

Dear WA Faculty & Staff,

"The Road goes ever on and on..." J.R.R. Tolkien

In the summer of 2001, I said "yes" to Wheaton Academy with forever in mind. However, with much prayer and counsel, I have decided that this season of serving at Wheaton Academy has drawn to a close. This decision has been prayerfully considered, even tracing back several years, and ultimately culminating in a divine encounter in October 2020. I wanted to share an excerpt from that day as recorded in my personal prayer journal. For several months, I had a strong sense that it was time to step out of the boat to walk on water with my family. On one specific morning I wrote, "Today's the day that Jesus told me that I am done serving Him at Wheaton Academy. And it's time for the next thing." In that moment, I became aware it was time to start preparing for the next adventure.

Through my teaching, I have offered an invitation into "water-walking faith" using Tolkien's *Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings* to inspire students (and parents) to say "yes" to the call of Jesus to share in the grand adventure of loving others and proclaiming the Gospel in all the world. Knowing that He loves us deeply can empower us to follow His leading as well as to genuinely love those who are also on this journey. I have used a variety of stories, especially Shakespeare's plays, to inspire people not to just trust our amazing Author but to communicate with Him, listen to Him, obey His nudges, and accept His invitations. It is once again time to live out what I teach through this act of trust, obedience, and courage.

I want the community to know that I am grateful for Wheaton Academy. It has been an honor to be on the WA team. I have communicated closely with Steve Bult and Kori Hockett, and they kindly support me "stepping out of the boat" before the start of second semester. I realize that for some, this decision may seem abrupt and unexpected midyear; please know that I have a deep sense of supernatural courage and peace believing that the timing is right. Over the past several months, God has graciously and clearly confirmed the direct word of transition from the beginning of last semester in a variety of ways. Leaving midyear, particularly during a pandemic, will allow for much needed time and space to prepare for and focus on what God has next. I am grateful for all of those who helped make this possible. As a family, we are anchored in hope and trust in our Shepherd to guide us.

Steve Bult, Kori Hockett, and I agree that it is essential for the immediate Wheaton Academy community to know and trust that there has been no moral failure, no biblical heresy, no student impropriety, and no issue of health or capacity involved in this decision. Rather, this is truly about courage, strength, and faith, as I have an inner awareness and confidence that God is inviting our family into new adventures.

Please partner with my family in praying for discernment, direction, and clear vision on where Christ is leading us. I am trusting in God's goodness and provision as I finish one assignment and await and plan for the next stage of our journey. I have deep confidence in God's character and promises, trusted encounters with the King, and meaningful prophetic words that I am praying into. In the waiting and preparing, I have excitement and anticipation for what God has next for us.

Matthew Dominguez

*"The Road goes ever on and on
Down from the door where it began.
Now far ahead the Road has gone,
And I must follow, if I can,
Pursuing it with eager feet,
Until it joins some larger way,
Where many paths and errands meet.
And wither then? I cannot say."
J.R.R Tolkien*

*"You shall go out with Joy and be led forth in peace;
the mountains and the hills will burst into song before you,
and all the trees of the field will clap their hands!"
Isaiah 55:12*