



*The robust Lutheran concept of vocation continues to inform the lives of Oles everywhere. We could fill a bookshelf with issues of St. Olaf Magazine telling their stories.*

DEAR OLES,

This issue of *St. Olaf Magazine* confirms the college's continuing commitment to the values articulated in the opening words of its mission statement: St. Olaf "provides an education committed to the liberal arts, rooted in the Christian Gospel, and incorporating a global perspective." As you read through the magazine I hope you rejoice, as I did in reading through these articles, in finding our core values enacted in everyday life.

Globalization is making the world smaller, and its inhabitants more interdependent, every day. The college's global emphasis thus constitutes essential preparation for our students as they prepare to lead lives of worth and service. The winning photographs from the 23rd annual Gimse International and Off-Campus Photo Contest offer a window into the breadth of experience promoted by the college's off-campus study programs, and the profile of Dr. William Stauffer '88, who is spending the year in Tanzania at the leading edge of the fight against avian flu, exemplifies the kind of professional interests and commitments travel can promote. Dr. Stauffer's early travel with his father to the tropics inspired the interest in tropical diseases, which led him to the good work he is doing in Tanzania, and it is our hope that the 755 Oles who studied off-campus this past year returned with similarly broadened horizons and that their experience off-campus will call them to equally expansive vocations.

"More Than a Livelihood," the article about St. Olaf's Social Work program makes the important point that the best social workers prepare for their vocation by studying the liberal arts. The voices of students, faculty and alumni of the program affirm the value of learning to think critically and communicate effectively, the importance of embedding the study of professional skills in a theoretical framework, the necessity of encountering the diversity of peoples and cultures, and the imperative of bringing questions of value to bear on social policy. St. Olaf alumni in professions that have rigorous pre-professional requirements — such as social work, nursing and teaching — excel in their vocations precisely because of the habits of mind and heart associated with the liberal arts education they receive on the Hill.

The Christmas Festival is certainly paradigmatic of the college's Christian identity, but, in truth, all of the stories in this issue of *St. Olaf Magazine* depict the faith commitments of students, faculty and alumni manifesting themselves in service to God's people. The robust Lutheran concept of vocation — whether manifested through the Swanson family's creative contributions to Christmas Fest, David Thews' calling from a social work major to the Lutheran Volunteer Corps, or William Stauffer's service at Selian Lutheran Hospital in Tanzania — continues to inform the lives of Oles everywhere. We could fill a bookshelf with issues of *St. Olaf Magazine* telling their stories.

So, I invite you to enjoy this issue of the magazine, to take pleasure in the vitality of the college's mission and to celebrate with us the lives depicted in this issue. 🦁

*David R. Anderson*