

Weathering the storm

Simpson's endowment, finances sitting positive

By Brittany Robb | Editor-in-Chief
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Simpson College students are irritated by the price of an education, but members of the administration have confidence in the financial climate of the college.

Ken Birkenholtz, vice president for business and finance, acknowledges the concerns financially but expresses confidence in the longevity of the college.

"We have a pretty good endowment for the size of school we are," Birkenholtz said. "We have a fairly low debt level. Balance sheet wise, we are a pretty healthy institution."

According to Simpson's Internal Revenue Service Form 990 report, the college's endowment was sitting at roughly \$85 million at the end of May 2014. Birkenholtz and business office controller Logan Edel confirmed the number increased nearly \$2 million by the close of May 2015. Most tax-exempt organizations must file a Form 990 with the IRS, which documents the organization's income and spending.

While Simpson is more reliant on tuition than endowment for most operational purposes, the latter is a key factor in the stability of the college's financial standing.

Through various circumstances, including salary savings from eliminated or unfilled positions and lower than projected debt rates, the college is looking at a consistent fiscal year 2016, according to Birkenholtz, though he is concerned about fiscal year 2017.

"We have enrollments struggling, and that's a long term problem for Iowa schools," he said.

The Board of Regents worsened the blow to private colleges by heavily basing the state funding formula more on recruiting Iowa students to in-state public institutions. In response, the University of Iowa rolled out a \$1 million campaign to recruit

Iowa students, resulting in 300 more applications than average and an increased enrollment of nearly 400 this year.

If Simpson received five percent of that increased enrollment – or 20 students – added to the 322-member class of 2019, it could have been fantastic for the college, Birkenholtz said. Broken down it is estimated each Simpson student is worth roughly \$15,000.

With declining high school graduating classes across the state, colleges in Iowa have a smaller pool of in-state students to recruit. The sheer number of colleges in Iowa may struggle to remain financially sustainable if enrollment continues to decline.

"The fewer students we bring in now, the fewer we retain for next year, and if we are at 322 this year, can we do better than 322 next year?" he said.



Photo by Alex Kirkpatrick

The key to that comment, he said, is retention. A preemptive move by the president's cabinet this year resulted in the creation of a new position – the director of retention and student success, which was taken over by Jim Hayes, former director of CVIL.

Along with the emphasis on retention, Edel said there are more ideas to pad the revenue for Simpson. "We are trying to input those initiatives, boost the revenue and get more students here," he said.

When it comes to the value of a Simpson education, there is more than just monetary value to consider. Birkenholtz said he looks at the value of Simpson from not only an educational standpoint but an experiential one as well.

"The real advantage here is the opportunity to interact with the campus community," he said. "The sports, clubs, all the opportunities that you have at a place like Simpson, most folks just can't find that at a place like Iowa State or Iowa."

State of Affairs

This is the first in a series looking into the details on Simpson's campus. Next to come: new recruiting focus in admissions.

Campus crawling with critters

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There's a new definition of "hopping in the shower" on the Simpson College campus due to crickets and other insects invading residence halls and athletic facilities.

Barker resident and freshman student Zoe Seiler finds crickets almost every time she takes a shower.

"Sometimes I don't really pay attention to it, but the crickets in the shower creep me out," Seiler said.

Junior Virginia Atwell and her six housemates have it worse than Seiler. Carpenter ants have taken over their performing arts theme house.

"Usually I'm not afraid of bugs, but it's really nerve wracking because I don't want ants in my bed," Atwell said.

Her roommate Molly Monk found them in her bed.

"My foot started itching and I found that it was covered in ants," Monk said. "Then there were ants all over my bed."

There have been roughly seven cases throughout the residence halls on campus thus far and were taken care of as of Sept. 10, according to Dean of Students Luke Behaunek.

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Grab n' Go

Students weigh in on new Pfeiffer to-go option



Photo by Michelle Hartmann
 Andy Decker took over as the director of dining services this summer. He is hoping to benefit campus with the new program

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Andy Decker is working to find appropriate reusable containers to offer a to-go option in Pfeiffer so students don't have to miss meals. Students weigh in on the positives and the negatives of the to-go option.

Students' schedules are often filled to the max, leaving little time to sit down and eat at Pfeiffer or wait in the

lines for food from Au Bon Pain or Tyler's. This year, Pfeiffer is going to offer a to-go option for students in a rush.

Each to-go meal can be purchased for one board block. When a student purchases a to-go option they will receive a reusable container to fill and take with them on the go.

The purpose of this to-go option is to add a way for students to keep themselves fed even on hectic days.

"A lot of students can't get in during the hours that we're open, so we want to make sure that people aren't missing their meals," Andy Decker, director of dining services, said.

Larissa Mincks, senior, believes this to-go option will be effective in her daily routine. She also thinks it will be something students with less busy schedules would appreciate.

"I think most students would really love this option. Busy students would appreciate it most, but other students would be able to take food and eat in their rooms if that's what they prefer," Mincks said.

Mincks says her chaotic schedule makes it hard to get different options for food.

"With all of my classes close together, and rehearsals on top of that, it would be nice to be able to grab food from Pfeiffer on the go. I get so sick of nothing but Au Bon Pain because that's all I have time to get sometimes," Mincks said.

Another student who says they would benefit from the to-go option, sophomore Audrey LoVan, also thinks there may be a downside to this new option.

"I think it sounds like a great plan," LoVan said, "but a negative to the to-go option is they may not get their to-go boxes back or they might run out of containers if they only have so many and don't have a proper return policy."

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Simpson College announces Health Services Leadership program



President Simmons and Steven Johnson discuss the new program offered at Simpson on Monday, September 14.

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Simpson College announced Monday a new partnership designed to meet the exploding demand for healthcare professionals in a variety of fields.

The partners include Des Moines Area Community College, the YMCA of Greater Des Moines, Merit Senior Living, Wesley Life, LCS and CareView Communications.

According to a press release, the Health Services Leadership program will receive a head start toward employment after graduation.

"The Health Services Leadership program will provide Simpson students with the knowledge and values needed for leadership roles and career success in the complex and evolving health industry organizations," the release stated.

Highlights of the program in-

clude a new undergraduate major and minor, post-baccalaureate certificate and workshops and conferences.

School officials said they worked for two years to design the new academic program, working with private industries, some of whom agreed to offer student internships.

"We believe this is an exciting turning point in the 155-year-history of Simpson College," Simpson College president Jay Simmons said in the news release. "We will be producing graduates fully prepared to make a difference in a health services industry that greatly needs them. The potential is enormous."

Classes began this fall in the HSL program. More will be added each year.

For more information, contact program director Jacy Downey at 515-961-1272 or Simpson College representative Ken Fuson at 515-961-1608.

"Beneath the Whispering Maples" finding relevance on social media

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The definitive history of Simpson College, documented in the late Joe Walt's "Beneath the Whispering Maples," is now finding relevance on Twitter.

Professor of political science Kedron Bardwell completed Walt's more than 800-page book in 30 days over the summer.

His findings are posted under the Twitter handle @WhisperingMaple using the hashtag #30daysofwalt.

The idea, Bardwell said, was to honor Walt, who taught at Simpson for more than 50 years.

"I'm sure Joe's motivation of writing the book was simply his love of Simpson and telling the story of the people who changed it and built it," Bardwell said. "I think the idea that resonates throughout all of Simpson's history is this idea that higher education, particularly a liberal arts education, is important."

Bardwell said he was struck by how integral the Methodist Church was in the early years of Simpson, saving the college multiple times from financial collapse.

"The typical thing that would happen, if Simpson was having financial problems - many times near closing - is they would have a service and someone would get up and say, 'We can't let this die. This is what God wants us to do to continue this college and minister to kids and have this value of higher education in the Methodist church,'" Bardwell said.

He also said student activism, especially in the late 20th century, was a highlight of Simpson's history, when students started to aggressively participate in social change which had not been the case before.

"The period during the Vietnam War was tumultuous but very interesting," he said.

Bardwell spoke at the All College Convocation and recounted the story of when students rallied together to lift a dancing ban, which reached national headlines.

The Schenectady Gazette, now The Daily Gazette, reported the story on March 27, 1933.

"The 50-year-old ban against dancing at Simpson College will be lifted next fall, it was disclosed tonight by a member of the board of trustees."

Student dissent reached a climax Friday when A. V. Proudfoot, president of the board, was greeted with a shower of eggs and oranges at the conclusion of a speech, in which he referred to the suspension of six students for refusal to sign pledges not to dance.

The student body voted today to make a personal apology to the board president."

In the present day, people should be looking for the deep history of the organizations to which they belong, according to Bardwell.

"Think of the fraternities and sororities," he said. "Some of them have been in existence here since they started in the 1880s. It's amazing to think that these organizations have been working here for more than 130 years."

Bardwell encourages students to read a sliver of Simpson's history to see how organizations or events were formed.

"You could start an organization, and it might be here 100 years from now," he said. "That's a pretty cool thing for a student who is engaged on campus to think about."

Bardwell noted multiple examples

of student activism in modern times, including the "End of the Isms" March, Agents of Change and Simpson Votes.

He hopes using social media will get students more interested. The Twitter account, @WhisperingMaple, already has more than 140 followers.

One tweet reads: "1870s: few students play cards/dance/drink. No saloon in 1-town! German opens Blue Goose bar at city line, 1-town annexes land to shut down."

Another reads: "1882: Kate Shelley goes to SC. At 15 became natl heroine: stops train headed for washed-out bridge by crawling over river bridge in the dark."

An example of Simpson's progressiveness: "1870s: Susan B. Anthony spoke in Indianola for women's suffrage. @SimpsonCollege president came out in support of women voting #30daysofwalt."

The main impact, Bardwell said, is for one to understand that the past is just as relevant as today.

"The lesson in the book, overall, is you can change things if you just get educated, involved and make a difference," he said. "We don't expect you to receive an education and get a job, but also get in the world."

Bardwell rates the book four stars out of five, reasoning that Walt's writing is exhaustive yet interesting.

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cent, wants to increase diversity on the SGA board to better represent the student population.

The issue was a talking point last year. Fredrick wrote in email to The Simpsonian last year: "That discussion is important because as SGA is supposed to represent students, we have a big problem electing representatives that represent the student body."

This election cycle doesn't look to be any different from others in that the overwhelming majority of student representatives will be heterosexual white men. That can present a lot of problems when we make valuable decisions about what really matters for students."

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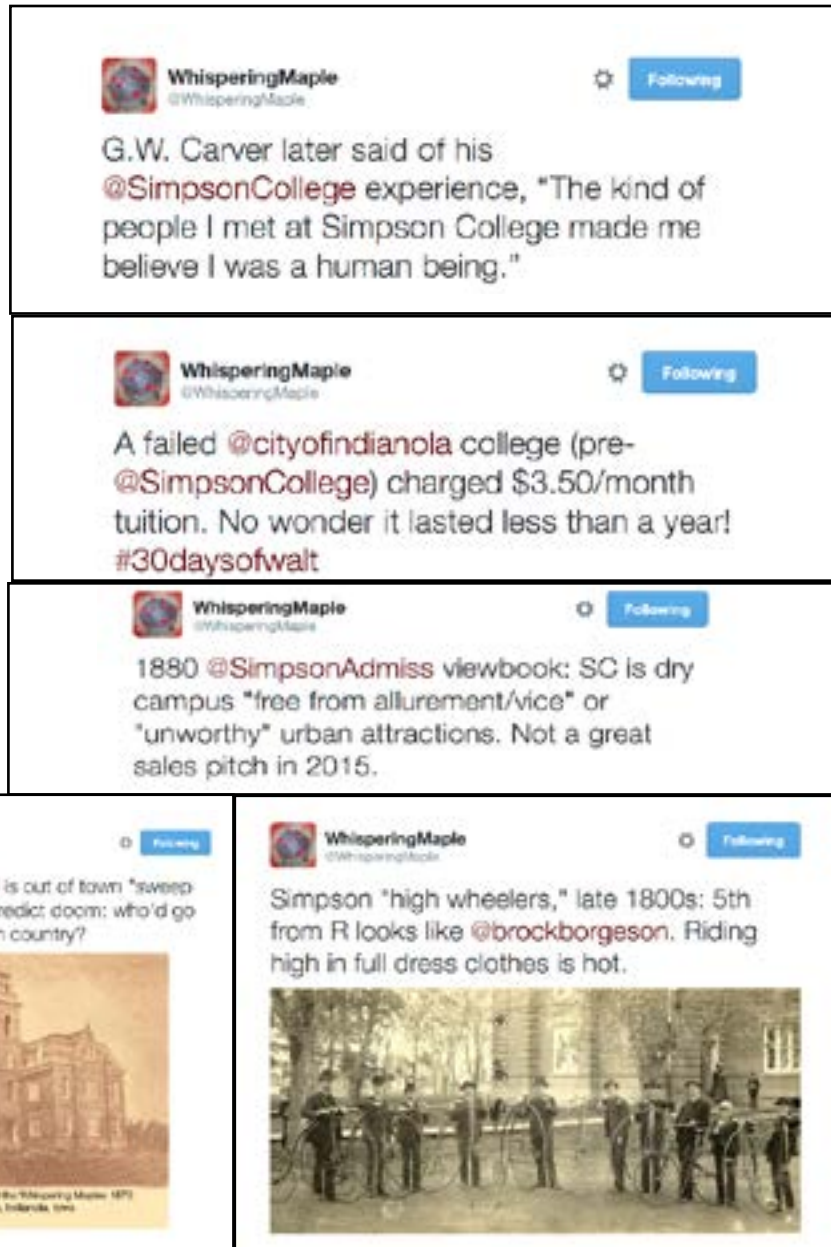
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Record turnout in SGA elections despite lower enrollment

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In a record turnout, Jordan Pope was elected freshman class president. Freshman senators - in no particular order - are Kelly Stone, Tre Loge, Pierce Carey and Jacob Bruns.

This year, 179 of 322 freshmen (55 percent) voted in the elections, according to student body president Ethan Fredrick.

Despite lower enrollment, according to Fredrick, the absolute number and percentage of freshmen voting in SGA elections has increased since current seniors started at Simpson.

"There are a variety of reasons this could be the case, and I won't speculate here what those are," Fredrick wrote in an email. "However, this

year's record turnout certainly has something to do with the robust campaigns run by this first-year class."

Freshman class president Jordan Pope, of Albia, said he enjoys serving others.

"I saw an ability to give back to the school at a very early stage through running for class president and being there for my classmates," Pope said.

Pope is a political science major who believes strongly in civic engagement.

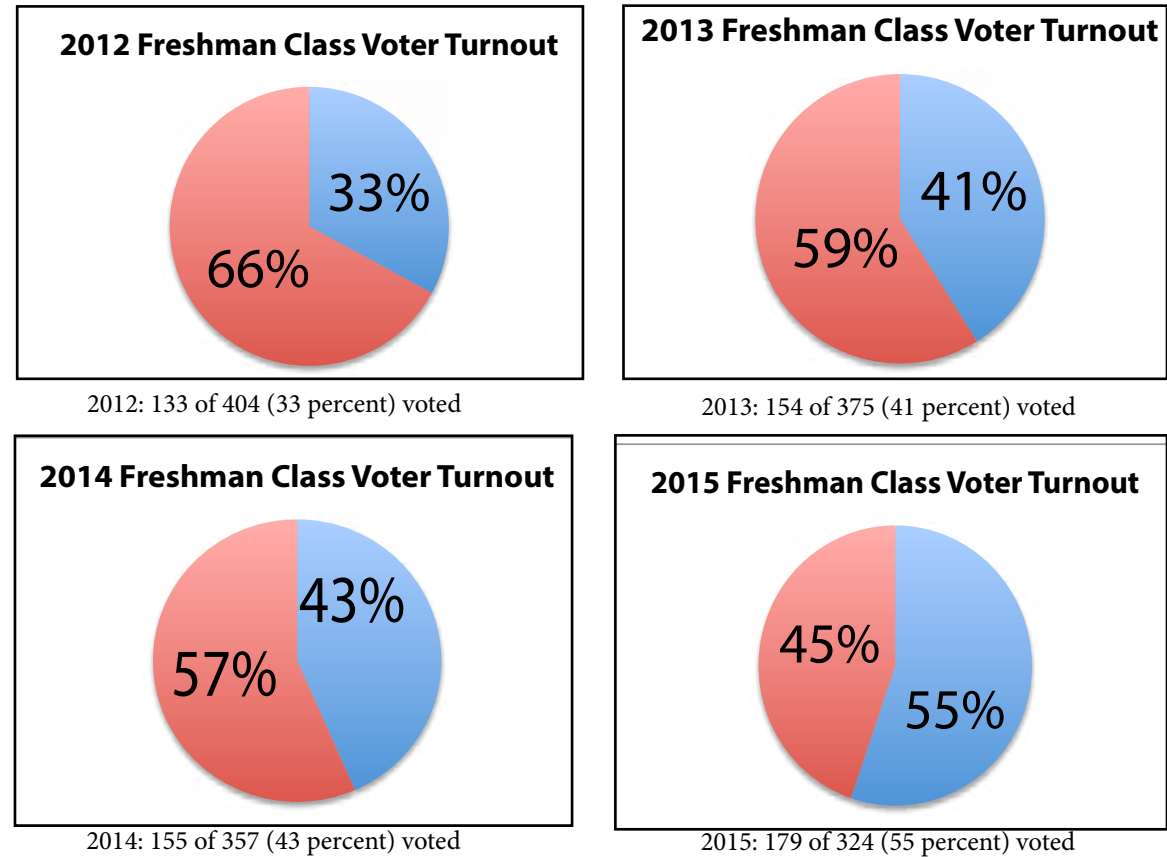
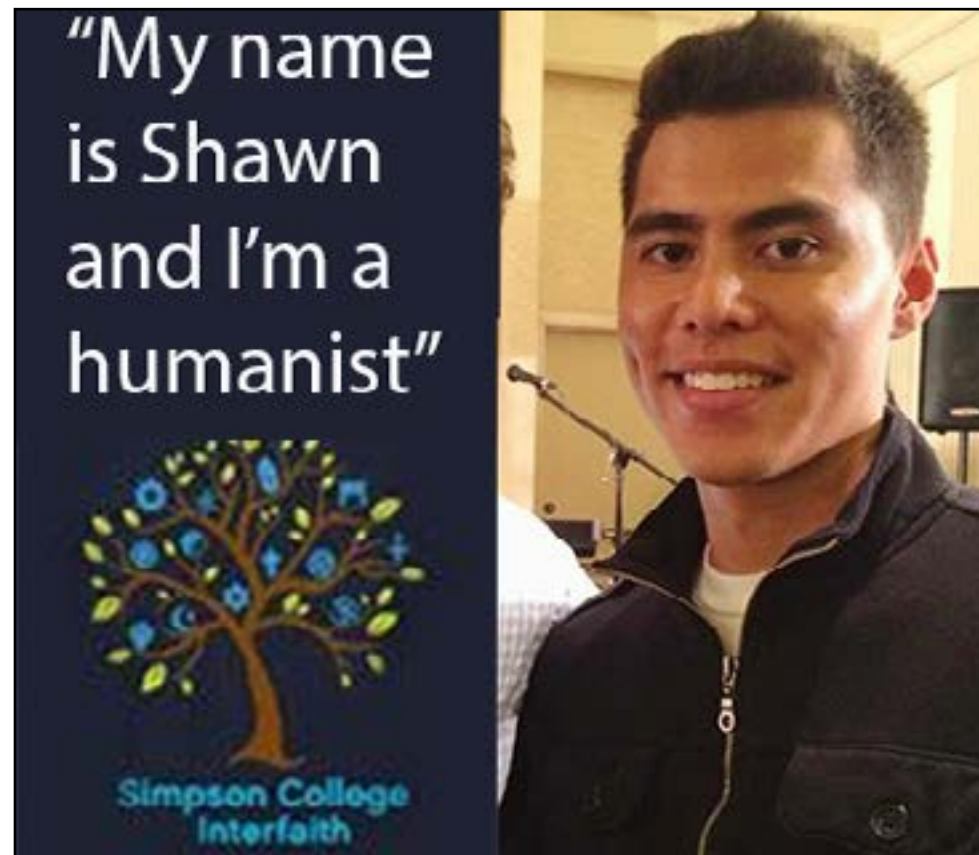
"I believe SGA has a frontline between the students and the college, and college is truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Pope said.

Fredrick said SGA will be analyzing election results on an ongoing basis to identify ways to better inform and increase voter turnout.

Pope, who is of Sri Lankan de-



Jordan Pope received 55 percent of the freshman vote this fall from the highest voter turnout in recent memory.



Simpson welcomes new faculty, staff

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Each year, new additions arrive on Simpson College's campus, but not just in terms of students. Those who keep the campus running continue to change as well. This fall, Simpson would like to welcome all new staff and faculty, including Abby Hahn, Rebecca Nation, and Heidi Levine.

Fresh out of graduate school at Iowa State University (ISU), Abby Hahn is the new area coordinator for the first-year area, encompassing Kresge Hall and Barker Hall. Before ISU, the Nebraska native studied at Doane College in Crete, Neb. Like Simpson, it is a small liberal arts school with many of the same values Hahn finds essential.

"I really wanted to get back to a small school," she said. "Just because I liked knowing people. You know, walking down the side walk and knowing who's there."

Another factor in accepting the job at Simpson for Hahn was the school's dedication to service. With a master's degree in Higher Education Student Affairs, she has a passion for helping students succeed, a vital component for working with freshmen transitioning to life at college.

This fall, Simpson College hired not one, but two new area coordinators. Taking charge of the apartments is Rebecca Nation. Nation has undergraduate degrees in Linguistics and International Studies along with

a master's in Student Affairs. Unlike Hahn, being at a small college is a new experience for Nation. Previously she worked at ISU where she assisted students in the Academic Success Center.

What drew Nation into Simpson was the proximity to home and the challenge the new career posed. "I wanted to find a different higher education institution and possibly a different area for academic support."

Perhaps the most prominent change is Heidi Levine, the new vice president for student development. Her role on campus is to provide leadership for the entirety of student development, such as counseling, residence life and service groups.

"I would describe myself as somebody who really leads through relationships," she said. "Part of the reason I chose to come to Simpson is that I really liked being a part of small and close-knit communities where I have the opportunity to get to know the students and my colleagues."

Levine is spearheading the job with a bachelor's degree in Psychology, a master's degree in Counselor Education and a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology. Before this position, she worked at a few mid-sized schools but gravitated mostly toward smaller institutions. It seems there's a certain appeal to small schools like Simpson.

"I love what this place is about," Levine said. "I was impressed with how committed people are at Simpson. People love this school."

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The program hasn't been implemented yet because Decker is working to find the proper containers.

"The part that Chartwells wants people to know about is that we are committed to the sustainability piece of [the program]," Decker said. "That's why I'm trying to make sure we source the right containers. We want to be able to reuse and reuse. Also, the law requires we make sure the containers are properly sanitized and they go through our machines and hit a certain temperature. Therefore, I need to find the right containers to stand up to the temperatures."

The to-go containers will be reusable and students are expected to bring them back to Pfeiffer so they can be properly sanitized and redistributed.

"When you sign up for the program we will issue you a new container, then you fill it, you take it home, you do whatever you do. You can rinse it out or bring it back dirty. You'll turn it in and we'll give you a new one or give you one that we have washed," Decker said about the return policy.

Decker has been involved in implementing similar to-go options at other schools and says that the program has made a huge impact, especially with the students who couldn't make it to the dining hall during the available hours.

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"We have a handful of situations that pop up every year depending on the year and type of insect or bug that is presenting itself," Behaunek said.

Not all residential areas have been affected. Junior Jordan Beem resides in Clinton and has not seen a bug problem.

There is, however, a problem on the practice field and outdoor athletic facilities as well. Crickets and moths swarm the field, especially during rainfall, nighttime practices and games.

Seiler is a goalie for the women's soccer team and finds them a nuisance during practice.

"Sometimes it's really distracting when a bug flies in your face, like right before a shot," Seiler said.

Jeff Wagner, manager for grounds, transportation and special events, says the amount of rain that Iowa has gotten over the past couple months has been the cause of this invasion. Roughly 27 inches of precipitation has fallen across Iowa since Jan. 1.

"I wouldn't say I've never seen it this bad, but it's been a tough year," Wagner said.

According to Wagner, no one could have predicted the number of insects set to populate the area and Simpson has taken all preventive measures.

"If we let Mother Nature take care of them, their populations will decrease exponentially when we have our first frost," Wagner said.

Wagner says nothing can be done to the outdoor facilities without use of major chemicals that would affect all sports teams that use the practice areas. Behaunek says the problems in residential areas have been resolved and says if future problems arise to contact someone right away.

"I'm thankful we have a facilities crew that will take the students concerns seriously," Behaunek said. "They respond as they can."



Heidi Levine is the new Vice President for Student Development. Before coming to Simpson, Levine was the Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students at Cornell College in Mt. Vernon, Iowa.



Rebecca Nation is the new area coordinator for the apartments on campus. Before coming to Simpson, Nation worked in the Academic Success Center at Iowa State University.



Abby Hahn is the new area coordinator for the first-year area. Hahn completed her master's degree in higher education student affairs at Iowa State in May before joining the staff at Simpson in June.

Photos by Michelle Hartmann

FLIPSIDE

SGA

Student Government Association

SGA is a student organization that is in charge of a lot of different things - from finding solutions to problems on campus to deciding how much money student clubs and organizations should receive for events.

CAB

Campus Activities Board

Remember the Stand Around, the dance that took place that first week back on campus with free ice cream and a giant slide? CAB planned that, and they have a lot more events planned to take place throughout the year!

BPAC

Blank Performing Arts Center

Chances are that you will have a class of some sort in BPAC at some point, and when you do this acronym will come in handy. Sometimes there are even events, such as plays and operas, that are held there!

Pfeif

Pfeiffer Dining Center

An all you can eat buffet in the middle of campus, Pfeif is a great place to stop! Fief serves breakfast, lunch, dinner, and even brunch on the weekends! But be on the lookout for this abbreviation, because no one really knows how to spell it!

WTF

Where's The Fun?

It is not what you think! WTF is actually a club on campus that plans all sorts of fun activities, such as piñata parties, coloring book sessions, and pirate days.

RLC

Religious Life Community

Not to be confused with Residence Life (ResLife), RLC welcomes students from a diverse range of backgrounds and beliefs and offers opportunities to expand religiously while also getting to know students from beliefs on campus.

12 **SimpCo Acronyms & Abbreviations**

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Simpson College loves acronyms and abbreviations, so much in fact that the Simpson website has an entire page dedicated to them! It can be difficult navigating the many shortened words and places around campus, so here we are to help with the 12 most common acronyms and abbreviations on campus!

WAC

Writing Across The Curriculum

A program that has been implemented throughout the college's curriculum to enhance the writing skills of students. It is likely you will come across this one when going over the syllabus and working with professors.

SSM

Simpson Student Media

If you don't know this one, you probably aren't reading this right now anyways! SSM runs The Simpsonian, KSTM The Storm radio, and ID Magazine!

CA

Community Advisor

Your CA is always there for you if you need them, whether that is a roommate disagreement, a question about the campus, or a lecture for a loud or irresponsible weekend.

SARA

Sexual Assault Response Advocates

SARA is an organization on campus that provides confidential help and support for issues surrounding sexual abuse. They can be reached by phone call or text at (515) 330-6392.

ABP

Au Bon Pain

ABP is a campus favorite for sandwiches, soups, and macaroni and cheese. No one knows how to properly pronounce the name of it, so everyone uses its acronym!

See more at thesimpsonian.com & follow The Simpsonian on Facebook!