

From the **PRESIDENT**



Our Summer Vacation

Every line of work has associated myths that seem never to go away. Those in higher education must contend with the common presumption that everyone has the summer “off.” The errant “Enjoying your summer off?” is a frequent well-intended (if slightly envious) greeting.

Alas, were it so—and perhaps years ago it was. But in actual fact the summer at most any college or university today is a very busy time indeed—in some ways busier than the traditional school year. Classes run year-long at King, so many faculty never really stop teaching. The busiest time of year for the admissions and financial aid folks is often the summer, as the final push is on to make a King education possible for those who have been accepted, even as the planning is done for the next admissions year. The business office staff and fundraisers work hard to close out one fiscal year and begin the next. Likewise, the faculty and staff ramp up to close out the academic year just finished and prepare for the next.

Those who aren’t teaching are busy hosting study-abroad programs, or running STEM camps, or doing scholarly work, or revising their lectures for the next semester. Some faculty, staff, and administrators are able to go to professional association meetings that help keep them and the university current. Coaches are often hosting sports camps, even as they put finishing touches on rosters



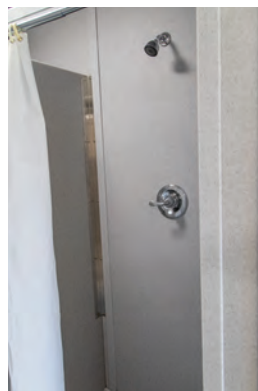
for the next year and ensure their playing spaces and equipment are in order. The Bristol campus may indeed seem empty with the residential students gone, but the work done each summer at all of our sites is considerable.

While for most of us our work remains more-or-less constant, irrespective of season, there are two groups on campus for whom the summers represent a significant up-turn in work. From the moment the last student crosses the stage at commencement and the alma mater is sung, King’s facilities and IT shops are working non-stop to accomplish a seemingly endless number of projects, from the mundane to the monumental.

That the grass grows faster when the students aren’t here is a truism, but it is true. And in addition to the normal grounds work that ensures King’s main campus grounds are as beautiful as they are, and the normal housekeeping that ensures things are clean and tidy, there are more comprehensive projects to tackle that cannot be done when the campus is full.

This summer just past, for example, had you visited campus you would have seen:

- Long-overdue deep cleaning of the brick on the hard-to-reach vertical surfaces of our brick buildings.



Liston restrooms (before & after)



**Spectrum Cable TV
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CAMPUS WIDE**

- The large trees which fell during the storms at the end of spring semester removed.
- Complete restoration of the front of the chapel, as our crews sanded the nearly century-old trim down to the raw wood, removing and repairing that which had rotted, and giving it fresh coats of white paint. It looks practically like new.
- Complete renovation of three Liston Hall restrooms, a pilot project done in hopes of doing all of the Liston restrooms over the next few years. The entire building (an excellent structure) needs attention, but restrooms and stairwells were the most critical areas of need—and last summer the stairwells were all refurbished.
- Complete rebuilding of the brick walkway in front of the E. W. King Building and the brick stairs that go to the chapel—made possible by a generous donation. This is the way most people access the Oval, and the original walkways had become dangerous and unattractive. (We are still looking for a donor who will fund rebuilding the stairs and brickwork on the Sells Hall side of the E.W. King Building.)
- Refurbishment of our counseling center.
- Transitioning away from hard-wired cable with boxes for television to wireless cable that residential students (and faculty and staff) may access from their smart TVs, computers, phones, or other personal devices.
- Quintupling the speed of on-campus wireless access.
- Installation of a new and dramatically improved sound system in the dining hall that eliminates all dead spots.

In an important strategic planning meeting at my last college, the president asked “What is the most important thing we do here?” No doubt he was expecting lofty, inspirational answers. But the very talented and down-to-earth head of physical plant answered first and resolutely: “Sewerage.” Everyone laughed, but he replied, “No, I’m serious. If the sewerage doesn’t work, nothing else will get done here: no meals will be served, no dorms will be fit to live in, and no classes will be taught.” And he was right, of course.

The work our facilities and IT staffs do here likewise is what makes everything else we do possible—at all of our campuses and online. Day in and day out, they accomplish a tremendous amount, work that is not always as visible as the summer projects I described above, but which is vital to our fulfilling our mission. They are very much our full partners in the work we do at King, inspiring us with their commitment and the quality of their work.

The next time you are on campus and see one of any of these “hands-on” workers, stop and thank them for the work they do toward our mission. And, better yet, think about funding projects (large or small) that will leverage their great talents and love for this place and our students. A campus that is well-maintained and preserved improves morale and retention, and helps us attract new students and new friends. In many ways these professionals are our best admission representatives and our best fundraisers.

Alexander Whitaker
President



Rebuilding of the E. W. King Building brick steps and walkway