

## Calvin approves minor in African studies

### Globalizing curriculum is goal of administration

Calvin College has received a two-year grant of just over \$140,000 from the U.S. Department of Education to fund a new minor in African and African Diaspora Studies.

Calvin professor of history Randal Jelks, will be the project director. Jelks has a book coming out this fall about African Americans in Grand Rapids (called *African Americans in the Furniture City: The Politics of Respectability and the Struggle for Civil Rights*).

He said the new minor will be a plus for the college and the local community.

"The new minor," he said, "will draw together faculty and students interested in Africa who previously have pursued their interests pretty independently. Students who take the new minor will learn more about Africa's contributions to world culture, history and geo-politics. The minor also will address Calvin's commitment to globalizing its curriculum. And, we hope, it will serve the college by attracting potential students and faculty interested in working together in these areas."

In addition, Jelks noted, "this minor will also, secondarily, address Calvin's commitment to racial justice and multiculturalism."

The grant, said Jelks, will help Calvin



Randal Jelks

expand its library and multimedia holdings on Africa, conduct faculty workshops, hold lectures in conjunction with the West Michigan World Affairs Council, create an African language course in Kiswahili, offer a film series and develop a course for area school teachers on teaching Africa.

Calvin officials note that the college already has a strong connection with African-American communities and an established relationship with the African continent. Almost 100 Calvin students last year were from Africa or of African descent. In addition, Calvin has a semester program in Ghana and relationships with colleges in Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Eritrea, Kenya and South Africa.

The new minor would have two tracks, each of which would require a minimum of six courses.

One track would be a study of Africa and people on the African continent with courses in African geography, history, literature and politics.

The other track would examine the descendants of those who were dispersed from Africa, both through forced migrations, such as slavery, and voluntary immigration, especially throughout the Americas, with courses in African American history, African American literature, the history of Africans in the Americas, Afro-Hispanic literature, and Francophone African and Caribbean literature.

Both tracks would conclude with a capstone seminar in African and African Diaspora studies.



## FLASHBACK: 'The Making of Modern Michigan'

Sometime between 1910 and 1920, the Driesenga family — probably along with some hired help — posed for this photograph. While many photographs from the early 20th century show people soberly wearing their Sunday best, this photo catches the attention since it seems to capture individuals in the middle of a regular work day.

This photograph — and countless others — are kept in Heritage Hall, the archives of Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary and the Christian Reformed Church in North America. In 2003 the Hekman Library received a Library Services and Technology Act grant through the Library of Michigan to digitize a portion of Heritage Hall's photographs to be incorporated into a statewide collection called "The Making of Modern Michigan" (MMM). After identifying over 500 images that displayed some facet of Michigan's history, library staff scanned and catalogued each image.

These online images will be publicly acces-



sible in two locations: one within the context of the statewide "Making of Modern Michigan" project, and the other within the Hekman Digital Archive (HDA), the library's digital repository that currently contains over 6,000 digitized images from ten unique collections (access to some of which are restricted to current Calvin community members). The new HDA collection, titled "The Making of Modern Michigan through the Eyes of Dutch Americans," is housed alongside additional

Heritage Hall images that depict the history of the college and the seminary.

Like the Driesenga photograph shown here, many of the photos in the MMM collection depict individuals, families and objects related to the Dutch-American experience in West Michigan. Brick homes, electric trains and street cars, country roads, hunters, horse-drawn delivery carts, and dozens of Christian Reformed Church buildings can be seen as they were by pioneering families.

Many of the photographs contain unidentified details or lack descriptions, but omission of such information can also enhance the enjoyment of viewing the images by allowing imagination to guess the stories behind the individuals and scenes. To view these images, see "The Making of Modern Michigan," at [mmm.lib.msu.edu/](http://mmm.lib.msu.edu/) or "The Making of Modern Michigan Through the Eyes of Dutch Americans," at [alexandria.calvin.edu/uhbin/hyperion/mmm](http://alexandria.calvin.edu/uhbin/hyperion/mmm).

