



President John Reynders congratulated each student during May commencement exercises.

from the president

Recently, I have been hearing and reading about a concept that is called The Wow Factor. Simply put, it's the concept of overwhelming someone with service or the quality of facilities to the point that they exclaim, "Wow! This service or place is incredibly special." This concept has become a mantra as the senior staff talks about the future of Morningside. We are getting closer when it comes to service. I get quite a few wow-factor comments on our admissions and financial aid staffs from prospective students and their parents. Many students are wowed by the personal attention they get from faculty. But the wow factor on the look of our campus hasn't measured up to the wow of its people. That's going to change here soon.

The look, feel, and functionality of our campus started to change with the renovation of the science building in 2001. The new apartments made quite an impact in 2003, and the Roadman Hall and Olsen Stadium renovations had a high impact in 2004 and 2005.

Quality of life and the richness of the total experience at Morningside have been tremendously improved, thanks to the generosity of our alumni and friend donors, and we are immensely grateful. Now, thanks to the continued generosity of alumni and friends and The Kresge Foundation, \$10 million more of wow lies ahead in the next year.

Construction begins this summer on a new 60-bed state of the art residence hall, which will feature 15 four-bedroom apartments complete with common

living area, kitchenette, and bathroom. The \$3.5-million residence hall will also include a fitness center and community space for meetings and presentations. To further the wow, this will be the first residence hall that is theme-oriented. Throughout the first semester of next year, staff will be finishing up details on a leadership academy that will be housed in the new hall.

Thanks to The Kresge Foundation and additional donors, the wow factor should continue. The Foundation's "challenge grant" of \$750,000 will help to raise funds for over \$6 million in projects, including renovation of the first floor of the Olsen Student Center; completion of Phase 2 of the campus design, which moves parking to the perimeter of campus; and construction of a softball complex at Bass Field, an outdoor performance center, and a new physical plant building. Several of the projects will begin this summer, with all of them scheduled to be completed by the end of next summer.

The Kresge Foundation is widely regarded in higher education circles as one of the most prestigious foundations in the country. The Foundation awards the challenge grants to encourage colleges and universities to complete capital campaigns, while reenergizing the donor base and building leadership for future campaigns. Campaign Chair **Jim Walker 1970, Tom Rice**, vice president for Institutional Advancement, and I welcome the challenge of raising the required \$6 million to secure the challenge gift—we have about \$5 million already—and look forward to

sharing our vision for a transformed Morningside campus space with alumni and friends in the coming year.

A group of graduating seniors told me the other day that they envied next fall's incoming freshmen because the college is about to do so many "neat" things next year. Maybe that's the best definition of the wow factor...always having our seniors envy the freshmen because "neat stuff" is happening! Have a nice summer!

John Reynders

President John Reynders was recently elected to serve on the board of directors for the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC), headquartered in Washington, D.C. Founded in 1956, CIC is a national association of small to mid-sized, independent, liberal arts colleges and universities working together to support college and university leadership, advance institutional excellence, and enhance private higher education's contribution to society. More than 550 independent colleges and universities, including liberal arts, comprehensive, and international institutions, are members of CIC.