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The Mission of Hillsdale College: An Inside Perspective

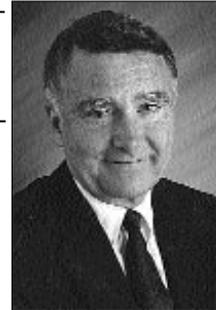
Just when they were knee-deep in student exams and all the other paperwork that comes at the end of the semester, we decided to give some of our faculty and staff an exam of their own. We asked each to write a brief essay on Hillsdale College's mission and how it relates to his or her academic area. Readers interested in a more extended discussion of the curriculum may order a copy of Provost and Associate Professor of Law Robert Blackstock's February 1995 *Imprimis* issue "Hillsdale College and the Western Tradition: Exploring the Roots of Freedom."

Please note: In later issues, we plan to feature faculty and staff at the Hillsdale Academy and in our teacher education and health and physical education divisions.



MAKING A LIFE

George Roche
President, Hillsdale College



The National Association of Scholars recently issued a report, "The Dissolution of General Education 1914-1993," documenting that a growing number of colleges and universities have eliminated core curriculum requirements and replaced them with a smorgasbord of trendy and politically correct courses. At Hillsdale College, we have always sought to measure our academic requirements against more enduring standards than the latest educational fad. The most important is our mission statement:

Hillsdale College is an independent, nonsectarian institution of higher learning founded in 1844 by men and women "grateful to God for the inestimable blessings" resulting from civil and religious liberty and "believing that the diffusion of learning is essential to the perpetuity of these blessings." It pursues the stated object of the founders: "to furnish all persons who wish, irrespective of nation, color, or

sex, a literary and scientific education" outstanding among American colleges and to combine with this such moral "and social instruction as will best develop the minds and improve the hearts of its pupils."



The College considers itself a trustee of modern man's intellectual and spiritual inheritance from the Judeo-Christian faith and Greco-Roman culture, a heritage finding its clearest expression in the American experiment of self-government under law.

By training the young in the liberal arts, Hillsdale College prepares students to become leaders worthy of that legacy. By encouraging the scholarship of its faculty, it contributes to the preservation of that legacy for future generations. By publicly defending that legacy, it enlists the aid of other friends of free civilization and thus secures the conditions of its own survival and independence.

In addition to fulfilling basic requirements in humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, all students must complete four specific courses: "Freshman Rhetoric and the Great Books I," "Freshman Rhetoric and the Great Books II," "The Western Heritage to 1600," and "The American Heritage." Critics claim that this kind of education is as impractical as it is old fashioned. But here is what our students have to say:

"I have been exposed more than in any other time in my life to the ideas of great thinkers, and I have found that many of the views I hold about the world are a direct result of the views those people held....Suddenly I realized I was not alone....This is an experience that everyone should go through."

"Hillsdale has taught me to appreciate the interconnectedness of all knowledge and to understand how this affects my life in the most unexpected ways."

"I have already seen the ways my thoughts and ideas have changed....I don't find this change very pleasant, and at times I want my ignorant youthful bliss back again, but I also know that in the long run the knowledge (and hopefully wisdom) I am gaining at Hillsdale will leave me with a stronger, truer faith, a stronger, truer character."

At Hillsdale we focus on the individual, on his talent, on a core curriculum, and on the liberal arts as they are traditionally understood. This proves to be very practical indeed. Imagine you are looking to hire a recent college graduate. Would you be more interested in (a) a "specialist" who received only narrow, technical training in one field, or (b) someone who had mastered basic academic skills, acquired broad knowledge, and developed critical thinking skills? If you picked (b), you came to the same conclusion as the over-

whelming majority of real-life employers who know that liberal arts graduates are more adaptable and versatile; most can turn to any trade or profession and learn it faster. But what is most important is that a classical liberal arts education helps people make the most of their whole lives, not just their careers. To keep this truth uppermost in our students' minds, our admissions department has adopted the motto: "Hillsdale College: Providing a Traditional Education for Making a Life as Well as a Living." ▲

PATHS TOWARD TRUTH

*Thomas Conner
Dean of Faculty and
Associate Professor of
History*



What sets the Hillsdale College faculty apart is

its dedication to fostering the intellectual growth of students and to designing and presenting a curriculum that lights paths toward truth in both the oldest and the newest ways. Our academic program is often characterized as "traditional," and its devotion to time-honored understandings of what constitutes an educated person makes it so. But, the faculty is equally dedicated to bringing before our students the most up-to-date ideas and knowledge from a wide variety of disciplines.

The various talents of the Hillsdale faculty are remarkable. Our professors come from the finest graduate programs in the world. Many of them are publishing scholars and acknowledged experts in their fields. But, the quality that defines our faculty more than any other is dedication to teaching and advising. This is evident in innumerable ways. It can be seen in the halls of our classroom buildings where dozens of faculty offices have open doors signaling an invitation for students to come in and talk about course work, scheduling, career plans, or, for that matter, anything at all. It can be seen in the minutes of faculty department meetings that reveal a deep and abiding commitment to effective pedagogy and academic rigor. It can be seen in the countless spontaneous interactions of faculty and students around campus—in the dining hall, at athletic events, concerts, plays, and honorary society meetings. The degree to which our faculty devotes time and talent to teaching—inside and outside the classroom—is extraordinary.

One of the best things I can report about my personal experience at Hillsdale is that I have had the freedom to do practically everything in teaching that I ever dreamed of doing—from offering

courses on the subjects I feel most passionately about in Western history to convincing skeptical students that those subjects are relevant and meaningful. In my capacity as an advisor, I have also had the opportunity to help many students make important decisions and learn to cope with the various challenges of young adulthood.

During nearly 14 years on the Hillsdale faculty, in addition to a rich array of traditional classroom experiences, I have climbed Alpine mountains, chipped pieces off the Berlin Wall, walked somberly among the crosses of the U.S. cemetery at Omaha Beach, strolled through Red Square in Moscow, and toured some of the great museums of Europe with my students. I am sure that my colleagues agree that the teaching environment here encourages us to reach students in the most creative and dynamic ways and to put a genuinely personal mark on our relationship with them. Indeed, this is something that has set Hillsdale College apart since its founding. ▲

STORIES AND THE "CULTURE STORY"

*John Willson
Dean of Social Sciences
and Salvatori Professor
of History and Traditional
Values*



One of the publications that explains the history, mission, and purpose of Hillsdale College states: "The ultimate aim of any college is the success of its graduates in their pursuit of wisdom, virtue, courage, and more tangible goals." Such success is hard to measure, but should be the motive behind a coherent curriculum. College students learn wisdom, virtue, courage and the other attributes of morally self-responsible citizens largely by studying what they have inherited from those who pursued these things in the past. This includes both *what* our forefathers learned (and failed to learn) and *how* they learned. A major premise of Hillsdale's curriculum is that they learned much from hearing, reading, and telling stories.

One wise observer once remarked, "The world is made up of stories, not of atoms." Many others have said this in different ways. Their message is not that we should deny material reality or stop studying atoms. They are simply reminding us that stories about human experience give meaning to existence. Hillsdale's curriculum begins with what we have learned to call the "culture story." In the social sciences, telling the culture story is initially the responsibility of two courses that all students are required to take: "The Western

Heritage" and "The American Heritage." According to the course proposal, the purpose of the first "is to acquaint students with the historical roots of the Western heritage, and in particular to explore the ways in which modern man is indebted to Greco-Roman culture and the Judeo-Christian tradition." "The American Heritage" picks up the story as Europeans moved westward in the 17th century and emphasizes the "American regime, the American experiment of liberty under law."

We are convinced that students are no longer taught "who they are," as the novelist Andrew Lytle put it. Before they can begin to comprehend non-Western cultures, they must first understand their own. Given the state of American education in general, this requires a major act of restoration. Two courses cannot accomplish it, but they can lay a foundation. In the sophomore year, all Hillsdale students must choose courses from other important disciplines housed in the division of social sciences: economics, business, accounting, political science, psychology, and sociology. Focused and refined, the culture study continues at that level.

It should be noted here that academic divisions at Hillsdale are not meant to represent discrete branches of knowledge. A division is merely a convenient way of organizing the faculty for administrative purposes. The entire social science faculty at Hillsdale would not make up even a medium-size department at most large universities. Hillsdale is a *collegium*, a university and not a multiversity. The intellectual coherence we seek is college-wide, not divisional. Deans of divisions function much like department chairpersons at larger schools.

Nevertheless, the term "social science" means something for the curriculum. We require all students to study political science, economics, psychology, and sociology (at a minimum, two of the four). Social science at Hillsdale assumes that truth exists and is worth pursuing; that reason applied to human affairs can lead to objective principles about human nature and society. With Aristotle, we start with science as respect for common sense, and we ascend from common sense through reason. We reject social science as a rationalist enterprise to construct social reality, which always leads to relativism and ideology. Homer's epics and the Old Testament portray fully functioning societies that do not rest upon scientific knowledge or defer to the authority of science. Our social science students confront first principles and the permanent things in the great literature of politics and society.

In all of Hillsdale's social science disciplines, introductory courses and majors reflect the liberal arts mission of the College and are in service of the culture story. Here are a few samples from the Hillsdale College 1996-1997 *Catalogue*:

- Psychology's first course introduces students to the major theoretical points of view "from which psychologists have tried to understand human thought and action." It is based on the question, "What should every liberally educated person know about this field of human knowledge?" The first course psychology majors take is a rigorous intellectual history of the discipline. Only then are they introduced to the empirical aspects of psychology, which dominate most contemporary programs in the field. Faculty work very closely with advanced students in individually designed research projects.
- Economics has introduced a foundation course in "political economy." It includes basic economic theory, but also the role of government and constitutional law. It is taught historically and includes classic writings in the field as well as public policy studies. The discipline continues its long-standing commitment to free market economics and its theoretical emphasis on Austrian School economics. In a recent development most upper division courses assume knowledge of advanced statistics and mathematics through calculus.
- Political science is grounded in political philosophy. Introductory students grapple with "the perennial problems of politics, with a special emphasis on the forms and formalities of liberty." They read such classic works of the Western political tradition as those by Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, *The Federalist*, Kant, Tocqueville, and others. As they move on to American government (including constitutional law) and international politics, a strong emphasis remains on close reading of political texts.
- The program in sociology is labeled "Sociology and Social Thought" because again the focus is historical and theoretical. It is broadly cross-disciplinary and aims at understanding contemporary society and culture. Before students confront the research methods that dominate contemporary sociology they are grounded in the social thought that has become such an important part of the Western culture story in the past two centuries.

Social science at Hillsdale is first historical and philosophical. Courses and majors are framed in

such a way as to reflect the chief concern of the curriculum: a coherence based on the mission statement. Faculty members tend to use traditional teaching methods, including lectures, discussion of original texts, and frequent recitation and writing assignments. As is true of the natural sciences, an important feature of all social science majors is the opportunity for students to do original research closely guided by professors, often in a one-on-one setting.

About a third of all Hillsdale graduates major in one or another of the programs in business administration or accounting. In many schools, business is set apart from the liberal arts, treated as "professional" or "practical" in a way the liberal arts are not. While it is true that business courses, and especially accounting courses, point students toward the "more tangible goals" in their future, at Hillsdale they are also a vital part of our understanding of the liberal arts. They are majors in a liberal arts college, not part of a separate business college or curriculum. Faculty are chosen for their broad learning and commitment to the mission of Hillsdale College rather than for narrow research expertise in finance or marketing. Concern for "wisdom, courage, virtue, and more tangible goals" is just as evident as in the other social sciences. The stories they teach are often case studies and are as challenging and as dramatic as the stories of ancient heroes.

As a teacher of what is often considered one of the most "irrelevant" subjects in the liberal arts (history), I have been fascinated for many years by how real the culture story eventually becomes for our graduates. Almost a year ago I received a message via the miracle of electronic mail from Manokotak, Alaska. It was from a 1987 Hillsdale graduate who had been my advisee and student. In his message, he reminded me, "I was not one of your top students," but learned "more than my transcripts showed." He added that while in college he was often "confused by the social mix" and sometimes felt out of place, but he was "always aware of the value of the education" Hillsdale provided.

He returned to his native Alaska after graduation, and wound up teaching in rural high schools. A classroom incident prompted him to write. Trying to figure out how to explain the American westward movement to a group of 14 Yup'ik Eskimo students, he came across Frederick Jackson Turner's classic essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," which he had read in my "American Heritage" course. His students were "intrigued" by it, and by the fact that it was from one of his college classes. He went on to tell them about his experience learning history at

Hillsdale and how the love his professors showed for the field was one of the main reasons he became a teacher. To me, he concluded, “The way you spoke of American history was as a great story that just needed unraveling.”

That unexpected message from a distant place and a distant past moved me to tears. And it should serve as a metaphor for everything we do. ▲

THE PREPARED MIND

Francis X. Steiner
Dean of Natural Sciences
and Mathematics and
Professor of Biology



“In the field of observation, chance favors the prepared mind.”—Louis Pasteur

These remarks, which are attributed to one of the greatest microbiologists of all time, lay the conceptual framework not just for a scientific education but for a true liberal arts education. You might be surprised at hearing that from a dyed-in-the-wool microbiologist, but in my 11th year at Hillsdale, I am confident this is truly what our college is all about.

Historically, Hillsdale has always demonstrated a strong commitment to science. The first biological laboratory in Michigan was organized in 1883 by Professor Daniel Fisk on the fourth floor of East Hall; over the years, it was followed by other science labs in Knowlton Hall, the Strosacker Science Center, and, most recently, the Herbert Henry Dow Science Building. In addition to “bricks and mortar” expansion, the science division will soon institute a new mathematics competency requirement and a year-long integrated science course for all incoming students.

We believe that science is a vital “way of knowing” about the universe. The courses we offer emphasize the philosophy of science, which helps students understand the process of scientific reasoning and empirical inquiry based on observation and verification by experimentation. We do not subscribe to the view that science and religion are incompatible. History is filled with countless examples of how they have worked together to provide humanity with untold blessings. We have a decidedly theistic science faculty at Hillsdale that believes, along with Galileo, “The Bible tells us how to get to Heaven, but science tells us how the heavens go.”

We also believe that science is an integral part of the liberal arts. Historically, the liberal arts were the higher arts, which among the Romans only freemen (*liberi*) were permitted to pursue. In the Middle Ages, the liberal arts consisted of seven

branches of learning that belonged to one of two groups: the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, and logic) or the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy). Briefly, what are the natural sciences at Hillsdale today? Biology considers the basis and phenomena of all life. Chemistry focuses on the composition of substances and the results of their interactions. Physics deals with matter, motion, energy, and the structure of the world. Closely allied to the natural sciences is mathematics, which examines relationships between space and quantity and offers symbols, abstract constructs, and patterns of logic. The computer sciences are a more recent but equally fascinating addition to this diverse collection of disciplines.

Since coming to Hillsdale, I have come to appreciate the fact that all three academic divisions—the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences—share more similarities than differences. No division stands by itself. Each has an outstanding teaching faculty, and the lack of a “publish or perish” environment enables professors to concentrate on students, not on their vitae. The natural sciences are particularly blessed with great facilities and “research-friendly” courses that allow for a great deal of experimentation and creativity. Other obvious attributes are small classes, frequent guest lecturers, and, in many cases, state-of-the-art equipment. However, the most important benefits of the education offered at Hillsdale are our professors’ constant interaction with students and the sound academic preparation that these students receive.

In the natural sciences, our professors introduce advanced research techniques at the undergraduate level. Serious interest, even among non-science majors, can often be sparked in this way. For example, we teach freshmen in survey courses to do “agarose gel electrophoresis” and analyze their own DNA fingerprint. In upper-level junior and senior courses, we encourage students to undertake ambitious projects that range from studying the effects of electromagnetic fields on melatonin production to studying the amount of metal alloy contamination in superconductor materials using powder X-ray diffractometry. Many of these projects are so successful that the students in charge are invited to present their results at scientific meetings.

In the natural sciences, we try to communicate the “how” and “why,” not just “what” we know. We want students to think, investigate, and discover for themselves. We also want them working side by side with us in the lab. For most of us, the lab is our favorite place to be, so you could say

that we aren't just teaching; we are doing what comes naturally. ▲

UNDERSTANDING MAN AND SOCIETY

*Thomas J. Burke, Jr.
Dean of Humanities and
Professor of Philosophy
and Religion*



The humanities division of Hillsdale College is comprised of seven departments: English, classics, modern languages, philosophy and religion, music, art, and theatre and speech. Each of these departments provides knowledge and skills central to a sound liberal arts education. We offer students an education predicated on the assumption of man's intrinsic and unique capacity for good and evil, nobility and baseness. The ancients saw mankind as just beneath the gods in ability and power, possessing a nature exalted above all other creatures; a rational being capable of discerning his place within the universe and creating a society of just and honorable citizens.

No single factor in ancient culture displays this more poignantly than Greek tragedy, in which the fall of the exalted is so injurious that it shatters any remnant of pride. In like manner, the Hebrews saw man "a little lower than the angels," crowned with glory and honor and having dominion over the works of God's hands (Psalm 8). The Hebrew counterpart to Greek tragedy—man's fall into sin—is, therefore, all the more tragic, cataclysmic, and wicked. This common, if not identical, vision of humanity as the flawed pinnacle of creation has driven art, literature, religion, and philosophy for the past three millennia, inspiring, provoking, disturbing, and directing the development of culture.

Western man sees himself as a lofty creature who must reestablish his place in the universe through the rejuvenation of his spirit, his mind, and his character. The task is not left to education alone, for faith and practical training are also essential. But in order to fulfill his place in the cosmos, man must know who he is and what he must do to fulfill his destiny. To live as he ought, he must understand his God, his world, and himself, and this requires a broad grounding in all those arts and sciences that address him *qua* human being.

The great literature of Western civilization is clearly fundamental to an adequate understanding of who we are and what we should and can be, and Hillsdale College has recognized this fact by establishing a year-long "Rhetoric and Great Books" course as part of students' inauguration into the liberal arts. Learning to read and under-

stand their literary heritage creates the proper foundation for all later learning. Further enrichment is provided through linguistic and cultural studies of ancient and modern languages and civilizations. To study Greek, Latin, German, French, Spanish, and other languages and cultures is to gain not only new skills but a new window on the world.

Art, music, and theatre do the same. It is on the stage, in the concert hall, and through creations of clay, wood, metal, marble, stone, and paint that some of society's most sensitive and insightful members have given emotional as well as intellectual expression to the ideals that motivate and inspire Western civilization. It is through the fine arts that the ideals and values a people hold precious come to life. The artist gives living form to beliefs and thereby holds a mirror up to the community, enabling it to see what appears when those beliefs become incarnate through the deeds of flesh and blood human beings—or what emerges when they are disdained or disregarded. Beauty gives form to body, and body gives life to form as the fine arts explore both the grandeur and the tragedy of life.

It is in the areas of philosophy and religion that the ideas expressed in literature, languages, and the fine arts find their formal expression and undergo logical analysis. Hillsdale's department of philosophy and religion provides a curriculum which enables students to learn about, think through, analyze, criticize, and develop the great systems of theology and philosophy that have dominated Western societies and driven culture and politics alike. Students are compelled to come to grips with questions concerning truth, aesthetics, and the moral imagination.

The humanities division, then, is that place where Hillsdale students study and learn about their world and themselves through the examination and contemplation of art, literature, theatre, and the great religious and philosophical traditions of the West. ▲

THE HIGHEST THINGS

*CarolAnn Barker
Vice President for
Student Affairs and
Dean of Women*



In his essay, "The Tension of Order and Freedom in the University," the late historian, philosopher, scholar, and friend of Hillsdale College, Dr. Russell Kirk repeated a Robert Louis Stevenson exercise called "The Reformers":

Four reformers met under a bramble bush. They were all agreed that the world must be changed.

"We must abolish property," said one.

"We must abolish marriage," said the second.

"We must abolish God," said the third.

"We must abolish work," said the fourth.

"Do not let us get beyond practical politics," said the first. "The first thing is to reduce men to a common level."

"The first thing," said the second, "is to give freedom to the sexes."

Said the third, "The first thing is to find out how to do it."

"The first step," said the first, "is to abolish the Bible."

"The first thing," said the second, "is to abolish the laws."

"The first thing," said the third, "is to abolish mankind."

As extreme as that moral tale appears, many of those solutions are a part of the mindset of citizens today. This confusing of the state of freedom with the state of nihilism is one which colleges must address when students from the society at large enter the college doors, for society appears to equate freedom with the absence of any authority; the effacement of traditions; the abolishment of rules, regulations, moral codes, or guidelines; and the denial of any absolutes all in the name of the right to pursue one's pleasures and individualism.

Some who don't know Hillsdale College and its philosophy ask, "Why if you don't believe in government control do you believe in rules that limit?" Our answer is that we incorporate certain policies and guidelines because "every right is married to a duty, every freedom owns a corresponding responsibility, and there cannot be a genuine freedom unless there exists also genuine order in the moral realm and the social realm." That philosophy has been the bedrock of our institution and the guiding light of our student affairs division at Hillsdale College.

It is markedly different from the philosophy of many other colleges and universities. These institutions' student affairs divisions are often bureaucracies run according to complicated and abstract theories like Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Reasoning (minus any reference to a Supreme Being), Arthur Chickering's Psychosocial Theory of Student Affairs, and Carl Rogers' Never-Ending Dialogue Method, in which "What I hear you saying" becomes "What I think I hear you saying," and this, in turn, becomes "What I'm perhaps uncertain of what I think I hear you saying." What's

wrong with "You said" and "I said"? (Oh, but such directness will annihilate any shreds of self-esteem to which a student might cling, according to most student affairs theories.)

Traditional principles have fallen out of favor and in many instances have completely disappeared in practice. Many colleges and universities now want to avoid any stand for absolutes. They reject outright the three basic tenets of student affairs at Hillsdale College:

- a college should have a genuine family-like atmosphere with caring, older adults;
- one of the most important lessons we can teach students is that actions have consequences, and one must develop the character to accept responsibility for both;
- and only the life lived according to the teachings of a Supreme Being is the life worth living.

Most colleges have also rejected the old concept of *in loco parentis*, "in the parents' place." Housemothers, housefathers, and other older adult supervisors have been stripped of authority or, more often than not, eliminated. A major newspaper reports that it is now possible for a typical college student to go about his daily campus routine without encountering a single adult beyond the age of 24 except for an occasional professor in a classroom (and even then he is more likely to come into contact with young teaching assistants).

In the 1960s and 1970s, students demanded, "Make school relevant—give us the real world!" Yet how realistic is an environment with no rules and regulations and no older adults? Of course, it is natural for students (youths between adolescence and adulthood) to push for unrestricted freedoms, but do they expect them to be granted fully? Rule-free dorms can be personal nightmares: bodily assault; rampant theft; strangers roaming the halls; unwilling witness to sexual acts; no quiet time for study or sleep; drunken students vomiting in the bathrooms. According to an April 1992 *Esquire* magazine article, rule-free dorms at the University of Massachusetts in recent years brought a rash of elevator "surfing." This requires getting stoned and/or drunk and then prying open elevator doors to attempt to jump on top of the enclosed box and to see how close one can get to the top of the elevator shaft without getting crushed. This dormitory scenario doesn't sound like "freedom" to me.

In the hundreds of pages of student affairs literature that come across my desk each year, I read legal advice such as, "Our beginning point is a recognition that the modern American college is

not an insurer of its students. Whatever may have been its responsibility in an earlier era, the authoritarian role of today's college administration has been notably diluted in recent decades." Or: "A college desiring to promote alcohol safety should be careful that its actions do not expose the institution to liability for failure to prevent an individual drinking incident." Translated: If we take no responsibility for guiding our students and create no sanctions for unacceptable behavior, we are actually safer under some laws. But, in the next breath, that same literature warns that the courts hold us ultimately responsible for students' well-being.

So do we drop our "family philosophy" and take our chances with the court system? Or do we continue to go against the tide because of our long-held principles? Do we write obscure and ambiguous rules to escape the legal snares? Or are we forthright in our expectations? Hillsdale's drug rule is: "Use, possession, or distribution of any amount of a controlled substance (drugs), except as permitted by law, will result in suspension for the semester. A second violation of this code section may result in expulsion." The rule is direct and unambiguous. Hillsdale College attempts to travel the high road—the *moral road*—in aiding students in the transition from youth to adulthood. We do not take the place of family, we emulate it. We act as caring, loving faculty and administrators while insisting that our students be morally, academically, and socially responsible.

Evidence of this responsibility and leadership can be seen in the Women's Council's work at the Salvation Army food pantry, in the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority's weekly volunteering at a local senior citizen's center, in Christian InterVarsity Fellowship's Sunday School teaching, and in the Delta Tau Delta fraternity's elementary school playground supervising. Hillsdale students volunteered nearly 6,000 hours of community service for the Fall 1996 semester alone.

We also continue to believe in and actively defend the second tenet of student affairs: Actions, just like ideas, have consequences. We teach our students to realize the enormous rewards of civil, courteous interactions: clean, quiet, residences that are a haven as well as a home away from home; a graffiti-free, litter-free, and safe campus; a student body that has the freedom to pursue academic excellence and campus activities within a consistent framework of rights and responsibilities.

Certainly, some students complain about our rules and charge us with being "out of sync" with the times. Others present good ideas for change. It is our duty in student affairs to listen, to respond, to say "yes" and to say "no" when appropriate, to stand on principle, even when it may be unpopu-

lar. Directing by example and thoughtfulness should always be our goal.

The third tenet of student affairs at Hillsdale College is that the spiritual dimension of life is essential to the welfare of our students and requires due respect, care, and nurturing. It is interesting to note how this dimension is regarded in two recent books explaining the preferred stance of most other institutions. In *New Futures for Student Affairs*, only one-and-a-half pages are devoted to naming three psychologists who have done extensive work on the spiritual dimension needed in a college student's life. In checking that same book's subject index, I found no indexing for "spirituality," "religion," or "God" with a capital "G." There were, however, 66 citations for "Students and AIDS." In a 660-page tome called *Student Services: A Handbook for the Profession*, the spiritual element is negligible. The Supreme Being is ignored as a major part of an individual's life.

Hillsdale is not a church-affiliated college. We do not represent any denomination, but we are an institution that has never forgotten its Judeo-Christian roots. Those roots are fed by thousands of years of faith. We begin each faculty and student federation meeting and each official campus ceremony with prayer. We offer majors in religion and philosophy and Christian studies. We allow student religious organizations to meet on campus. Our students and faculty represent many faiths, including Hebrew, Muslim, and Christian; we not only respect their religious freedom but we encourage it to flourish.

The great British social observer and writer G. K. Chesterton once said, "The tremendous examination of existence will not be based on whether we have been to college, but on whether we seriously, yet in good humor, confronted in our lives the highest things." With humility, I say to you, we at Hillsdale College consider the sons and daughters who have been entrusted to us for a short while as most worthy of the highest things. ♣

Character Counts

John Coonradt
Dean of Men



It isn't easy these days for students to be decent and responsible, or to even agree upon what those words mean in our troubled modern world. Pop culture, peer pressure, and increasingly lax educational standards make ladylike and gentlemanly behavior unattractive at best. What is "good" and what is "cool" are often seen as oppo-

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