I want to talk to you today about the New American College.

Education in America has a rich history, starting with the founding of Harvard University in 1631 to train ministers. In the years after, dozens of religiously based colleges—Yale, Brown and Princeton, for example—sprung up for similar purposes. Anthony Kronman, for many years the dean of the law school at Yale, writes in his book Education’s End that the next 200 years was the “age of piety,” where “college education rested on the premise that the ends of human living are not merely a fit subject of instruction but the one subject, before all others, that young men must study and learn."

College education was about learning biblical truth, character training, moral habits and the preparation of lives for noble service and living. Modeled on Oxford and Cambridge, these colleges became the foundation for the great American tradition of four-year residential colleges.

But by the time of the Civil War, what Kronman calls the “age of secularism,” our nation’s colleges had begun to lose their way. With the rise of secularism, the importation of the research university model from Germany and the downgrading of divine revelation, colleges (and now universities) began to worship at the altar of science, technology, instrumental reason and academic specialization.

Fading fast was the idea that colleges were to be about discovering the meaning of life, learning about the Bible and preparing for one’s calling, as well as the belief that they were to act as a training ground for maturity, character and noble habits of the heart.

If these happened at all, it was now in the domain of the humanities departments with the study of literature, philosophy and art. They became the only place in colleges and universities that still cared about the meaning of life and forming a philosophy of life.

The third phase, according to Kronman, began in the 1960s and continues up to the present. "It has," says Kronman, “been expelled from our colleges and universities, under pressure from the research ideal and the demands of political correctness.”

No longer do colleges and universities see their priorities as helping students find the meaning of life, building a life of strong character (what de Tocqueville called the “habits of the heart”), learning to serve others or preparing for civic responsibility.

Continued on page 8
This issue of the Providence newsletter is a wonderful glimpse into some of the glorious things God has been doing at Providence this fall.

In late September my son Jonathan (age 13) and I joined 25 Providence students and staff on Dr. Larry McHargue’s biennial earth science tour of the Mammoth Lake area of California. The four-day journey took us through deserts, into valleys, over mountains and around lakes, stopping for hikes, beautiful views and Dr. McHargue’s explanations of the fascinating geological formations of California and the interesting botany of the region. The trip opened my eyes to the uniqueness of California geography—so much of it formed by volcanic eruptions and its unique Mediterranean climate—that I now see the region in a different light.

Knowing how it was formed makes it even more beautiful. For four days we marveled at God’s beautiful creation—the mountains, rocks, trees and lakes—and agreed with John Calvin that He has created these things for our “delight and good cheer.”

The earth science tour is experiential learning at its best—learning inside and outside the classroom, combining the theoretical with the experiential. It is just another example of what makes Providence unique.

On October 18, Providence celebrated the inauguration of its third president. It was a great day for Providence, my family and myself, a day I will never forget. The participants in the ceremony spoke and prayed meaningfully; the charge by John Bernbaum was heartfelt and inspiring; the organ-led hymns were tremendous; and the investiture was Bernbaum was heartfelt and inspiring; the organ-led hymns were tremendous; and the investiture was

Inaugural celebration at Atchison Place

beautiful. For four days we marveled at God’s beautiful creation—the mountains, rocks, trees and lakes—and agreed with John Calvin that He has created these things for our “delight and good cheer.”

Later that evening at the president’s house, Providence hosted an outdoor informal dinner and celebration. Close to 250 people helped us celebrate the momentous occasion. It was a fabulous evening as faculty and staff, students and parents, alumni and board of trustee members, and friends and family enjoyed this amazing community and marveled at God’s faithfulness to Providence over the past nine years. Great food and fellowship marked the evening under the lights. It was one of those unique experiences, like a huge wedding celebration, that doesn’t come along often but, when it does, is memorable and meaningful and everyone has a great time. When the evening was over, I was filled with a quiet contentment (as well as being exhausted), knowing that God would continue to providentially direct our steps and lead us into the future with humility, boldness and confidence.

Inaugural celebration at Atchison Place

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Record Enrollment for Fall 2014

This fall Providence Christian College welcomed its largest class in school history for the second consecutive year. 49 new students arrived at Providence over the weekend, just in time for a two-day retreat in the San Bernardino Mountains in Forest Falls, California.

This year’s incoming class is a 69% increase from 2013’s incoming class and helped grow the total student body by 34%. The launch of a baseball program in the summer gave a boost to what was an already record recruiting class of new students.

New students’ home states include Arizona, New Mexico, Washington, Oregon, Colorado, Michigan, Hawaii, and Texas with over half of students coming from California. International students from Canada, Mexico, Brazil and the United Kingdom also began their tenure at Providence this fall.

Members of student senate, the resident life staff, and members of the inaugural First Year Experience (FYE) program joined the new students for a retreat from Sunday to Tuesday. Dr. Jim Belcher delivered three talks on Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s Life Together, sharing moving details about Bonhoeffer’s last hours alive. Dr. Belcher stressed bearing one another’s burdens in the Providence community. FYE mentors led discussions throughout the retreat, which also included zip-lining, soccer, and swimming.

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Dr. Larry McHargue’s earth science trip has quite the reputation in the Sea Bagger Nation. It is nearly impossible to spend four years at Providence without hearing rumors of strange natural hexagons at Devil’s Postpile, the delicate tufa towers, and piles of huge rocks light enough to hoist above your head. This year, as a senior, I finally got to go on the famed earth science Avodah and lift those rocks over my head, as has every earth science class before me. The hype did not disappoint. The trip left me with an unforgettable glimpse of God’s nature through his creation, his nature.

While the focus of California is often its bewitching Golden Coast, the focus of this class and trip is the geological, geographical, biological and ecological (to name a few) functions of our planet, specifically those seen in California. In late September, the earth science class spent four days wandering to and around northeastern California to experience God’s creation beyond the textbook by seeing the earth’s grand cycles in action, clambering through magnificent geological structures and physically interacting with the creation we were learning about.

Our trip began on the drive north to Mammoth, CA, as we stopped and explored Red Rock Canyon’s towering sandstone cliffs in the middle of the desert and Fossil Falls—black basalt (hardened lava from a visible nearby volcano) polished by the once-flowing Owens River. When we arrived in Mammoth, we spent three days venturing from Convict Lake, with a harsh wind that didn’t stop some from braving the icy blue water, to Hot Creek, with milky turquoise water pools heated by magma coming to the surface of the earth. We saw the effect of Los Angeles’s water consumption and subsequent crisis, with many of the lakes at a clearly alarming low.

One of my favorite stops of the trip was We hiked into Panum Crater, a young volcanic crater full of beautiful shards of black glassy obsidian and lightweight pumice, which we had fun lifting. We climbed up and slid down a gigantic granite dome in Tulumne Meadows.

Outside Yosemite. We ended the last night of our trip at Mono Lake, admiring the graceful tufa towers and watching the sunset over the peaceful playa. Catching the last light of the day, we climbed down into an earthquake fault, attempting to see into the great depths of the earth through a crack in the fault’s icy bottom.

Colossians 1:17 tells us that Christ “is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (ESV). Before this class, I often thought of the earth as a static thing—that God created the world way back when, and occasionally we see his power in a natural disaster, but otherwise, concerns of physical creation were taken care of in Genesis. On our trip, there was an earthquake swarm in Mammoth with over 500 earthquakes in twenty-four hours. Dr. McHargue excitedly showed us each of their locations on his iPhone earthquake app, and, looking at the tiny screen showing all those earthquakes happening around us, I was struck that Christ, alive in me, is physically holding the world together, sovereign over every tiny movement of the earth’s crust, every raindrop and every melting glacier.

One thing I greatly appreciate about Dr. McHargue is that the idea of science being at odds with faith and Scripture is not even a consideration for him. In the class, he begins each section by giving us verses about the things we will be studying, showing that every small topic of our study is the Lord’s. Isaiah 40:12 reminds us, “Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a balance? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable” (v. 8). The earth science trip helped me to know and hear this more clearly.
Dr. McHargue is also known for a deep love and devotion to his wife Lynne, whom he called on the phone daily during the trip. Larry and Lynne originally met at an Orthodox Presbyterian church in Eagle Rock. They married less than eight months later. Since 1982, they have attended Calvary Presbyterian Church (OPC) in La Mirada, where Dr. McHargue serves as an elder.

Dr. McHargue knew from an early age that botany, geology, and history were his real interests. He studied biology at Occidental College in Los Angeles. After Occidental, he pursued middle school teaching by earning a teaching credential and his master’s degree from Cal State-Los Angeles. “It was evident pretty quickly that teaching that age group wasn’t for me,” he says.

From there, Dr. McHargue completed a PhD in botany at University of California-Irvine and was hired not only to teach, but also to help build a science program at Vanguard University in Orange County. Aided by a nearly photographic memory for dates and the Latin names of plants, he has devoted his life to unfolding the complexity of the natural world for his students.

In the early 2000s, founding Providence president Jim Den Ouden called Dr. McHargue to be on Providence’s first board. Since then he has served the Providence community with enthusiasm and cheerfulness.

In connection with this fall’s earth science Avodah, senior Ian Harrison and Max Belz, director of experiential learning, set about and interviewed Dr. McHargue. To listen to a recording of the interview, visit our website at http://www.providencec.edu/2014/11/18/interview-with-larry-mchargue/
Now higher education is about specialized research and contributing to the technological advancement of our society (for the professors) and about pre-professional vocational training and ethical and moral experimentation (for the students). But the shift away from the early foundations of what a college was about—a shift from the true end of education—has been a disaster. All too often it has led to our nation’s students being “academically adrift”—ill prepared for adulthood and productive, meaningful careers, and distracted and injured by dorm brothels, political correctness and a lack of religious freedom on campus.

According to a myriad of studies (and they seem to come out every year), we have become a nation of individuals who are adrift, lost in the transition—who cannot read, write or speak well, who do not possess deep and broad learning, who cannot problem solve, think critically or work well in diverse groups; and who don’t possess curiosity or a love of learning. Each year in studies, employers complain about the quality of college graduates and how ill prepared they are for work. And sadly we have brought this crisis upon ourselves.

Even in the elite colleges and universities that enroll the best of the best, the reality is not any more hopeful. Former Ivy League professor William Deresiewicz (someone who spent his university) writes in his new book, Excellent Sheep, that although students are talented and driven, they possess little curiosity or desire to learn.

Most of their energy is put into networking, building a resume and extracurricular activities. Deresiewicz says all this pressure to succeed has made them “anxious, timid, and lost, with little intellectual and extracurricular activities. Deresiewicz says all this pressure to succeed has made them “anxious, timid, and lost, with little intellectual curiosity and a stunted sense of purpose.”

And that brings us to today. We stand at a unique moment in history, a time for us to rethink and re-envision what higher education can look like. It is a time to reclaim the best of the great American tradition: liberal arts colleges that are residential and rooted in Christian community and theology; colleges that believe their true end includes helping students to discover the meaning of life; inculcate habits of the heart; train students to think, write and speak well; help them discover purpose and meaning in life; and, throughout it all, teach that the chief end of human is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. It is time for a New American College.

First we are a residential, four-year college, committed to living life together. Modeled after the monastic communities that started Oxford and Cambridge, we are a community of learning filled with caring mentors, talented professors and committed staff members.

This environment is essential for the kind of life-changing transformation that we think college education is capable of and can’t accomplish in distance learning or commuting. So much of the best learning takes place between classes—in discussions over meals, in the hallways of the resident halls, or over coffee in those spontaneous and wonderful moments that only come in the residential model.

Reformed

Like the colleges in the “age of piety,” Providence is rooted in the Bible, guided by our historic creeds and confessions and inspired by our history. Providence was founded nine years ago by Christians firmly planted in the Reformed tradition, a tradition that finds its best articulation in confessions and catechisms like the Belgic Confession, The Heidelberg Catechism and the Westminster Confession of Faith. We are Reformed and Presbyterian and, in fact, our board of trustees represents eight different denominations in those traditions.

It’s a beautiful tradition that stresses the providence of God (which means the fatherly care of God) that the image of God is in people, that we have our calling in life from God and that God has not given up on his good creation, even though it has fallen, and neither should we. It stresses God’s sovereign care over all things, including work, science, art and culture, and stresses the need for Christians to think Christianly about all things and work toward the transformation of all of life, what we often call the reweaving of the broken fabric of the world.

It is a tradition rooted in the divine, supernatural revelation of God found in the Bible. From the Bible we learn all we need to know about our fallen condition and our need for a Savior. It is a tradition that right from the start asks “What is your only comfort in life and in death?” and answers “That I am not my own but belong, body and soul, to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.”

We also learn that God speaks not just through the Bible but he speaks through his creation—what theologians call general revelation. In it we can learn much about human nature and God’s world. In his creation God has embedded his wisdom and his norms, and it is up to us to discover them.

Liberal Arts

And this leads me to the third way that we are modeling the New American College—the study of liberal arts and sciences.

Because of our commitment to general revelation, we believe we can study the finest books, art and culture and learn much about God’s world. We believe all truth is God’s truth. We are thus committed to a broad liberal arts education where our students take at least half of their classes in core liberal arts classes like theology, history, literature and philosophy.

But the liberal arts is not only about content, it is a way of learning. It is contrasted with specialized pre-professional learning and vocational training, which are now taught at the majority of institutions of higher learning in our country—products, I might add, of the shift to research universities and the abandoning of the meaning of life questions.

Continued on next page
Because it is here that we get to the heart of the New American College and Providence.

First, it teaches that learning is for its own sake and not just for a diploma, a means to an end. We are learning to slow down, read carefully, think deeply, ask deep questions, clarify our identity and discipline our mind. We are learning to be curious, to realize that knowledge brings great joy and that wonder and curiosity are more important than IQ—a point made by a recent study in the Harvard Business Review.

In the end, we are creating lifelong learners who forever remain curious about God’s Word, his world and their place in it.

And may I add what a great city Pasadena is in which to study the liberal arts and sciences! You can learn about Van Gogh and Renoir and stand before their works at the Norton Simon; you can read the Magna Carta in history class and then see it in person at the Huntington Museum; you can study the history of Pasadena architecture and then tour the historic Gamble House by the Gamble family of Proctor and Gamble fame. Pasadena is our classroom, the liberal arts are our texts. It’s an unprecedented opportunity for our students. Providence is the New American College at its best.

Second, the liberal arts are about abilities. It is not, as some say, “a waste of time,” or “not practical” to study philosophy or art or the Bible. It isn’t something that should be relegated to one’s free time.

Recently I was watching a business show on cable that listed five majors that shouldn’t be studied in college because they won’t help you get a job. In fact, the host seemed to be blaming these majors for the problems with the job market and the economy.

As I watched the program, I realized that each one of the five majors the host listed are on our list of concentrations at Providence. But what the host didn’t tell his audience is that 96 percent of all students are already NOT studying these things and are in pre-professional majors like engineering and computer science. Only 4 percent of college graduates are from liberal arts and sciences colleges. So, I say with respect, don’t blame liberal arts for the weak job market in this country or for students who are not prepared to enter it.

Study after study shows that employers complain about the kind of graduates colleges and universities are pumping out—graduates who can’t write well, think critically, problem solve or work in diverse groups well. But what a surprise—this is exactly what the liberal arts does best. It is what Providence does best.

Because the New American College is academically rigorous, students learn how to write well, speak with fluency, think critically and analytically, problem solve and demonstrate leadership and a strong sense of purpose and calling. In fact, at Providence we are working on a list of the eight core abilities that our students will have at the end of their education. And most of these abilities are exactly what employers are looking for, which is why liberal arts education is on the rise again.

For the past decade, communication skills—the ability to write and speak clearly—have been at the top of the list in major national surveys of what employers are looking for. Along with communications skills, employers yearn for graduates who can think critically, problem solve and relate well with others.

They aren’t as concerned about technical skills; these they can train in months. But the other skills take years to learn—some might say four years at least to make a good start.

At Providence, as at the New American College, our students learn these abilities through rigorous class material, reading, discussions, papers and presentations. They learn it from our experiential learning emphasis, internships, study abroad, service learning and leadership opportunities on campus. In fact the New American College connects its teaching and learning to these learning outcomes, to the cultivation of these abilities.

So as I sat there with my father-in-law, watching the cable business show on cable that listed five majors that shouldn’t be studied in college because they won’t help you get a job, I noticed that the host was surrounded by four sharp, well-spoken panelists—four people who were at the pinnacle of business and media success.

One by one I started googling their names; what I discovered did not surprise me: each one was a graduate of a small liberal arts college. Exactly!
NEW FACULTY & STAFF

Ben Austin
Ben Austin has been hired as an adjunct instructor in biblical and theological studies as well as cycling coach. Ben’s responsibilities include teaching Greek I, New Testament Studies and Epistles and Revelation, while also recruiting young men and women to race mountain and road bikes. Ben graduated from Trinity Christian College, where he studied theology and history. He went on to Calvin Theological Seminary, where he earned an MTS and a ThM in ancient Near East languages and literature. Ben recently studied for his PhD at Leiden University in the Netherlands, where he learned to cycle in a fierce headwind.

Justin Baker
Justin Baker has been hired as athletic recruiter and associate head women’s volleyball coach. His primary responsibility is recruiting for the new women’s volleyball, women’s soccer, and men’s and women’s cycling teams, along with the current men’s baseball, men’s and women’s cross country, and men’s soccer teams. Justin received his BA in religious studies from Westmont College and his MDiv from Fuller Seminary. Justin has a long history in the reformed church, having attended Presbyterian churches for the majority of his life. He has been involved in sports of all kinds as a spectator, player, coach and official. Justin and his wife Carissa have been married for seven years and are the proud parents of their one-year-old daughter, Elianna.

Beth McConaghy
Beth McConaghy grew up in St. Louis, Missouri and attended college and graduate school in nearby Columbia. Her first teaching job was at a community college in St. Louis, where she discovered a love for teaching writing to college students. Beth received an MFA in creative writing and is currently a PhD candidate in creative writing and literature at the University of Missouri. This summer, she and her husband Kyle broke past the Missouri state line and moved to Los Angeles, where Kyle works as a filmmaker and Beth is writing her dissertation.

Larry Reynolds
Larry Reynolds is the assistant baseball coach and recruiting coordinator. He has over 20 years of coaching experience. A native of Los Angeles, Coach Reynolds earned his bachelor of science in accounting from Pepperdine University. He is in the process of completing his master of arts in coaching and sports administration at Concordia University. Coach Reynolds has coached at the youth, high school and college levels. He has two sons, both of whom enjoy sports.

Sarah Rippetoe
Sarah Rippetoe has been appointed as the graduate assistant for experiential learning. In this role Sarah is developing a peer mentorship program for first-year students, encouraging first-year-related initiatives and assisting in the creation of a student internship program. She holds a bachelor’s degree in biblical studies from Covenant College and is currently working on a master’s of science in college counseling and student development at Azusa Pacific University. Her work in higher education began at Covenant College as she assisted residential life and then became a resident assistant for a year. In the years after graduating, she had the opportunity to work in three different roles within higher education for a total of seven years. From her experiences in admissions, to program assistant for a graduate nursing department, to overseeing a campus activities program, she has learned a great deal about her passion for encouraging the development and growth of the students she works with.

Sarah and her husband Mark have two children, Chase and Livi. They live on campus and regularly open their home to students.

Jesse Robinson
Jesse Robinson has been hired as a student life assistant. His main responsibility is to assist the director of student life in overseeing and implementing the student life program. He has his hand in many aspects of student life, including student counseling, scheduling chapel speakers, and even assisting with our burgeoning athletic program.

He comes to this position with experience and love for student ministry, especially in a residential collegiate setting. Originally from Texas, he worked as a resident assistant and dorm coordinator at West Texas A&M University while studying for his undergraduate degree in student life. While studying for his MDiv at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, PA, he continued in student ministry as the senior high director for New Life Dreher Presbyterian Church (PCA).

He comes to Providence from beautiful Vancouver, where he was serving in a ministerial internship at Faith Presbyterian Church (PCA). He is excited to return to student life in a collegiate setting and especially at a confessionally Reformed school. He has enjoyed the warm community of the Providence staff and has been very impressed with the caliber of student thinkers he’s encountered here.

Jan Van Spronsen
Jan Van Spronsen has been hired as an adjunct professor to teach classes in the education concentration. She received her undergraduate degree in special education from Calvin College and her masters in educational leadership from Point Loma Nazarene University. She has thirty-four years of experience in education as an instructor for student in special education, as a regular classroom teacher, and as a school principal.

In addition to teaching at Providence, she is currently serving area schools as an educational consultant regarding curriculum development, support for students with special needs, and in-service training of faculty. She finds great joy in helping schools and students achieve success by using their strengths. Jan says, “It has been an added delight to be able to be a part of the journey of a new generation of educators by serving at Providence!” Jan and her husband Roger have been married for thirty-four years and live in Glendora, California. They have three grown children, two of whom are teachers and the youngest of which is finishing his last year of college.
ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2013–2014
(Year ending 6/30/2014)

INCOME // 2013–2014
Contributions $1,580,674
Net Tuition & Fees 560,857
Auxiliary Services 423,840
Other Income 49,763
Total Income $2,615,134

INCOME 2013–2014
Contributions 60%
Net Tuition & Fees 22%
Auxiliary Services 17%
Other Income 6%

EXPENDITURES // 2013–2014
Instruction & Academic Support $1,620,930
General & Institutional Support 583,431
Fundraising 283,298
Total Expenses $2,487,659

EXPENDITURES 2013–2014
Instruction & Academic Support 65%
General & Institutional Support 24%
Fundraising 11%

INCOME 2013–2014
Contributions 65%
Net Tuition & Fees 11%
Auxiliary Services 24%

EXPENDITURES 2013–2014
Instruction & Academic Support 51%
General & Institutional Support 47%

TOTAL INCOME $2,615,134
TOTAL EXPENDITURES $2,487,659

Percentage Gain (vs. ’13)
Residential Students 89%
Commuter Students 11%

DENOMINATIONAL PROFILE
64% CONFESSIONALLY REFORMED
2% REFORMED OTHER
3% BAPTIST
2% LUTHERAN
29% PROTESTANT OTHER

GEORGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN
91% U.S. (15 STATES)
9% INTERNATIONAL (4 COUNTRIES)

FALL 2014 ENROLLMENT & ACADEMICS
Total Student Body 91
Student/Faculty Ratio 11.2:1
Gender
34% Res.
11% Com.
89% Female
11% Male

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1. $5000 GUARANTEED SCHOLARSHIP
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2. THE PROVIDENCE PROMISE
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Classes Begin // January 13, 2015
Avodah: Musical Wicked // January 21 & 22, 2015
Campus Visit Days // February 6 to 7, 2015
Avodah: Study of Korean Culture // February 7, 2015
Academic Conference // February 12 to 13, 2015
Avodah: Mexico Cross Cultural Study // February 14 to 15, 2015
Spring Banquet // February 28, 2015
Campus Visit Days // March 6 to 7, 2015
Spring Break // March 23 to 27, 2015
Golf Tournament // April 13, 2015
Final Exams // May 4 to 8, 2015
Class of 2015 Commencement // May 9, 2015
Avodah Immersion: Jakarta, Indonesia // May 11 to 29, 2015