Wildcat champions on and off the field

When I first announced to my family that I had been appointed president of Linfield College, my Minnesota nephew immediately exclaimed, “Hey, they’ve got a great football team!” My nephew attends St. John’s, a college that has faced Linfield on the gridiron in the past.

This year one of my Midwestern colleagues, Paul Adanian, served as our interim CFO Paul has taken to referring to Linfield as “the Notre Dame of NCAA Division III.” Paul is talking about more than football when he makes his quip: Notre Dame is one of America’s strongest academic institutions.

It is true: Linfield has a great tradition in football, we possess the most consecutive winning seasons in history. And this year we set a new mark at the college, when our softball players won the first national championship of any Linfield women’s team.

But like Notre Dame, we possess other great traditions as well. Not only do we excel in athletics, we excel in academics.

When Tim Benzel ’06 was a senior at Evergreen High School in Vancouver, Wash., he made two lists. The first ranked small college football programs; the second ranked by academic excellence. Tim found the lists intersecting at Linfield College, where he eventually became our starting quarterback and graduated last December with a 3.56 GPA, majoring in economics and graduated with a 3.78 GPA. After graduation she plans to ally became our starting quarterback for excellence, both within and outside the classroom.

I could even move on to other extracurricular achievements in art (Laura Hayes ’07), drama (Patricia News Everett ’07), and music (Chris Engbretson ’07), because our students are competing nationally in those fields as well.

But my main point is this: When a student is looking for, yes, but in fact our academic programs are the true measure of our achievement. I contend that Benzel, Johnson, Smith and Mills and all the others are champions because they have their priorities in order – because they decided to attend an academically excellent college. Linfield has enabled them to find their calling and pursue their passions – on the playing field, in the studio, on the stage and in the classroom.

— Thomas L. Hellie

On the covers:
Front: Nurse Anesthetist, clockwise from top: Jose Romero ’07, Michelle Gibson ’08, Lucas Arellanes ’07, Catherine Ruffelle-Gorman ’07, Jamie-Watson ’07, Stacy Griffin ’08, Megan Rodgers ’07, Richard Cedeno ’08 (Juan Calvillo photo)
Back: Scenes from commencement May 27

Lindfield Magazine

Champions. Whether it’s on the field, in the classroom, in a clinic or around the world, Linfield students, faculty and alumni are champions. In this issue we explore many kinds of winners. We take a close look at the Lindfield-Good Samaritan School of Nursing, which combines the liberal arts with handson clinical practice to educate some of the top nurses in the region. Their reach is also being felt in places such as Cameron, where students worked with an alumna in January. We salute the Wildcat softball team for their national title, the first for any Linfield women’s team. Read on for the work by a linfield professor who aids the devastated Gulf Coast. We also take a look at service by a linfield student in the local community and research by an alumna at the bottom of the world. As we prepare for Linfield’s sesquicentennial next year, we will continue to bring you stories, both past and present, of linfield champions.

— Mardi M radar

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