A Note from the Director

Welcome nine new IDEAL students to campus, engage at least 18 new undergraduate students to support our program. We’ve set some large goals for next year, but we know that we will undoubtedly achieve them with the backing of our Lipscomb community.

With the success of this spring in the books, we are looking forward to expanding our impact during the 2014-2015 school year. We’ll be weighed. They also helped assemble and label the boxes. It was a chilly, but rewarding, day!

I am pleased to report that the Lord is working through this program. He is creating a level playing field where students who are diverse learners are able to contribute to a community that values them.

He’s opening up a new path for students with intellectual disabilities to further their education and develop job skills. This is important work!

Would you join us? If what you see in these pages inspires you, please let us know. We’d love to invite you into the IDEAL family.

In Him,

Mallory Whitmore
IDEAL Program Director

In addition, all three of the young men in the IDEAL program were asked to throw out the first pitch at a Lipscomb University baseball game.

Through this partnership, student athletes’ lives were impacted just as much as our IDEAL students. Baseball player Tyson Ashcraft, a junior, said it best: “I’ve learned to be more open to meeting new people and to be genuine and kind to the people I meet.” Many lifelong friendships began this semester. Thanks, Lipscomb Athletics!

IDEAL levels the playing field for diverse learners

What an incredible spring semester! When we began the process of establishing the IDEAL Program at Lipscomb University last fall, we knew that this community would be the perfect place for our program. True to our expectations, we have been overwhelmed by how welcoming, inclusive, supportive and excited the students and staff have been. IDEAL has truly been accepted as an important part of this Lipscomb family and for that we are grateful. It is a blessing to watch the Lord make a way for us.

With the success of this spring in the books, we are looking forward to expanding our impact during the 2014-2015 school year. We’ll welcome nine new IDEAL students to campus, engage at least 18 new faculty partners, develop 12 on-campus internships and recruit 80-100 undergraduate students to support our program. We’ve set some large goals for next year, but we know that we will undoubtedly achieve them with the backing of our Lipscomb community.

Did you know that we are the only Christian university in the state of Tennessee to offer an age-appropriate, employment-based postsecondary curriculum for students with intellectual disabilities—those who would be otherwise unable to attend college?

In Isaiah 42:16 we read, “I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know, in paths that they have not known I will guide them.”

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IDEAL gives back

The mission of Lipscomb University is one of faith, community, knowledge, innovation and service. A crucial part of the IDEAL Program is for our students to understand the mission and values of the school they attend and to demonstrate these values in our own lives.

The first volunteer opportunity this semester was the Special Olympics Tennessee state basketball tournament hosted at Lipscomb University. The IDEAL students helped set up and prepare the hospitality room for the coaches, referees and volunteers. They stocked drinks, arranged snack trays, sorted fruit and more. This was also a great opportunity to show the Special Olympics athletes that their dreams of attending college one day can become a reality.

The IDEAL Program was blessed this year to partner with the Lipscomb University Athletic Department.

Two IDEAL students, A.T. Banks and Rashaad Harrell, interned in the athletic department for the semester. They helped in the area of marketing by rolling T-shirts, folding programs and hanging signs to prepare for home games.

“They’re outgoing and fun personalities helped remind us that there is more to our jobs and lives than the typical office tasks,” said Garner Goode, director of marketing for athletics, about the IDEAL students.

It wasn’t all work at the athletic department—our students also had a lot of fun. The Lipscomb University volleyball team hosted a pizza party for the IDEAL students and their families. Matthew, Rashaad and A.T., along with their families got to attend a basketball game and watch it in style in one of Allen Arena’s suites while enjoying quality time with the volleyball players and coaches.

IDEAL also participated in Lipscomb’s 14th annual spring Service Day, volunteering at Second Harvest Food Bank with 20 other Lipscomb undergraduate students. While there, IDEAL students helped in the cooler by sorting food and placing it into boxes to be weighed. They also helped assemble and label the boxes. It was a chilly, but rewarding, day!

All three of the IDEAL students greatly enjoyed serving and are looking forward to having more opportunities to give back. They are proud to show the Nashville community that students with disabilities are capable, motivated workers and that they can be a part of a productive team.

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Meet our spring 2014 students

On Jan. 9, 2014, the first group of IDEAL students enrolled at Lipscomb University’s campus, bringing blessings for both these three students and for the Lipscomb community. Introducing A.T. Banks, Rashaad Harrell and Matthew Loveland:

A.T. Banks, of Hendersonville, Tenn., is a 2010 graduate of Beech High School. A.T. has deep family ties to Lipscomb as many of his family have attended, including his mother, father and younger sister, Alex Banks, who is a sophomore and on the women’s basketball team. He has a great love for sports and people. A.T. is one of Lipscomb’s biggest and most loyal supporters. He always knows every sporting event that is going on as well as every theater production.

This semester A.T. was enrolled in Nature Study and the Lipscomb Seminar class titled “Becoming a Local.” “His personality is wonderful. He knows when someone isn’t in class—he is my automatic roll taker,” said Tamera Klingbyll, instructor of the Nature Study class.

A.T. is also very social on campus. It is not very often that he passes someone on campus that he does not already know. If that happened, he would be best friends with them by the end of the week. “I like A.T.’s outgoing personality and his ability to strike up a conversation with anyone,” said Haley Padilla, a friend of A.T.’s. Chandler Cooper commented how she admired his ability to make friends with everyone around him.

When asked why he wanted to come to Lipscomb, A.T. said, “To get an education and meet new people.” He is succeeding at both of those goals.

Rashaad Harrell, of Nashville, is a 2012 graduate of Madison Academy. Rashaad was enrolled in Nature Study and the Lipscomb Seminar class entitled “Becoming a Local.” “His personality is wonderful. He knows when someone isn’t in class—he is my automatic roll taker,” said Tamera Klingbyll, instructor of the Nature Study class.

Rashaad’s ability to know everyone didn’t only show up in class, he displayed his talent all across campus. When Rashaad first came to Lipscomb he was a little shy. But it wasn’t long before he broke out of his shell. He soon became one of the most well-known faces on campus. “He makes friends so easily, and I wish I had that ability. He’s such a social butterfly,” said Christianna Calandro, a friend of Rashaad’s.

His love for sports also runs deep. He got to know every athlete on campus and was always there to give them a pep talk when needed. Brandon Thomas, a sophomore baseball player, spent quite a bit of time with Rashaad playing sports, and he said, “He never has a problem telling me that I can’t miss layups if I want to be on his team.”

When asked why he wanted to come to Lipscomb, Rashaad said, “I want to meet more friends that go here and the students and professors here.” Needless to say, he has far exceeded this goal.

Matthew Loveland, of Franklin, Tenn., is a 2012 graduate of Wilson Central High School. Matthew was enrolled in Introduction to Technical Theatre and the Lifetime Fitness class. “I appreciate Matthew’s determination. There were things that were difficult for him and really challenged him but he never quit,” said April Ezell, instructor of the Lifetime Fitness class. This was a theme for Matthew on campus. He was very well known for his determination as well as his creativity. “He has an attention to detail that I wish I had and a very creative imagination,” said Lauren Temple, a friend of Matthew’s.

Matthew has a great love for movies and can out-quote almost anyone when it comes to movie lines. “I love how he makes something as simple as a quote from a movie come to life in one sentence,” said Emily Shepherd, who became a great friend to Matthew.

Matthew really enjoyed his theatre class and looks forward to taking some film classes in the future. When Matthew was asked why he wanted to come to Lipscomb, he said “to meet a lot of new friends and just have a good time.” He has definitely met a lot of new friends and he is excited about coming back for his second semester in the fall.

All three of these students have proven themselves to be great role models for our incoming class this fall. We are so proud!

Fast Facts from Spring 2014

- 2 internship sites
- 3 students
- 28 hours spent in chapel
- 46 peer mentors
- 50 hours spent in internships
- 156 hours of traditional university class instruction
- 42 hours of IDEAL class instruction

Countless friendships and memories made
The word on the street

The Lipscomb campus just can’t stop talking about the IDEAL Program. Check it out.

“We all come from different backgrounds, and there are points and places where we can find community, where we can love one another and support one another. I think my class has gained that knowledge in a richer and different way than they would have if the IDEAL Program wasn’t a part of our classroom experience.”
– Sam Parnell, IDEAL faculty partner

“The mainstream students in my classroom benefit from having some time with a special needs student. It helps broaden their awareness of the rest of the world, and they start to have to exercise things such as patience, understanding and kindness. Those are all qualities you hope human beings develop over time.”
– Andy Bleiler, who taught an IDEAL student in his Introduction to Technical Theatre course

“I feel very blessed, very privileged and very honored to be able to teach these kids. If they are learning in my class—and they are not just learning content information—but if they are learning about the kindness of others or the ability of others to actually accept them for who they are, then hopefully within society they can thrive more.”
– Tamara Klingbyll, who taught two IDEAL students in the Nature Study course and lab

Finally, the support we received from the parents and families of our students was incredible. All three families have expressed what an incredible opportunity this program has been for their children and the impact and difference it is making in their lives.

“I can already see an increase in Matthew’s maturity level. He is thriving. He talks about the fun things and the good things going on. I’ve gotten great feedback that he is being a serious student here, which is wonderful news to me.”
– Claudia Loveland

“Rashaad is learning and growing. It has been nothing but a great experience.”
– Mia Harrell

“I think the best part has been the way that the students on the campus, faculty and staff, but especially the students, have embraced A.T. and made him feel welcomed and so loved. But more than anything they have made him feel like a part of this community. He just feels like he belongs.”
– Stephanie Banks

In addition to our faculty, a large body of support for our students came from their undergraduate peer mentors. It was quickly apparent that not only were the traditional students impacting the IDEAL students’ lives, but the IDEAL students were having just as much of an impact—if not more—on the traditional students’ lives.

“These students genuinely just love everyone. Getting to learn from them how to view life, and not just people, is the biggest thing I have learned.”
– Alex Banks, Sophomore peer mentor

“I’ve learned to enjoy the people I’m around and to be more open and friendly to people by watching the IDEAL students, who meet somebody for the first time and act like they are their best friend.”
– Tyson Ashcraft, Junior peer mentor

“The IDEAL students have really big hearts, and they just love being a part of the Lipscomb community and love getting to know other students.”
– Carly Williams, Senior peer mentor

New faces in the fall

The IDEAL Program is thrilled with the incredible support and success of its first semester. Due to this support, we are able to grow and expand our program for the fall. We will be welcoming nine new students this fall semester to join our three returning students. Here’s a bit about our incoming class:

Joshua Ahlberg, of Thompsons Station, Tenn., is a 2014 graduate of Independence High School. An active volunteer in his church, Josh enjoys participating in his youth group and reading the Bible. His hobbies also include playing piano and public speaking.

His dream job is to work in the music industry.

Matt Branch, of Nashville, is a 2007 graduate of Glencliff High School. He is currently employed at Lipscomb University in the facilities department where he takes great pride in keeping the campus clean. His interests include helping others, learning history and volunteering with the Tennessee Civil Air Patrol.

His dream job is to be a firefighter.

Riley Dulaney, of Raleigh, N.C., is a 2013 graduate of The Trilogy School. He is currently running his own eBay business. His interests include computers, volunteer work and music.

His dream job is to work in the field of information technology.

Alanna Johnson, of Murfreesboro, Tenn., is a 2014 graduate of Siegel High School. She is currently employed at Tots Landing as an assistant teacher. Her interests include working with young children, riding horses and spending time with her friends.

Her dream job is to be a preschool teacher.

Teagan Martin, of Spring Hill, Tenn., is a 2009 graduate of Independence High School and a 2013 graduate of Maui Community School for Adults. Teagan currently volunteers at the Spring Hill Public Library. Her interests include working with children, swimming and spending time with friends.

Her dream job is to work with children who have hearing impairments.

Conner Mirt, of Brentwood, Tenn., is a 2013 graduate of Brentwood High School’s Transition Program. He has previously had several jobs including at Old Navy and Prairie Life Fitness. His interests include sports, music and getting to know people.

His dream job is to work in the field of sports and fitness.

Shayla Osborne, of Murfreesboro, Tenn., is a 2014 graduate of Benton Hall Academy. In the past, she has volunteered at Paws. Her interests include working with animals, learning Spanish and hanging out with friends.

Her dream job is to be a Spanish interpreter.

Jenna Staehling, of Brentwood, Tenn., is a 2013 graduate of Currey Ingram Academy. She currently works in the library at her school. Her interests include volleyball, computers, art and music.

Her dream job is to be an art assistant.

Zachary Sutton, of Murfreesboro, Tenn., is a 2013 graduate of Siegel High School. He is currently employed at Goodwill. His interests include cars, helping people and hanging out with friends.

His dream job is to be a car salesman.

Incoming students Jenna Staehling and Teagan Martin play Rock, Paper, Scissors for a game of Uno after lunch during their visit to campus.
Here's how you can serve us in this important work:

• Pray for our current students and the students who will begin their college journey this fall.
• Follow us on Twitter and Instagram and keep up with all that the students are doing.
• Spread the word if you know of someone who might benefit from the IDEAL Program.
• Volunteer your time or talents.

Give to the IDEAL Scholarship Fund at www.lipscomb.edu/gift. Designate “IDEAL Program” in the special instructions box. Donations can also be made through the Lipscomb University Office of Development by contacting Burton Williams, associate vice president, at 615.966.5561.

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.”
– 1 Peter 4:10-11

“Everybody has a special calling that God gives to us. You can't sit there and put people who are different in pigeon holes. You have to allow people to soar and be who they are.”
– Tamera Klingbyll, instructor and IDEAL faculty partner

The IDEAL Program allows students to soar. Please consider being a part of this incredible program.

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