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PROVIDENCE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
Our difference-makers are working all around the world
The Lord is at work at Providence. Heads, hands and hearts are growing each day.

Every August, Barb and I have student leaders to our house for a barbeque. These 25 undergraduate students have been at Providence for one, two or three years. They have had some time in our classrooms, residences, performing arts groups and athletic teams. Some of them have served in prior years as resident assistants or on student council.

Every fall I meet with the student council. I also spend time every month with its president. I teach a seminary class once each year. I lead a devotional for Mile Two Discipleship School. I interact with students at the annual social awareness fair. I attend fine arts performances and Pilots sports events. I see our students in the hallways and in the Reimer Student Life Centre. My point is that Providence is a studio where God is busy creating masterpieces for Kingdom work, and I get to watch it happen. What a privilege!

In this edition of Eye Witness you will meet a few of our alumni. These people have experienced Providence first-hand and have grown during their time here. They are difference-makers. I was surprised to learn last year that 70 per cent of a student’s growth and maturation is a result of the school they attend. This shouldn’t have surprised me. I meet some students on the day they arrive on campus in their first year. I keep my eye on these students and often they show up at my house in August as a student leader. Then I watch from the sideline as they carry out their leadership duties. Finally, I get to hand them their degree at graduation.

What I am trying to say is that the Lord is at work at Providence. Students certainly gain in knowledge and skill while they are with us. They could gain the same at a public university. At Providence they also grow in character. They become leaders and servants, or in more recent parlance, “servant-leaders.” A large part of the process of growth in character comes through our student development program. We believe that a holistic Christian education, an education that seeks spiritual, social, physical as well as intellectual maturity, is what a university should do, whether that is at a basic undergraduate level or in a seminary.

Our student development program helps students discover who they are, teaches them how to live together under our Covenant of Community Life and gives them opportunity to stretch their newly developed adult wings.

This student development program is why we are building a new Living & Learning Centre. We believe that this Centre will help students develop head, hands and heart in a way that integrates classroom instruction with community living and servant-leadership opportunities. Many friends have caught the vision and have invested to make the Centre a reality.

Thanks for reading this issue of Eye Witness. As Providence enters its 94th year, you will see that our legacy of “teaching people to grow in knowledge and character for leadership and service” continues. Each generation has done this differently, but the mission is still the same.

David H. Johnson, PhD.
Providence President
By the time this issue of *Eye Witness* is in your hands, new and returning Providence students will be getting ready for the 2018-19 school year. We're looking forward to welcoming them to campus. They are, after all, the reason we're here, why we do what we do. Providence exists to teach people to grow in knowledge and character for leadership and service. That's our mission. My hope is that this magazine will provide a glimpse of how we go about it.

The cover story, "Living & Learning," will take you into our classrooms, community spaces, residences and sports teams, demonstrating how faith and education are integrated into everything we do here at Providence. Writer Libby Giesbrecht (you'll know her from Winnipeg's CHVN 95.1FM) will introduce you to current students Amanda Friesen, Timothy Hildebrandt and Madison Will, as well as Community Life Coordinator Darcy Friesen, and she'll also familiarize you with the Living & Learning Centre, which will open in September 2019. Libby has gone above and beyond in describing how student life is the daily expression of the Providence mission. I trust you'll appreciate her work as much as I do.

I'm also excited for you to read Alissa Moffit's article about Natasha Loge, who was hired into a managerial position upon graduation from our Buller School of Business. The neat twist in this story is that her employer happens to be a Providence alum, herself. Alissa, for her part, is a graduate of our Communications & Media program and currently works as Communications Manager at Emmanuel Evangelical Free Church in Steinbach.

Two more Communications & Media (hons.) graduates, Niklaas Schalm and Isabella Selk, return to the *Eye Witness* pages in this issue. Niklaas has an intriguing piece about the growing popularity of our Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) program, which allows students without undergraduate degrees to pursue Master's-level education in our seminary. Isabella, who played four years on the Pilots women's basketball team, explains in her article "More than Sports" how being a student-athlete at Providence helps develop a range of life skills.

I'd also like to draw your attention to our "Alumni Connect" section, which has been increased to six pages. The "Alumni Updates," having disappeared when the standalone *Alumni Connect* magazine was discontinued, are also back, so graduates can keep up to date with former classmates from down the years. Jill Sperling, who graduated in 2011, leads off the section with a first-person account of her trip to Israel and Palestine with Mile Two Discipleship School. (Alumni are always welcome to join Mile Two on the annual journey. See page 31 for details.)

Finally, I hope you'll enjoy my report from Southeast Asia, where I was part of a Providence contingent that visited alumni last fall. We were proud to present an honorary doctorate to Rev. Dr. Samson Hkalam, who continues to work for peace in Myanmar's Kachin State, and also dropped in on Lian and Daisy Hmung, who operate a Bible school in Yangon. We are filled with joy to see our graduates making a difference for Christ all over the world.

Those graduates, once students here at the Otterburne campus, participated in and benefited from a holistic learning environment that puts faith at the centre of all aspects of community life and education. I hope we've presented their stories well, and I trust you'll be encouraged by the "Living & Learning" that takes place at Providence on a daily basis.
Jerrad Peters

There is a sign on Highway 59, about 15 minutes from the Otterburne campus, which simply reads, “Difference-Makers.” It’s an unofficial slogan here at Providence, a buzz-word we emblazon on posters and promotional materials and within publications such as this magazine. And, as with any good buzz-word or go-to phrase, little explanation is required.

Providence students go on to become leaders of character, knowledge and faith, serving Christ in their churches, workplaces and communities. Our graduates are difference-makers, and they’re making a difference all over the world. How do we know this? We’ve seen it.

Last November I accompanied a Providence contingent on a working trip to Southeast Asia. Our group included Dr. David Johnson, Providence President, and his wife Barb; Dr. Stan Hamlin, Vice-President for Seminary, and his wife Bev; Gary Schellenberg, Director of Institutional Services; and me, Creative Content Specialist. We departed Winnipeg on November 18, and after nearly 30 hours of travel we touched down in Yangon, Myanmar and began a whirlwind adventure that took us throughout that country, to Hong Kong and, briefly, into China.

Over the course of our travels we met numerous Providence graduates, each making a difference in their chosen field and impacting the world around them. And what an impact! Literally hundreds of thousands of people in the regions we visited have encountered our alumni, either personally or very directly through their work. Coming face to face with that impact is overwhelming and incredibly humbling, yet also gratifying.

“This is a major moment in the life of Providence,” said Dave while we awaited our flight from Yangon to Myitkyina, in the rolling northeast of the country. It was a remark we would only begin to understand when we landed a few hours later.

Kachin State

In the summer of 1997, Samson Hkalam moved from Myitkyina, the capital of Myanmar’s Kachin State, to Manitoba in pursuit of his Master of Arts in Theology. Already a veteran missionary among the Kachin people, he had been part of the momentous “3 x 300” initiative (“3” for the length of Jesus’ ministry on earth; “300” for the number of Gideon’s army) sent out from Prayer Mountain on Myitkyina’s outskirts in 1979. In 1999, he graduated from Providence and returned to Myanmar, where he became a Christian advocate and spiritual caretaker of the Kachin.

He obtained his Doctor of Ministry; he founded a Bible college, a leadership training school and a drug...
rehabilitation centre; he launched study programs for local pastors; he mentored fellow Christian leaders. In 2011, following the breakdown of a ceasefire that another Providence graduate, Saboi Jum, had helped negotiate, he led Kachin State’s internal refugees to Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps, of which there are now 169 sheltering more than 100,000 people.

Formerly the General Secretary of the Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC), Samson was recently appointed President of the denomination, which serves more than 400,000 members representing 435 churches in the region, as well as clusters of KBC congregations in China and India. It was because of his leadership and service, past and present, that Providence decided to present Samson with an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree. And it was around the degree presentation ceremony that our travelling delegation planned its trip. “This degree is recognition for the significant work Samson has done after his formal training,” explained Dave. “He has made great sacrifices and risked his life for the sake of the gospel.”

On Saturday, November 18, our twin-prop flight from Yangon descended on Myitkyina, its airport situated on a grassy field and overlooked by the Himalayan foothills. We hadn’t even made it off the tarmac before we were greeted by Samson and his family, presented bouquets of roses and filmed by mobile phones and television cameras. “You promised someday you would come,” Samson told us. “This dream has come true.”

In the week leading up to the ceremony we met with several other Providence graduates—some of the 18 who have studied at Providence ever since Saboi Jum expressed a need among Kachin Christians to better train their leaders. One of them, La Wom Gumling, served as our guide and interpreter in and around Myitkyina, and he underlined the importance of our presence in Kachin State to the Christians in the region.

“Every Kachin who has had training at Providence has contributed tremendously to the Kachin community,” said La Wom, pointing out that many currently serve in leadership positions. “We’re looking forward to building a stronger relationship between Providence and the Kachin people as we equip future leaders. I am confident that this honorary doctorate will not just be for Samson, but for all Kachin students.”

While in Myitkyina, Dave and Stan taught modular courses at the Bible school established by Samson and at a specially organized pastors’ conference at KBC headquarters, situated against the Irrawaddy River. Barb and Bev connected with women at nearby IDP camps, providing listening ears and healthcare advice. Each evening the group of us visited a KBC church.

Finally, on November 25, we joined the nearly 2,000 people in attendance, and an additional 50,000 watching on Facebook Live, for the conferral of Samson’s honorary doctorate. A string orchestra welcomed guests into the church on the KBC compound, and the congregation sang “To God Be the Glory” and “Great Is Thy Faithfulness.”

“This is a great privilege, and I am humbled,” Samson read from his acceptance speech. “God is using the KBC to do his ministry in China, India and Myanmar. Today, Providence is here to present this honorary doctorate to me. In fact, Providence is honoring all Kachin. You know our suffering and oppression, and we are so glad you’ve come to see us.”

In his graduation address, Dave both praised Samson’s character and legacy and acknowledged the friendship between Providence and the Kachin. “You are wonderful people, and we love you,” he said. “Rev. Dr. Samson Hkalam has more to teach me than I have to teach him. He is truly an example of who a Christian is and what a Christian does.”

Yangon, Hong Kong and Shenzhen

We met another such example in Yangon a few days later.

Uk Lian Hmung, who graduated with Master of Divinity (2012) and Master
degrees from Providence Theological Seminary. Elected President of Judson Bible College (JBC) with his wife Daisy in 2013. On November 28 and 29, our Providence contingent visited the JBC campus, where Dave delivered lectures on the book of Revelation and Stan provided a study of Nehemiah. We also participated in community worship services. The road to JBC is bumpy, and the potholed, earthen path weaves between small huts and livestock pens. Located in Yangon’s Dagon Seikkan Township, the bustling former capital of 7.6 million people seems far removed from campus, which sits in an agricultural district undergoing slow and controversial urbanization. It is here, however, that Lian and Daisy are teaching Myanmar’s biggest city’s next generation of Christian leaders.

All 75 students live on campus, and the school’s residence and education-purposed facilities are powered by a diesel generator. Further development is planned for the site, and Lian is hopeful the JBC buildings will soon be connected to Yangon’s electricity grid. Taking the opportunity to tell his students about his experience at Providence, Lian reflected on the impact the institution is making globally. “I have seen Providence love God and God’s word,” he said. “I have seen your devotion to serving the church around the world. You have made a tremendous impact on my life and ministry in this country. Today you have visited us, marking a milestone for our ministry and training school in Yangon.”

Late Wednesday, November 29, we departed Yangon for Hong Kong, where we would meet even more Providence graduates. Early the next morning our group, accompanied by Ming, our guide, caught a train in Kowloon and took the short ride to Shenzhen, where we crossed into China. A small city of 30,000 in 1980, Shenzhen’s conversion to a Special Economic Zone in May of that year has since seen the population skyrocket to nearly 13 million. We enjoyed lunch, saw a few sites and did some afternoon shopping before returning to Hong Kong, where we watched a laser light show on Victoria Harbour.

On Friday we met our Hong Kong alumni. Bertha, Hin, Timothy, Kristy, Vincent and Stephanie shared stories from their time at Providence, and there were plenty of laughs as we looked at pictures of previous hairstyles and called memories from residence. Each of them is involved in ministry in some capacity. They’re furthering the Providence mission to be difference-makers. We’re proud of them.

Remember the highway sign near the Otterburne campus? There’s nothing much to it, just the slogan: “Difference-Makers.” But I see faces on it whenever I drive past. I see our Hong Kong graduates and the people they impact in their jobs in church administration and finance. I see Lian, Daisy and the 75 young people who will become leaders in Yangon. And I see Samson, furthering the gospel and working for peace in one of Asia’s most volatile regions.

Providence graduates are difference-makers, and they’re making a difference all over the world. How do we know this? We’ve seen it.
What does business education at Providence look like? The Buller School of Business offers hands-on experience, expert faculty and the integration of Christian faith with entrepreneurship, but what can students expect when they graduate with a Bachelor of Business Administration?

Natasha Loge, a 2018 graduate, enrolled at Providence in 2014 because, she says, she wanted “a degree, to learn from Christians and to strengthen my skills.” She adds, “I received so much more.” During her four years at Providence, Natasha thrived in numerous areas of study and leadership. In addition to being a leader in the classroom, she served as student council president and opened an on-campus thrift store. She points out that while the Buller School of Business undoubtedly prepared her for the world of business, she also had to take initiative.

“My desire to be a better businesswoman drove me to look for challenges and ways to learn,” she says. “I could have done my degree without deciding to open up a thrift store on campus, but all I had to do was bring the idea to Bruce Duggan (Assistant Professor of Business Administration) and he said ‘yes’ before I had finished speaking!”

She says Professor Duggan helped make her dream a reality: “I think doing that is what enhanced my education the most.”

A business graduate with skills and dreams, and one with the ability to use her management style to show Christ’s love, Natasha found she was not only employable, but also sought after, following her time at the Buller School of Business. And it was another Providence alum who reached out to hire her.

Cody Quiring, Vice-President of Development and Alumni relations at Providence, knew that alumnus and business owner Andrew Heidebrecht was in search of a manager for his new franchise in Steinbach. Quiring had taken note of Natasha’s hard work and positive attitude, and he met with her to discuss the opportunity.

“I talked with Natasha about what type of role she was looking for,” he explains. “Through visits with friends of Providence, I made the connection that Andrew could find success in the potential of having Natasha on board with his business.”

Heidebrecht, a 2003 grad who helps coach the Pilots men’s volleyball team, interviewed Natasha for a managerial position of Steinbach, MB’s Great Canadian Dollar Store. He was impressed with her drive, intelligence, communication and interpersonal skills, and maturity. Her education also helped set her apart.

This kind of success story may be unique, what with a university graduate stepping directly from convocation to a place of employment—and a management position at that—but, as Quiring points out, Providence graduates may
just be an exception to the rule.

“Providence alumni are making a difference,” he says. “They have been prepared in the classroom and community life on campus to succeed and make a difference in their workplaces, their churches and the world around them. They have a special role to play in walking alongside and supporting current and future Providence students and promoting their alma-mater to their local communities and beyond.”

Natasha’s story bears this out.

Heidebrecht recognized that her unique education and experience gained at Providence would only benefit his business once he hired her for a management position. As someone who sees retail as relational, and even an opportunity for evangelism, he sought a manager grounded in Christ’s love and grace.

“I anticipate a few years of hard work as we get up and running, but I am so excited to work alongside Andrew,” says Natasha, pointing out that her new employer is unapologetic about his faith and uses it to fulfill his mission in business.

She adds: “I want to do the same—to be an agent of change in my community, grow in my faith, seek the Kingdom of God and have some fun doing what I love. God gave me an opportunity right out of Providence to use my degree, so we’ll see what He does next!”

It’s true. Providence staff, faculty and alumni undoubtedly have a loyalty to Providence and its present students. They want them to succeed in all areas of life—spiritually, relationally and professionally—as they move on.
In June 2017, a devastating fire destroyed one of the residence facilities on the Providence campus. But while the loss of Bergen Hall, which was being renovated, provided immediate challenges, Community Life Coordinator Darcy Friesen says it also “opened up a new door to the future.” Now, more than one year after the fire, plans are in place for the construction of a to-be-named Living & Learning Centre—a new residence Friesen hopes will enhance student life for all those living at Providence.

Set to open its doors to students in fall 2019, the dormitory will include comfortable rooms and living spaces that will both allow students the space to connect with each other and provide communal areas for gathering. It’s a facility designed to incorporate every aspect of student life that Providence aims to encompass.

“It’s a building designed for intentional community,” says Friesen. “A thoughtfully designed residence building is critical in developing a fun and thriving Christ-centred learning community. Our campus Living & Learning program is focused on ensuring students are cared for and on providing spaces and people that are critical to student living and thriving. We are extremely excited for students to enjoy the new space.”
Together

As Friesen explains, student life at Providence is about living, learning and growing in community.

“Students attend chapel together; they sing in choirs together; they eat meals together; they support Pilots sports teams together,” he says. “Being together is the underlying rhythm of the Providence experience.”

Providence places high importance on the concept of community within all aspects of life on campus, as evidenced through not only the new Living & Learning Centre, but also the Mission Statement, student groups and athletics, to name a few. But how does it all come together for students and staff on campus?

“Student life means late-night papers, part-time jobs, friendships, memories and life lessons,” says Madison Will, a social science major. “The social life at Prov is one of a kind! Providence focuses on academics while incorporating fun and memories within it. I’ve never experienced a community quite like it.”

Amanda Friesen, who just completed her second year of studies in psychology, emphasizes relationships while reflecting on her own student life experience.

“Student life” makes me think of the relationships between students and staff,” she says. “It’s interesting to see how overall student life changes with the interaction and connection between staff and students when we intentionally participate within the Prov community.”

Variety of classes

Of course, there would be no student life without students. Providence offers a variety of undergraduate and seminary-level study options, and recent faculty hires have further bolstered programs such as biblical studies, psychology and science. Timothy Hildebrandt points out that the variety of classes available to students helps prepare them for the lives they choose to live. A biblical studies major, he says the incorporation of faith within the classroom provides opportunities for both knowledge development and spiritual growth.

“My faith has changed because of my professors’ different viewpoints on biblical understanding,” he says. “I’ve grown in huge ways because of this.”

Adds Darcy Friesen, a Prov alumnus: “As cliché as it sounds, my time as a student was life-changing.”

Friesen initially attended Providence in pursuit of a one-year TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) certificate, which would have allowed him to travel overseas to teach English. He ended up staying four years, completing a Bachelor of Arts, Adv., playing two seasons on the Pilots men’s soccer team, serving on student council and working as a residence assistant.

“Although the professors I had were inspiring, and the sports that I played were exhilarating, it was the community that continued to draw me back,” he explains. “Providence became my home away from home because of the memories and friendships that were made through late-night dorm discussions, meals in the cafeteria or cheering on the other Pilots teams.”

Will notes that diversity within the student population is another way she has been prepared for life after university, having been able to meet and interact with individuals from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

“Providence sets people up for the workforce by teaching them how to learn, grow and accept differences in our world,” she says. “We learn to embrace each other’s differences and see the good in everyone. You will never see eye-to-eye with everyone you meet, and Providence teaches us how to accept that. We learn how to look for God in hard times, and although it can be stressful, God will always be there for us.”

Story continues on page 24...
Jerrad Peters

Providence will begin construction of new residence facility this fall, and 112 students will move into the state-of-the-art Living & Learning Centre in September 2019.

More than a dormitory, the Living & Learning Centre will promote a thriving, Christ-centred student community within a bright, inviting, home-like atmosphere. We believe that learning happens both inside and outside the classroom, and this building has been intentionally designed to be part of the holistic education experience we provide at Providence.

To be located west of Eichhorst Hall and directly south of the Reimer Student Life Centre, which houses the cafeteria, the three-story, fully accessible Living & Learning Centre will accommodate male and female students on the second and third floors. The first floor will contain staff apartments and community spaces such as a kitchen, a lounge, prayer rooms, study rooms, a seminar hub and a laundry facility. The residence floors, each of which will be divided into four “pods,” will also include lounges and study areas. Generous use of glass will allow considerable natural light into the building, and the south facade of the structure will overlook the Rat River.

Importantly, and also intentionally, the Living & Learning Centre is to be built in the shape of a cross, emphasizing Providence University College & Theological Seminary’s commitment to Christ-centred higher education and community life.

A new residence on the Otterburne campus became necessary after Ber-gen Hall was destroyed by fire in June 2017. High-quality temporary housing was quickly made available to address the accommodation shortfall, and a committee was struck to guide the planning process for a new facility. In January, the Providence Board of Governors unanimously approved a $4 million increase to the IMPACT 2020 campaign, providing the opportunity for further constituency support of the Living & Learning Centre project.

Our partners in the architecture, design and construction process are Pico Architecture, Grant Design and Three Way Builders.

We are looking forward to breaking ground on the future site of the Living & Learning Centre in the fall and are enthusiastic about serving our students through this facility. The mission of Providence is to teach people to grow in knowledge and character for leadership and service. Our vision is that this mission could be lived out within the Living & Learning Centre as the spiritual, academic and community life of students is integrated.
Story continued from page 21...

All aspects

It is Christian faith that ties together all aspects of student life at Providence. Amanda Friesen, for example, has been able to become involved on campus by participating in a worship band.

“It's been a great experience, collaborating with other musicians and worshipers, learning about worship,” she says. “Serving [in a worship band] has provided me with yet another opportunity to learn, grow and connect.”

Recruited to play soccer for the Pilots, Will hadn’t even heard of Providence before meeting Tory Walker, her future coach. She didn’t have a faith background, either, and admits she was initially somewhat intimidated by the “Christian aspect” of the school. Nevertheless, she was excited for the opportunity to learn about Christianity and has since been exploring the true meaning of faith.

“Coming to Prov was a huge change, as I had to explore outside my realm of knowledge and open up to the idea of Christianity,” she explains. “I have tried my best to embrace a Christian lifestyle and have taken full opportunity to use the resources provided by Prov to educate myself as a Christian.”

Participation in a variety of cultural backgrounds as a way of giving back and sharing the love of Christ in a tangible way that includes the athletic, God-given talents they’ve been given. “[We] guide [the kids] through gym activities, and get them involved in team-building and leadership,” she says.

It’s a living testament to the institution’s mission statement, which reads that Providence will help students “grow in knowledge and character for leadership and service.” Providence also seeks to transform students into leaders of character, knowledge and faith.

“I see faith incorporated into our sport every day,” Will says. “Our coaches continually invite us to grow our relationship with God, guide us through Bible studies and lead us through group prayers. We are constantly shown ways in which we can live Christ-like lives.”

Home

About 150 students call the Otterburne, MB campus home each year, providing a tangible application of “community” for students attending the institution. Amanda Friesen has spent the last two years living in the Turner four-plex, a residence facility for those age 21 and older. For her, the experience has been hugely positive, fun and relational.

“It’s been great to connect with people around my age and have the freedom to cook my own meals, set my own schedule,” she says. “It also provided me with an instant family. We set up our own holiday gatherings, like little hot chocolate parties on snow days.”

Thanks to the variety of cultural backgrounds that make up the Providence campus, Friesen has found that living in residence has provided her with a more personal way to connect with international students, both assisting them in adjusting to Canadian life and gaining friends who may have grown up in a world away.

“Residence life is a tremendous experience for our students because it allows them to build strong connections with people who share similar interests while also getting to know people they might not regularly connect with,” observes Darcy Friesen. “Living in residence challenges students to take responsibility for themselves while also giving them exceptional opportunities to build friendships with people from all over the world.”

What Providence means

Darcy Friesen says “community,” “motivating” and “family” are three words that come to mind when he reflects on what Providence means to him. With students from all over the world coming to study, live and grow together, fond memories are constantly being made on campus. It’s easy to see why so many choose to call Providence their home.

For Will, like many other students who have attended Providence, it has been a once-in-a-lifetime experience. “The community, the Christian education, my soccer team, my coaches, the professors who double as friends,” she says, naming her highlights. “Providence has given me an experience that the average university student will never get to experience.”

Though the definition of “student life” may vary from student to student depending on their own involvement during their time at Providence, faith and community remain the two constants in every student experience. It’s a legacy that the Living & Learning Centre will soon become a part of, continuing the role of dorm life as one part of overall Providence experience.

“[Our students have] fond memories of living in residence, working hard throughout the season alongside teammates and experiencing God in a new way in chapel,” says Darcy Friesen. “Providence makes a significant impact on a person’s journey. Whether they are here for one year or five years, students often find that they leave a piece of themselves at Providence.”
NO BACHELOR’S? NO PROBLEM!

SEMINARY STUDENTS ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING AS THEY ANSWER THEIR CALL TO MINISTRY

Niklaas Schalm

Five students in the 2017-18 graduating class of Providence Theological Seminary shared one unique accomplishment: they graduated without ever having completed an undergraduate degree. This was no accident. Rather, they were beneficiaries of the institution’s Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) program.

RPL is a process that allows mature students with demonstrable life experience to pursue graduate studies in their intended field without having completed an undergraduate degree. This was no accident. Rather, they were beneficiaries of the program’s Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) program.

Unsurprisingly, the program “sells itself,” says RJ MacKenzie, Seminary Enrollment Officer at Providence. Of course, the RPL process is hardly a formality. Demonstrating an amount of learning equivalent to an undergraduate degree, while doable, takes work. Once the student is accepted, MacKenzie refers them to Janice Rempel, Associate Registrar, who coaches them through the process. Under her instruction, applicants piece together a comprehensive portfolio demonstrating all the skills they have learned and the knowledge they have accrued through their various life experiences, which is then assessed by the Seminary faculty.

Rempel, herself a beneficiary of RPL, has a passion for working with these students. “The beautiful thing about RPL,” she says, “is that it recognizes that learning takes place in many contexts, and not just in the traditional classroom. I have discovered that most RPL students don’t recognize the significant learning that they have had through volunteering with a missions organization for several years, or raising a child with special needs or being a youth leader in their church for 15 years.”

Immediate Benefit

While the immediate benefit of doing RPL is obvious, Rempel and MacKenzie both emphasize the “unmeasurable” rewards of the program, like increased confidence and hope. Rempel says, “Some students have told me they were ‘too dumb’ to do RPL, but as we have worked through the process and they have acquired on the learning they have acquired through their life, work and ministry experience, they are shocked, encouraged and humbled at the ways they see God’s hand at work in their lives.”

For students who complete the process, the next challenge is to actually pursue their graduate degree.

“To put it mildly, it was a shock,” comments Darren Jones, a current Seminary student who went through RPL. “I had absolutely no idea of what the work load was going to be like. I had pastored for 20 years and was working outside of ministry at the time, so I was feeling a little displaced and when I began reading and studying, and then writing, I was hit with how much work I had to achieve.”

Jones did not let the challenge of graduate studies stop him, though. “It wasn’t until I attended campus for Practicum I that I really grasped the vision of what my studies could achieve, and that understanding helped me conceptualize why I was here, which helped tremendously.”

Driven by this recognition of the value of their education, Jones and many others who have entered the RPL program have told me they were ‘too dumb’ to do RPL, but as we have worked through the process and they have acquired through their life, work and ministry experience, they are shocked, encouraged and humbled at the ways they see God’s hand at work in their lives.”

For students who complete the process, the next challenge is to actually pursue their graduate degree. 

“While I am on somewhat of a furlough from my pastoring, I have been impacted by the notion that I will indeed be discipling again,” says Jones. “I am becoming more aware of the emotional wounds of many Christians, and how that affects the body of Christ, and pastors in particular. I already see how studying has opened my understanding of texts, and not just in the traditional classroom. I have discovered that most RPL students don’t recognize the significant learning that they have had through volunteering with a missions organization for several years, or raising a child with special needs or being a youth leader in their church for 15 years.”

Immediate Benefit

While the immediate benefit of doing RPL is obvious, Rempel and MacKenzie both emphasize the “unmeasurable” rewards of the program, like increased confidence and hope. Rempel says, “Some students have told me they were ‘too dumb’ to do RPL, but as we have worked through the process and they have acquired through their life, work and ministry experience, they are shocked, encouraged and humbled at the ways they see God’s hand at work in their lives.”

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“To put it mildly, it was a shock,” comments Darren Jones, a current Seminary student who went through RPL. “I had absolutely no idea of what the work load was going to be like. I had pastored for 20 years and was working outside of ministry at the time, so I was feeling a little displaced and when I began reading and studying, and then writing, I was hit with how much work I had to achieve.”

Jones did not let the challenge of graduate studies stop him, though. “It wasn’t until I attended campus for Practicum I that I really grasped the vision of what my studies could achieve, and that understanding helped me conceptualize why I was here, which helped tremendously.”

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PROCEDURE CLASSIC RAISES MORE THAN $66,000 FOR PROVIDENCE STUDENTS

RAIN STOPPED JUST IN TIME AT 20TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Jerrad Peters

After the rain stopped just in time and the sun broke through the clouds, the 20th Annual Providence Classic Golf Tournament provided an exciting day of fun, fellowship and fundraising for Providence students.

A total of $66,016.55 was raised during the June 12 event through a combination of 32 tournament sponsorships, a silent auction, hole-in-one supporters, a raffle draw and a sell-out of registrations. Those funds, says Cody Quiring, Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations, will be designated to Providence students, via scholarships, through the Providence Fund.

“We’d like to send out a big thank-you to all golfers, sponsors and volunteers who made the 20th Annual Golf Classic an enormous success,” said Quiring. “It was a fantastic day right from the start as we saw the rain stop, the clouds part and the sun begin to shine as registration began. What a blessing!”

Steve Loney, Indigenous & Community Relations Liaison at TransCanada, was also glad for the timely turn in weather. “The sun is shining over my right shoulder. We just cued it,” he said during the pre-tournament lunch. “It was raining on the way in, but we knew it was going to be a great day.”

He added: “TransCanada is proud to be partnered with Providence for this amazing event.”

Following the barbecue lunch, the golfers played 18 holes and also participated in numerous games and contests throughout the afternoon. The raffle and silent auction winners were announced during a dinner of chicken and ribs. For the second Providence Classic in succession the Guenther foursome claimed the trophy.

Don Streuber, Executive Chairman of Bison Transport and head of the IMPACT 2020 Campaign Committee, underlined the importance of supporting students. “We’re excited to support Providence and the students and the outcome that they provide, which is leaders for many, many organizations,” he said. “Bison Transport is proud to be the title sponsor of the tournament this year.”

“IT was a great day,” added Providence President Dr. David Johnson. “Thank-you to the sponsors and golfers for helping us have a great golf tournament and supporting 50 scholarships for our students.”
“Don’t try to explain it.”

That was the advice a Jewish shop owner in Jerusalem offered students of Mile Two Discipleship School and its guests, including me, just days before we were set to return home. God had invited us to Israel, the gentleman told us, and no one could ever understand the experience unless they were to have it themselves.

Each time someone asks me how my trip was, I respond with, “amazing.” It really was amazing, but for some reason I can’t quite find the words to describe what made the trip enjoyable. Weeks after returning home from Israel I had yet to show anyone pictures of the places I visited, or recount my journey in a way that didn’t sound rehearsed.

When I signed up to join the Mile Two Discipleship School’s annual trip to Israel I expected to be overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit each time I set foot in a place of biblical significance. I was captivated by the beauty of the Garden of Gethsemane, filled with wonder as the group navigated the narrow channel known as Hezekiah’s Tunnel, and I was humbled atop the Mount of Beatitudes, but it was in the locations of Israel’s current narrative that I felt closest to my Saviour.

God broke my heart for the Palestinians living in Dheisheh Refugee Camp, a place intended as a temporary refuge for Palestinians displaced by the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. Seventy years later, children walk home from school through the narrow streets of Dheisheh never knowing life beyond the camp. Similarly, I was moved to tears by a glimpse of not-so-distant Syria. As I gazed out across the border I was compelled to pray for Israel’s neighbour, a nation ravaged by war and suffering.

At both Dheisheh and the lookout over Syria, I felt God saying, “These are my children, I love them.” If I have learned anything since graduating Providence, it is that time and time again God defies my expectations. It was no different with this trip. I expected to be moved by God’s love for me, and I was, but God was also moving me to be a vessel for His love. I don’t know what that looks like yet, but I want to be obedient. I want this trip to have a lasting impact, not only on myself, but on everyone that I have an opportunity to show Christ’s love to.

I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to join Providence and Mile Two Discipleship School in February. She currently works as a reporter at a television station in Kamloops, B.C. Alumni who are interested in participating in the 2019 tour of Israel can contact Jeff Banman, Director of Mile Two Discipleship School, at jeff.banman@prov.ca.
ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

As part our April 2018 graduation exercises, Providence recognized two previous graduates who have dedicated their lives to making a difference in workplaces, churches and communities. Kim Coursey was named Providence University College Alumni of the Year while Dave Siemens was named Providence Theological Seminary Alumni of the Year.

Kim Coursey, Providence University College Alumni of the Year

Kim Coursey has worked with Manitoba youth for 40 years. “In 1978,” recalls Coursey, “my brother-in-law, then the director of Red Rock Bible Camp, visited us and asked us to consider taking a summer position at the camp, with the idea that I could start taking classes at Providence. We were excited to accept and saw God’s leading as we made the move and said goodbye to many friends.”

A 1995 Providence graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Biblical studies, Coursey says that Providence provided him with the tools he needed to study the Bible and instilled the value of disciplined study. “I have been given many opportunities to use these tools in my own, personal growth as a Christ-follower, as well as in our ministry at Red Rock, in our church and in the community in which we live,” he says.

The long-time executive director of Red Rock Bible Camp has also served with Steinbach Area Youth Leaders (SAYL), Christian Camping International (CCI) and in Sunday School and Ministry Counsel roles in his local church.

Dave Siemens, Providence Theological Seminary Alumni of the Year

Dave Siemens is a successful businessman who continues to use his counseling education from Providence Theological Seminary help his company, Kleefeld Construction, thrive.

Kleefeld Construction employs 10 people and builds large, custom homes. It was Providence, says Siemens, that equipped him with the interpersonal skills he’s drawn on over a successful career in business.

“A hard worker with a heart for ministry, Siemens has served as both a worship leader and voluntary elder at Kleefeld Christian Community since the mid-1990s and will continue to be involved in his church as his son, Chris, eventually assumes more of Kleefeld Construction’s day-to-day operations.

Through my training at Providence,” he says, “I became very aware of the depth of God’s love for me and how fortunate I am to be called one of his own and to belong to his family. My vision is to spread that Good News to everyone I am involved with, whether at work, in church, in the community or in my family.”

Abe Reddekopp, 1956

Clarice (Netzer) and I were married September 14, 1956. In April 1959 we left Winnipeg for the Del Rio, Texas and the Mexico border area where we served with Gospel Missionary Union. I was Field Director until we moved into full-time bilingual radio ministry. Today, Clarice and I minister in an assisted living senior centre. I also perform traditional western and gospel music. In 2016 I was inducted into the National Traditional Country Music Hall of Fame.

Isabel Allison, 1961

After graduation, I continued to take summer school and evening courses at the University of Winnipeg and University of Manitoba until I graduated with the B.Ed. Degree in 1976. I worked as a church deaconess, a public school teacher and an inner-city mission worker. I taught in Peru for two years, 1998 and 1999, as a teacher of children with Wycliffe Bible Translators’ personnel. In 2016 I published the devotional book that I authored, Alive With Christ.
Fred & Elizabeth Durston, 1967
After 45 years of ministry with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, we have retired. What a privilege it was to serve Christ through this ministry. We are now living near Charlotte, NC, and are quite involved with our church. Our kids and grandkids live in Minnesota, Illinois and Michigan, so we don’t get to see them enough. If your travels ever bring you to the Carolinas, please look us up. We would love to show you around, especially the Billy Graham Library.

Linda Olson, 1973
Following God’s complete healing of my own story, I sensed His calling to help others with theirs. Three years ago, I received my new mission, “To impact a million people a year through story.” In March 2018 my book, Your Story Matters: Three Breakthrough Secrets to Stories That Transform, was launched. Within the first five days, it became an Amazon Bestseller in seven countries. It is truly a testimony of God’s miraculous work.

Joseph Jolly, 2000
Since 1995 I have been the General Director of Native Gospel Ministries of Canada, with its head office in Ontario. I praise God that my wife and I have seen many of our people come to Christ in the 34 years of ministry. While continuing these ministries, I earned M.A. and M.Div. degrees from Briercrest Biblical Seminary, majoring in administration, leadership and education. In April 2000 I earned my Doctor of Ministry from Providence Theological Seminary.

Narendra Katare, 1979
Since I retired, I am still involved with teaching ministry in various ways, such as youth retreats, conventions and family conferences. Continue to pray for us as family. Thank you. I’d love to hear from old friends.

Jessica Widrick, 1993
My life has been full with marriage, raising children, serving in mission and ministry, furthering education and teaching. I’ve had the privilege of travelling on mission to Nigeria, South Africa, Hungary, Ecuador, Mexico and Ireland. I now coach our junior high worship team at church. I’ve been deeply broken while walking the hard road of healing from childhood trauma, but now I’m blessed to see God using my journey to bring hope to others.

Randall Mantai, 1981
God has blessed Laureen and I with 36 years of marriage, four children and six grandchildren. I am teaching Power Engineering at NAIT and Laureen is teaching in the Edmonton Public School system. We are attending Ellerslie Road Baptist Church in south Edmonton.

Wilson Hu, 1984
After 30 years of pastoral service, my wife Janet and I now live in south Surrey, BC. I spend most of my leisure time playing lots of pickle ball and continuing to pursue missional living in all things.

Narenda Katare, 1979
Since I retired, I am still involved with teaching ministry in various ways, such as youth retreats, conventions and family conferences. Continue to pray for us as family. Thank you. I’d love to hear from old friends.

Brodin Anderson, 2018
I have a personal training business that I developed a couple of years after receiving my undergrad from Providence. This was my job while I completed my M.A. in Counselling. I have recently been hired by Oakville Wellness Center as a psychotherapist.

Kelsey Johnson Gahaya, 2009
After graduation, I moved to Rwanda and started a counselling and training organization called Live Again Rwanda. Our vision is to promote emotional healing through the provision of counselling and the teaching of counselling skills, encouraging Rwandans to journey into a brighter, healthier future. Over the past seven years, we have trained over 150 students. God has been amazing! Most recently, in March 2018, I married my best friend Celestin Gahaya. God is the giver of incredible gifts.

Margaret Nemez, 1987
I married in 1990, and after 23 years, my husband passed and is now with Jesus. I am mom of five kids ranging in age from 18 to 26. The oldest is married and brought a beautiful daughter-in-law and my first grandson into my life. I now own an auto body shop in Swan River, MB. I am happy to be a part of a vibrant church family. My friends, a life lesson for me that I try to pass on: “God is bigger.”

EJ de Waard, 1997
Sharen (Class of 2007) and I have been pastoring here in upstate New York for almost six years. We love the opportunity to serve together in the Finger Lakes Region. Our three kids have all moved to either Michigan, Romania or Southern Ontario. They have been busy and have given us six grandchildren! We are thankful! Glory to God.

Gerry Giesbrecht, 2010
Since Providence, I got married to a gem of a lady and together we’ve been blessed with three children. Currently, I am on staff at my home church as Youth Pastor. I will have been on staff for five years at the end of this July. I oversee the youth and young adults ministry within our congregation. My favorite thing about ministry is seeing people encounter Jesus and watching Him transform their lives inside out.

Christine Zangl, 2017
I started a flour milling business with my dad on the family farm. Using our own organic wheat, we make a fine whole-grain wheat flour—no additives, preservatives or blending. We are currently in some local Costco grocery stores and coffee shops, as well as some Save on Foods locations in Saskatchewan!
University sports are vital to the overall experience of post-secondary education. For a lot of schools, a particular team can bring groups of people together that wouldn’t otherwise have very much in common.

At Providence, athletics is woven into the fabric of the institution’s identity. Aptly named for the thriving aviation program, the Pilots provide a rare spin on the typical college athlete’s experience. Here, faith is an integral part of every team and student-athletes act as disciples, with plenty of opportunities to show why athletics is so unique, and also why it attracts so many student-athletes.

Shayna Staerk is a graduate of the psychology program and has earned numerous championship banners during her time playing for the Providence women’s volleyball team from 2014-18. For her, like many others, playing for the Pilots just felt like the perfect fit.

“It seemed like everything I wanted in a school had come together, and that’s when I knew that God wanted me there,” she says. “The fact that God was such a big part of the team was how I knew it was right.”

Participating in athletics at Providence also extends far from just the court or the field. Expectations for athletes to act as leaders in the Providence community and excel at academics encourages a well-rounded approach to integrating faith, academics and sport.

Joel Coursey, head coach of the women’s basketball team and former student-athlete at Prov, has experienced both sides of the program and believes that it provides students the opportunity to excel in many areas, not just sports.

“There is more of a focused interest in what we can teach and model outside of sport than simply sport successes,” he explains. “The Christian values that the institution holds are foundational in how our program operates.”

This is what makes the Pilots program so unique, and also why it attracts so many student-athletes.

For Staerk, academics were important, and because athletes are required to enroll in a minimum of 12 credit-hour classes per semester and adhere to a higher GPA standard, graduation was seen as one of the program’s biggest targets and successes.

“At Providence, you’re a student first and an athlete second,” she points out. “The fact that I could participate in a sport I love as well as receive an education while honouring God was such a blessing.”

Of course, student-athletes can often become so wrapped up in their sport that other aspects of their lives end up sliding, especially academics.

Acting as Prov’s Athletic Director and men’s volleyball coach, Scott Masterson believes the balance that the program provides in so many areas is important in developing life skills beyond just performing well athletically.

“One of our highest priorities is to communicate the value of skills like time management and maintaining priorities,” he says. “Athletes who struggle with these skills often struggle academically and therefore tend to not last for the full length of a degree.”

This balance is something that really appeals to many student-athletes who feel like they get more out of their overall experience. “We have an overall higher standard to keep within any community we enter,” states Julika Kehler, a former Providence women’s soccer star and TESOL student. “It means that it is our responsibility to influence and show Christ’s love and servanthood to the people we see every day.”

Being involved in fellowship with fellow Providence students and serving in the community are key points in the success of the mission of Providence Athletics.

“Teams have volunteered at Siloam Mission and other non-profit organizations like MennoCentre Central Committee, and the athletics department hosts elementary schools a few times each semester for gym games with the Providence athletes,” explains Coursey.

For students looking to closely incorporate faith in sport, this is a huge part of the program. Staerk particularly enjoyed getting to share this with other teams in competition—perhaps one of the most unique experiences for Providence student-athletes.

“Our team was a way for us to be in Christian community and spread God’s love through our games,” says Staerk. “Because of the Pilots I learned how to allow God to be the anchor of my sport.”

Adds Masterson: “We challenge our athletes to treat each other, and our opponents, in ways that reflect our faith.”

It isn’t just the athletes who are benefiting from the program, either. Coaching staff are invested and integral to the success of the mission.

“Our coaching staff is committed to using athletics as a vehicle through which we can point our athletes, and those we come into contact with through sports, to Christ,” reflects Masterson. “That impacts how we coach, how we operate our program, our goals, how we interact with each other and with other teams.”

Providence Athletics is impacting Pilots student-athletes, says Staerk, pointing out that her experience growing in faith while playing volleyball was extremely important to her.

“Our team was always making time for God. He was ultimately the best teammate we could have asked for.”
they've represented 25-30 countries, students, “says Debi van Duin, Inter-
national body is made up of international "Between 20-25 per cent of our stu-
dents, no matter how wide Providence opens its doors. Coming from various countries with different languages, religious tra-
ditions and cultural customs, these students often go through periods of cultural shock.

"Ethiopians share almost every as-
pect of life, from literally eating on the same plate to sharing everything with our neighbours and talking
teaching international students in leadership positions on campus points to the increasing diversity and growth of acceptance on campus in recent years. "Having international STUCO presidents shows that the community has received them well and considers those students a part of the community," he says.

That said, there are always the neg-
ative effects of cultural shock and misinterpretation experienced by students from abroad, no matter how wide Providence opens its doors. Coming from various countries with different languages, religious tra-
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"Ethiopians share almost every as-
pect of life, from literally eating on the same place to sharing everything with our neighbours and talking

Providence prides itself on its in-
ternational community. Seeking the holistic, Christ-centred educa-
tion offered at the Otterburne, MB campus, students from all over the world—from Australia, Africa, India, the Caribbean, Europe, South Americ-
a, Southeast Asia and the United States—have made Providence their home.

"Between 20-25 per cent of our stu-
dent body is made up of international students," says Debi van Duin, Inter-
ational Student Services Coordinator at Providence. "In recent years they've represented 25-30 countries,
speaking more than 60 languages."

Two of the last three Providence University College Student Council (STUCO) presidents have been in-
ternational students. Bardia Salim-
khani, who is from Iran and served as STUCO president during the 2016-17 school year, believes the rep-
resentation of international students in leadership positions on campus points to the increasing diversity and growth of acceptance on campus in recent years. "Having international STUCO presidents shows that the community has received them well and considers those students a part of the community," he says.

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"Ethiopians share almost every as-
pect of life, from literally eating on the same place to sharing everything with our neighbours and talking

Salimkhani adds that living arrange-
ments, in particular, presented a chal-
lenge for him and many other in-
ternational students. "In my time as a student, the biggest challenge was the fact that international students were not allowed to stay on campus during scheduled breaks," he says. "Because of that, many international students, such as myself, had to move in and out of dorm every semester during our entire stay. Not having the secu-
rity of a place to stay is very stressful on international students, as we are already on our own here in Canada."

A common difficulty international students face is loneliness. Coming from more collectively-organized communities and adjusting to the more individualistic Canadian cul-
ture is often a struggle. However, Providence strives to make all stu-
dents feel truly welcomed.

"Providence staff and faculty interact with international students as indi-
viduals and not as faceless numbers," says Marlin Reimer, Vice-President of Student Life. "We see the individu-
al student for who they are and look at their personality, strengths and needs within a caring community setting."

"Serving international students is one way Providence fulfills its mission," says Reimer. "The purpose of Prov-
idence education is to not only offer credits for students to earn degrees, but to meet our mission and form people of knowledge and character for leadership and service."
We are one of the oldest post-secondary institutions in Manitoba.

1925 We are founded at 580 Spence Street in Winnipeg
1964 We are given full degree-granting privileges
1970 We move to the former St. Joseph’s College in Otterburne
2011 We are granted University status
2013 Launched the Mile Two Discipleship School
2016 We are launching the Buller School of Business and offering increased Science programming

Christ-centred education

Students pursuing Bachelor of Arts degrees are required to complete 21 credit hours in Biblical & Theological Studies

Our vision is to be identified among Canada’s foremost Christian universities as a learning community that transforms students into leaders of character, knowledge and faith, to serve Christ in a changing world.

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WE ARE PROVIDENCE

Our vision is to be identified among Canada’s foremost Christian universities as a learning community that transforms students into leaders of character, knowledge and faith, to serve Christ in a changing world.

Our People

Providence students, faculty and staff are part of a Christian community that pursues both knowledge and faith.

Our Spaces

Thanks to our use of biomass and geothermal energy we are one of the leading, environmentally-friendly campuses in Western Canada.

Our Values

Christ First, Community, Diversity of Thought, Exploration, Academic Excellence

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"Thank you so much for investing in Providence students like me! Providence has afforded me a place to explore God’s plan for me, develop business ideas, and take chances in my learning. My professors have stretched me and given me lots to think about."

Natasha Loge
2017-18 Student Council President, 2018 graduate

ACCREDITING BODIES

Providence is chartered by the province of Manitoba to offer Bachelor, Masters and Doctoral degrees.
Providence’s deep-rooted connection to Myanmar and the ongoing success of Impact 2020: The Campaign for Providence. The impacts of Providence, both near and far, are the fruit of deep roots established over the past 90-plus years. Impact 2020 rapidly climbs towards its goal of $16.5 million because of its strong foundation and clear vision for the future.

I invite you to join alongside hundreds of others in supporting the Providence Fund, a vital avenue that engages and equips the next generation of leaders. Gifts to the Providence Fund play a role in carrying out our mission and making more opportunities available to Providence students. Absolutely every gift makes a difference.

Providence is not simply a school or a workplace. Providence is a Christ-centered, life-changing, kingdom-focused post-secondary institution. Our vision is to be identified among Canada’s foremost Christian universities as a learning community that transforms students into leaders of character, knowledge and faith, to serve Christ in a changing world. You are a part of this journey. The difference you make can be felt now, and will be felt for years to come. Thank you for coming alongside us and investing in future leaders. Through your generous support, Providence develops difference-makers.

Cody Quiring
Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations