

Southern Adventist University KnowledgeExchange@Southern

Faculty Works

Biology Department

Winter 2019

Insights From the Professor

W. Rick Norskov M.D.

Southern Adventist University, wnorskov@southern.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://knowledge.e.southern.edu/facworks_bio



Part of the [Academic Advising Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Norskov, W. Rick M.D., "Insights From the Professor" (2019). *Faculty Works*. 5.
https://knowledge.e.southern.edu/facworks_bio/5

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Biology Department at KnowledgeExchange@Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Works by an authorized administrator of KnowledgeExchange@Southern. For more information, please contact jspears@southern.edu.

Insights From the Professor

“I’m Not Sure I Want to Be a ____”

By Dr. Rick Norskov

It happened again last week after class. “Dr. Norskov, do you have time to talk?” Our department’s open-door policy for faculty invites students to stop by and visit. This sophomore stepped into my office and looked sheepishly over his shoulder as he sat in the chair across from my desk. In a hushed voice, he said, “Lately, I’m not so sure I want to be a ____.”

Whether pre-physical therapy, pre-dentistry or pre-whatever, we’re all about assisting students as they achieve their career goals at Southern. We’re not perfect, but we have a fairly good record of “how.” Thirty-six students were accepted to medical school this year, and over half of whom were biology majors.

Most all parents who enroll a student at Southern want their son or daughter to find a great career—maybe even work for the church. But they also want that student to be invested in his or her work. A 2015 Gallup Poll found that an average of 32 percent of U.S. workers are enthusiastic and committed to their job and are engaged in the workplace, but 68 percent are disengaged. They just “show up and kill time, doing the minimum required.”

This statistic is not lost on our biology and allied health students. They are engaged in career conversations in the first-year experience class (Southern Connections). One of our majors just completed a study of 90 pre-medical students about their calling and burnout. We also include this narrative in our summer pre-med camp for visiting high school students.

Focusing on the “why” is important. Many on campus refer to this as “Finding a Calling.” Calling is defined by most as hearing a summons or call from God, making a difference in other’s lives, and finding purpose and meaning in a career. This is a growing movement in Christian higher education. This year over 250 American parochial colleges are engaged in the purposeful exploration of vocation as students search for their calling. I just returned from the national meeting of NetVUE colleges held in Louisville, Kentucky, last month. Over 600 faculty and staff gathered for this three-day event and learned new ways to help college students find purpose in their careers.

So how do you know what you’re being called to do in life? Your calling is a journey and not just a destination. We all have a calling and career journey. It may change some over time. I discovered during my semester sabbatical (Fall 2017) that reflecting on this journey is both personal and relevant to our biology/allied health students and also to our staff.

In the book *Make Your Job a Calling*, Bryan Dik and Ryan Duffy discuss three ways to find and live your calling.

When talking with students and other groups, I write three phrases on the board:

1. Hear the summons or call. God usually uses people and circumstances, not a burning bush as He did with Moses. Elijah calling Elisha is a good example.

2. Make a difference. We talk a lot about service to others at Southern. Service-learning and community service is built into our curriculum. Dorcas is a well-known Bible example.

3. Find meaning and purpose. To use our God-given strengths and talents makes careers more meaningful, and we find purpose in our calling. David was living the good life using his gifts of music and even protecting others, though he suffered many trials. "Enjoy life to the full" (John 10:10, WE). Students want to hear our career journey stories. I turned to the sophomore in my office. "So here's where to start when thinking about what God is calling you to do...."