

The LUTHERAN CLARION



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The Present and Future of Our Concordia Universities

The presentation below was given by Dr. Russell P. Dawn, President, Concordia University Chicago, at the LCA Conference on January 16, 2023.

Introduction

I am grateful for the opportunity to speak to you this morning, and to be with you throughout the day, brothers. My topic today is the present and future of our Concordia universities. I accepted the invitation to speak on this topic because I see its importance and because in my position I have some insights on the matter. But I am president of one Concordia university, and only one. I represent Concordia-Chicago, and I neither can nor will speak for any other Concordia. Just as I would not want the presidents at Seward or St. Paul talking about Chicago, so this president at Chicago will not opine on Seward or St. Paul – or any others. I am confident, however, that what I will say today about CUC will have analogs elsewhere.

My introductory remarks should also address the elephant in the room, and that is the declared independence from synodical governance by one of our number. I will not speak for or against the actions taken by that university's board of regents, nor will I speak for or against the efficacy of those actions. I will not speak for or against the responses of the Concordia University System or the president or board of directors of Synod. I speak only for Concordia University Chicago, and these actions and responses change nothing for CUC. We are the church's institution, and the church's institution we shall remain. We are not biding our time, watching to see if this all works out well for the other institution, ready to follow suit if it does. We will not follow suit. We do not need tighter synodical controls or mechanisms to keep us faithful. It is God, working in and through our people, who keeps us faithful.

On this matter I cannot speak for the other Concordias, but I can speak as one who knows the other Concordia presidents. I have no reason whatsoever to believe that any other Concordia views their connection to Synod differently than I have just described for CUC. I would add that, to the limited extent that I'll refer to other Concordias today, please understand those references to mean those who are unequivocally committed to synodical governance.

In essence, my talk today will respond to the question, *Where is Concordia today, and where is the University headed?* It's a question I'm asked frequently, and I'm

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Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities for the Confessing Church

The presentation below was given by Gerhard H. Munding, MD, at the LCA Conference on January 17, 2022. Previous parts of the article were published in the July, September, November 2022 and January 2023 issues of the Clarion.

These [Wokeness and Critical Race Theory] and other governmental regulatory issues have spawned presentations and seminars, with the Concordia presidents, from "First Liberty" and "Alliance for Defending Freedom" attorneys, and as well from Aaron Lacey at Thompson Coburn and from Tim Goeglein (an LCMS Lutheran), serving as Vice President of External and Government Affairs with Focus on the Family. They have generally recommended that congruency of policy manuals and manuals that align well with the Church's teaching and practice would be helpful against challenges that might come from non-Christian advocacy groups. They do not recommend diversity policy statements that are inconsistent with our confession.

Diversity is an area where the schools could unwittingly "slouch toward Gomorrah." It is legitimate to ask whether we should have diversity officers or diversity training at all. Should the Christian concept of diversity rather be incorporated into the catechetical instruction of all new staff and faculty hires and student orientation? Should our Christian concept of diversity be extant in our published mission statements and policy manuals? Should placating the government be the reason to develop policies? Since the last Synodical convention, the universities have been compliant in Lutheran identity activities as requested by Synod and have appreciated the beneficial utility in this activity.

Formal catechesis of new staff and faculty hires, commensurate with proper understanding of subordinated academic freedom, is required and is accomplished under existing policy manuals. CUS has particularly appreciated the formality and rigor that has been applied at CUI and is an example that for many reasons would be helpful to emulate at all the Concordias. At CUI the The-

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Present & Future of Concordia Universities

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delighted to respond in this forum.

Fiscal Matters

When people ask this question, they usually have in mind either a fiscal question, a mission and identity question, or both. And when people have the fiscal question in mind, they often really mean, is *Concordia headed the way of Bronxville and Portland?* The answer is simple: we are not. We're in a very different situation than either of those institutions was. We are more diversified in our programs than the one, and less dependent upon an Online Program Management company than the other. That is not to say we lack vulnerability. All tuition-dependent institutions are vulnerable to some extent. But vulnerable is not the same thing as fragile, or on the brink, or in a desperate situation. As far as I can tell, none of the Concordias can be described that way.

In the century since we re-located to River Forest, so much of modern education hasn't only rejected Christianity, it has rejected the principles of the laws of nature, including human nature, which even the pagans historically have understood.

So in short, how we avoid becoming a mere memory is by doing exactly the sorts of things we've spent my first three years doing. First, we're exercising financial and operational discipline and innovation. We're constantly finding ways to increase efficiency, to diversify our revenue streams, and to meet the market effectively and faithfully. We have an extremely smart, creative, motivated team of people who care about our Lutheran identity and Christian mission, and want to see us thrive in our pursuit of that mission.

Second, we're planning and executing. We're now two years into our five-year strategic plan, and I guarantee that plan is gathering no moss. We began with 28 initiatives, and we're constantly working on them, evaluating and re-evaluating them, and holding one another accountable. We're now down to 21 initiatives, after completing several, shelving two for the future, and adding two more that emerged through experience. Investors in a venture like ours want to know two main things: That they can believe in our mission, and that they can trust us to succeed in that mission. We're proving our ability to succeed by living out our strategic plan.

Third, we're figuring out how to bloom where we're planted. When Concordia-Chicago moved from Addison, Illinois to River Forest over a century ago, the Chicago area was very different religiously, educationally, and culturally than it is today. Blooming in River Forest was a different proposition than it is now.

In the century since we re-located to River Forest, so much of modern education hasn't only rejected Christianity, it has rejected the principles of the laws of nature, including human nature, which even the pagans historically have understood. The modern world seems to think that somehow humanity has evolved beyond the natural law, and the corrosive effects that these views are having on our culture are visible and profound. In Chicagoland, these views are thoroughly embedded in the public schools, and have even made deep inroads into many private schools. Thus, the enormity of the need for evangelism into the faith and education into the truths of natural law through the liberal arts.

Nationally, there are only a handful of institutions that are in an urban context and also genuinely, scripturally Christian and dedicated to the liberal arts. While Wheaton, Taylor, Grove City, and others do important work equipping those who are already in the faith and schooled in natural law principles, they're all in remote locations and aren't even blips on the radar screens of most Chicago high schoolers. Christians cannot just retreat to the boondocks, circle the wagons, and speak comfortable truths to our fellows in the faith while the cities decay with no hope of reversal. If there's no hope for the cities, eventually there will be no place to hide from the cities. We're here to bring hope to the city in one of the country's most progressivist locales, Cook County.

By being distinctive, committing ourselves visibly and substantively to our Lutheran identity and Christian mission, and especially by doing so in Cook County where the need is so great, I believe we're becoming uniquely attractive to a relatively small but significant slice of the pie of American families. In our case, and I believe that other Concordia presidents recognize this for their own schools, being true to our calling can be good for business.

So in short, we're financially secure and headed in a good direction. We'll be here for your grandchildren.

Types of Church-related Institutions

I had said before that the question of where we are and where we're headed is sometimes a financial question, and sometimes a missional one. Having covered the financial side, let's move toward the more fundamental question: *what is the faith confessed and taught at Concordia?*

On our way toward the answer to the question, I'd like to take a few moments to talk about how we teach the faith that we confess. In general, it may be said that there are four types of church-related schools, which is to say four approaches to being such a school. (My thanks to Dr. Bernard Bull, president of Concordia-Nebaska, for his summary of this schema.) The *remnant* school has only a small remnant of the faithful among faculty and staff, and is otherwise disconnected from the doctrine and practice of the church to which it's related. The *mission* school is largely faithful in its faculty

and staff, and focuses on delivering its education more to unchurched students than to the faithful. The *critical mass* school is also largely faithful in its faculty and staff, and focuses on delivering its education more to faithful students than to the unchurched. And finally, the *covenant* school requires commitment to the faith by students, faculty, and staff.

I don't know what the strategies of the other Concordias are, but I can surmise from circumstances that all of the Concordias do, and will continue to, seek to fall into either of two types: the mission school or the critical mass school. One way I can surmise this is by process of elimination. The remnant approach isn't faithful or churchly, and so isn't my goal or that of any of my fellow presidents. On the other hand, the covenant approach isn't very Lutheran. Retreating to a remote location and shutting out the great mass of the unchurched is more monastic than Lutheran. It ensures not being of the world by also not being in the world. That isn't my goal, nor is there evidence it's the goal of my fellow presidents.

Concordia-Chicago is a mission school: we focus on delivering our education more to the unchurched than to the faithful. That doesn't mean we don't focus on LCMS students, of course. To the contrary, our enrollment of LCMS students is among the highest in the CUS and on the rise, and what those students find in River Forest is great preparation, growth in the Word, genuinely Lutheran chapel life, and camaraderie with one another. They also find the rich challenge of life in the mission field, living day-to-day in baptismal grace as Christians who are salt and light in a dark world. We're doing more all the time to equip them for that kind of college life, for speaking the truth in love to fellow students who are desperate to hear good news, for giving reason for the hope within them.

At the same time, we assume (correctly) that many of our students have little knowledge of the basics of the faith, natural law, and the like. Many of them have everything to learn, and quite a bit to unlearn. What a blessing and privilege it is for us to be masks of God as He brings the light of truth into the lives of young people in Cook County.

Not all of the Concordias are mission schools. Many of you can make pretty good guesses as to which ones are mission schools and which ones are critical mass schools. Regardless, every Concordia seeks to be faithful, and every Concordia accomplishes this by God's grace. Imperfectly so, of course, but that's the human condition.

Mission and Identity Matters

Now, finally, we come to the question of the faith confessed and taught at Concordia-Chicago. The Sunday school answer, of course, is Jesus. The LCMS Sunday school answer, of course, adds the Catechism. Or some might go all in and say the Augsburg Confession or the Formula of Concord. But these answers are not

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all that helpful because Concordia-Chicago is a university, not a church. It's a university of the church, but still not a church. So to say that we believe, teach, and confess the Book of Concord is not quite accurate, given the prevalence of classes in areas such as education theory, health and human performance, and accounting.

There's another sense in which it's not fully accurate, and that is that it's no secret we experienced some mission drift during the 1990s and 2000s. My predecessor began to turn the ship back around, but the drift was significant enough that our work is not yet completed. Candidly, I don't want us ever to attain to a sense of completion. From that sense comes complacency or hubris, neither of which is a good foundation for maintaining a confessional identity. I suspect that most church-related schools that have become remnant schools – and let's face it, there are a great many remnant schools – became such more through complacency and hubris than through intention. That's why at CUC, every person we hire is an important hire. Important for the quality of the work, important for mission and identity. That's also why our Mission & Identity Program educates all faculty – and will eventually be expanded to include staff – on a Lutheran approach to the intersection of faith and learning. Because of this work we're doing, because we're intentional and tireless about our Lutheran identity and Christian mission, CUC is a decidedly different place than it once was. Decidedly different. I'm deeply proud of our faculty and staff, as they're embracing our move toward fidelity. We're turning the corner, and it's exciting to see.

Some among us measure an institution's faithfulness by the number of LCMS congregants on the faculty. When they do so, they see that our percentage is not very high – below 40%. That number troubles me, and I'm committed to raising it steadily and at every opportunity. On the other hand, we all should hold our devotion to that percentage loosely. When there are LCMS pastors who publicly skewer CUC for not being woke, but I have Evangelical, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox colleagues who are 100% behind our mission and devouring Lutheran writings in order to understand

us better, I trust you'll join me in celebrating substantive wins in the midst of formal losses.

Returning to the Formula of Concord, if most college classes don't touch on matters directly addressed by the Formula, then how does one describe a faithfully Lutheran higher education? At CUC, we've embraced the pillars of truth, freedom, and vocation. We derived these from our University motto, which comes from chapter 8 of the Gospel of John: "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

"If you abide in my word," the passage begins. If we dwell in the word of Christ Jesus. That applies to all facets of the University, not just the theology department. When I was new at Concordia, a member of the faculty told me that different areas of study have different foundations of truth. It was only in theology that Scripture is the foundation of truth. In other areas, such as the hard and social sciences, it might be Darwinian theory or other some other form of naturalism. My answer was that the Word that God created us and all things through Christ and for Christ is foundational to all learning.

...some aspects of worldly truth are declared in Scripture. ... Luther rightly saw in the 10 Commandments a perfect encapsulation of the natural law.

When I say things like this in an academic context, there's unfailingly someone who brings up the canard that I want our people teaching Jesus math, as if anyone has ever advocated such a thing. But math and the Word are not irrelevant to one another. As one of CUC's math professors extolled to me just the other day, algebra is the science of patterns, and patterns demonstrate how creation reflects the mind of the Creator. (This was just a casual hallway conversation, not a response to a pointed question. What a joy!)

Furthermore, a political science, education theory, or psychology that denies creation and fall will lead to outcomes that range between anemic and disastrous. We are seeing the devastating fruits of this all around us in the Western world. In case you're wondering, by the way, the faculty member who denied the broad applicability of Scripture left the University shortly after our conversation. That person didn't want to be part of where we're headed.

So back to the Gospel of John. If we abide in the Word of God...what? If we abide in the Word of God, we'll know the truth. Of course Jesus is talking here about the truth of the Gospel of grace and of all other scriptural teachings that support and flow from the Gospel. We'll know these teachings, but we'll also know the One, the Person to whom these teachings point. We'll know the truth, the revealed truth.

But as a university motto, this language about truth indicates another layer. In addition to knowing revealed truth, our call in the university is to know worldly truth, empirical and rational truth. Indeed, the quest for truth is at the core of a university's purpose. These two layers, revealed truth and worldly truth, rightly interact with each other. Knowledge of revealed truth helps us to interpret and more fully understand the implications and proper uses of worldly truth.

Moreover, some aspects of worldly truth are declared in Scripture. For instance, Luther rightly saw in the 10 Commandments a perfect encapsulation of the natural law. There is a God to whom we're responsible. There is a moral law that transcends our preferences. The basics of that moral law include humility, fidelity, restraint, and goodwill. Aristotle saw these things, or at least most of them. So did Cicero. So did Confucius. Because God declared the natural law to Moses, we are not free to dismiss it. It is to that extent, revealed. But even if we were free to dismiss it, the wise among us would return to it, for those who dismiss the natural law find themselves bound to chaotic thoughts and dissolute lives. This shouldn't surprise us.

So for Concordia it's absolutely central that we abide in God's Word so that we know the truth, the revealed truth. But it's also crucial that we pursue worldly truth – grounded and informed by revealed truth, but robustly and fully engaged with the wisdom (and the foolishness) that the world has to offer. We rely on reason and evidence in the search for worldly truth, but we also submit imperfect reason to the perfect Word of God.

So we have truth, revealed and worldly. We will know the truth and...what? The truth will set us free! Of course, it's clear that Jesus had spiritual or eternal freedom in mind here. We'll know the Lord who is the truth and we'll be set free from the powers of sin, death, and the devil. But again, as a university motto, an additional layer of meaning to the word *free* emerges.

The ancient Greeks taught that particular kinds of study were necessary for anyone who would be free. What kinds of study? Essentially, the pursuit of truth in regard to the most important and enduring questions that humanity faces: What does it mean to be human? What is the nature of the world? How should I regard my neighbor and my community? What is virtue? What is justice? And others like these. Natural law-type questions. The Greeks called these studies the liberal arts, the arts of freedom. These arts were necessary because they equipped the student for freedom.

Some might wonder, *why does anyone need to be equipped for freedom? Isn't freedom just choosing whatever we want from among a variety of possibilities? Anyone can do that!* Of course, we know that the nature of freedom isn't just being allowed to choose. Freedom is governing oneself, rather than needing to be governed by force from the outside. If we tend to make our choices unwisely and immorally, outside forces will need to constrain our freedom in order to protect others from us, and

us from ourselves. Insisting on keeping our ability to choose while choosing according to corrupt desires isn't freedom, it's abuse.

If, on the other hand, we so govern ourselves that we tend to choose morally and wisely, there will be no cause (other than tyranny) for anyone to constrain our choices by force. Hence, the liberal arts to equip us for freedom. And despite the obituaries being written for the liberal arts, despite the modern world's rejection of the arts of self-governance, these arts are as necessary as ever. I doubt there's mere coincidence between the decline of the liberal arts in schools and the civilizational decay and loss of freedom that we see all around us. Just as spiritual freedom is the outgrowth of knowing the Truth who is Christ Jesus, earthly freedom is the outgrowth of knowing the truths found in the liberal arts as illuminated by the revealed truths of Scripture.

This way of conceiving of freedom also has applicability to pedagogy, to how we teach our students. Let's take a godless, anti-Christian philosopher like Karl Marx. If one of the faithful were to look at my syllabus when I taught political thought, he or she might gasp to see that I spent several class periods on Marx (and Engels and Lenin, for the Marxism geeks out there). But the question isn't whether Marx is being taught, the question is how.

The way of some (or perhaps many) in secular institutions is to teach Marx's views as though what he's saying accurately describes the world. They teach as though his views are true. That isn't freedom, it's indoctrination. A second possibility is to teach Marx merely to point out why he's wrong, how he's a threat to Christianity. That also isn't freedom, it's indoctrination in the other direction. Perhaps it could be called a

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Bible college approach, or even a covenant school approach.

Another common possibility is teaching Marx in a properly detached way that lets students choose what to think, but without having grounded students in the fundamentals of truth. That also isn't freedom because it sets the students up for abuse of their choices. They aren't equipped to exercise their freedom through the self-government of wisdom and discernment.

The final possibility, the one that I think is the most thoroughly Lutheran, is to ground the students in the fundamentals of truth, then to present Marx in a properly detached way that allows them to encounter Marx freely. The students are free to choose what to think, and they're in a position to exercise their freedom wisely. There's some risk in that approach, but freedom is risky. There is no safe space in this fallen world. The way of freedom is the way of confidence in our Lord's promises, in His care. It's the Lutheran way, and therefore the Concordia way.

So we have truth and we have freedom. But one thing is missing. We skipped a few words. We said, *if you abide in my word you will know the truth and the truth will set you free*. But Jesus said, *if you abide in my word you are truly my disciples*. Then he moved on to truth and freedom. So we need to understand what a disciple is.

A disciple, as you well know, is one who takes on a master's discipline; one who follows the master. And what does it mean to follow Jesus? He said it means to take up one's cross, that is, to die to self for the sake of serving others. So to be a disciple of Jesus is to serve. God calls us to serve our neighbors, our neighbors being anyone who has need whom we're capable of serving.

The call to serve, of course, is our vocation. Many of you, like me, might be a bit frustrated by the world's sudden embrace of the term "vocation." As far as I can tell, when the world says "vocation" it just means a job that's more than a job, it's a career about which we feel passionate. A career that holds meaning for us. It's wonderful when we can serve in a way that suits our gifts and our emotional needs. But as Bonhoeffer said, when God calls a man, He bids him come and die. If we're following Christ, our service will be selfless, benefitting the neighbor regardless of our subjective experience. The same is true for our students – God bids them to come and die, and we encourage them in that journey of service.

So now our reflection on Concordia-Chicago's motto is rounded out. Truth, freedom, and vocation. These pillars are what a Concordia education is all about. They help define us as a university and unite as a community. The other Concordias have their own defining standards, which are as important to them as ours are to us. The presidents of those Concordias are extremely thoughtful and learned, and they speak eloquently about what defines their institutions.

Moving Forward Together

A final note, or perhaps collection of notes, about the

future of Concordia-Chicago. What do you want CUC to be like in 10 years? How about a classical education program that's as big as our traditional Lutheran education program? How about an honors college to rival any in the country? How about not needing to rely on any government funding? (That's a big one!) How about state-of-the-art facilities all across the campus? (That's another big one!) I want all of these things, too. There are four ingredients that are required if we're going to reach such lofty goals.

1. **Will.** This one rests on all of us. University leadership has to have the will to get there, the will to win, but so also do others who are not members of the University. Partners and friends also have to have the will to win.
2. **Planning and execution.** This one rests mainly on leadership. We have to figure out the Xs and Os, then do everything from blocking and tackling to hitting deep passes in stride in order to string together wins, season after season.
3. **Financial support.** And I mean significant financial support. No small part of the mission drift at various Concordias has resulted from attempts to overcome financial challenges. I'm not suggesting that money is a cure-all, of course, but financial support can help prevent some causes of mission drift. For instance, dependence upon federal and state funding can only be overcome by building up a very large endowment. Said differently, it's infinitely better to be dependent upon faithful friends than on godless government.
4. The final ingredient is **patience**, and this one rests on all of us. We need a long-term perspective and the patience of Job. Because this vision I'm casting isn't a ten-year vision. It's more like a 25-year vision, at least. It's an inter-generational project, and it's worth every ounce of commitment it will take. To some it feels like the progressives have taken over America in the last decade or less. The truth is that they've been hard at work for at least a century. One might even argue that the seeds of the destruction of the American Revolution were sown in the French Revolution. Regardless of the timeframe, as Christians we should have more patience than the progressives, not less.

To sum up, the future of the Concordias is bright, in spite of the challenges we face. Current leadership across the system is strong, smart, and faithful. Concordia-Chicago still has some distance to travel, but we have traveled far, indeed. By God's grace, my team and I are answering His call to bring the light of truth to Cook County. I'm grateful to the Lutheran Concerns Association for allowing me the privilege of sharing with you my view of that call. And I'm grateful to each of you for your attention and your will to see us win.

Dr. Russell P. Dawn

President, Concordia University Chicago

Higher Education: Challenges & Opportunities...

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ology Department has been placed at the cabinet level. At "Christ College," they review and interview new staff and faculty hires. They review syllabi of courses offered, review all curricula with the question of how the Lutheran ethos or identity is manifested in the course materials. They have developed policy manuals with language targeted for specific groups of students to aide in bringing a Christ-centered focus to the daily living on campus. They have implemented a 6-month ongoing catechesis for faculty and staff and have implemented a second tier of instruction to be completed as requisite for academic advancement. These programs have been well received. The theology department has direct involvement in chapel life, worship services, student counseling to mention a few of their myriad activities. In a similar way this is done and done well at all the Concordias by policy, but the heightened prominence of the theology faculty in all aspects of campus life is evident to anyone visiting campus at CUI. There is much of the Church's ontology and teleology that is being expressed and lived out on all CUS campuses.

While there has been consternation regarding the presidential election process over the years, the end results have been quite positive. The recent last four elections have brought to the Church prominent men, well-versed in theology and academics and well-committed to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's approach to higher education. They all have expressed a desire to strengthen "closeness to the Church" as servants of the Church. As of the end of October 2021 at CUWAA, the review panel has returned and approved eleven candidates for president for consideration from those the BOR submitted. We wait for the BOR election from these, that by God's grace, will give Concordia University Wisconsin a strong leader as well.

Let me shift now to say a little regarding finances, fiscal viability, value and possible ways to distance ourselves from government dependence with respect to student loans. Thus far, we have weathered the Covid pandemic. The government in many and various ways may still attempt to tell the Church and thus her schools how they must practice. Some of this regulation may not be tolerable or proper when one remembers the quotation from Luther. Despite all of this, our schools have maintained good balance sheets. Five years after the merger, the Ann Arbor campus balance sheet (from activities generated only on that campus) is in the black. The last three to five years has shown good donor support and a significant improvement in all schools' endowments. Historically endowment development was a late comer, for several reasons, but these endowments continued to grow well and there is considerable planning to help them improve significantly in the future.

Building campaigns have been robust with \$200-\$250 million of value being added to our universities in the

last three to five years. These have included at Irvine a new theology and music building with plans in place for refurbishing the chapel and ground breaking on a new athletic complex; a large office building complex adjacent to St. Paul for administration, classrooms and expansion of its nursing programs; a new science building in Seward with plans for a new music complex; at Mequon, a new health science building and a new business center complex; at Ann Arbor, plans for a weight room/athletic facility and the completed purchase of nearby law school building with refurbishment for a state-of-the-art human science, nursing and medicine practice laboratory, with an associated million dollar grant for specialized laboratory furnishings, and another three million dollars planned for major renovations; a new athletic complex and dormitory in Austin as well as the initiation of a campaign for a Chapel. For the majority of these projects' campaigns, cash in hand accrued prior to beginning construction. There has truly been great donor support within the Church for the Concordias.

Clarity of purpose, faithfulness to Church and individual ontological development are natural selling points for a Concordia.

Desire for alternative tuition revenues remains a constant focus. Maintaining value is a constant concern for all administrators, particularly career specific value for parents and students in shaping the growth and development of individuals' faith and vocation. In part we have aided fiscal viability with the development of on-line graduate programs, many of which directly benefit the Church and are generally more cost efficient. New strategies are being developed to find alternative loan sources outside Federal guarantees. Several schools are adapting plans for generating endowments to provide tuition, particularly for Church work students.

Students like our Concordias. During our recent visit to Ann Arbor and Mequon, and through similar visits to other campuses, we asked individual students about their experience. LCMS, other Christian, and non-Church affiliated students participated. The majority expressed consistently that they believe that they are receiving an enhanced value in their campus experience and that it exceeds what they would have received for similar education at a state school. Some related that they did not see this until after they had come on campus and had opportunity to discuss their experiences with former friends who were studying on other campuses. Reasons for this emanated from their experiences with chapel life, and enhanced opportunities for Bible study groups and in participating in school activities that engendered a sense of being valued as part of God's creation. They felt the staff and faculty were caring and interested in their personal development and growth.

We were impressed with a pilot program at Concordia University Wisconsin entitled "Faith Partners" which is run through the chaplaincy office, aided by the Theology Department. Senior students demonstrating a strong faith, go through an evaluation process, a several-week training process, as well as a continued weekly education and training during the year with the chaplains. They receive a small stipend and live in the dorm with the first- and second-year students and have 24/7 opportunity to talk with students where staff or faculty may not, and have opportunity to discuss personal issues of faith or life's issues with a peer. Such a program has real opportunity to aide individuals' maturation but also seems to be a tool to help recruitment, retention rates, overall graduation rates and is a real student advantage compared to secular schools' offerings. It will help in the ontology and teleology of student life.

Why do only 4% of Lutheran confirmands attend a Concordia? Why is there an apparent disconnect from the congregations and their members from knowing about the distinct value and benefit our schools? From students who attend a secular university we hear stories of lost faith, complaints that college experiences often turned students away from the values of their upbringing. It seems self-evident, that in an ever-increasing hostile world parents would want to send their children to a Concordia. Clarity of purpose, faithfulness to Church and individual ontological development are natural selling points for a Concordia. Excellence in academics by many metrics can also be demonstrated.

Mequon recently added a person to their advancement staff whose sole purpose is to engage congregations programmatically. This includes Lutheran high schools and Lutheran grade schools (particularly at the 5th and 6th grade level), to bring the value concept of education to the forefront for discussion with parents and students. Many believe that as we do a better job in getting this message out, and maintaining fidelity, we will do much to help the Concordias and thereby also the Church. Congregational health will be benefited by lay members educated at Concordia who understand their ontology and vocation. Such graduates irrespective of academic degree, thus educated, will more likely appreciate and support the distinctives of the pastoral office as they in the future become leaders in congregations.

What are the barriers that interfere with this enhanced connection with congregations? Perhaps something for the panel Q & A session. Rev. James Baneck has recently been called as executive director for pastoral education for the LCMS and is engaged in helping schools recruit church work students particularly those considering the ministry, and works to help streamline the educational experience of these students' curriculum in an efficient manner to mesh with seminary programs.

Dr. Munding's presentation will continue in future issues of the Clarion.

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Faithful Lutherans who are members of LCMS congregations are invited to submit articles of approximately 500 words for consideration. Inquiries are welcome. Manuscripts will be edited. Views and judgments expressed in articles are the author's own and do not necessarily represent those of LCA. Please email articles to Mr. Walter Dissen (wdissen@aol.com; 757-436-2049).

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