



MOUNT VERNON
NOW

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Campus Switchboard: (740) 392-6868
 Subscription Updates: communications@mvnu.edu

Postmaster, send address changes to:

Mount Vernon NOW
 800 Martinsburg Road, Mount Vernon, Ohio 43050-9500

MORE THAN BIRTHDAY WISHES

Happy Birthday, Mount Vernon Nazarene University! It is hard to believe how fast these last 40 years have gone, isn't it? Especially when you look at all that has been accomplished—both in the development of the University and through the life of our students and alumni. If "TIME" magazine were to do a feature article on "40 at 40—Colleges and Universities that are Changing the World at their 40th Anniversary," there is no doubt MVNU would be the lead university identified!

However, birthdays are not necessarily a time to reflect on the past. My youngest son, Josh, just turned 10 and not once during the days leading to his birthday or at the party we held for him did he talk about "the first nine years of his life." No sir, he was now 10! And, his talk revolved more around what being 10 meant and what his plans were for the future!

Likewise, much of my time this summer leading up to our 40th birthday revolved around what it meant to be 40 and what dreams and plans we should have for our future. What do we want MVNU to be and be like at its 80th birthday or its centennial in the year 2068? Does that seem too far way to even think about? It may seem that way, but, seeing how fast the last 40 years went by, we'd better start thinking about it.

I've been asking five questions in various University and community settings since I arrived nearly two years ago—"Who are we, where are we, where are we going, how will we get there, and why is it important to get there?" We are currently fleshing out the third and fourth questions, looking to the future by answering the questions, "Where are we going and how will we get there?" I'm a strong believer that if we do not seek to define our future, our future will define us. We can't let that happen and it will be through a proactive nature that we will seek to navigate what will be a very challenging operating environment for colleges and universities.

The University has wrapped these questions into our strategic planning process that has been ongoing for over a

year. Out of this process, the University mission statement was restated (Mount Vernon Nazarene University exists to shape lives through educating the whole person and cultivating Christ-likeness for life-long learning and service); the mission context was developed core values (Christ-likeness, learning, serving, excellence); and critical concerns identified (access, affordability, engagement, learning and growth, continuous improvement and innovation, assessment, and partnership and collaboration); the Campus Master Plan was redesigned; and we are now finalizing our strategic vision, strategic initiatives and corresponding action steps (thus answering "Where are we going, and how will we get there?")

Thinking about the future and dreaming about what Mount Vernon will be and be like in the year 2048 or 2068 is both exciting and daunting at the same time. However, we are setting our sights high. Noted scholar Elton Trueblood encouraged the Christian scholar to "Make no small plans; they have no power to move men's hearts." Taking this cue, we are making no small plans—we serve a great God and our passion is to pursue excellence so that He might be glorified in all that we do and all that we are.

So, why?

Why do we think about our future in such great detail? Why do we make plans to continue in our development; enhance our quality; seek to renew and deepen our academic life; achieve fiscal and facility resource growth; expand and deepen institutional influence, reach and relationships; and develop a premier student experience?

Because it is even more important to pursue the vision the University has been called to fulfill since day one of its existence—to change the world with the love of Christ.

That's why.

I look forward to sharing more specifics with you regarding strategic initiatives and direction for MVNU in the spring issue of *Mount Vernon NOW*. Please pray with me for our institution and our country in the days ahead.



Dr. Daniel Martin
President

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