

# A Word from the Wilsons

November 2011

The stadium is full, waiting for the coin toss that will begin the football game. The usually rowdy pre-game crowd suddenly silences as hundreds of people—players, coaches, and staff from both teams—kneel together at mid-field. Hats and helmets off, they join hands and hearts as Nebraska assistant coach Ron Brown leads them in prayer.

Penn State English professor Heather Holleman watches in amazement on her TV at home. “Is this normal?” she asks her husband Ashley. “No, this isn’t normal,” he replies.

But then, the whole past week had been anything but normal. As news broke of criminal sexual abuse charges filed against a former Penn State assistant coach, a media maelstrom descended on the small college town. Things went from bad to worse as prominent university officials—including Penn State’s revered longtime coach, Joe Paterno—were fired, and students rioted in response.

It is in dark times like these that Christ’s light shines brightest, offering both hope and healing. *Campus Crusade* staff at Penn State are reaching out to their shocked and grieving community and telling them about Jesus’ love and forgiveness.

Our *Athletes in Action* staff at Penn State helped to set up the prayer at midfield before the game. It was an incredible visual statement of faith as the game was broadcast around the nation.

The director of our *Cru* student ministry at Penn State delivered a moving speech to a standing room only crowd at their regular weekly meeting. Students reported that “they never felt the presence of the Holy Spirit so powerfully.” Titled **Love Notices Wet Hair** (read the talk to understand the title), the speech has now gone viral on the internet. You can read it at [pennstatecru.org/lovefull.html](http://pennstatecru.org/lovefull.html).

A condensed version of the speech ([pennstatecru.org/loveshort.html](http://pennstatecru.org/loveshort.html)) has been printed into a booklet which *Penn State Cru* is distributing widely on campus.

Dr. Holleman and her husband Ashley represent *Faculty Commons* at Penn State. The university is encouraging all of its faculty and staff to take time in class to help their students process the scandal and its aftermath. The Hollemans are leading the response of Penn State’s Christian professors, who are mentioning the **Love Notices Wet Hair** campaign in their many classes.



Faculty Commons staff Ashley and Heather Holleman

As we write this, the scandal is in week two, and the students at Penn State are looking forward to fleeing all the media attention for Thanksgiving break at home. Heather Holleman is reminding her community in her blog, **Live With Flair** ([livewithflair.blogspot.com](http://livewithflair.blogspot.com)) of Jesus, the Good Shepherd who provides rest and refreshment in the midst of the dark valleys of life.

You are part of equipping these professors at Penn State to minister to their hurting students and colleagues. Thank you for helping us at *Faculty Commons* bring words of hope and healing to a community that is in great need of it right now.

The mid-field prayer at the football game was a fitting end to a horrible week, and a hopeful beginning for a new stage at Penn State. As Heather wrote on her blog: “Penn State moving forward is a microcosm for what hope and healing look like: you come together; you get on your knees in humility, and you pray.”

Daryl & Ceil

