

Yellow Ribbon program draws Veterans to Valpo

Matt Campbell has seen tough times in this world. So coming to Valparaiso University to pursue his dreams is all part of the good life, especially now that the Army veteran doesn't have to worry about the financial burden of his education as a participant of the Yellow Ribbon Program.



Campbell is not only an engineering student, but he is a non-traditional student. He is 30 years old, has been married for eight years to wife Elizabeth, and they have a 15-month-old son named Connor.

But it is his work prior to coming to Valpo that earned him his stripes.

"I've gone to Iraq two times with the Army—once in April 2003 for 10 months and again in August 2006 for 11 months," Campbell said. "I did mostly electrical work, such as repairs on cameras and surveillance equipment, and I drove convoys with my unit. I grew to love electrical work and decided to pursue it as a career."

So when Campbell, born and raised in Muncie, came to pursue his electrical engineering degree at Valpo, he decided to take advantage of the University's participation in the Yellow Ribbon Program, an expansion of the G.I. Bill that allows participating institutions of higher learning in the United States to fund tuition expenses that exceed the highest public in-state undergraduate tuition rate. The institution can contribute up to 50 percent of those expenses and Veterans Affairs will match the same amount as the institution.

Currently, Valpo is hosting five undergraduate, four law students and one graduate student through the Yellow Ribbon program.

One of them is graduate student and Chesterton native Richard Amburgey, who recently completed six years of active duty service in the U.S. Navy.

The Yellow Ribbon program has allowed him to come back home to pursue his dream.

"Since I was a kid I have always known Valpo to be renowned for bright students and its wide variety of academic programs," Amburgey said. "I value the

experiences the Yellow Ribbon is allowing me to have here at Valpo now, giving me the knowledge, tools and skills I need to thrive in life and in a career in criminal justice.”

To supplement the federal Yellow Ribbon Program – authorized under the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 – the University offers a Patriot Award to eligible veterans who are accepted into its undergraduate, graduate and law school programs. The award is renewable for students who maintain satisfactory academic progress and conduct and those students participating in the Yellow Ribbon Program also are eligible for other Veterans Administration benefits, including living allowances and a \$1,000 annual stipend for books and supplies.

“I received a letter from Veterans Affairs saying that I qualified for the program, so I applied and I talked to the Valpo financial aid office, which helped me,” Campbell said. “So the Yellow Ribbon Program covers half of my tuition, and the Veterans Affairs office covers the other half. I receive 100 percent tuition, and the G.I. Bill also gives me a housing stipend and pays for my books.

“It’s such a great program and I really appreciate Valpo’s participation in the program. It’s a huge financial burden off of my shoulders,” Campbell said.

He chose Valpo partly because of its involvement in the program, and partly because he and his wife are close to family in the area. But he said his decision to attend Valpo, beginning in the fall of 2008, was deeper than just the tuition coverage.

“I chose Valpo because it has a very strong engineering program,” said Campbell, who interned with Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) this past summer.

He says that the location close to home also enables him to spend time with his family, which is valuable to him. Campbell plans to stay in the region after graduation and said he enjoys the Valpo experience.

“I’ve gone to several different universities, and I really enjoy the smaller class sizes here,” Campbell said. “Within one week, all of my professors knew my name.”

Veterans interested in the Yellow Ribbon Program and the Valpo Patriot Award should contact Valpo’s Office of Admission at (219) 464-5011 or toll-free at 888-GO-VALPO.

Strategic planning process moves forward

Dear Colleagues,

For more than a year, numerous members of the Valparaiso University community have come together to envision and discuss what this institution should look like in 20 years. This dialogue resulted in a future vision describing Valpo as a place renowned worldwide for preparing women and men who are highly sought for their knowledge, character, integrity, and wisdom. Now we are engaged in determining the best course toward that desired future.

As part of the current strategic planning process, members of the Valparaiso University Board of Directors, National Councils, Athletics Task Force, and other

alumni, community and church leaders participated in a "University Summit" at the end of October. Participants reflected on possible goals developed by task forces comprised of faculty, staff, students, and alumni aligned with three strategic priorities developed by the Strategic Planning Committee: (1) to offer a compelling education, (2) to ensure the future success of the campus and community, and (3) to enhance a community of belonging and engagement. Those attending the University Summit expressed great excitement about the preliminary ideas presented by each task force and offered their external perspective and advice. Based on feedback from the University Summit, the task forces finalized recommended goals and objectives for consideration by the Strategic Planning Committee later this month.

The Strategic Planning Committee, composed of University faculty, staff, students, administrators and alumni, now begin developing the first draft of Valpo's new Strategic Plan. While focused on the next five years, this plan is expected to guide decisions about and investments in the University's growth and development over the next two decades. It is, therefore, an important and historic conversation for us as a community of learning.

Beginning in February, all members of the campus community as well as the Board of Directors and all University Summit invitees will have multiple opportunities to read and comment on several drafts of the Strategic Plan. You will be able to respond electronically or in person during open forums or by attending open meetings of the Strategic Planning Committee. I urge you to take full advantage of these invitations to participate. Our goal is to have the Strategic Plan solidified by July 2010 and formally adopted by the Board of Directors in October 2010.

Open Office Hours Continue

I plan to continue the pattern of periodic open office hours for faculty and staff. (My first student open office hours were held earlier this semester.) I invite you to attend the respective open office hour period and to share with me your comments, suggestions and concerns. Open Office Hours for hourly staff will take place today, Nov. 12, from 2:15 to 3:15 p.m. in the Harre Union Hearth Dining Room, and tomorrow, Nov. 13, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. in the Facilities Management Break Room. An Open Office Hour for faculty will take place Tuesday, Nov. 17, from 1:45 to 2:45 p.m. in the Christopher Center Board of Directors Room. Salaried and professional staff are invited to an Open Office Hour on Thursday, Dec. 3, from noon to 1 p.m. in the Harre Union Victory Bell Room. In closing, I want to express my personal gratitude for the great effort and high quality demonstrated by each of you so far this semester. We often are so busy attending to our collective responsibilities that it is easy to lose sight of all the people who work so hard to make this institution a place of academic rigor within a supportive and caring community. Your commitment to making Valpo a place where students grow intellectually, socially and spiritually is inspiring, and your efforts will be reflected in the achievements of our alumni in the decades to come.

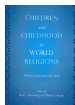
Thank you!

Sincerely,

Mark A. Heckler President

Professor's book examines children, childhood in world religions

What major religions of the world say about children and childhood is examined in a new book that will focus greater public and scholarly attention on the subject, co-edited by Valparaiso University professor Dr. Marcia J. Bunge.



Dr. Bunge co-edited “Children and Childhood in World Religions: Primary Sources and Texts” with Don. S. Browning, professor emeritus at the University of Chicago’s Divinity School. The book explores the theme of children in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. Each of its six chapters focuses on one religious tradition and includes an introduction and a selection of primary texts ranging from the ancient to the contemporary.

“Although attention to children and childhood is growing in many disciplines today, ‘Children and Childhood in World Religions’ is one of the first volumes to examine the theme of children in major religions of the world,” said Dr. Bunge, a professor of humanities and theology in Christ College, Valpo’s interdisciplinary honors college.

The volume addresses a range of topics, from the sanctity of birth to a child’s growing moral capacities and responsibilities. Taken together, the chapters show that issues regarding children are central to understanding world religions and raise significant questions about conceptions of children today.

“Children and Childhood in World Religions: Primary Sources and Texts” also discusses what traditions say about the various obligations of families, religious communities and the state to children, as well as the role children play in the life of religious communities and children’s obligations to others.

“Many people do care deeply about children and their well-being,” said Dr. Bunge. “Exploring various religious understandings of children and our obligations to them can provide a creative starting point for people of all faiths to speak about some of our shared concerns and hopes for children today.”

Dr. Bunge says the book will serve as a valuable resource for courses in the areas of childhood studies and world religions, but anyone who is interested in learning about various religious understandings of children also will enjoy reading it.

“By exploring a vast range of religious understandings of children and childhood, the book invites all readers—regardless of their own religious or philosophical commitments—to reexamine their own preconceptions and beliefs about children and to reevaluate their responsibilities and obligations to children,” she said.

Several people connected with Valpo supported the work for volume, including four Christ College students who served as research assistants: Daniel Jarratt from Evanston, Ill., a 2007 graduate in communication television-radio; Libbi Bartelt from Oshkosh, Wis., a 2008 graduate in theology and youth/family/education ministry; Melanie Mosher from Batavia, N.Y., a senior majoring in history and German; and Christine Furman from Asheville, N.C., a junior majoring in humanities, theology and youth/family/education ministry. Vicki Brody, Christ College’s former administrative assistant; Dr. Mel Piehl, dean of Christ College; and Yiqun Zhou, former Christ College professor also supported the work for the volume.

The volume is published by Rutgers University Press and is part of the Rutgers Series in Childhood Studies. Copies can be ordered online at <http://www.Rutgerspress.Rutgers.edu>.

Dr. Bunge previously edited the book "The Child in Christian Thought," the first major survey of the history of Christian thought on children, and co-edited "The Child in the Bible," a collection of essays written by biblical scholars on the theme of children. Both can be ordered on line at <http://www.eerdmans.org>.

She is a consultant for the Center for the Theology of Childhood; theological advisor to the Search Institute's Center for Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence; and co-director of the international Child Theology Movement. Dr. Bunge also is a member of the steering committees of the Childhood Studies and Religion Consultation of the American Academy of Religion and of the Children in the Biblical World program unit of the Society of Biblical Literature.