

NU Enrollment Surpasses 5,000

Dr. Alan Cooper, President



On September 2, 2011 the student body at NU reached an all-time high as the 5,000th student registered to begin their journey of study. We rejoice to see what God has done with our efforts, especially considering the fact that this milestone represents a doubling of the student body in just four short years, since 2007 when enrollment stood at 2,500. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve each of you in your pursuit of biblical training, realizing that our growth reveals God’s blessing in your lives and for the university.

We certainly live in exciting times. Even though daily news may be filled with negativity and reports of regional turmoil, we are fully confident in the fact that God remains firmly in control. Regardless of uncertainty in common aspects of life or what we may face individually, we have an opportunity to join God in what He is doing throughout the world, especially in our local communities. In fact, it is precisely during times of distress that our calling to share God’s story becomes even more important. I encourage you to consider how you fit into His plan for your sphere of influence – how will you use the training you receive at NU to benefit others? What will you do today?

In addition to the 5,000th student milestone, we at NU also celebrate positive news regarding our pursuit of accreditation. On September 15, 2011 we were notified of the accrediting board’s permission to continue on to the next step. We thank God for His blessing on our efforts. I encourage you to continue to pray for the dedicated NU staff who put in countless hours to help us reach these goals.

Yes, these are exciting days for NU, as we celebrate these two latest achievements. As we look to the future, keep in mind that you are part of an organization driven by purpose – to share God’s story throughout the world, in whatever circumstance and place He has given to you.

Current Enrollment

Current through 9/1/2011

Total Students: 5,006

Male - 4,135

Female - 871

Undergraduate - 4,430

Graduate - 573

Total Countries: 143

Top Ten Countries:

United States	1,883
Ethiopia	355
South Africa	311
Nigeria	258
Egypt	195
Kenya	195
Iran	166
Cameroon	112
Ghana	83
Malawi	78

States Now Requiring Licensure

Distance education is becoming increasingly dominant in the United States. Many are finding with their schedules and demands on their time, it is more convenient for them than traditional education. For this reason, some state governments are taking a closer look at distance learning institutions and imposing licensure requirements to be met for operation within their state.

Requirements differ by state. In some instances, NU may not pursue licensure due to the expense. In other cases, NU is

denied licensure because of its unaccredited status although the institution has passed the readiness assessment with a national accrediting commission.

Currently, new students who register with a physical address in Alabama, Arkansas, Nevada, or Wyoming may not expect to receive a degree.

The licensure regulations will not affect continuing students. Students who registered before September 1, 2011, in Arkansas and September 16, 2011, in Alabama may complete their programs.

Metacognition: Thinking About My Thinking

Martell Souder, Director of Student Services

"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;. . ." (Psalms 139:14)

Our Creator made us with a magnificent and complex organ to control all the other parts of our body – the brain. The brain is fascinating, mysterious, and brilliant. Scientists have discovered amazing information in the last century about memory and how our brain learns, but there is still so much we don't understand. Why can't we remember the name of a childhood friend but when we smell cookies baking, we immediately get an image of our grandmother's kitchen? After spending hours studying, why can't you remember what you learned long enough to do well on an exam?

Metacognition is awareness and understanding of one's thinking or in simpler terms it is "thinking about my thinking" (Dictionary.com, LCC). Because learning is so complex, the more we understand our thinking, the better students we will be. Every time we learn

a new piece of information the brain creates new pathways or connections between brain cells (Funston and Ingram 35). The important question for a learner is, "Will the new information be stored or does it just pass through short-term memory and end up in a trashcan?"

Short-term Memory

Every piece of information that enters our brain comes through short-term memory but only stays about 30 seconds. Imagine all the bits and pieces of information your body takes in as you read this newsletter:

- Sensory – The chair is hard; the air is too warm; a clock is ticking; hot coffee aroma drifts from a cup.
- Procedural – Looking at the letters that connect into words, sentences, and thoughts that allow you to read this page. Computer procedural information – moving the mouse, scrolling down the page.

What if we consciously had to remember to breathe in and out, make sure the heart is beating, the eyes and ears function as designed? Isn't this body God created a wondrous thing?

Since we cannot possibly hold all the information we receive in a day within short-term memory, what can it do? Think of short-term memory as a trashcan and long-term memory as a large, locked safe. Much of our short-term memory information is bound for the trashcan and is limited to holding 5-7 numbers, letters, words, or designs (Funston and Ingram 37).

If you need to remember someone's phone number (7 digits long), what will it take to remember it tomorrow or next week? Do you need to write it down several times or use it many times before you can retrieve it next week? But do we need to even know a phone number today? Technology has changed what we need to remember and how we need to remember it. Our cell phones store phone numbers for us, and today most people do not even punch in a complete phone number; they just look it up in their phone. The way we search for information has changed because of technology as well. We do not have to remember the type of reference book to use, where to find it in the library or on our bookshelf, or even how to use the reference book. We just "Google" our question on the Internet to find an answer in seconds.

Long-term Memory

How can we hold on to information that comes into the short-term memory bank or how do we move it into long-term memory? Scientists have learned that two things have to occur: the memory must be reinforced and the information must connect to your schema. Your schema is the mental pattern or organization in your brain, but it changes all the time as you add information. Since the brain is constantly checking for connections, this is helpful information for our learning. The study guides on the NU website encourage you to take notes, make charts, use organizers, or mind-maps to help your brain make those connections. We will continue to add to these strategies to help you improve your ability to remember information.

Here is a quick strategy to try for reinforcing information – the first essential strategy for moving information into the long-term memory vault. The 10-24-7 Principle comes from *Quantum Teaching* (DePorter, Reardon, Singer-Nourie 150). Imagine a combination lock with numbers around the edge from 1-24. Think of the three numbers 10, 24, and 7 as bright red and a large blue M in the middle. These numbers determine when you need to review or rehearse new information. After you read or hear something you need to remember, review it within 10 minutes, again in 24 hours, and then within 7 days. Why is the lock used in this strategy? Remembering where the information is, or Loci mnemonics, is a strategy to engage visualizing in the brain. Imagine you are turning the lock to the 10 and remember 10 minutes, then turn it to 24 and remember in 24 hours you should go over this information. Do the same for the number 7. Try this strategy and see if it helps you move information you need to remember to your long-term memory.

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DePorter, Bobbi; Reardon, Mark; and Singer-Nourie Sarah. *Quantum Teaching: Orchestrating Student Success*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1999.

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Funston, Sylvia and Ingram, Jay. *It's All in Your Head: A Guide to Your Brilliant Brain*. Toronto: Maple Tree Press, 2005.

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Student Services

student.services@nationsu.org

For general inquiries, prison students should
contact:

Prison Services

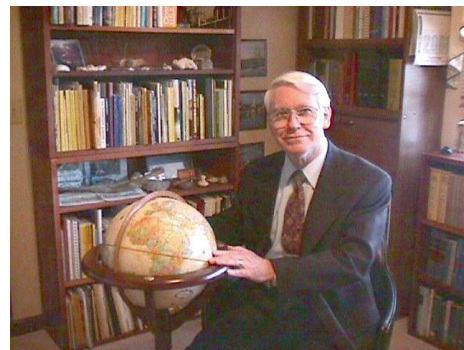
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Your Questions Answered

Mac Lynn, Chancellor

We thank you for your questions, for they help us improve our communications. Following are some answers for frequent questions.

- 1. Why do you change the curriculum?** Education is an inexact science. Experience with courses, examinations, and assignments leads us to detect weaknesses in content and the delivery system. A vital part of accreditation is assessment. Even though a course may receive excellent input in its formation, there is no assurance it will fulfill the intended objective. We use student feedback, exam analysis, and faculty critiques to serve you, the student, in the best way possible. Routinely, we examine courses and exams to keep them fresh and current.
- 2. How am I to know what catalog governs my program?** Each year the institution publishes a new catalog. The new edition is likely to have new courses, new degree requirements, and new regulations. With regard to *degree plans*, the student is automatically obliged to follow the academic plan in effect at the time of initial registration. A student may opt to follow a later academic plan, but, if so, must follow the new plan completely. Occasionally, the registrar may assign the student to a later plan, if it is in the best interest of the student. If a required course is discontinued, the student is provided a substitute course that will count toward degree completion. Stay with your original plan and you will be fine. If new regulations come into effect, they will not penalize you.
- 3. How do prison students know what course to take next?** Prison students do not have the opportunity for the full range of courses offered by NU. They simply do not have access to the Internet, when online sources are necessary for course completion. NU personnel monitor student progress and send what is believed to be the most appropriate course for each student. We follow a certain order, but as courses are updated, the order may be modified slightly. Occasionally, we overlook something and send a wrong course. We are especially caught off-guard when sending General Education courses before we have an official transcript from another collegiate institution showing the student may have completed some or all of the General Education courses.
- 4. When is a transcript "official?"** An official transcript is one that is sent to NU directly from the institution granting a diploma or credit. NU is not obliged to grant transfer credit on the basis of a transcript sent by the student. Only under extreme circumstances will a student be admitted to a degree program without an official transcript. And only the student can write the institution to request a transcript of his/her private record.
- 5. Why does it take so long for prison students to get materials and grades?** Inmates are at a decided disadvantage. Whereas regular Internet students can go online any time day or night and work on a course, take an exam, and see their full record, the inmate must wait for other processes. Everything must be handled by live people. Materials sent to inmates are measured out in keeping with the activity of the student. They are received in keeping with prison policies. Exams are graded according to a schedule and in keeping with the manner in which the exams are received. We do our best on this end to respond in a timely manner. Hand processing is always slower.
- 6. Why does it take several weeks to receive a diploma after completing a certificate or degree?** The normal procedure begins when the student notifies us of the completion of a program. When the student fails to make application for a diploma or degree, we must rely on the student advisor or a computer check to discover program completion. At that point, we begin a graduation check that goes through the hands of multiple people. First, we must verify the total credit count, completion of specific course requirements, payment (for U.S. non-incarcerated students), assignment completions for those courses which have submitted assignments, name and address to insure correctness, and grade point average (master's students). Then, the diploma must be printed and mailed. The work is done on a schedule that is workable for the office staff.
- 7. Why can a prison student not enroll in the M.Div. program?** The M.Div. program is a professional degree that requires the student to be in active ministry. In addition to a healthy list of required textbooks, some courses require service activity that can be completed outside the prison environment. Conceivably, a prison student can take some M.Div. courses, but the M.Div. cannot be completed while incarcerated. Consequently, NU does not admit prison students to the M.Div. program.
- 8. How is the accreditation process coming?** On September 15, we received word from the accrediting commission that we had passed the readiness assessment. That leaves two more benchmarks: (1) approval of individual courses and (2) a site visit. The site visit should come in early 2012.



Policy Changes

**Marty Lynn,
Student Services Administrator**

Recently, our enrollment passed the 5,000 mark and shows no sign of slowdown. At the time of this writing, the enrollment was 5,052. To continue offering our educational services free of charge, we are making some changes in the enrollment policies.

Prison students must have a proctor at the time they register. If we receive an application from a potential student who does not have a proctor available to sit with him/her during exams, then that application will be delayed. Proctors must have an email address. Family members are not eligible to serve as proctors although they can obtain your grades and download material from the website with your permission.

A new automated proctor registration system is under development. This will allow us to communicate with proctors and to keep them informed. Until the necessary programming is completed, please ask your proctor to download and print the application that is on the website under Academics and Prison Division. As always, thank you for your cooperation.

A Special Note to Our Prison Students

John Casteel, Director of Prison Enrollment

Today, I am thankful to God for a break in the heat and for the rain we are finally getting. Here in Oklahoma and in neighboring Texas, we are in a severe drought. When you add in triple digit temperatures for the last couple of months, it can be a recipe for disaster. As hard as it has been for me and my family and for most of you in prisons without air conditioning, it is nothing compared to the thousands who no longer have homes due to the wildfires. Please keep these families in your prayers.

I have had a number of you use my address for transcripts. This really slows down the process since I have to send them to the Registrar's office in Tennessee. All transcripts should be sent to the following address:

Registrar's Office
NationsUniversity
PO Box 3342
Brentwood, TN 37024

For those of you with access to email, I will correspond with you using my NU e-mail address: jac@nationsu.org

I am currently corresponding with close to 200 federal prisoners via email, and I hope to service some state prisoners when the system becomes available to them. My email is the only NU email that will accept prisoner emails; all other offices forward the requests to me.

Finally, I want to thank all of you who responded to my request for stamps. Some of you went above and beyond, and we at NU appreciate all of your donations.

Graduates Since the Last Newsletter

Certificate in Religious Studies

Vinh Phung, United States
Kenneth Eugene Sampler, United States
Raphael Dabo, Mali
Christie Dawn Lambert, United States
Billie Ray Hensley, United States
David Ryan Shelton, United States
William Alberto Arbelaez Alzate, United States
Sibusiso Dhlamini, United States
Marcus Preston, United States
Patricia J. Jordan, United States
John Nguri Muchina, United States
Sean Combs, United States
Ubaldo Sierra Briones, United States
Edwin Cooper, United States

Associate in Religious Studies

Troy C. Taylor

Diploma in Religious Studies

Troy C. Taylor

Bachelor of Religious Studies

Elmo Denis Avery, Jr., United States
Rolando Lavapie, United States
Dianna Edwards, United States
James Back, United States

Master of Religious Studies

Benneth Mashele, South Africa
South African Bible Institute
Peter Nyamari, Kenya
B.R.S., NationsUniversity
Stephen Robert Wilson, Australia
Christian Heritage College
Robert Little, United States
B.R.S., NationsUniversity
Joseph Ephraim Williams, United States
Ph.D., Syracuse University
Paul Huckabay, United States
B.R.S., NationsUniversity
Kwame A. Darkwa, Ghana
Mahanaim Bible College
Robert Bridgers, United States
B.R.S., NationsUniversity
Robert Y. Hall, United States
B.A., Harding University
Master of Ministry
Toby Richard Holland, United States
B.Min., Andersonville Theological Seminary

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