS UPDATE

MEN'S BASKETBALL SET TO MAKE SECOND STRAIGHT NAIA NATIONAL TOURNAMENT APPEARANCE

For the second straight season, the No. 14-ranked Mid-America Christian University Evangels have earned a berth in the NAIA National Championship tournament in Kansas City, Mo.

This go-around, the Evangels are guided by first-year head coach Josh Gamblin, who led the Evangels to a 23-9 overall record and a 12-6 league mark, good for second place in the highly competitive Sooner Athletic Conference.

"We are so excited to be back in Kansas City for the National Tournament," Gamblin said.

"We wanted to continue to build off last year's success and getting back there was the biggest part of that. Our group has bought in on all levels and has been extremely fun to coach. We are excited for the opportunity to go up against the best NAIA programs in the country."

In the Duer Bracket of the tournament, the fourth-seeded Evangels will face the fifth seed, Park University, at the historic Municipal Auditorium in downtown Kansas City. The championship game of the tournament is set for 7 p.m. on March 22 and will be aired live on ESPN3.



WOMEN'S BASKETBALL UPDATE

Under first-year head coach Seth Froese, the Mid-America Christian University Lady Evangels finished the 2015-16 season at 12-16 after advancing to the Sooner Athletic Conference tournament semifinals for the first time since the 2008-09 season.

MACU won its quarterfinal matchup 84-58 behind 30 points and seven threes from Lindsey Mann.

Mann then delivered another 30 points and seven threes against

second-seeded and No. 17-ranked Oklahoma City University, but OCU nipped the Lady Evangels 87-85 when a last-second three-point attempt by MACU bounced off the rim.

Next season, the Lady Evangels are set to welcome back seven returners from this year's squad, including the team leader in assists (Sarai Rodriguez) and rebounds (D'Shala Culberson).



Senior Guard Lindsey Mann

2015-16 AWARDS

ALL- SOONER ATHLETIC CONFERENCE TEAMS

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Nick Tate - Co-Newcomer of the Year | First Team

Devonse Reed - Third Team

Bryon Miller - Third Team

Jerrick Massenburg - Honorable Mention

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Kelli Tolar - First Team

Sarai Rodriguez - Honorable Mention

D'Shala Culberson - Honorable Mention

ALL-OKLAHOMASPORTS.NET AWARDS

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Nick Tate - Player of the Year

Devonse Reed - First Team

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Kelli Tolar - First Team

Sarai Rodriguez - First Team

**All-NCAA Awards and academic awards have not been released yet.*

BASEBALL EVANGELS DIVE INTO NEW ERA UNDER SAVEDRA

Following a 2-7 start to the season, the Mid-America Christian University Evangels have begun to click under first-year head coach Adrian Savedra.



Senior Pitcher Zach Carley

The Evangels have won nine of their past 12 games and are now 11-10 overall and 4-2 in the Sooner Athletic Conference.

The 4-2 start to the conference season is the Evangels' best in school history.

Jerry McNew leads the Evangels with four home runs and 22 RBIs, while Colt Pickens is batting a team-high .388 on the season.

Junior Obeso leads the starting pitching staff with four victories and a 1.67 earned-run-average, with Wyatt Glasgow recording four saves this year.

Glasgow, an All-SAC performer in 2015, has been benched with an injury in the first few weeks of the season, but his return promises added depth on the hill as the Evangels prepare for a tough schedule coming into the middle of the season.

Coach Savedra is encouraged by the heart and character that his team displays every game.

"Our players are committed to our mission and have committed to the winning culture that we are trying to cultivate," said Coach Savedra.

"We are 4-2 in conference play and swept a conference series for the first time since 2012. More than that, though, I am proud of the progress that many of our players have made as men. They are becoming more mature, embracing accountability from their coaches as well as their teammates. They are setting high standards for themselves and demanding that their teammates do the same. Our best baseball is still ahead of us."

Levi Convirs

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REVITALIZED LADY EVANGELS AIM HIGHER IN 2016

The Lady Evangels have begun their 2016 season with a boom, winning 10 of their last 11 games overall to improve to 11-7.

Coach Robert Wakefield is looking to capitalize off of consecutive winning campaigns the past two years, which included an appearance in the Sooner Athletic Conference championship game in 2014.

The Lady Evangels returned five of their top seven hitters overall for this season. Among them is senior shortstop Tiffany Holt who hit .308 last season and earned a SAC Gold Glove award. It's senior Cassidy Hart who is pacing the Lady Evangels at the plate in 2016, though. She is batting .429 with 19 RBIs and has the eighth highest batting average overall in the SAC.

Junior hurler Macie Crites anchors the pitching staff for the Lady Evangels this season. An All-SAC performer in 2015, Crites has an ERA this season of 1.87 with five wins and two losses and has already garnered a Sooner Athletic Conference Pitcher of the Week award. Morgan Wardlow is also making an impact in the circle for the Lady Evangels. Wardlow has now won four straight decisions and has a 2.98 earned-run-average. She has been instrumental in helping the Lady Evangels enjoy one of their best stretches since joining the NAIA in 2008. Both Crites and Wardlow are both ranked in the top ten for pitchers in the SAC.



Senior Infielder Tiffany Holt

The Lady Evangels begin their journey through the most demanding part of their schedule in mid-March when conference play heats up for all SAC teams.

"We got off to a slow start, but our girls fought hard to change that. Our schedule is very tough this year. Our conference is going to be tougher than ever with OCU, St. Gregory's, and USAO all preseason ranked in the top 15 in the nation."

Megan Allen-Cloninger

Megan Allen-Cloninger is no stranger to the ministry. She is a fourth-generation ordained minister in the Church of God and currently serves as Children's Pastor at Teays Valley Church of God in West Virginia.

The 28-year-old graduate of MACU completed her Bachelor of Science in Specialized Ministries in 2011 and will earn a second diploma in May with MACU's first graduating class in the Master of Ministry program. After completing her undergraduate, Megan served as a children's pastor in Winchester, Kentucky for three years. During that time, she was able to complete her graduate degree from MACU online.

Her father, Darryl Allen, graduated from Gulf Coast Bible College (now MACU) in 1983 and now serves as the State Pastor for the Church of God in Kentucky. Allen, the former Director of Church Relations at MACU, actually had the opportunity to teach Megan's first class in her graduate program.

"It is a very practical program," commented Megan. "It teaches you how to handle situations and is excellent for ministers. With the program online, I was able to work full time as a pastor and still complete my degree. It was the best experience."

Megan married her husband, Devin, in the fall of 2013 and is more than convinced that God knew what he was doing when he sent Devin to her. Devin is employed at Amazon and is Megan's pronounced 'right hand man' in her ministry efforts.

"The best part about being a children's pastor is seeing kids take what they learn from class and apply it in real life. I had the chance to perform my first baptism while I was in Kentucky. It was the best feeling knowing I was helping to lay a spiritual foundation for that child and that I played a part in developing their relationship with God."

DO YOU HAVE AN ALUMNI UPDATE OR STORY IDEA?
PLEASE SEND IT TO
COMMUNICATIONS@MACU.EDU

AN ETERNAL INVESTMENT

DR. HELEN CURTIS REMEMBERS HUSBAND'S LIFETIME SUPPORT FOR MACU

DR. HELEN CURTIS RESIDES in a duplex on the south side of the MACU campus. The duplex has been her home for the past 18 years. It overlooks the MACU athletic facilities named after her husband, Dr. James E. Curtis.

"He went to every game he could," said Dr. Curtis. "He loved MACU and its students!"

Helen met James by chance in 1945 on a visit to see her brother on a Merchant Marine vessel in New Orleans. The girl from Tennessee married the boy from Texas in 1946. Soon after, James was called to ministry in the Church of God, which led him to begin supporting Gulf Coast Bible College (now MACU) in 1958. James attended more than forty meetings and revivals a year. At each meeting, he would have a breakfast for the high school students on Saturday morning and use the opportunity to tell them about MACU.

Helen recalled the story of one student in particular who wanted to attend a Christian learning institution, but could not because of finances. James lobbied the student wherever he went, and eventually, one couple anonymously funded the student's entire tuition.

"He had a passion for helping college students," said Mrs. Curtis. "He wanted young people to get a Christian education. It didn't matter what profession they were going into, he just wanted them to go to college."

Helen played a very active role in ministry, as well. She was the president of the Women of the Church of God (WCG) for ten years and is the author of twelve spiritual

books. She received an honorary doctorate from MACU in 2008.

In 1996, it was discovered that James had cancer. Throughout the majority of his life, he helped students at MACU find the financial assistance they needed to attend college. Following his death in 2003, the James Curtis Scholarship Fund was established to continue to support students with financial assistance long after his passing. Thanks to him, the Curtis name will forever be inscribed in the foundation of Mid-America Christian University.

"James had a standard he lived by to never let a student not attend MACU because of finances," said Helen.

"He played a very active part in helping to provide students with finances for college."

Helen can still be seen on the MACU campus. She devotedly attends chapel services on Wednesdays and Fridays and is in attendance of almost every big occasion. She has been hard at

work on her next book, *Food for Body and Soul*, that she hopes to be released in the summer of 2016.

MACU is grateful to both Mr. and Mrs. Curtis for their unending gifts and devotion to MACU and we are proud to have students that mirror their love and devotion to God, as well.

If you would like information about how to make an eternal investment, contact the Office of University Advancement at give.macu.edu/



Dr. Helen Curtis and President Fozard





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