

## from the president



"THE SPIRIT OF DEMOCRACY WILL LIVE ON IN THE HEARTS OF OUR STUDENTS."

**A**s I write this piece for *The Morningsider*, it is about a week away from the November 2nd election. I think most Iowans have had enough of political advertisements by now, regardless of party affiliation. Negative ads wear thin, and most voters have made up their minds by now. This year's election, though, has caused me to notice a real change in our students.

Following the tumultuous years of the Vietnam era, I believe students grew a bit apathetic when it came to politics. Democratic and Republican groups on campus were not particularly large or active, and voter turnout among college-aged students was generally quite low.

That has changed this year. Students on our campus and across the country have been quite active. Aggressive voter-registration campaigns were conducted on 95 percent of the country's college and university campuses. At Morningside, under the direction of Dr. Patrick McKinlay, associate professor of political science, a bi-partisan political activism group called the Morningside Civic Union (MCU) was revived. This group registered more than 400 Morningside students from Sept. 8 through the last voter-registration day. Students from the civic union talked with athletic teams, freshman seminars, fraternities and sororities, and staffed tables in the dining hall encouraging students to register.

There was no pressure to choose a party ... simply a reminder of our civic responsibility living in a country with free elections. It was a very tangible example of students living the values of our mission statement.

On October 22, Morningside was one of three satellite-voting centers in Sioux City. Western Iowa Tech Community College and Briar Cliff University hosted the other two. We had 418 people, many of whom were our students, vote that day. The MCU students helped to staff the tables.

Presidential election years have always been exciting in Iowa. But for the first time in a long time, college campuses are active participants in the process again. Many of our students are well informed, deeply committed, and passionate about their candidate. Some came out to support Vice President Dick Cheney earlier this summer when he spoke to us in Allee Gym, while others protested across the street. Some came out just last week when Senator John Edwards spoke to a crowd in the same location.

Hopefully, this will all be over in a week, barring any repeat of the 2000 fiasco. But the spirit of democracy, the engagement of our students in a civic responsibility, and the respect for the system will live on in the hearts of our students. Good colleges ought to promote that spirit. Morningside did.

John C. Reynders

**Top right photo: Sophomore Christianna Nelson was one of the students who worked hard to register voters this fall.**

**Below: Vice President Dick Cheney spoke at a political rally held on campus in June.**

