#### Faculty Addresses 'Da Vinci Code'

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Dan Brown's "The Da Vinci Code" is full of half-truths, distortions and historical inaccuracies, a group of Union University professors said during a campus forum that was also open to the community.

Christian studies professors George Guthrie and Hal Poe, English professor Gene Fant and art professor Chris Nadaskay addressed Union students and community members about the problems with the book and the way Christians should respond to it.

"Dan Brown has given us a fun read, an interesting counter-history and an exciting opportunity to clarify the real history of the first Christian centuries, but he should not be seen as providing a greater clarity on what really happened in the life of Jesus or the early church," Guthrie said. "For that we must still look, with study and thoughtful reflection, to our earliest texts, the books of the New Testament."

Guthrie gave an overview of Brown's claims regarding the historical facts about the life of Jesus and the validity of the New Testament. For starters, Guthrie disputes the book's claim that thousands of ancient documents exist that present a picture of the life

"Is it possible that there could be a trove of thousands of documents out there that were not mentioned anywhere in ancient literature, for which there is absolutely no evidence at all?" Guthrie asked. "Perhaps, but the point is, there is absolutely no evidence to support the idea. It is fiction in every sense of the word."

DVDs of the panel discussion, "Decoding 'The Da Vinci Code,'" are available for \$5. To request a copy, send your name and address along with the \$5 to College of Arts and Sciences, 1050 Union University Dr., Jackson, TN 38305.

#### Union graduate featured in Lucado book

When Lori Neal ('02) came to Union University as a freshman, she wasn't sure what she wanted to do with her life.



## **Churchill to Address 10th Annual Scholarship Banquet**

inston S. Churchill will be the keynote speaker for the 10th annual Scholarship Banquet at Jackson's Carl Perkins Civic Center on Tuesday, Sept. 26.

Grandson and namesake of the former British prime minister, Churchill is an accomplished author, journalist and parliamentarian. He worked as a roving war correspondent in the Congo, Angola, Borneo, Biafra, Vietnam and the Middle East. At age 30, he entered Parliament as the youngest Conservative Party member. He served 27 years, and was named to the Defence Select Committee of the House of Commons.

"Winston Churchill was one of the greatest leaders in modern world history, and his grandson connects us to this eloquent and inspirational statesman," Union President David S. Dockery said. "When he promised the British people 'blood, sweat and tears,' and when he described communism's life behind an 'iron curtain,' Churchill coined phrases that have stood the test of time. It will be an honor to welcome his gifted grandson to Union University."

In addition to his leadership as prime minister, Churchill served as British colonial secretary during the 1920s, playing a major leadership role in the Middle East during that era.

His grandson has studied that contri-

bution and produced significant writings about the region.

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"Churchill's book 'Six Day War' has remained the definitive work on that conflict many years after its run on the best-seller list," Dockery said. "He will bring our audience a perspective on world affairs that starts with his grandfather's legacy, but is very much based on personal experience as a journalist and historian."

Previous keynote speakers at Union University's Scholarship Banquet include George H.W. Bush, Mikhail Gorbachev, Lady Margaret Thatcher, Colin Powell, James Baker, Rudolph Giuliani, John Major, Robert Dole and Lou Holtz.

This year's lead and premier sponsors include BancorpSouth, Porter Cable & DeVilbiss, which is now Black & Decker, Harry Smith and Schilling Enterprises, Roy White and White Investments LLC, FirstBank, Benny and Norma Fesmire, Lloyd Hansen, Jack and Zan Holmes, The Jackson Sun, Northwestern Mutual Financial Network/Rod and Amy Parker, Jack and Faye Porter, Mike and Trish Weeks, West Tennessee Healthcare and an anonymous donor.

Sponsorship opportunities are available at all levels. For ticket information, including table sponsorships and individual balcony seating, contact Union's Office of University Relations at (731) 661-5050.





## **Union Forum Speakers Address Supreme Court Changes**

renowned legal scholar and one of the nation's most visible journalists weighed in on the changing U.S. Supreme Court during the eighth annual Union Forum presentations.

Robert George, the McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton University, focused on the new Bush appointees, John Roberts and Samuel Alito. He said many observers assume new justices will mirror the philosophy of the president who tapped them, but that is frequently not the case.

He cited the example of Dwight Eisenhower, who decided to appoint William Brennan. The National Liberal League opposed Brennan on religious grounds. Brennan, however, turned out to be a "liberal of the strictest observance," George said.

Likewise, the conservative Ronald Reagan appointed the moderate Sandra Day O'Connor, who played a crucial role in preserving abortion and racial preferences. Democrat John F. Kennedy appointed Byron White, who proved to be a conservative.

Margaret Carlson, a columnist for Time magazine and a frequent guest on national television shows, talked about the future of the court in light of the unpredictability that permeates Washington.

"That's what makes my job so much fun," Carlson said. "Every day there is something to learn."

George is considered a conservative observer, while Carlson is a self-described liberal. That balance helps make Union Forum one of the university's most anticipated events each year.

Both speakers ventured some

Washington predictions.

Carlson said she thinks U.S. Senator Hilary Clinton might win the democrats' nomination for President in 2008, but she will not win the general election because she is too polarizing as a public figure. She also thinks Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice will choose not to make a presidential run.

"She's Secretary of State," said Carlson. "It's a better job!"

George observed that the U.S. Supreme Court is still one vote short of overturning the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion. Until a new justice provides that fifth vote, George expects the four justices in the minority to welcome cases that will slowly chip away at the structure of Roe v. Wade.

Both speakers addressed more than 300 luncheon guests, and also met separately with faculty and students. George focused his student discussion on natural law and the role Christians play in politics.

"I especially his enjoyed his discussion with the students," said Union senior Natalie Treece. "I thought it was interesting and relevant for 2006. He's a very brilliant man."

He is the author of "In Defense of Natural Law," "Making Men Moral: Civil Liberties and Public Morality" and "The Clash of Orthodoxies: Law, Religion and Morality in Crisis." He has published numerous scholarly articles and book reviews.

Carlson became a columnist for Time magazine in February 1994. Her column, "Public Eye," made Carlson the first woman columnist in the magazine's 76year history.

A gifted athlete, she came to the university on a softball scholarship. Her first thoughts centered on a career in sports.

But an evaluation Neal completed during her college years pointed her instead to art. This spring she completed a master of fine arts degree from the University of Georgia.

"I'm one of the only Christians in my program," Neal said. "Just to be able to be very confident in who I am and who (God) made me to be gives me the confidence to go out into a dark world."



Neal's story caught the attention of bestselling Christian author Max Lucado, who included a section about her in his latest

book, "Cure for the Common Life." Lucado wrote about Neal, who through the Discovering My Design assessment realized her gifts and how she could use them for God's glory.

"Within three years the confused, softball-playing freshman was a focused and recognized college senior," Lucado wrote. "The prestigious 'Ceramics Monthly' published her writings, and the world's premier ceramic school, Alfred University, invited her to study on their campus."

Neal spent one year studying at Alfred before transferring to Georgia.

Lucado told of his conversation with Neal, in which she described her passion for her art work. He asked how a career in art can "make a big deal out of God," to which Neal gave two answers.

"The art world has few Jesus followers," Neal said. "When I do my best, they notice, not just me, but my Lord."

Neal also told about working at a rehab center one summer, when one of her jobs was to draw pictures on balloons for handicapped children.

"When the work of my hands makes little girls smile, that's where my heart is," Neal said.

A native of Mansfield, Tenn., Neal and her fiancée, Clay Nolen ('99) plan to return to West Tennessee this summer. She says she doesn't yet know what the next chapter in her life will hold, but she

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is sure of one thing.

"God gave me all of these gifts, and it's my gift to give back to him, to use my gifts for his purpose," she said.

### Union Choir Selected to Perform at Educators

Union's Voices of Proclamation performed the feature concert March 30 at the joint meeting of the Tennessee Music Educators Association and the Tennessee chapter of the American Choral Directors Association in Nashville.

As the feature concert, Proclamation was the only group that presented an evening concert during the meeting.

"It was the only event which was attended by hundreds of music educators, conductors and all-state choir members at the conference," Proclamation director Richard Joiner said.

Joiner said most of the program was a cappella, consisting of masterworks in German, Latin and English. It also included some American folk hymns and a piece in gospel/blues style, accompanied by Union music professor Ronald Boud.

The meeting was held at First Baptist Church in Nashville.





## **Summer Completion Date Expected for New Fesmire** Field House

nclement weather delayed its completion, but the 18,000 square-foot Fesmire Field House should be ready for tours in the summer and athletes in the fall.

The facility will include a 9,000-square foot turf room suitable for varsity indoor practice sessions. Also included in the plans are locker rooms and showers for each home and visiting team, coaches' offices and an athletic training room. It will serve baseball, softball and soccer teams.

Benny and Norma Fesmire, long-time

supporters of Union University athletics, gave a \$500,000 lead gift to support the project. Associate Athletic Director Tommy Sadler says when finished, the facility will rank among the very best in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics.

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Heavy rains earlier in the construction phase slowed the work, but Sadler estimates a possible completion date in July. Watch the Union athletics Web site (www.uu.edu/ athletcs) for information about the grand opening and building tours.

## **Union 2010 Capital Campaign** Tops \$80 Million

nion 2010: A Vision for Excellence" has already exceeded \$80 million in gifts and pledges.

The capital campaign was launched at the 2005 Annual Scholarship Banquet in September. Since then, Union has set records for donors contributing in a single month, and highest dollar figure in a single month. Both marks were set in December.

"We are on target to reach \$110 million by 2010," says Charles A. Fowler, senior vice president for university relations. "Our

alumni and friends are embracing this vision, and responding in wonderful ways."

The campaign targets three key areas of opportunity: New and enhanced campus facilities; endowment growth; and operations support.

Call 1-800-338-6644 to find out more about joining this historic effort. Online, log on to www.uu.edu/union2010. The campaign Web pages provide news on the latest developments, multimedia presentations and a variety of opportunities for participation.



## Union Class of '06 Ready to Make an Impact

raduation from college does not mean a freedom from requirements in life, Paul Corts told a group of nearly 400 Union University graduates at spring commencement on the university's Great Lawn.

"Most of you graduates probably thought that with commencement you find yourself free from having to worry about fulfilling requirements," Corts said. "Your time at a great Christian university like Union has been preparing you to live your life in accord with God's requirements for you. As the Scripture has reminded us, to whom much is given, much is required."

The rain-shortened service saw 400 students receive their degrees, bringing to nearly 900 the number of Union University graduates for the 2005-2006 academic year.

"It was one of the most memorable commencement services in the history of Union University," Union President David S. Dockery said. "We salute the graduates of the class of 2006 for what they've accomplished in the past, and look forward to what they will do in the future."

Corts is the newly elected president of the Council for Christian Colleges and

Universities. He has served as assistant attorney general for administration for the U.S. Department of Justice since 2002 and previously was president of Palm Beach Atlantic University for nearly

Using a text from Micah, Corts told graduates they were required to do three things: do justice, love mercy and walk humbly.

"The world needs a fresh touch, a new infusion of mercy," Corts said. "Put into action what you've been taught here. Follow in the footsteps of Jesus."

Following his address, Corts was inducted as a fellow for Union's Carl F. H. Henry Center for Christian Leadership.

Political science major Josh Dougan, of Gadsden, Tenn., received the Elizabeth Tigrett Medal from Union. The award, created by Tigrett's son to honor his mother, has been awarded since 1912 by vote of the entire Union faculty to an outstanding member of the senior class.

Earlier in the month, English professor Pamela Casey Sutton was named Faculty Member of the Year, and Karen Miller, coordinator of the Department of Continuing Studies, was named Staff Member of the Year.

#### Social Work Students Again Win National Award



For a second consecutive year, social work students at Union have won national acclaim for a program proposal that could benefit thousands of people across Tennessee.

Brandon Bailey, Lindsey Lawrence, Amanda Thedford and advisor Theresa Blakley won the national award in the annual Influencing State Policy competition, sponsored by the Council on Social Work Education. The award was presented at CSWE's annual meeting in Chicago earlier this year.

The project, entitled "Tennessee Can't Wait! Professionalizing the Child Welfare System Through Student Loan Repayment," is a proposed program that would provide loan forgiveness for students who commit to serving vulnerable children and their families in Tennessee's state child welfare system. The students produced a video documentary and policy brief to support their proposal, which they took to state lawmakers and top administrators.

Just last year, a team of Union students won the same national competition for a project entitled "Rights of Incarcerated Women: Movement toward Gender-specific Guidelines and the Protection of Unborn Children."

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#### **Union Students Spend** Spring Break Helping with Katrina Relief

When Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast last fall, Union University sophomore Kirby Maxwell knew she wanted to help.

"I had my heart hurt for the people down there," said Maxwell, a Memphis native. "It was such a bad thing. I just wanted to help in any way I could."

Over spring break, Maxwell had her opportunity. She and 12 other Union University students spent the week of March 19 in Gulfport, Miss., helping the North Carolina Baptist Men's disaster relief group by painting houses and doing other jobs as needed.

The Gulfport team was one of 11 Global Opportunities teams Union sent out worldwide over spring break to such places as France, Romania, Honduras, North Africa, Guatemala, Canada, Boston, New York and Chicago.

Lisa Whiffen, an enrollment counselor who led the Gulfport team, said the students learned a valuable lesson about service. They wanted to do some of the more difficult jobs, like gutting houses, but instead spent much of their time painting and doing other "easy tasks."

"One of the things they learned and I learned was that we really just needed to do what they told us to do," Whiffen said. "Those small tasks really do fit into the bigger picture of getting those homes completed."

"The last couple of days we got to work in areas where we could really see the disaster, and see how the hurricanes affected people," said Union sophomore Blake Waggoner, of Louisville, Ky.

One couple appreciated the work of the Union students so much they sent a letter to the university praising the students.

"Today a group of students from your university arrived and were very helpful in cleaning and painting our home," wrote Chris and Fay Stainbrook, of Biloxi, Miss.

"Anything they lacked in experience, they made up in enthusiasm. It was great to find young people who are polite, motivated and respectful in their work."



## **Hurricane Katrina Victims Find a** New Home at Union

ike thousands of other residents of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, Christy Denney fled ahead of Hurricane Katrina's path. She and her parents made their way to Alamo, Tenn., to stay with Christy's aunt and uncle.

"We only usually get to see them during hurricane season," Denney joked.

What Denney didn't realize at the time was that she'd be staying much longer than she expected. A freshman in college, Denney originally planned just to take some online courses this semester until she could return home to Moss Point, Miss., and finish her schooling there.

But Denney soon decided to enroll as full-time student at Union University. Now she's decided to stay and graduate from Union in four years.

"I love the school," Denney said. "I love the atmosphere. I feel like I've been here for years instead of just two months. It just kind of fits."

Denney is just one of 11 college students who transferred to Union University in the fall because of Hurricane Katrina. To accommodate students who had been affected by the hurricane, Union extended its enrollment deadline and offered to help such students academically, socially and financially.

Steve Tien, of San Jose, Calif., previously attended Louisiana State University. A computer engineering major, Tien isn't sure yet what his long-term plans will be.

But he knows if he stays in Jackson, Tenn., he'll stay at Union.

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"Union is like a small family where everybody knows everybody and everybody is very helping," Tien said. "If you need help they're willing to help you. It's a very nice place to be. It's a good study environment, and the professors are very helpful."

Chrissy Esnault of New Orleans echoed that assessment of Union's professors. A nursing student who heard about Union from a friend, Esnault said Union's faculty members have been "outstanding."

She specifically cited the help of nursing faculty members Tharon Kirk and Jill Webb, who have helped Esnault by soliciting donations and providing her with gift cards to purchase some necessities.

"They've been helping in a lot of ways," Esnault said. "Hopefully, if everything works out, I might just stay to graduate from Union."

Naomi Larsen, chair of sociology and family studies at Union, and her husband Jonathan opened their home to students who had transferred to Union.

"We have empty rooms upstairs, so we thought that was a way we could help,"

With an empty nest, Larsen said having two college students living with her has taken some adjustment. But it's also been a good experience, because it's given her a chance to interact with people from a different background and culture.



Senior Kimberly Brown, of New Orleans, one of 11 students who transferred to Union in the fall because of Hurricane Katrina, selects a quilt made by Kindred Spirits Quilters, from Hydewood Park Baptist Church in North Plainfield, N.J.

## New Jersey Group Focuses on **Katrina Victims at Union**

tudents who transferred to Union University as a result of Hurricane Katrina attracted the attention of some New Jersey women they don't even know.

Kindred Spirits Quilters, from Hydewood Park Baptist Church in North Plainfield, N.J., made and sent 13 quilts to Union, one for each of the students displaced by Hurricane Katrina, and two for the students' children.

"I sent them an e-mail once I received the quilt, and I told them that the group is really a spiritual group to think of other people," said senior Kimberly Brown of New Orleans, who graduated from Union this spring. "It's really good to know that there are other people in your corner when you are at your worst."

Kimberly Thornbury, Union's dean of students, said her mother, Carolyn Carmichael, who lives in New Jersey, told Mary Lou Kirtland about the students who had transferred to Union because of the hurricane.

Kirtland is involved with Kindred Spirits Quilters, and said the group had been looking for a way to help the hurricane victims. When she heard the story from Carmichael, she knew her group

had found its project.

"I asked the other members of Kindred Spirits Quilters to produce either throwsize or bed-size quilts," Kirtland said. "We'd get them quilted, bound and sent to Tennessee as soon as possible. We added a label to the back of each quilt with a Scripture verse of promise – and to let the recipients know that there are strangers who care for them and are praying for each of them."

The verse attached to each quilt was Psalm 91:4, "He shall cover thee with his feathers and under his wings shalt thou trust."

Thornbury's office handled the quilt distribution, as students came by to pick out items crafted by women they'll probably never meet.

"They just took all semester to work on the quilts and pray over the students and everything," Thornbury said.

Brown loved her quilt, and said she greatly appreciated the thought behind it. A tragedy like Hurricane Katrina "kind of messes with your spirit," she said.

"But God sends people in your life to let you know that what you're going through is just a test. And eventually you will come out better than you were before."

#### Undergraduate Research Showcased

Is there a scientific basis for how coffee-loving chemistry students should select their favorite blends? Can engineering students build a better robot for Federal Express? How can global positioning systems be used to get pizza delivered more efficiently?

These and scores of other questions were answered with solid, quantitative student research at Union's third annual Scholarship Symposium.

Sometimes the research involves everyday situations such as ordering coffee or pizza. Other projects delve into subjects such as a lymphoma that primarily attacks African-American children, an in-depth survey of computer ethics studies on the nation's college campuses, or the benefits of becoming bilingual.

More than 100 students from 18 departments participated in the event, presenting significant research conducted alongside a faculty adviser during the 2005-06 academic year.

It's the type of serious exploration usually reserved for graduate study at most institutions. Faculty members say completion of such work often makes Union students stand out on employment or graduate school applications.

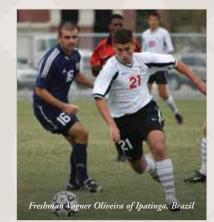
Kolo Goshi ('05) gave the keynote address at a reception after the day of presentations. Goshi was in the first engineering class at Union and now works in the aerospace industry in California.



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**NEWS**BRIEFS

Union Soccer Wins Values Award



Men's Soccer was awarded the Buffalo Funds Five Star Award this season for exemplary demonstration of five key character traits. The national recognition is accorded to one team in each of the 23 sports represented in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics.

In the areas of respect, responsibility, integrity, servant leadership and sportsmanship, the program was judged to be a top example of those attributes in action.

In the area of sportsmanship, for example, the team reduced its number of yellow penalty cards by 72%, and head coach Darin White received numerous communications from game officials praising the graciousness, class and positive attitudes of his players.

"We put a high premium on being leaders on our campus and in our community, says White, who just completed his 12th season as head coach. "This translates into success in a number of ways."

Union soccer received the prestigious National Soccer Coaches Association of America National Team Academic Award, signifying an overall team grade-point average in the top 3% of all men's soccer teams across all divisions in the United States.

On the field, the 2005 squad advanced further in intercollegiate play than any other Bulldog soccer team, meeting the defending region champions and six-time national champion Lindsey Wilson (Ky.) in the Region XI Title Game. The team earned runner-up finishes in the TranSouth regular season, TranSouth Tournament and NAIA Region XI Tournament.



ole Floyd took first place individual honors in the 2006 NAIA Region XI golf championship, leading Union to a third place team finish just days after the Bulldogs captured the TranSouth conference title.

Floyd, a sophomore from Milan, earned an automatic bid to the NAIA National Golf Tournament in Kansas as an individual qualifier. In the regional tournament, Floyd led after two rounds and then fired a 70 for a three-day total

of 211. That was four strokes better than the second place finisher.

In the conference tournament, sophomore William Boyd took third place overall to lead Union to its ninth TranSouth title.

Several post-season honors came home with Union, including Head Coach Don Morris being named the TranSouth Coach of the Year. Boyd, Floyd and sophomore Drew Cannon were each named to the TranSouth All-Conference team.

# Union Men Finish Memorable Season atop TranSouth

or a second straight year, the Union University Bulldogs won the TranSouth Conference Tournament championship, their fifth such title in nine years.

Union, which finished 28-6, clinched the tournament title with a 92-79 victory over Trevecca Nazarene in Nashville, and

finished the regular season No. 5 in the NAIA men's basketball rankings.

For much of the season, Mountain State (W.Va) University was the topranked team. The Cougars lost only two regular season games, and Union accounted for both of

those defeats. The first victory over MSU put Union atop the men's national poll for the first time in school history.

In addition to Mountain State, Union defeated several other top non-conference opponents, picking up wins over NAIA powers Houston Baptist, Oklahoma City and Lindsey Wilson.

The Bulldogs even threw a scare into

NCAA Division I Middle Tennessee State, leading the Blue Raiders by as much as 14 in the first half and trailing by only a point with three minutes remaining. MTSU went on to a 95-82 exhibition win.

The season ended with a first-round loss to eventual national champion Texas Wesleyan at the NAIA tournament in

Kansas City, Mo. It was the second consecutive year that an unseeded team started a Cinderella-style run to the national championship with a win over Union.

But as they remember the 2005-06 season, Bulldog fans will savor all those big wins, and some

outstanding individual performances. Kinley Sellars, Corey Burkett and Ben Frederick were first-team selections for the TranSouth All-Conference squad. Dewayne Lee made second-team, and Sellars was named Newcomer of the Year.

Bulldog Head Coach Ralph Turner took
Coach of the Year honors in the conference.

Homecoming
Weekend
is making
a move!

Beginning next school year homecoming will move
from February to November. The dates for next
year's homecoming will be November 3-4, 2006.

Join us in November and help us make the move!

## **Union Moves to November Homecoming**

ne key reason for moving Union University's annual homecoming celebrations from February to November is the unreliable weather that is possible during a west Tennessee winter.

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The point was illustrated dramatically during the final February event.

Forecasts of ice and snow on Friday, Feb. 17 forced the University to cancel scores of homecoming events.

"We did get in all the Friday activities," says Gary Williams, associate vice president for alumni services. "But almost everything on Saturday had to be canceled."

The men's basketball game set for Feb. 18 was played, but Homecoming Queen Kari Bachman of Louisville, Ky. and her court were not introduced until the following weekend.

The switch to November means there will be a second homecoming weekend in

the calendar year 2006. It has been scheduled for Nov. 3-4.

The alumni awards luncheon canceled on Feb. 18 has been rescheduled as a dinner on Nov. 3.

Among the accolades to be awarded that night:

- Distinguished Faculty/Staff Award, Jimmy H. Davis
- Distinguished Service Award, Donald R. Webb
- Distinguished Alumnus Award, Raymond A. "Buddy" Boston
- Honorary Alumnus Award, David S. Dockery
- Outstanding Young Achiever Award, Andrea McDaniel

The potential for better weather in early November should lead to some new activities on future Union homecoming schedules. Tailgate parties, barbeques and

outdoor activities for families are in the planning stages.

The initial plan is to conduct any formal activities on Friday, followed by ample time for departments and organizations to hold reunion events, dessert receptions and open houses. Saturday will be reserved for outdoor events and basketball.

"Saturday will be a totally relaxed, casual and fun day," says Williams. "We're already planning a golf tournament. Family and student activities will be mainly in the morning, with the basketball games in the afternoon."

Among those actively involved in the planning are students in Ashley Blair's public relations classes. They will study strategies for increasing student participation and attracting alumni to campus.

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