

Northwest University's Student Magazine

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Outside the Bubble

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CHURCH PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM OFFERS UNIQUE, HANDS-ON PATH TO DEGREES



Photo by Talon Staff

By Jon Ladd

Since 2014, Northwest University has partnered with churches all across America through the Church Partnership Program (CPP). The program offers students curriculum, credit and, if they persist, a degree.

Students enrolled in the program take online classes through NU and partake in internships with their respective churches. The extent of responsibility interns have is up to the respective churches, but all students receive practical experience in ministry.

NU Campus Pastor Christian Dawson believes the CPP is a unique opportunity for students to get hands-on experience and education at the same time.

"I do know people who are in the program. It seems like they have had a great experience," Dawson said. "It's a good program for some people who want to be involved in practical ministry and getting real experience while also getting a great education. My pastor friends who have the program at their churches have said that it adds a whole new level of strength to what churches are doing, and so they love it."

The degrees offered through the program include Associate of Arts, Associate in Ministry Leadership, Bachelor of Arts in Business Management, Bachelor of Arts in Ministry Leadership, Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Management, and Bachelor of Arts in Psychology.

Cary Peterson, director of the CPP, said that the program offers local opportunities to get an NU education without having to relocate to the Kirkland campus. The CPP offers the opportunity for budding youth pastors to get their degree without leaving their ministry for years at a time, and adults who already have careers and families can finish their program without disrupting the life they have built. The considerations for students in unique positions doesn't end there. One of NU's partnerships is with Union Gospel Mission, which focuses largely on recovering addicts.

Peterson explained how Union Gospel Mission is perhaps the most unusual, yet rewarding aspects of the CPP.

"Union Gospel Mission is probably the most unique application of the CPP. Many of their students are recovering from a life of addiction. Previously it was too risky to send these recovering addicts away from the UGM structure for their education. Without the daily support of UGM there was too much chance of a relapse. The CPP allows such students to pursue their education while still in the supportive UGM environment," Peterson said.

The CPP and its students have been benefitting from NU's involvement since they partnered in 2014 and hope to continue in successfully changing and enriching the lives of those involved for years to come.

Peterson believes the program offers a fresh start for many of its students.

"There are numerous stories of students in their late 20's (or older) who were extremely unsuccessful in college immediately after high school, but have found great success in the CPP," Peterson said. "The CPP gives them a second chance at success after years of growing up and learning how to handle increased responsibility."