

# Feather Notes



January 2009

## Tom Shea named head football coach

Tom Shea, former defensive coordinator at Upper Iowa, has been named UIU's head football coach. Shea was part of Upper Iowa's football program from 2004-2007; he has served the last two seasons as head coach at Dakota State University in Madison, S.D.

"We are delighted to have Coach Shea return to Upper Iowa University as our head football coach," said President Alan G. Walker. "He brings a remarkably successful career to Fayette, and we are confident that he has the skills, ability and confidence to continue the growth the program has experienced since joining the Northern Sun conference three years ago."

The Peacock program is the sixth program that Shea has led as head football coach. His successes include two conference titles and an NAIA Division II



*Tom Shea returns to Upper Iowa University as head football coach.*

National Title at Peru State University (PSU) in 1990. His work at PSU contributed to his selection as NAIA National Coach of the Year in 1990. Shea left PSU for the University of Mary, where his teams won two conference titles and were nationally ranked for five years. He also coached at the University of Central Arkansas and William Penn University.

Members of the search committee were impressed with Shea's record of dynamic leadership and successful coaching record. The committee was especially pleased with the graduation rates of Shea's student-athletes, said Kent McElvania, Upper Iowa's Interim Director of Athletics.

"It's great to be back at Upper Iowa," said Shea. "There's such a family atmosphere here and everyone is working together for the common goal of the school. I am especially pleased with the administration's commitment to this

program. I am equally committed; my responsibility is to put our young men in a position to be successful on the field."

A graduate of Sparta (WI) High School, Shea earned a B.S. in physical education from Dakota State College and an M.S., also in Physical Education, from South Dakota State University. Shea's appointment was effective immediately. He has been on campus in Fayette since January 15.

### Get ready to ride!

*You've heard the stories. Now it's your turn to be part of the action. Team Peacock is looking for riders and support crew for RAGBRAI XXXVII, the annual statewide bike ride sponsored by the Des Moines Register. Upper Iowa's Team Peacock will ride for the fifth straight year, and you could be part of the fun.*

*Upper Iowa uses RAGBRAI to raise funds for student scholarships by securing pledges (a \$500 minimum is encouraged for each rider) and corporate sponsorships. Last year, the team raised \$100,000, bringing their four-year total to over \$250,000.*

*Participation in the ride also raises awareness of the institution. Upper Iowa sponsors a booth in overnight towns along the RAGBRAI route. The booth has become a popular gathering spot for riders, townspeople, alumni and prospective students.*

*If you'd like to be part of the fun, contact Jackson Hayek, Director of Special Projects, at hayekj@uiu.edu. Alumni and friends of the college will be needed as overnight hosts; overnight towns will be announced in February. For more information on Team Peacock (including details for online contributions) see the April issue of Feather Notes.*

### Online programs ranked

Upper Iowa has been recognized as one of the nation's leading degree-granting online institutions, placing fourth out of 44 programs rated by Online Education Database, an independent organization that provides comprehensive reviews of online colleges and programs. The metrics used to establish the rankings included acceptance rate, financial aid, retention and graduation rates, student-faculty ratios and years accredited. Upper Iowa's commitment to transparency and academic excellence are primary reasons for its high ranking.

## Upper Iowa Malaysian students form cheer squad

The loyalty of Upper Iowa University Malaysian students to their American campus is evident by their latest undertaking: They've recently formed an official Upper Iowa cheerleading squad.

Just a few short months ago, much to the students' delight, a Pete-the-Peacock mascot suit was delivered to the Malaysian center. Pete was immediately scheduled to appear at numerous school events. Instead of flying solo, he will now be accompanied by a 16-member cheer squad in peacock blue uniforms that display the UIU insignia.

The squad is coached by Marcus Lim Wai Ket, who represents Malaysia in competitive cheerleading. In 2007 and 2008, he participated in the IFC International Cheerleading Competition in Japan and is also a student at UIU-Malaysia.

Squad members bring several special talents to the effort. They have trained as ballerinas, gymnasts and dancers. Several are members of the Charm All Stars Malaysia National Cheerleading Team. They perform dance routines and traditional movements like splits, jumps, kicks and stunts to cheers they have composed.

"We are extremely proud of these Peacocks, who managed to successfully turn an idea into reality within such a short time through sheer devotion, hard work and tremendous support from all members of the Fayette House," said Dr. Steven Baptist, head of the American Degree Program in Malaysia. "Such healthy endeavors augurs well for the enrichment and growth of our students and, in turn, allows them to experience a very American-type activity though thousands of miles away.

"This squad allows the barriers between our cultures to be even further diminished," he added, "bringing a better understanding amongst peoples of this world. This is a crucial role that education plays for our future generations."

The debut performance of the new cheer squad was given in front of 400 spectators at the UIU-Malaysia Global Music Festival, organized by the Intercultural Communications class. Proceeds for the event were donated to the Malaysian Mental Health



*Students at one of Upper Iowa's Malaysian campuses have formed a cheer squad.*

Association (MMHA). The squad also performed in December for an Upper Iowa delegation from the Fayette campus led by President Alan G. Walker. The delegation was in Asia to participate in Upper Iowa commencement ceremonies. Also participating was Pete the Peacock.

Like American cheerleaders, the Malaysian squad has been busily fundraising to pay for their uniforms through food, drink and T-shirt sales. They're also looking into local corporate sponsorship and considering a 240-mile Team Peacock-type bike ride as a possible fund-raising activity.

### Upper Iowa news briefs

#### Board approval for nursing

The Iowa Board of Nursing has granted Upper Iowa's RN-BSN program maximum board approval for six years. Classes are offered at the Fayette campus, as well as the Des Moines and Cedar Rapids centers. Twenty-one students have already graduated from the program, and 50 are currently enrolled.

#### Top military educator

Upper Iowa has been selected as one of Military Advanced Education's Top Military Friendly Colleges and Universities Honorees for 2008. The award is presented annually to institutions based on their service to military personnel, military-friendly policies and flexible delivery options.

#### New degree program

Upper Iowa has been approved for a new degree program. The Master's of Higher Education Administration (MHEA) will launch in Fayette and Madison, WI, and will also be available online nationwide. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that positions in education will increase by 14%, adding 1.1 million new jobs in the field by 2016.

#### Next round for UIBD

Applications for the next round of Upper Iowa Business Development grants are being accepted through April 25, 2009. A total of \$40,000 in grant money is available for this round of funding.

*Full releases at [www.uiu.edu/general/news/index.html](http://www.uiu.edu/general/news/index.html)*