For generations, Young Harris College has had a tradition of preparing graduates for lives of ministry, both for professional and lay service. This year, four members of the Senior Class of 2012 will continue the trend by either entering prestigious seminary programs or moving directly into church ministry.

“This speaks volumes about the character of this class and the intentionality present in several of our graduates to seek out those ways that our intellectual, spiritual and vocational lives intersect,” said Campus Minister and Assistant Professor of Religious Studies Rev. Dr. Tim Moore. “Our students are encouraged to think deeply about themselves while also connecting that exploration, in concrete ways, with a life of faith and dedicated service.” He continued, “Creating occasions for such exploration and connections leads to a greater likelihood that a student will say ‘yes’ to a life of service.”

Marcus McGill, of Young Harris, was accepted to at least nine different institutions, including Asbury Theological Seminary, Candler School of Theology at Emory University and Wake Forest University School of Divinity.

“I chose this path because I sense a call to the ministry, and I believe one needs to be equipped and educated to do that sort of work in this day and age,” said McGill. “While at seminary, I hope to be strengthened in my faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ. I also look forward to connections I will make with other future ministers.”

Amanda Noonan, of Smyrna, will pursue a master of divinity degree with concentrations in women’s leadership and apologetics at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

At YHC, Noonan was involved in the “Underground” Bible study, the Chapel Worship Team and Breaking Free Ministries. She also served as president of the Inter-Religious Council, Baptist Collegiate Ministries and the “Souled Out” drama ministry.

“My time at YHC helped me grow in my desire to do ministry and rigorously delve into the mysteries of God. Helping lead religious life groups on campus strengthened and confirmed my call to ministry,” she said. “Studying theology and philosophy, as well as having wonderful mentors in these areas, has also helped craft my desire to pursue a seminary degree.”

Jordan Fleming, of Marietta, was accepted into Columbia Theological Seminary’s master of arts in practical theology program with a concentration in Christian education.

“YHC is the place where the Lord became the one true love of my soul. I would have had a much harder time figuring out God’s plan for me if He hadn’t led me to YHC,” said Fleming. “Religious life was my second home at Young Harris. It’s where I went for comfort and answers, and it’s where I found a lot of my happiness through the Lord on campus.”

Continued on page 3
We completed another great year of ministry and work in the Office of Religious Life at Young Harris College, and that work has been broad, deep and wide-ranging. As a broad ministry, we added new religious life groups, including welcoming our first non-Christian organization to campus. As a deep ministry, we completed our 10-year reaffirmation with The United Methodist Church and welcomed back to campus the tradition of a winter revival. This year, students also participated in a ministerial vocational discernment weekend facilitated by the Fund for Theological Education and visited Emory University’s Candler School of Theology. As a wide-ranging ministry, the programs offered stretched us to think and act internationally as well as locally through our fall and spring break trips, volunteer days and collections of offerings.

All of these efforts built upon the already expanding and burgeoning religious life program we are developing, thus cultivating a ministry that incorporates well over half the student body in any given semester.

In the midst of all this work, the year’s most significant accomplishment might have been an exercise in self-examination. Our student leadership resolved to make an honest and deliberate effort to be better, be more reflective of our dynamic college community, and be more accountable for their work. Such self-evaluation is neither easy nor regularly welcomed. Yet the maturity and openness the students displayed in allowing for this process and in making their identified changes is commendable. It is because of their hard and sincere work—as much as any new program or activity offered—that leads me to say that this year was a great year.

Rev. Dr. Tim Moore
Campus Minister and Assistant Professor of Religious Studies

Building Partnerships with the Church

Faith and Life Program Hosts Annual Seminar

Young Harris College’s Office of Religious Life is committed to educating and nurturing the next generation of church leadership—as well as those already serving the church. The Faith and Life Program provides learning and spiritual development opportunities for students and lifelong learners.

Held in October 2011, this past year’s seminar, “Through the Glass, Darkly,” discussed important demographic and attitudinal trends and trajectories in our culture, helping ministers and their congregations shape faithful, more effective ministries for the future.

“I have attended several seminars at YHC and found them stimulating both intellectually and practically,” said Rev. Kirk Hatherly, pastor of Hayesville First United Methodist Church in North Carolina. “YHC is a great institution for seminars with beautiful facilities, accommodating staff and knowledgeable presenters.”

YHC Hosts Summer Ministries Job Fair

In November 2011, representatives from ministries across the Southeast gathered for Young Harris College’s second annual Summer Ministries Jobs Fair. Co-sponsored by the Office of Religious Life and the Academic Advising Center, the fair helped pair students with ministries looking for summer staff. More than 60 students stopped by to speak with representatives from nearly a dozen ministries.

“I appreciated being in such good company with the diverse ministries represented at this fair,” said Rev. Amy Spivey, director of program ministries at Hinton Rural Life Center, a mission agency of The United Methodist Church in Hayesville, N.C. “I had the opportunity to hear from YHC students about their goals and interests and to share the story of Hinton summer missions with them.”

Students Engage in Summer Ministries

Young Harris College students regularly serve the church through a variety of ministries, demonstrating the strong and intentional efforts made by the College to maintain and bolster a solid connection between the campus, community and church.

Sophomore Jacob Greene, of Broxton, sophomore Bekah Herum, of Blairsville, sophomore Danielle Tully, of Hayesville, N.C., sophomore Breanna Glesson, of Windsor Gardens, Australia, and senior Ian Calhoun, of Young Harris (pictured left to right below), put faith into practice this summer while working at the Hinton Rural Life Center in Hayesville, N.C. The students led mission teams that provided home repair for low-income families.

“Working at the Hinton Center gave me the opportunity to serve and build relationships with members of my community while growing spiritually and gaining leadership skills,” Calhoun said.

Tully added, “Besides the obvious reasons of expanding my knowledge and stepping out of my comfort zone, I joined the Hinton Center summer program to instill faith and hope in my community.”
The Office of Religious Life and the Inter-Religious Council at Young Harris College sponsored the annual Spiritual Life Retreat (SLR) at Camp Glisson in Dahlonega, Sept. 9-11. The retreat was attended by 85 Young Harris College students, as well as several faculty and staff members, making it the largest group to date.

The theme for the weekend event, “Unity,” was discussed in nine large- and small-group sessions designed to strengthen and challenge students’ faith in God. According to Campus Minister and Assistant Professor of Religious Studies Rev. Dr. Tim Moore, the theme was selected as an extension of the Office of Religious Life’s theme of “One” for the 2011-2012 academic year that promoted togetherness within the Young Harris College community.

“The most memorable moments during the weekend were the ones when students took time to care for each other, pray for each other and support one another. This type of generosity of spirit builds a community of faithful students, faculty and staff willing to risk life and faith together,” Dr. Moore said.

The much-anticipated weekend began on Friday evening with a large-group session that introduced the theme and allowed students to get to know one another, followed by a scavenger hunt that revealed the students’ small-group leaders. The night concluded with a worship session in Camp Glisson’s lakeside amphitheater and the traditional late-night run to Waffle House.

On Saturday, the group enjoyed a chilly creek hike to Camp Glisson’s waterfall, and each person had the opportunity to take a turn down the zip line or climb the rock wall. That evening, the “tacky prom” dance, a tradition in which participants are encouraged to forgo style and dress in favor of their most zany outfits, was followed by a time of teaching and worship for the entire group.

“Before coming to the retreat, I was a little apprehensive because I didn’t know what to expect,” said Mary Beth Maxwell, a junior from Carrollton and first-time SLR participant. “It ended up being the most amazing worship-filled trip I have ever been on.”

Returning SLR attendee Jessie Robinette, a sophomore from Madison, was “excited and honored” when asked to serve as a small-group leader for the event.

“By leading my small group, I learned that I am able to take on bigger leadership roles,” she said. “My favorite part of SLR was definitely the fellowship with my classmates. Having two straight days of pure worship and fellowship was amazing.”

On Saturday, the group took the traditional creek walk to the waterfall at Camp Glisson.
Eleven Young Harris College students, faculty and staff members took part in National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week by making a day trip to The Haywood Street Congregation of Central United Methodist Church in Asheville, N.C., on Nov. 9.

The group participated in outreach activities and heard personally from a former homeless man who had benefited from the church. They had the opportunity to eat lunch with the nearly 300 homeless men and women who came to the church that day, as well as attend the church’s weekly Wednesday service with them. After the service, the YHC group helped with lunch clean up and took some time to process the day with the volunteer coordinator and the minister who started the church.

The trip marked the second time a group from YHC has worked with The Haywood Street Congregation in connection with homelessness awareness. In 2010, a group of YHC students and staff visited Asheville during YHC’s Homelessness Awareness Week to explore issues surrounding urban homelessness.

The trip was facilitated by S.E.R.V.E. (Service, Education, Responsibility, Voice and Engagement), a task force at YHC that plans and implements campus-wide community outreach opportunities throughout the academic year in collaboration with the Office of Campus Activities, the Office of Religious Life and the Bonner Leaders Program.

“The Asheville trip was the most rewarding and touching event I have ever experienced,” said Nathan Hughes, a junior from Young Harris. “The people we interacted with had some of the most profound things to say. I would strongly recommend this trip to anyone who desires to help others and to serve our world and make it a better place.”

YHC STUDENTS ATTEND J.O.Y. FEST

The Young Harris College Inter-Religious Council planned and implemented a new spring event, Feb. 26-30, “J.O.Y. (Jesus, Others and You) Fest,” that incorporated two successful events previously held on the campus, Winter Revival and Jesus Fest.

“The purpose for the revival was to inspire or ‘revive’ and deepen people in their faith more than to convert participants to a new faith,” explained Campus Minister and Assistant Professor of Religious Studies Rev. Dr. Tim Moore. “The student leadership wanted to make an event that was open to all, including those at the beginning of and those already deeply involved in faith.”

The worship services featured diverse constituencies from across the campus providing leadership, sharing music, offering personal reflections and presenting talents as acts of praise. More than a dozen student groups helped lead services for more than 250 worshipers from the YHC community.

“This event was the perfect place for us to perform our dance to minister to others,” said “Souled Out” Drama Ministry Director Elizabeth Land, a sophomore from Thomson. “I feel closer to fellow Christian peers and grew spiritually through the speakers and scriptures.”

“This revival enriched my experience at Young Harris, especially because I also participated in 24 hours of prayer that kicked off the event. I’ve never prayed like that before,” added freshman Andrea Simmonds of Suches.

A JOYFUL REFLECTION

“My experience at Young Harris College was delightful. Not only did the service reflect a seamless integration of diverse faith traditions, but it was also a pleasant coalescence of energy, enthusiasm and sincerity. To me, the service exemplified authentic worship, the kind of which God is seeking after.”

REV. DR. CLAUDE FOREHAND,
Pastor, Buncombe Baptist Church,
Lexington, N.C.
Speaker at J.O.Y. Fest

MEET THE 2012-2013 INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL OFFICERS:

Austin Thomas
President
Senior Communication
Studies Major
Kennesaw, Ga.

Corey Helton
Vice President
Freshman Business and
Public Policy Major
Suches, Ga.

Laura Grace Tarpley
Secretary
Junior Communication
Studies Major
Little Rock, Ark.

YHC STUDENTS RETURN TO ASHEVILLE FOR Homelessness Awareness Project

The Haywood Street Congregation in Asheville, N.C.

Student groups helped lead services during the four-day event.
Ten Young Harris College students, faculty and staff members traveled to Little Rock, Ark., March 4-9, to participate in an alternative spring break trip facilitated by S.E.R.V.E. (Service, Education, Responsibility, Voice and Engagement). The group teamed up with Heifer International, a global nonprofit organization that strives to end poverty and hunger in a sustainable fashion, believing that giving families a hand-up, not just a hand-out, empowers them to turn lives of hunger and poverty into self-reliance and hope.

“The program combines interactive learning sessions that bring awareness of the great needs in the world with opportunities to give the gift of time and hard work,” said Campus Minister and Assistant Professor of Religious Studies Rev. Dr. Tim Moore. “The service activities offered by Heifer International not only allowed participants to give back, but also served as great educational tools and allowed us to connect what we believe with what we do.”

The YHC group joined nearly 50 students from colleges and universities across the United States including Berry College, Florida State University, the College of Saint Rose and Pennsylvania College of Technology.

In addition to learning about Heifer's model for developing programs to end poverty and hunger through sustainable means, students also met regularly for team-building and problem-solving exercises. The group also spent time completing service projects on Heifer Ranch, carrying out tasks like feeding animals, tending the garden and assisting with other general maintenance.

“Not only were students able to hear real facts about poverty and hunger, but they also experienced firsthand what some individuals have to go through on a daily basis to survive,” said Director of Campus Activities Rouseline Emmanuel. “I don’t think our students will ever forget their experience at Heifer Ranch, and will think twice about food waste in particular.”

As part of the interactive learning program, the group spent 24 hours in Heifer Ranch’s Global Village living in one of seven Third World representative sites. The exercise allowed students to learn about living conditions in Third World countries, as well as how to cope with available resources.

“I was so excited to come back and share my experience with friends and family,” said freshman Andrea Simmonds of Suches. “My life has been greatly enriched through this experience and has caused me to develop a deeper respect and love for people.”

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YHC STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN Alternative Spring Break Trip

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YHC STUDENTS ENJOY Special Spiritual Commencement Festivities

One of Young Harris College’s longtime Commencement traditions is a mountaintop vespers service prior to the graduation ceremony. On Thursday, May 3, a group of soon-to-be graduates, their families and YHC faculty and staff gathered at the top of Brasstown Bald, the highest mountain peak in Georgia, for the annual Vespers Service to mark the arrival of Commencement weekend. More than 85 participants made the seven-mile hike up Bald Mountain to join others from campus to share in a meal and worship. Following a special sermon by Campus Minister and Assistant Professor of Religious Studies Rev. Dr. Tim Moore, titled “Soar,” graduates released balloons into the sky over the “Enchanted Valley.”

Then on Friday, May 4, 89 baccalaureate degree candidates, along with family, friends and members of the YHC community, gathered on the eve of the 2012 Commencement ceremony for the College’s annual Baccalaureate Service. Rev. Dr. Barbara Brown Taylor, who serves as Harry R. Butman professor of religion and philosophy at Piedmont College, delivered an inspirational message to the students. The ceremony also included presentation of purple stoles to the graduates by special mentors and the distribution of a Bible to each senior as a reminder of the College’s spiritual heritage.

YHC Associate Professor of Biology Dr. Linda Jones (right) presents Kaylin Canup of Jefferson with her graduation stole.
Young Harris College recently expanded religious life offerings for students, faculty and staff by welcoming to campus three new organizations.

YHC Expands Religious Life Programming

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) recently started back up at YHC under the leadership of YHC Baseball Head Coach Rick Robinson and a devoted group of student-athletes.

The group gathers weekly for study, fellowship and discipleship, in addition to hosting campus-wide events. On Jan. 25, YHC alumnus and Atlanta Braves relief pitcher Cory Garrass, ’06, spoke during a special gathering hosted by FCA that was attended by a large group of students and coaches.

“People came to hear Cory’s message about not waiting on God to equip us for ministry because God has already given us all we need to get started,” explained Robinson.

The Buddhist Meditation and Mindfulness Gathering is a group that aims to provide a welcoming meeting place for committed Buddhists and members of the YHC community interested in learning more about the religious aspects and philosophy of Buddhism.

“Expanding the diversity of religious expression on campus by adding this Buddhist group will, in part, impact the larger community positively by helping us all become more aware of our religious choices and commitments,” said the group’s advisor, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies Eric Dicakman, Ph.D. “As YHC expands, such groups are crucial for the vibrancy of the community.”

In addition to meeting weekly on campus, the group has traveled to temples and facilities throughout Georgia and North Carolina to explore different aspects of the tradition.

“I’m very proud to serve as president of this group,” said Dasha Bohannon, a freshman from Winder. “While it’s not a traditional religious life organization, it provides a way for all of us at YHC to explore a different religion and its traditions.”

In Spring 2012, eight students formed the Chapel Ministry Team to oversee and organize events and activities such as Chapel and special worship services, Spiritual Life Retreat, revivals, vocational discernment retreats and other activities.

“We are dedicated to the growth of Christian life on campus through planning, advertising and conducting weekly Chapel services and campus-wide Christian events,” said the group’s leader, senior Austin Thomas of Kennesaw. “We also try to facilitate any other resources that a student might need during their time at YHC.”

YHC Inter-Religious Council Assists UMAR

Earlier this year, the Young Harris College Inter-Religious Council (IRC) presented a check for more than $300 to UMAR, a nonprofit organization that supports more than 350 adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities through residential, employment and cultural enrichment opportunities. The money was collected during weekly Chapel services each Wednesday during the Fall 2011 semester.

At the end of each academic year, the IRC meets to decide which charity to support through the following year’s Chapel offering. The council has collected money for a variety of causes over the years, including hunger relief, international disaster relief and the fight against human trafficking.

“I am delighted that the IRC selected UMAR this year, because it is a wonderful ministry and a great witness to the importance of the shared life and common dignity we all desire,” said Campus Minister and Assistant Professor of Religious Studies Rev. Dr. Tim Moore.

Throughout the academic year, student worship leaders invited UMAR residents to share in weekly Chapel services held at the College. Students also recently visited UMAR homes to plan an event with the residents.

“I am so thrilled with our interaction with the residents of the UMAR homes,” said IRC Secretary Jessie Robinette, a sophomore from Madison. “Getting to know each resident through weekly visits was amazing. I am very pleased with the relationship we’ve formed with these amazing people.”

Based in Huntersville, N.C., UMAR owns and operates 24 group homes and nine apartments throughout western North Carolina.