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DEAR OLES,

OUR COLLEGE ENTERS ITS 134TH YEAR THIS FALL in very different circumstances from those that existed when it was founded in 1874. Once a school for the children of Norwegian immigrants from the upper Midwest, St. Olaf is now a national liberal arts college that embraces its identity as a global institution.

I am often asked how this change in our circumstances affects our sense of our past, of our identity as an institution. The stirring photos from the Gimse International and Off-Campus Photo Contest remind us just how vast and varied our world is. Has St. Olaf managed both to stay connected with its historical identity and to apply its deepest values to a changed world? This issue of *St. Olaf Magazine* helps us to think about that question.

The International Summer School at the University of Oslo promotes peace, international understanding and goodwill, and St. Olaf has been part of ISS since its inception following World War II. In fact, we house its North American office, facilitating the enrollment in ISS programs not only of Oles but also of students from across the continent. St. Olaf students and faculty attend or teach at the International Summer School every year, and they promote a continuous dialog on campus about Norway and things Norwegian. As the story in this issue of the magazine notes, the International Summer School “reinforces the special link between St. Olaf and Norway.” We look forward to a strong and continued relationship with this program stretching into the future.

Similarly, the profile of Professor Solveig Zempel '69, granddaughter of O.E. Rølvaag and a faculty member in the Norwegian department, emphasizes the depth and tenacity of modern St. Olaf's links with its founding. But as Professor Zempel profoundly observes, “The St. Olaf legacy is helping a new generation assimilate into American life.” For her grandfather's generation, the college helped Norwegian immigrants maintain their heritage while becoming American citizens. Today, St. Olaf helps other immigrant groups fulfill their potential and realize their dreams. The immigrants' countries of origin and the circumstances surrounding their assimilation have changed, but the project remains the same.

We see this project best displayed in the article about St. Olaf's S-STEM initiative that, with funding from the National Science Foundation, is enabling students from underrepresented groups to pursue studies in mathematics and statistics, biology and chemistry. Whether these students are the first in their families to attend college or are themselves recent immigrants, the support we are able to provide enables them to persist in their studies and to provide the intellectual capital our country needs.

Professor Dan Hofrenning's Interim course in American presidential politics focuses our attention on the thread that ties the St. Olaf of 2008 back to our founding in 1874. This course helps students understand, and teaches them to participate in, the process by which our country translates ideals into action, the process by which citizens select the leaders and policies that will carry the country forward.

Taken as a whole, the stories in this issue of the magazine show both how attentive the college is to its history and how thoughtfully it works to craft a modern identity that respects its past while remaining relevant to its present. It's a question of balance, to be sure, but I hope that every reader of *St. Olaf Magazine* closes this issue confident of the direction in which the college is headed. 🦁

David R. Anderson