

six years

OF FORWARD THINKING

DC President Dr. Gerald Wood is stepping down after a successful six-year tenure

by Kathy Punches, Director of Public Relations and Marketing

Dr. Gerald Wood will step down as President of Defiance College effective June 30.

Dr. Wood noted that his decision, based on transitions in his professional and personal life, was a difficult one. “I have been president of Defiance College for nearly six years. They have been six great years that I will always cherish and appreciate what has been accomplished. However, I am ready to take on new challenges,” he announced to the campus on May 12.

“Likely, I will have one more assignment before retiring, and there are a number of other things I would like to do,” he said. “Also, in my personal life, my fiancé Gayle and I, as we prepare for marriage, believe a fresh start and new opportunity is best for both of us as we write a new chapter in our lives together.”

Dr. Wood lauded the College’s administration, faculty, staff, students, trustees and alumni. “They have been wonderful to work with as we together

developed a distinct vision for Defiance College. I will miss them. Also, I have appreciated the support of the people of Defiance and all of Northwest Ohio. This is a great community in which to live and work. It has truly been a privilege to serve as President of Defiance College. I will always remember my days in Defiance fondly and wish the College the very best.”

Dr. Wood said that he will continue to work through June 30 so that a smooth transition in leadership can take place.

Philip Mallott, chairman of the College’s Board of Trustees, said the board will proceed immediately with a search for a successor, naming a committee to work with a search firm. Serving as interim president during the search process will be Dr. Charles Warren, former dean of Defiance’s McMaster School for Advancing Humanity.

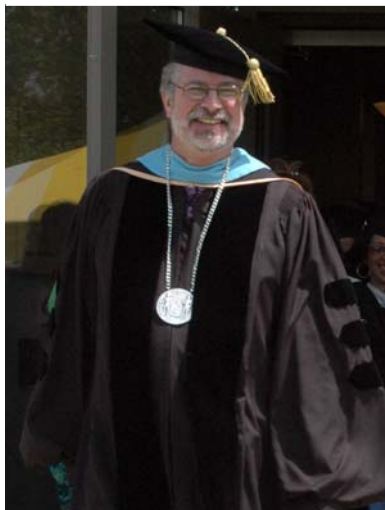
Mallott cited Dr. Wood’s six years of leadership highlighted by increased recognition of the College’s unique style of student engagement giving Defiance College a niche in higher education.

Dr. Wood was named the 17th president of Defiance College in 2002. During his

tenure, the College has made a name for itself as an institution educating students to become effective leaders within a democratic society. Dr. Wood introduced a strategic vision of a “culture of engagement” that melds the civic, academic, and cultural components of engagement into the student learning experience.

At the forefront of engagement has been the McMaster School for Advancing Humanity which has grown during Dr. Wood’s presidency to a level where undergraduate students regularly conduct original research in response to community identified needs in high-need areas of the U.S. and the world. Student and faculty projects in domestic and international locations are supported by significant planning and research conducted by fellow students on campus.

Mallott noted Dr. Wood’s leadership in the development of new majors to appeal to 21st century students, including computer forensics and international and global studies. In 2007, the College unveiled a groundbreaking program for adolescents with autism, the Hensch Autism Studies Program.





Most recently, Dr. Wood led a collaborative effort of education and health care in Northwest Ohio to create a nursing program for bachelor's degree-seeking students.

Over the past six years, the College has made significant progress toward improving campus facilities. Dr. Wood developed a creative partnership with the Defiance Area YMCA, and through the generosity of George and Sandy Smart, created the Smart Fitness Center. The main science building, Tenzer Hall, received major renovations and a state-of-the-art forensic science lab through Dr. Wood's securing of congressional support for a \$250,000 appropriation. He also led the planning process for updating of residence halls including a complete renovation of Whitney Hall, currently in progress.

"President Wood's fund-raising and development efforts have positioned the College to be able to continue to improve its facilities and programs," said Mallott. "He has also helped Defiance College develop key organizational partnerships that will benefit the community and the College in the years to come."

Mallott continued, "Jerry Wood has

given passionate and dedicated leadership to Defiance College. I would like to thank him for what he helped to accomplish at Defiance College and wish him all the best in his future endeavors."

During Dr. Wood's presidency, Defiance College has been named as one of 81 colleges and universities around the country to the *Colleges With a Conscience* national guidebook published by Princeton Review and Campus Compact. Defiance College has also been recognized by U.S. News and World Report: America's Best Colleges as one of the top tier of comprehensive colleges in the Midwest as well as one of the top schools in the nation for service learning programs. Defiance College has been named with distinction to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for the past two years.

In 2006, Dr. Wood was invited to attend the Council of Europe Higher Education Forum in Strasbourg, France, which addressed the role of educating students for democratic leadership. He has been actively involved in numerous state and national educational organizations.

Prior to his arrival at Defiance College, Dr. Wood had extensive experience in higher education administration at Davis and Elkins College, Waynesburg College, and West Virginia Wesleyan College. He holds a doctor of education from West Virginia University, a master of divinity from Methodist Theological School in Ohio, and bachelor of arts degree in history from West Virginia Wesleyan College. He also did post-graduate studies at Emory University in Atlanta.

Dr. Warren, retired president of Lynchburg College, comes as a familiar face to DC and the local community. He led the McMaster School for Advancing Humanity during the 2004-05 academic year. Most recently, he was interim president at Bluefield College in Virginia during 2006 and 2007.

"Nancy and I are deeply honored to have another opportunity to be a part of the DC community," said Dr. Warren. "We remain very impressed with Jerry's creative vision and with his many accomplishments – along with those of the cabinet, faculty, staff, students and trustees – during his tenure. We look forward to helping maintain and increase DC's positive momentum during this period of transition." ♦