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Witnessing an Earthly Resurrection

Efrain looked so sharp with a pressed shirt and a tie under his graduation robe. A fresh haircut under the graduation cap with the gold tassel. His dress and demeanor signaled a special occasion. And this was a special occasion set in a sunlit, albeit small, gymnasium. This gymnasium had seen many a basketball game, but it had also seen many other gatherings because it was the one place at this institution that could hold the right amount of people. The room was filled with anticipation. The joy and excitement were palpable. As I went around the room introducing myself and learning the names of Efrain and his fellow graduates, I saw that their happiness matched that of students at other commencement ceremonies I had attended.

I’d been invited to give the graduation address. I was looking forward to it and had prepared well because I was given only 8 minutes, which can be as difficult as 30 minutes. But still, I was somewhat nervous. Would my remarks resonate with my audience of graduates and their special guests? This graduation was different than the others I’ve attended. These graduates were inmates of the Fishkill Correctional Facility in the small town of Fishkill, New York.

Fishkill Correctional Facility is home to approximately 1,650 men. The average age is about the same as that for other adult learners: 35 to 40. It is a medium- to maximum-security prison facility with a mental health unit and senior care, including hospice care. The assistant deputy commissioner of prisons says that the day the men enter Fishkill, they also begin the first day of their journey to release. That release could be longer or shorter based on how they decide to live under the supervision of the department of corrections of New York State.

This is an institution with a “student conduct code” of a magnitude unknown to most of our higher education institutions. The men are counted around five times a day, and if the graduation ceremony is not given special dispensation, it will stop, the men will stand up, and they will line up against the wall to be counted. Each counting reminds them that they are not free; that they are deemed untrustworthy and a flight risk; that they are under the absolute authority of prison guards. This is not an easy mental state to endure, even when brought about by one’s own actions.

But this prison also values preparing men for their future release into a law-abiding life. To that end, the prison provides classes on anger management, parenting, counseling, addiction recovery, and paralegal training, to name a few. Fishkill’s leaders also value providing their residents (as they call them) with educational opportunities.

For this group of residents who took advantage of a particular educational opportunity offered by Nyack College, graduation day has arrived. They have written papers, taken tests, done their homework, and fulfilled the requirements for their associate or bachelor’s degrees. Most graduate cum laude. They are Nyack graduates – albeit ones who attended an extension site.

What is it like for these 56 inmate students of the Nyack College prison education program to see their college president, vice presidents, faculty members, college professional staff, and two invited speakers – all in academic regalia – greet them with the exuberance fitting the occasion? What is it like to see seven state correctional leaders front and center on the stage giving them greetings and words of congratulations as if they are not the men who line up on the wall but men who belong to a community of achievers? What does it feel like to be publicly respected for their behavior? What does it feel like to have your name – not your number – called out over the microphone in front of your family members as you get that associate or bachelor’s degree?

It feels like new life. It is a resurrection of sorts. When Christian higher education spends precious budget resources on incarcerated persons, we are living out the command of Matthew 25. In many ways, providing an educational opportunity for an imprisoned individual fulfills all of the provisions – it provides food, clothing, presence, counsel, encouragement, engagement, and identification with the poor and outcast. It promotes their wellbeing and gives opportunity for a future when they will not be hungry, naked, thirsty, lonely, or down and out on their luck, because they have achieved an education.

Jeremiah 29:11 is always popular at graduations because it speaks to a fresh, unfettered future of dreams. But because it was written to a captive people in exile, it applies equally to a population whose dreams have been crushed and for whom life has been gritty: “I have plans for you, plans to prosper you and to give you hope and a future.” When the faculty and staff of a Christian college take the long drive to an institution made up of buildings surrounded by barbed wire, they make a hope and a future possible.

When Jesus sent out his 12 disciples, he instructed them to raise the dead (Matthew 10:8). We tend to have a certain incredulosity about that prophecy. We know it is true because of stories of resurrection like Peter raising Dorcas (Acts 9:36-42) or Paul raising Eutychus (Acts 20:7-12). But it is also, in my opinion, true today when we touch the lives of the men and women who have made dark choices and walked their futures. When we bring the potential of hope and help them succeed, it is resurrection – going from death to life because of the love, grace, and power of Jesus Christ. ❒
REIMAGINING THE SCOPE OF ONLINE LEARNING
A new online consortium could improve graduation and retention rates and expand curricula—all with minimal expense.

By Morgan Feddes Satre
Cultivating Discernment

RECENTLY, MY HUSBAND and I went to an advance screening of the new movie "Shazam!" In a few scenes, a Magic 8 Ball is a key prop, and seeing it reminded me of all the so-called "future-telling" toys and games I used to play with for fun as a kid with my friends: paper fortune tellers (or fortune tellies), which we filled with random sentences and ideas for the future, the MASH game, in which we would desperately try to get a future that involved living in a mansion (or any of the buildings that weren't the shack in the swamp) with a famous movie star; and, of course, the Magic 8 Ball. We never took those "predictions" too seriously. I went to a Christian school, so it provided material for fruitful discussion in our Bible classes. But there are certainly times when I'd love the help of some sort of yes-no device to ease the process of decision-making. Of course, given the answers the Magic 8 Ball actually provides, that would not be for the best: "Should I attempt sledding off this roof?" Yes – definitely. "Should I listen to my doctor regarding this expensive medication?" Reply hazy, try again. "Is going to seminary the best thing for me? It really seems like it is." Outlook not so good. Relying on a cheap toy for any decision would be a poor life choice.

But big decisions – the kind that have an impact for months, years, or even decades, whether we realize it at the time of the decision or not – are intimidating. And acquiring discernment for big decisions is hard – it's a skill we want to have already, not one we want to develop. Developing discernment means being subject to situations that require … well, discernment. Most worthwhile character traits are like this. I pray often for patience, but that isn't just handed to me – instead, I find myself in a situation that requires me to use patience, whether that's a conversation that involves someone asking questions about what was just explained or getting stuck in a traffic jam while running late.

One thing can make discernment easier: community. One verse we like to reference around the CCCU is the first part of 1 Chronicles 12:32: "from Issachar, men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do." Being a community of people like the tribe of Issachar would be great, but the context of the verse lends even more weight to the power of community discernment. The men from Issachar ("200 chiefs, with all their relatives under their command," as the second part of 12:32 says) were part of a group of men who gathered at Hebron "fully determined to make David king over all Israel" (12:38). Most of the tribes sent thousands and thousands of men with weapons, armor, and battle experience. Issachar's contingent was by far the smallest of them all. But their contribution was worthy of note by the Chronicler because of what they could provide that tens of thousands of others could not: discernment. As practitioners in Christian higher education, we all know that we live in times that demand discernment. We also, thankfully, are in the midst of a community that shares a commitment to promote, preserve, and advance the cause of faith-centered higher education that develops both faith and intellect for the common good. Each of the contributors to this issue (and, hopefully, in every issue of Advance) has provided expertise, insights, and recommendations based on their own context and experience. All of this is in the hope that, together, we can develop and carry out the discernment needed for such a time as this.

DO YOU HAVE COMMENTS ABOUT STORIES IN THIS ISSUE OR IDEAS FOR STORIES IN A FUTURE ISSUE? EMAIL US AT EDITOR@CCCU.ORG.

MORGAN FEDDES SATRE is the CCCU's communications specialist and managing editor of Advance. She is an alumna of both Whitworth University and BestSemester's L.A. Film Studies Center and is currently pursuing her M.Div. at Fuller Seminary.
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Students who study at the Australia Studies Centre (left) and the Uganda Studies Program (right) are also able to engage in cultural opportunities such as experiencing Australian Indigenous customs or learning from Ugandan community leaders.

Cccu Celebrates 15 Years of Student Programs in Australia and Uganda

In 2019 the CCCU celebrates the 15th anniversary of the founding of two of its faith-integrated, off-campus study programs: the Australia Studies Centre (ASC) and Uganda Studies Program (USP). Since their launch in the spring of 2004, more than 1,500 students have participated in one of the two programs, which foster students’ intellectual, cultural, vocational, and spiritual growth.

“We are so grateful for 15 great years of programs in Australia and Uganda,” says CCCU President Shirley V. Hoogstra. “Since the founding of the CCCU, we have sought to provide off-campus study programs that can extend the educational mission of our institutions and equip students to apply their Christian faith to the world through these culturally immersive learning experiences. I am proud of our leaders and staff in Australia and Uganda for the hard work and dedication they have given in making these programs truly excellent, and I am grateful that so many of our institutions continue to recognize the value they provide for their students as well.”

“In the 15 years since the Australia Studies Program began, over 800 students from more than 83 CCCU schools have come to Uganda Christian University to live and learn for a semester,” says Rachel Robinson, USP director. “While this is an impressive number in its own right, it is just the tip of the iceberg when one considers the number of relationships each one of those students made during their four months on the program, all the learning both in the classroom and out, all the kilometers traveled, and all the life trajectories that were shifted in both big and small ways. We are excited for the next 15 years of facilitating connection between cultures and building bridges across differences.”

“The Australia Studies Centre gives undergraduates a life-broadening experience through its fully experiential curriculum,” says Aaron Ghilioni, ASC interim director. “ASC classrooms range from lecture halls on a college campus to the bush, the reef, and the rainforest. ASC teaches through challenging professional internships and personalized tutorials led by innovative teachers.”

Both programs have adapted to meet the needs of CCCU students and campuses over the years. ASC, which has hosted more than 750 students since 2004, originally emphasized art majors but in recent years has hosted more students from business, ministry, social science, and STEM majors, and is launching a new international business focus in January 2020. It also formally launched an internship program in 2016 to help students build their skills in an international context.

Similarly, USP launched a social work emphasis several years ago to allow students studying social work to gain a practicum experience in the Ugandan context and learn from social work practitioners in the area. As that part of USP’s program grew successfully, USP also launched a global health emphasis to give students pursuing various medical degrees a chance to learn from practitioners in Uganda. The program also continues to see students from a wide variety of majors engage its interdisciplinary emphasis.

Accreditation and Innovation Rulemaking | Submitted comments to the Department of Education to ensure the accreditation and innovation rulemaking committees considered ensuring that religious institutions and their faith-infused missions receive equal treatment under the law. The CCCU is exceptionally grateful to those from our institutions who were willing to serve on these committees: Susan Hurst (Ouachita Baptist University), Kimberly Rupert (Spring Arbor University), Gregory Bruner (Olivet Nazarene University), Stephen Eck (Oklahoma Christian University), William Hathaway (Regent University), Debbie Braswell (Belhaven University), and Mary Otto (Campbell University).

Title IX | Submitted comments to the Department of Education to speak into their Title IX rulemaking. Our comments praised the proposal to require sufficient notice to all parties in an investigation and for providing institutions the flexibility to extend timelines or pursue an informal resolution if all parties agree. We also expressed concern about the chilling effect of the proposal for victims and the increased cost and administrative burden on institutions.

Prison Reform | Advocated alongside Prison Fellowship, the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops to increase access to educational and faith-based programming in prisons that resulted in the FIRST Step Act being signed into law. We continue to work to increase access to Pell grants for incarcerated persons (Second Chance Pell). In April, we joined with Prison Fellowship to celebrate Second Chance Month.

Immigration | Alongside the Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration and the Evangelical Immigration Table, we continue to urge Congress to find a permanent, legislative solution for Dreamers. We started a partnership with Voices for Christian Dreamers, who host events to keep the conversation about undocumented immigrants people-focused through biblical teaching and personal stories, as well as sharing other helpful resources.

Increased Tax Burden | Worked alongside a group of faith-based nonprofits to urge for the repeal of the “parking tax.” Along with the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) and other nonprofits, we have also been urging Congress to enact policies that encourage charitable giving. There is concern among the nonprofit community that 2017 changes to the tax code, which increased the standard deduction and incentivized different ways of giving, may cause charitable giving to go down over time.

The Latest Updates from Capitol Hill

The CCCU’s Advocacy Work promotes and protects its institutions’ unique position as Christ-centered, nonprofit institutions of higher education that are often in the crosshairs of a variety of issues affecting higher education and nonprofit organizations, and our challenges to religious character and convictions.

The government and external relations staff work continuously to advance the interests of CCCU institutions and to make the case for Christian higher education in the public square. Over the last several months, this work has included:

- Advocated alongside Prison Fellowship, the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops to increase access to educational and faith-based programming in prisons that resulted in the FIRST Step Act being signed into law. We continue to work to increase access to Pell grants for incarcerated persons (Second Chance Pell). In April, we joined with Prison Fellowship to celebrate Second Chance Month.

For more information about the CCCU’s advocacy work, visit www.cccu.org/advocacy.
2019 YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD

JACOB ATEM | Spring Arbor University, 2008

JACOB ATEM’S JOURNEY to Spring Arbor University (SAU) in Spring Arbor, Michigan, didn’t begin when he left one continent for another; it began with a 2,000-mile walk to escape war.

Atem’s passion for helping others and his love for South Sudan stems from his experience as one of Sudan’s Lost Boys. Atem was 6 when his parents and several siblings were killed by northern Sudanese Arab militias waging war on Southern Sudan. After walking over 2,000 miles, he found refuge in Kenya before coming to the United States at 15. With the support of his foster family in Michigan, he graduated high school and went on to study at SAU, where he experienced the antithesis of his Lost Boy experience: a welcoming community of faith, full of mentors and friends ready to invest in his life.

After personally witnessing the effects of malnutrition and disease in Sudan, his experience in America propelled Atem to continue his education in order to give back. In the midst of his studies, Atem co-founded the Southern Sudan Healthcare Organization (SSHCO) and raised $800,000 toward building a clinic in his hometown. Today, SSHCO sees over 3,000 patients monthly for less than $5 a person, fulfilling Atem’s goal of bringing hope to where it is lost.

“For me, I wouldn’t be who I am today without God,” Atem says. “One of my favorite verses says, ‘To whom much is given, much is required.’” After coming to America, I found myself being blessed in a land of freedom, a place where you can learn and actually practice your faith, and I was blown away. This scripture has truly impacted my life, and after realizing I could work hard to help others, now I am returning to give to my country and share my story.”

“Atem’s story of perseverance in the midst of trauma, despite unimaginable odds, inspires such hope,” says CCCU President Shirley V. Hoogstra. “His story reminds us of the power of individuals to make a difference, the life-changing work of higher education, and most importantly, the unparalleled glory of our God.”

After Spring Arbor, Atem continued his education by earning a Master of Public Health at Michigan State University and, eventually, a doctorate in Environmental and Global Health at the University of Florida. Atem is currently a postdoctoral fellow at Johns Hopkins Center for Humanitarian Health.

CHRISSTIE THOMPSON FINK

Taylor University, 2008

As a journalist, Chrissie Thompson Fink, the current education editor at USA Today, has utilized her abilities to address some of the most pressing issues of our time. While working for the Cincinnati Enquirer, Fink and her team received the Pulitzer Prize for Local Reporting for their piece entitled, “Seven Days of Heroin.” Under Fink’s leadership, the story catalogs a week in the Cincinnati region in 2017 during which over 200 heroin users were jailed, 15 babies were born with drug-related health issues, and 180 heroin overdoses took place, showcasing the pervasive nature of the drug epidemic.

SAVRA GARCIA LOZANO

Southeastern University, 2016

During her time at Southeastern University, first as an undergraduate and then as an MBA student, Sayra Garcia Lozano used her story as an immigrant and a Dreamer to advocate for protections for others, like her, who were brought to the U.S. as children.

She finished her bachelor’s in 2016 and her MBA in 2017. In 2018, she was selected as one of two delegates to represent Dreamers at the United Nations. In addition to sharing her story through many media outlets, including the New York Times, the Washington Post, and the Los Angeles Times, Lozano has advocated for Dreamers directly with members of Congress.

WALTER AND DARLENE HANSEN HONORED FOR OVER TWO DECADES OF SERVICE TO CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

THANKS TO THEIR shared passion for scholarship and Christian higher education, hundreds of faculty from dozens of CCCU institutions have benefitted from the financial support and public influence of Walter and Darlene Hansen. At the CCCU’s 2019 Presidents Conference in Washington, D.C., the Hansens were recognized for their support of Christian higher education, which spans more than two decades.

“Walter and Darlene have provided tremendous support for Christian scholarship throughout the CCCU for the past 20 years,” says CCCU President Shirley V. Hoogstra. “Their financial contributions have not only helped bring Christian voices to speak into contemporary academia, but also equipped Christian professors to further advance faith and intellect for the common good.”

The Hansens have a strong history with CCCU institutions. After attending CCCU member institution Wheaton College, Walter Hansen served as a professor of New Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary. Darlene Hansen is a graduate of Moody Bible Institute and is a gifted artist, specializing in portraits and still life.

Out of their passion for scholarship, the Hansens helped finance the CCCU’s Networking Grants Program, which supports collaborative scholarship among professors at two or more CCCU institutions and connects these scholars with broader networks. It is through this program that the Hansens have been able to fund research by over 200 Christian scholars at more than 50 CCCU institutions.

“The survival and success of CCCU institutions depends on a large extent on the quality and productivity of the faculty. Networking grants provide funds for faculty to engage in collaborative research that will enhance their contribution to their own schools, the academy, the church, and society,” says Walter Hansen.

Over the years, the Hansens have also funded several workshops for CCCU faculty members in particular disciplines, which focus on sharing ideas and resources for scholarship and teaching. Over 500 professors have attended these workshops. In addition, the couple has supported global seminars to inspire Christian artists from Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas in their production of art and literature.
ADDITIONAL AWARDS

MARK O. HATFIELD LEADERSHIP AWARD

This award is presented to individuals who have demonstrated uncommon leadership that reflects the values of Christian higher education. The 2019 recipient was Barry C. Black, who has served as the 62nd chaplain of the U.S. Senate since 2003. Prior to Capitol Hill, Black served in the U.S. Navy for over 27 years, ending his distinguished career as the chief of Navy chaplains. In 2006, he released his autobiography, From the Hood to the Hill. He is most recently the author of Make Your Voice Heard in Heaven, Nothing to Fear, and The Blessing of Adversity.

CHAMPION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

This award is presented to individuals who have demonstrated strategic vision and unparalleled dedication to the field of higher education. This year, the CCCU presented this award to both Michael Galligan-Stierle and David Warren.

Galligan-Stierle is the president and CEO of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities; he has written and edited a number of books that are considered the standard for Catholic higher education institutions in the areas of campus ministry, student affairs, and the role mission officers play in advancing Catholic identity and university mission.

Warren is the president of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU), a role he has served in since 1993. A crusader for America's private colleges and for increased financial aid funding for all college students, Warren is widely regarded as one of the most persuasive and influential voices for higher education on life after college, 6,271 alumni from 18 CCCU institutions completed the First Destinations for The College Class of 2017: Findings and Analysis National Data Source: National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE): This survey was administered via CAP and is a national comparison data point. The CCCU Alumni Survey 2018 Report

ALUMNI: IN THEIR OWN WORDS

THIS IS A SIGNIFICANT MOMENT for Christian higher education, as changing demographics and a changing landscape across higher education make it vital for us to provide strong evidence of the value of Christian higher education. In our efforts to build a body of evidence about the impact of a CCCU education on life after college, 6,271 alumni from 18 CCCU institutions completed the first CCCU Alumni Survey in spring 2018. The results show strong evidence that our graduates highly value their educational experience, and in a six-month employment comparison with a recent national study, we see several areas of strength within the CCCU as well as areas for improvement.

OUR ALUMNI SOMEWHAT TO STRONGLY AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>CCCU</th>
<th>National Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My life outside work is fulfilling to me.</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with the relationships I had with faculty.</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel a strong appreciation for this institution.</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This institution contributed significantly to my spiritual growth.</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend this institution to prospective students.</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>77%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

OUR ALUMNI AGREE THAT THEIR INSTITUTION HAD MODERATE TO STRONG IMPACT IN HELPING THEM TO:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>CCCU</th>
<th>National Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand Christian values.</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grow in their intellectual abilities (e.g., critical thinking, writing).</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a Christian worldview.</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personally adopt a system of ethical standards.</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in service to society.</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage consistently in spiritual disciplines (e.g., Bible study, prayer).</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interact positively with others in a diverse society.</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciate cultures other than their own.</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By collecting data on the same questions from all CCCU alumni, we hope to paint a picture of the value of Christian higher education that can be useful not only to the CCCU in its advocacy efforts to make the case for Christian higher education, but also to each institution as it endeavors to make its own case and understand its outcomes compared to other institutions. The CCCU Alumni Survey is offered every other spring through our Collaborative Assessment Project (CAP). This survey will next be administered in spring 2020.

To learn more, visit www.cccu.org/CAP or contact Nita Stemmler at nstemmler@cccu.org.
Pursuing Common Ground

IF YOU’VE EVER SPENT much time in Washington, D.C. during the summer, you may have wondered why this city, of all cities, became the nation’s capital. Having lived through many hot and steamy summers, I certainly have on more than one occasion. A swamp in reputation that was neither a port city nor a hub of industry or culture, it was an unlikely choice. The City of Washington (as it was first named) was land that was then owned by Maryland and Virginia and was almost completely undeveloped. New York City and Philadelphia were cultural and financial hubs and, up until the time that Washington was chosen to be the capital, had been the political epicenters for the new country. So why Washington?

Joseph J. Ellis tells the story of the city’s selection in his excellent book Founding Brothers, which captures six key vignettes of the American Revolution. In “The Dinner,” he tells the story of how Thomas Jefferson, having recently returned from serving for five years as America’s minister in Paris, invited James Madison and Alexander Hamilton over to dinner one night in June of 1790.

What was in dispute was not solely the matter of the capital’s location, but also the matter of whether the federal government would assume the debts held by the various states from the Revolutionary War. This controversial idea highlighted the differences between those who supported stronger state autonomy and those who wanted a stronger federal government; additionally, there were economic components that meant that states and regions would each be affected differently. Meanwhile, Ellis writes, by the time of the dinner, 16 possible sites for the capital were proposed and none had gained a majority. But on this night, at this dinner brokered by Jefferson, Madison agreed that the federal government would take on the debt, and Hamilton agreed that the capital would move to the Potomac. It was an agreement that would preserve the fledgling nation and help move it forward.

Jefferson wrote of the importance of that night: “[T]his is the most important event of the present instance I see the necessity of yielding for this time … for the sake of the union, and to save us from the greatest of all Calamities.”

There is a reason books are written about moments like this. This type of political leadership is almost always too rare and almost always too sorely needed. In our current context, we are in an absolute moment in our nation’s history, where most elected officials are more worried about their primary election than the general election and seemingly dedicate more energy to being reelected than to solving problems. It’s not to say there are no bipartisan moments. Thankfully, there still are. In December, a bipartisan approach to prison reform – the First Step Act – was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Trump. It was a wonderful moment of bipartisan agreement for an important topic.

But what about when there is no shared perspective on important questions? The frequently exhorted virtue of “finding common ground” in important political debates, while admirable, is often insufficient. What if there is no common ground to be found or ceased? Is the necessary alternative then governing for the good of the party rather than the country? Governing for the good of the few rather than the many?

Recent significant pieces of legislation have indeed lacked any common ground. The Affordable Care Act failed to get one Republican vote. The tax overhaul of 2017 failed to gain one Democratic vote. In 2015, a first blow struck the filibuster in the Senate by Democratic leadership; another in 2017 by Republicans. Both were about the confirmation process of judges and appointees. Now there is talk of striking at the heart of the filibuster when it comes to legislation itself. This would do away with the 60-vote requirement for legislation in the Senate, only further solidifying the power of the majority, weakening the voice of the minority, and disincentivizing collaboration.

This begs the question: Is there virtue in gaining bipartisan support for initiatives beyond the requisite vote total? Could it actually improve the idea? Could it give a proposal more longevity? Could broader support help bring greater societal unity? Could collaboration be worth doing even when it is not required?

The answer, I believe, is “Yes.” But engaging in the conversations required for this kind of agreement can be difficult in our current age – not just in political chambers or debate halls, but in our everyday interactions with people who disagree with our views. Ours, to borrow Joseph Bottum’s book title, is an anxious age.

Arthur Holmes writes in The Idea of a Christian College: “The educated Christian exercises critical judgment and manifests the ability to interpret and to evaluate information, particularly in the light of the Christian revelation. In a word, if she is to act creatively and to speak with cogency and clarity to the minds of her fellows, the educated Christian must be at home in the world of ideas and people. Christians, unfortunately, often talk to themselves. We think in ruins, and express ourselves in a familiar kind of family jargon. Unless we understand the thought and value-patterns of our day, as well as those of biblical revelation and the Christian community, and unless we speak fluently the language of our contemporaries, we tragically limit our effectiveness.”

This quote illustrates how much Christian higher education is needed in this moment, and how much our graduates have to offer in the midst of this age of intractability. As people who have good news to share; as people who are called to be peacemakers; as people who are called to pray for and seek the welfare of the city where they are living (Jeremiah 29:7). Christian college graduates are uniquely positioned to break open the rigid paradigms and offer fresh, creative approaches to the world’s problems, political or otherwise.

When our identity is in Christ, not in our political party, or our opinions, or a particular solution, we can be freed to enter into situations ready to lead – even if it’s not popular; even if it’s seen as breaking from our “tribe.” In their Christianity Today article on the ways Christians can be a Gospel witness in this current age, Tim Keller and John Inazu write about the posture of confident pluralism that Christians are uniquely situated to take. “As Christians, we can engage with the pluralism around us because our confidence lies elsewhere. We can acknowledge genuine differences in society without suppressing or minimizing our firmly held convictions. We can seek common ground even with those who may not share our view of the common good.”

This happens not only when common ground is present or readily visible, but also – and more often – when we follow the example of the founding brothers to sit down with those we know disagree with us and do so with the determination to find a way forward for the greater good.

SHAPRI D. LOMAGLIO is the senior vice president for government and external relations at the CCCU. A native of Tucson, Ariz., Lomaglio is a graduate of Gordon College and of the University of Arizona’s James E. Rogers College of Law.
This, Here, Now

I’VE BEEN GIVING some thought in recent months to what it means to thrive as Christian universities amid all of the challenges that confront us. After a couple of decades in Christian higher education, I’ve concluded that the sorts of habits and disciplines that enable us to flourish in our personal lives are also what God calls Christian colleges and universities to practice.

Let me explain. In our personal lives, it’s easy to fall into the “if only” trap. We fantasize about how things would be better if only I got that promotion at work, or if only our child would get into that college, or if only we had a bigger house.

Fortunately, I’m often reminded by Anna, my 21-year-old daughter and part-time spiritual advisor, that God calls us to live in the present. Recently she reinforced that truth by sending me her Spotify playlist entitled “This, Here, Now.” Or, as Henri Nouwen writes, “The spiritual life is a life in which we wait, actively present in the moment, trusting that new things will happen to us, things that are beyond our own imagination, fantasy, or prediction.” In other words, God calls us to flourish today in the particular place we find ourselves. Therein lies contentment.

Colleges and universities can fall prey to the same “if only” syndrome. If only we had 50 more students; if only we had a larger endowment; if only we had another donor for the new science building. But as in our personal lives, God calls Christian institutions to flourish in their current state, even while as leaders we work to improve those institutions.

So how do we do that? The same way we do in our personal lives. First, by embracing simplicity. One of the positive developments in American Christianity in recent years has been a renewed appreciation for simplicity in daily living. Authors such as Tish Harrison Warren and James K.A. Smith remind us that our daily habits — both individual and communal — ultimately form who we are as Christians.

The path to fulfillment lies not in continually doing more and getting more but in learning to simplify our lives, be discerning with technology, and say no to “bigger and better.” Doing so creates the breathing space in our lives for joy and Christian virtues to flourish. I would suggest that embracing simplicity is important for Christian universities as well. As leaders, it’s easy for us succumb to the notion that being a strong leader requires continually taking on more, both individually and institutionally. And while it’s important, of course, to adapt to changing environments strategically and nimblly, sometimes wise leadership means doing less rather than more; it means knowing what to stop doing in order to preserve spaces for reflection and spontaneity.

Expansions of institutional mission lead naturally to new programs and initiatives, which can leave everyone feeling frazzled instead of flourishing. Embracing simplicity as an institution can create spaces for faculty to thrive as scholars as well as teachers, and for students to learn the natural rhythms of mature spirituality. The unmeasurable qualities of a Christian college campus — an impromptu conversation in the dining commons between a professor and a student; a weekly staff members’ brown-bag lunch discussions; students tossing a Frisbee on a sunny afternoon — thrive in the unscripted spaces in university life that come by resisting the urge to fill every nook and cranny with activity.

Second, as Christians we flourish not only through simplicity but also through relationships. Long before he hit the Christian college speaking circuit and wrote about character, David Brooks penned an insightful book called The Social Animal. Humans, he observed, are hardwired to connect with other humans. We learn this as infants, and throughout life our relationships with family and friends are our deepest source of fulfillment. Christians in particular understand that our flourishing is determined not by how much stuff we have but by being in right relationship with God and others.

Universities are no different. As in our personal lives, the true health of a Christian university is best measured not by the amount of resources it possesses but by the quality of the relationships among its members. Paramount, of course, is the relationship between faculty and students. For example, in a recent Strada-Gallup Alumni Study, “a mentor who encouraged your goals and dreams” was found to be the single most important correlation to success in work and life for college graduates. These are the sorts of relationships at which CCCU institutions excel.

Equally important are the other relationships throughout the institution. Are our faculty thriving in their relationships with their colleagues and with the administration? Is there a sense of collegiality and mutual respect between staff members and faculty? Do members of underrepresented groups feel welcome as full members of the community? These are the true determiners of a thriving university.

Universities flourish not only through internal relationships but through relationships with other institutions, which is what makes the CCCU especially valuable. In my time with the CCCU, I have had the satisfaction of seeing new relationships develop and existing ones strengthened. For example, there’s the new CCCU Online Consortium, which enables our institutions to share online courses with each other. There have been councils created to foster collaboration among our schools in various areas, such as the Research Council, the Doctoral Education Council, and a network of Accreditation Coordinating Councils that provides a unified Christian voice regarding accreditation.

Then there are ongoing cooperative activities such as the Collaborative Assessment Project and the collective commitment to Christian study abroad represented by our BestSemester programs, not to mention the annual gatherings of presidents, vice presidents, and other professionals. Indeed, if one measures the health of Christian higher education not just by the relationships within each institution but by the relationships between our institutions, one could conclude that Christian higher education is alive and well.

At the end of the 2018 film Christopher Robin, Winnie-the-Pooh and Christopher are sitting on a grassy hillside watching the rising sun peek over the horizon. "Christopher," Pooh asks, "what day is it?" “It’s today,” Christopher replies. "Oh," says Pooh, "that’s my favorite day.”

Amid the very real challenges that we face in Christian higher education, it’s easy to succumb to “if only” thinking and long for a different sort of university than the one that God has given us. By embracing simplicity and nurturing healthy relationships both inside and outside our institutions, we can learn to thrive in the “This, Here, Now.”

RICK OSTRANDER is vice president for research & scholarship at the CCCU.
Olivia’s University

On March 13, the CCCU welcomed a new baby: Olivia Diane Mullen, daughter of Leah Mullen, the director of enrollment and campus relations for BestSemester. Every new baby turns our thoughts to the future, and tiny Olivia has drawn me to 2037, the year when she will enter college. What will that world be like, and what will she experience on her campus? Websites and articles that predict the future have a lot to say on this subject. Understanding that trends can jump track without warning, this is one version of what Olivia’s life might be like.

In 2037, Olivia will hop into a fully automated car and hurdle toward the college of her choice. She won’t be stopping for gas since her car will be electric or solar-powered. Since she isn’t driving, she can enjoy the scenery, but she won’t see telephone poles and wires lined with birds. Those have all been replaced by cell phone towers. Her new college wardrobe won’t come from the mall where she and Leah grabbed lattes between boutiques, nor will it come from smiling boxes on her porch. Instead, Olivia will have created her new clothes in her own room with her 3D printer.

Olivia probably won’t own her automatic car or maybe even her printed clothing because access will replace ownership. The World Economic Forum predicts that by 2037, products will become service-oriented. Some of the earth’s minerals, like zinc, will be completely depleted. There will be greater competition for shrinking resources and a widening gap between the rich and the poor. Predictions of other experts are too dire to contemplate. One writer says, “Future universities have rethought the relationship between knowledge of what is and visions of what ought to be.”

While these writers are describing idealized universities of the future, much of this sounds familiar. It could almost be a description of Christian higher education right here, right now. The article pessimistically projects how difficult it will be for universities to change— to move out of their silos, to abandon their arrogance, and to accept responsibility for dealing with the world’s very real problems. But Christian higher education has always had this vision and this purpose.

When Olivia finishes her bachelor’s degree, she will join thousands of Christian university graduates across generations who have been steeped in the idea that their education has always had this vision and this purpose. When Olivia finishes her bachelor’s degree, she will join thousands of Christian university graduates across generations who have been steeped in the idea that their education has always had this vision and this purpose. She will have a profound understanding that she is responsible for changing what is to what ought to be. This will happen for Olivia not because she graduates in 2041, but because she graduates from an institution that puts Christ at the center of its curriculum. As we face dire predictions about the future of private, faith-based institutions, we can be confident in the knowledge that what we offer is what the world will increasingly need.
Game Changers

Azusa Pacific University’s newest degree program will launch a new generation of storytellers in a rapidly expanding market: video games.

By Chloe Buckler

FOR CENTURIES, the art of storytelling – from oral tradition to music to books to movies – has captivated audiences globally. Though the medium of storytelling has shifted over time, its power to describe the human experience has remained an undeniable force. Now, one CCCU institution is preparing students to engage one of the newest mediums of storytelling: video games.

In recent years, the gaming industry itself has become one of the largest forces in the economy and a source of employment for many. According to a report from the Entertainment Software Association, in 2016, the video gaming industry directly supported over 65,000 employees. Newzoo, the leading global provider of games and esports analytics, predicts that the global games market will produce nearly $150 billion in revenue in 2019.

Additionally, those diving into the narratives of a given game are doing so for extended periods of time. In its “State of Online Gaming 2018” report, Limelight Networks found that, on average, gamers around the world spent six hours every week playing video games, but a quarter of respondents reported spending seven or more hours each week playing games.

To capitalize on these trends, Azusa Pacific University (APU) in Azusa, California, is launching a new program to equip students to craft stories for future generations: a games and interactive media major.

“One of the things that is important to consider is how games have become ubiquitous in many parts of the world at this point,” says Tim Samoff, a professor in APU’s department of cinematic arts and the director of the new program. “After several secular schools have proven to be very successful with their game-oriented degrees, it’s probably overdue that Christian colleges engage in this always growing industry.”

Samoff has previous experience in the gaming industry and created a similar gaming major at another institution, all of which helped him shape the new program that starts this fall.

Students will be able to choose between a robust 50-unit major or a 22-unit minor to prepare for a host of different careers within the gaming industry, such as game design and programming, game art and music, game testing, and everything in between. The comprehensive list of class options includes offerings in game development, game theory, and user experience design.

This degree program, however, will not only focus on computer programming or the technical side of the gaming industry. For Samoff, technical mechanics and narrative development work hand-in-hand in the gaming industry.

“One of the great things that leads toward the creative process of making the game is the fact that a game’s narrative really informs the mechanics of the game, but the game’s mechanics also lead toward the resulting narrative,” Samoff says.

Because of this, the new major will seek to blend technical skill development with creative storytelling. Not only will all classes have a narrative component, but students will also be challenged to tell their own story through their design.

Entering into the video game industry isn’t just an opportunity to innovate through a unique platform; it is also another arena for people of faith to engage.

“I think that virtual spaces are one of the last uncharted mission fields for the Christian gospel,” Samoff says.

This new degree program offers a way for students to both tell their own story and invite others into the metanarrative of the biblical story through their games, he says, adding that, ultimately, the degree will enable students to create games that are not only engaging, but also speak to the stories of the students themselves, the stories around them, and the story of their creator.

Thus, graduates will leave the degree program with the technical skill necessary to succeed in the field and also be challenged to offer important new narratives to an ever-growing industry. As Samoff says, this degree will “develop a mission for being game changers in the industry.”

CHLOE BUCKLER is the CCCU’s government relations & communications fellow. She is an alumna of Azusa Pacific University (Azusa, CA), and will be pursuing a master’s in public policy from Pepperdine University (Malibu, CA) in the fall of 2019.

Source: Courtesy of Azusa Pacific University
Lowering the “Second Tuition” for Students

How one university’s shift to open textbooks has saved students nearly $350,000 since 2015.

By Kara Simmons

OVER THE LAST 40 YEARS, textbook prices have increased by 945 percent, creating what some have dubbed a “second tuition” for students to pay. Tanya Grosz, dean of graduate, online, and adult learning and an assistant professor of English at the University of Northwestern - St. Paul (UNWSP), realized that this “second tuition” was making higher education unequally accessible to some of her students. She decided that needed to change. Her solution? Partner with the Open Textbook Network, which promotes access, affordability, and student success through the use of textbooks.

By Kara Simmons

The first two elements weren’t difficult; faculty and administrators are well-aware of current financial realities facing students, and librarians want to ensure their resources are being used to their full capacity.

The third prong was the hardest to tackle, Grosz says. There were two common concerns: “The quality of open textbooks and the curtailing of academic freedom.” Key to helping faculty navigate this idea was not forcing them to adopt the open textbook format, but “equipping faculty with the understanding that this is an alternative,” Grosz says. “It’s always going to be the faculty member’s choice whether he or she adopts an open textbook.”

She actively encouraged her faculty members to give it a shot: “[I would say] go look. Write a review. Determine for yourself whether this meets your students’ needs.” For even greater incentive, UNWSP offered qualified faculty a $200 stipend to review an open textbook in the Open Textbook Library.

A few faculty pioneers are all you need to get the momentum rolling, Grosz says. “That’s due in part to the fact that “many [faculty] who have adopted their first [open textbook] then go on to adopt a second one because it’s been a good experience for them and their students.” UNWSP currently has 56 faculty adoptions of open textbooks, and they are hoping that number will grow.

Many of the faculty members are fond of their continual ability to improve the textbooks by being able to swap out, audit, and edit content, Grosz says. They are able to use multiple different textbooks and arrange them in a way that best serves their students.

Additionally, UNWSP now has a unique team structure in place for every new course designed on campus: It includes a professor, an instructional designer, and a librarian who work together to ensure that they are choosing the best possible resources for the course, including ones already available to students in the library at no extra cost.

Grosz and UNWSP did not stop at being a founding member of the Open Textbook Network or restructuring how they were using textbooks; they also worked to create new courses; they became the first school in Minnesota to create a “Z-degree,” or a zero-cost textbook degree. One professor in the philosophy department is also working to publish UNWSP’s first open textbook, thus bringing a faith-based perspective into the open textbook realm.

Through this work, Grosz hopes to encourage good stewardship of campus resources, both for faculty and students. “In my opinion, the open textbook initiative is equipping us to be really good stewards of our resources and to be mindful of the cost barriers for our students. If we can remove those barriers through open textbooks and [doing so] fits our curricular goals, then why wouldn’t we do that?”

KARA SIMMONS is the CCCU’s government and external relations fellow. She is a graduate of The King’s College (New York, NY), and she will be pursuing her MA in economics at George Mason University (Fairfax, VA) in the fall.

The top-down efforts involved gathering administrative support; the grassroots approach began by talking with the faculty. Grosz’s work also involved the following:

1. Raising awareness about student debt and the current financial realities;
2. Partnering with librarians to ensure that UNWSP was fully utilizing already-purchased library materials when designing and revising courses; and
3. Encouraging faculty to adopt and adapt open textbooks.

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IT ISN’T HARD to find headline after headline painting a grim picture for higher education, particularly when it comes to its financial health. But, as the old saying goes, necessity is the mother of invention. So what’s the current reality for Christian higher education, and how can CCCU institutions respond in a way that promotes positive growth and innovation?

For 20 years, the Annual Financial Aid Survey of CCCU Institutions has tracked trends in enrollment, financial aid, and other financial health indicators, including tuition and fee revenue, net tuition revenue, discount rates, and the percentage of students utilizing need-based aid at Christian colleges and universities. Led by Bethel University’s Dan Nelson, chief institutional data and research officer, and Jeff Olson, director of financial aid, the survey provides important long-term data regarding the financial health of CCCU institutions.

The latest survey data, which analyzed the 2017-18 academic year and was presented at the CCCU Multi-Academic Conference in February, shows most CCCU institutions facing the same financial stressors that are affecting all of higher education. More than half of the 62 institutions who participated in the survey reported a decline in traditional undergraduate enrollment. Over half of enrollment at surveyed institutions now consists of undergraduate degree completion and graduate programs, including some seminaries.

The declining enrollment trend for traditional undergraduates is one that isn’t likely to change much in the future. The National Center for Education Statistics predicts that the number of high school graduates will increase only by 0.2 percent in the coming years (compared to a growth rate of 6 percent from 2009).
to 2018). The latest Knocking at the College Door report from the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) projects that the number of high school graduates will begin to drop after 2025; between 2026 and 2031, WICHE projects a 9 percent drop (from 3.47 million graduates to 3.25 million). WICHE also noted that the number of white high school graduates is projected to drop by 6 percent between 2013 and 2031; robust growth in the numbers of non-white high school graduates (especially among Hispanics and Asian/Pacific Islanders) helps to counterbalance that drop, but won’t be enough to stop the overall decline. Additionally, WICHE noted, currently “there is no indication of a sustained upward trend in births to suggest a sudden increase in high school graduates after 2032.”

At the same time, the median unfunded discount rate at the surveyed CCCU institutions has steadily increased over the last decade, from 29.6 percent in 2007-08 to 43.3 percent in 2017-18. This rate is calculated by taking the amount of unrestricted institutional gift aid at an institution (which is high for most CCCU institutions surveyed, since the average institution reports that only 4 percent of its gift aid has a specific funding source like an endowment or a designated scholarship donation), and dividing that number by tuition and fee revenue.

In short: an increasing unfunded discount rate is not a good sign, especially in light of growing operational expenses. These trends are again reflective of higher education broadly; in its latest report on the credit outlook for higher education across the U.S., Moody’s Investors Service once again rated it negative because of low revenue growth from tuition and likely increases in operating expenses.

The amount of unrestricted gift aid at CCCU institutions is so high in part because of their commitment to support their students: For the typical CCCU institution surveyed, 70 percent of students were qualified as financially “needy.” This is logical, given that half of CCCU students come from families that earn less than $50,000 annually, and one in three CCCU students are first-generation college students.

Yet CCCU institutions are so committed to serving their students and offering scholarships and other aid that CCCU students are able to take out the lowest amount of federal loans annually: an average of $6,108 per CCCU student for the 2014-15 year, compared to $6,701 at public universities and $8,128 at other four-year private institutions. This annual loan amount has been virtually unchanged since the onset of the recession in 2008-09; in the last nine years, the annual average loan a CCCU student has taken out has increased by only a total of $402. Additionally, nearly 5 in 10 CCCU graduates finished their undergraduate programs without taking out student loans.

This kind of data, if shared broadly, bodes well for attracting the next generation of students. Studies have shown that Gen Z (the generation born between 1995 and 2012) are more financially pragmatic and interested in saving money than Millennials were at the same age, in part because Gen Z spent much of its formative years in the Great Recession. This will no doubt factor into these students’ college choices as they graduate high school.

It is also worth noting that CCCU students already take their investment in their education seriously, no matter their level of need. Currently, when it comes to federal loans, CCCU students have the highest loan repayment rates and the lowest loan default rates of any sector in U.S. higher education. In fact, the default rate for CCCU institutions (6.3 percent) is nearly half that of the national average (11.9 percent). This is in spite of the fact that many CCCU students go on to work in fields that may not maximize earnings but deliver great social benefits to the community, such as human services and education.

CCCU students also hold their institutions in high regard. CCCU seniors preparing to graduate were more likely than any of their peers at other colleges or universities in the country to report that their interactions with faculty, academic advisors, and other administrative staff and offices were “excellent” or “very good.” Likewise, CCCU students were also the most likely to report that their courses often included diverse perspectives, featured a community-based project, or directly connected what they were learning in the classroom to societal problems.

It is clear that CCCU institutions offer quality academics and a transformational, faith-based learning experience that students greatly appreciate and consider a worthwhile investment. It is also clear that CCCU institutions are committed to keeping a Christian education affordable for all— which is great for CCCU students and their families, but can pose a challenge for the institutions themselves that need to ensure they are surviving and thriving now and for decades to come.

The key, then, to addressing these financial realities is to adjust accordingly and find ways to continue providing an educational experience that advances faith and intellect for the common good. CCCU institutions are uniquely positioned to tackle these challenges, thanks to the network of colleagues they have across the country and around the world to think through these challenges together and to collaborate in new and unique ways.

With an eye toward promoting innovative, cost-effective collaboration while maintaining each campus’s academically rigorous, faith-based enterprise, the following articles examine two potential ways to collaborate in key areas of interest for students: online learning and off-campus study.

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IT’S A STORY familiar to many CCCU faculty and administrators: A student who is a year or two (or more) into their studies realizes they want to switch their major to a program that better meets their own interests and career goals. But some courses they need aren’t offered every semester or even every year, so those students have to stay an extra semester, another year, or even longer in order to graduate. That means a greater financial burden on the student and the family and, in some cases, a greater risk that the student might transfer to a different institution or not even finish their degree at all.

For Sierra Chavez, a current student at Judson University in Elgin, Illinois, the story starts the same but has a different ending.

During the spring semester of her second year, Chavez decided to switch her major from music business and entrepreneurship to communication studies. She knew the program was a better fit for her, but she also knew it could interfere with her plan to try and graduate within three years. In many ways, hers was an ideal scenario: The classes she took for her initial major met all of the general education requirements of her new program, so all she had left was to take the classes required for her major.

But there were a couple of prerequisite communications classes she still needed, including one required for several upper-level classes coming up in the fall. Some of those upper-level
Sierra Chavez, (above) a student at Judson University (Elgin, IL), was able to find a pre-approved course that fulfilled her introduction to public speaking requirement in time to sign up for those fall classes. Thanks to that, and the option to take more two classes online in addition to her other coursework, Chavez will achieve her original goal: to graduate this spring and begin her career.

Because of a new initiative from the CCCU, other CCCU students like Chavez who are at participating institutions and need the option to take an approved online class or two to stay on track for graduation will now be able to take CCCU classes from institutions across the country—an opportunity that not only saves them money but also helps CCCU institutions improve completion rates, expand enrollment in various courses, and potentially even broaden their academic offerings, all with minimal expense.

A NEW RESOURCE FOR CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Launched in February, the CCCU Online Consortium enables CCCU institutions to share online courses across a common platform with peer institutions that embrace a Christ-centered mission. The platform is built by the College Consortium, a national organization that several CCCU institutions like Judson were already part of prior to the formation of the CCCU’s consortium.

By utilizing the resources the College Consortium provides, CCCU institutions can easily find, review, and enroll in courses from other institutions listed on the site. Since faculty control the courses that are available to their students, they can ensure that the chosen classes are in close alignment with the curriculum of their program, says Will Friesen, senior advisor for the College Consortium.

Friesen, who previously worked as a faculty member and academic administrator at three CCCU institutions prior to joining College Consortium, knows firsthand the benefits a resource like the CCCU Online Consortium can provide for students and for the institution. “The CCCU consortium helps to improve both student and institutional outcomes by providing an expanded offering of high-quality, faith-based online courses while at the same time increasing revenue, student retention, and degree completion.”

Buckley-Hughes, who has been teaching for 40 years, still prefers the benefits of face-to-face discussion with her students, but she also recognizes how circumstances can interfere with students’ ability to take certain courses and graduate on time. One of the ways she helps mitigate the absence of face-to-face teaching for students like Chavez who are taking online courses is to make sure to check in with them regularly throughout their course to ensure their experience meets Judson’s standards.

“I’d ask, ‘How are you doing, what do you think, how are you responding—just so I could be involved in the process and hear from the students’ perspective if they thought they were getting what they needed,’” she says. “Because a student doesn’t always know what they need, we have to make sure they are getting what they need. We just have to be involved. … An online class can be as good as face-to-face—you just need to make sure the quality is there.”

Chavez says one unexpected benefit from one of her online courses was being able to gain communications skills she might not have otherwise obtained. “I needed to take a media theory class, but I ended up taking a social media class [to fill that slot],” she says. “Judson doesn’t currently offer a specific social media class, so getting the opportunity to take that class has given me so many more skills for my future career that I wouldn’t necessarily have acquired otherwise.”

THINKING BIGGER

For some, the new online consortium opens up a world of possibility even beyond improving graduation rates and expanding student opportunities.

Ed Ericson has served as the vice president for academic affairs and dean of the faculty at John Brown University (JBU) in Siloam Springs, Arkansas, since 2002, and he’s been on the faculty there since 1994. “This [CCCU Online Consortium] is the most exciting thing I’ve experienced in my 35 years of academia,” he says.

JBU is one of a handful of CCCU institutions who are looking at the online consortium and envisioning not only picking out some classes to supplement students’ coursework on campus, but also thinking of ways this could both expand degree opportunities and prevent faculty and course reduction.

For example, Ericson says, JBU currently offers an online-based M.S. in cybersecurity, as well as a cybersecurity concentration for its MBA program, which students can earn entirely online or in a hybrid model. Given the rapidly growing demand for cybersecurity degrees, other CCCU institutions are interested in expanding their offerings at the graduate level, but they may be starting from scratch and facing the challenge of hiring all new faculty and building a critical mass of students to sustain the degree, he says.

Conversely, since JBU is so close to the headquarters for Walmart and other national companies, there is a demand for graduate degrees in data analytics in the region. But while JBU
Equipping Latina Students to Lead

Sharing their own journeys as Latinas and leaders, these three women explore the stories of twelve inspirational women of the Bible who navigated challenges of brokenness and suffering, being bicultural, and crossing borders. Latina students will find mentorship through these authors and biblical women, enabling them to find their own voice of leadership.

"If you want to gain biblical insight from strong women in the Bible, grow in your understanding of the Latina experience in America, and thrive as a courageous leader, this book certainly will help you get there."

ORLANDO CRESPO, national director of InterVarsity Latino Fellowship

To learn more, visit www.collegeconsortium.org/cccu.
MORE THAN JUST A TIME AWAY

How off-campus study can become an integrated part of a specific degree program.

THE BENEFITS OFF-CAMPUS study programs can bring to the academic career of a student are well known. Studies show students who study abroad are more likely to have a job within six months of graduating and are also more likely to get into their top choices for graduate school. Beyond that, many students report that studying abroad helped them gain valuable skills for the job market, increased their confidence levels, and made them better prepared to engage diverse workplaces and communities. Many also reported that the experience provided career clarity.

But for administrators and faculty on campuses coordinating these programs, there are all sorts of questions and obstacles that must be addressed: safety concerns, credit transfers, and handling visas and other paperwork. Campus-run programs have to figure out logistics of housing, travel, and more, and both campus-run and third-party programs need to provide the kind of quality academic experience that meets the institution’s standards. And all of that doesn’t even include the additional costs associated with such programs, both for the student and the institution.

For over 40 years, the CCCU has worked to provide faith-based off-campus study opportunities that extend the educational mission of participating CCCU institutions and provide students with culturally immersive, academically invigorating experiences that also equip them to apply their Christian faith to the
world. Each year, hundreds of students from more than 80 par-
ticipating CCCU institutions have the opportunity to visit one of
nine program locations, study alongside peers from other CCCU
campuses, and explore their vocational calling in a new context.

Some campuses have taken the opportunities these programs provide for students one step further: utilizing the faculty exper-
tise, unique location, and overall experience to supplement the
curriculum for a major on campus. This in turn provides a unique
draw for that major, making it stand out from competing pro-
grams on other campuses.

THE BENEFITS OF SHARED MISSION

Northeast Indiana may not seem like the most obvious place
for a small Christian university to have a bustling digital media
arts program, with degree options in animation, broadcasting,
film production, and film studies, but that’s precisely the case for
Huntington University in Huntington, Indiana.

That wasn’t the case just over 20 years ago during Lance
Clark’s early days in the department of communication. Clark,
now the associate dean of the arts and division chair in addition to
his role as professor, says that began to change in 1997, when a
student approached him about an off-campus study opportunity
that would allow her to explore the world of film, since Hunting-
ton had no courses on the subject.

That was the first time Clark heard of the CCCU’s L.A. Film
Studies Center (LAFSC), but after the student returned from
her time in L.A. with high praise for the program, Clark knew it
would not be the last.

“Based on her experience, I started recommending it as an
alternative for some of our students who wanted to go into film
or find out more about the industry,” he says.

And when the time came for Huntington to launch its own
degree in film studies in 2000? Clark says he designed the de-
gree so that the LAFSC experience could fit nicely into the
major. As the department continued to expand, Clark continued to work with the team from LAFSC to incorporate the experience as an option for students studying animation or film production.

The experience, paired with the award-winning fac-
culty working at Huntington and the state-of-the-art resources Huntington has available for students, means that the film department at Huntington is now one of the most signature on campus, Clark says.

Today, the team at Huntington considers the LAFSC faculty to be an extended part of their program, Clark says. Once or twice a year, a staff member from Huntington will travel to L.A. to visit the students there and connect with the LAFSC community.

But the value for Huntington in partnering with LAFSC through all this wasn’t just in the location or access to internship placements within Hollywood itself. “It is the Christ-centered mission that LAFSC brings to the table that so benefits our relationship,” Clark says. “Unlike other film schools, LAFSC gets the Christian mission of our department and of the CCCU schools in general.”

That kind of missional alignment is vital to a good partnership with third-party providers, as Esther Breamer, executive director and CEO of NAFAA: Association of Independent Educators, told attendees at the 2019 Presidents Institute hosted by the Council of Independent Colleges: “What’s important if you are working with third-party providers is really having them understand your core mission so what they’re do-
ing is tailored to what you’re doing and tailored to the specific curriculum outcomes that you want.”

THE POWER OF EXPERIENCE

That mission alignment also proved vital in the develop-
ment of the music business major at Southeastern
University (SEU) in Lakeland, Florida. Paul Harlan,
professor of music at SEU, says that the university first
began developing a relationship with the Contempo-
rary Music Center (CMC), located in Nashville, Ten-
nessee, when program director Warren Pettit visited
some classes at SEU in the mid-2000s. “I knew imme-
diately that this was a great opportunity for our stu-
dents, so we started promoting CMC and encouraged
our students to attend,” he says.

When SEU began designing an official music busi-
ness major a few years later, the experience and exper-
tise of the team at CMC proved valuable for the devel-
opment of the program itself, Harlan says. “In addition
to obtaining great advice for our program [from the
team], we also came to the conclusion that partner-
ing with CMC would be advantageous for everyone
involved,” he says.

Today, attending a semester at CMC is an integrat-
ated part of the music business degree. Harlan says the
value comes in CMC’s unique experience, expertise, and location and how it complements the SEU fac-
culty’s experience.

“We have world-class music faculty in our depart-
ment, coming from the major music institutions in the
country … [and] we offer our students an excellent
experience in commercial music, music technology, and
audio production,” Harlan says. “CMC completes that
education with expertise in music industry stud-
ies. This way, our students get a solid music education
plus a focused semester at CMC in writing, perform-
ing, managing, and concert/recording production.”

Both the faculty at Huntington and the faculty at
SEU report that students’ engagement and appre-
ciation for the respective programs has remained high
over the years. “Students have a terrific experience,”
Clark says. “The time they spend taking classes and
interning in L.A. is priceless.”

Harlan says that there have been a few times over the
years when students arrived at CMC and soon re-
alized that their goals didn’t exactly match what was
being taught at CMC; in those instances, the CMC
staff went out of their way to help the students figure
out a plan of individualized learning that better fit their aspirations.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUST

Personal care and missional fit is part of what led Westmont Col-
lege in Santa Barbara, California, to embark on a new partner-
ship with the CCCU’s Uganda Studies Program (USP) a few
years ago, says Cynthia Toms, professor of global studies and ki-
netiology and director of Westmont’s Global Health in Uganda
program. The program utilizes USP’s own Global Health Em-
phasis track, which is open to all CCCU students, and takes ad-
vantage of USP’s location and the ways it could meet a unique
need for Westmont students.

“We had an increasing number of students interested in
studying health delivery in the Global South. Partnering with
the Uganda Studies Program offered an opportunity for our
natural science, kinesiology, and pre-med students to study abroad
with a curriculum that closely aligned with our own,” Toms says.

Prior to coming to Westmont, Toms had worked on USP’s
staff, so she was well acquainted with both USP’s mission and
its leaders. That connection was key in the development of
Westmont’s eventual partnership with USP, she says.

“There were substantial relationships in place [with the
CCCU] and a willingness to partner in a way that felt
trustworthy,” Toms says. “I don’t think we would have done
this with a partnership that would have just come off the street
to try and provide a checklist of pieces [for the program].
Knowing the CCCU and having relationships with people
that were experienced and willing to work with us gave us an
added measure of confidence in the quality and delivery of
the program.”

Key to the new program’s success at Westmont has been the
development of courses students take before and after they
go to Uganda, both to facilitate their immersion into life in USP
when they arrive and to assist with the reentry process after they
return to campus. The reentry class has been especially helpful for stu-
dents, Toms says, because it helps them process their experiences,
examine how they can be worked into their coursework back at
Westmont, and continue to explore the deep and often challeng-
ing questions that come with studying abroad, especially as it
relates to the development of the student’s faith.

In light of her experience with USP in Uganda, Toms has
enjoyed helping Westmont faculty and staff appreciate the
unique opportunities of such a program. Westmont sponsors
many of its own global programs run by its own faculty, but in
Uganda, the college can partner with USP staff and African
scholars at Uganda Christian University to provide students a
rich immersive learning experience. The partnership has al-
so allowed several Westmont faculty to travel to Uganda to
Teach modular courses for students there, and their experience
in Uganda has enriched discourse on campus about global
health and African culture.

Erin Kluer, a student from the University of Northwestern -
St. Paul, attended the Contemporary Music Center in Fall 2018.
CMC students get firsthand experience in the music industry.
In essence, Toms says, the partnership with USP has enabled Westmont to create a hybrid off-campus program of sorts, where Westmont faculty remain deeply involved in the educational process but the USP faculty provides the on-the-ground experience and connections that are so vital to the success of an immersive semester abroad.

Though Westmont’s partnership has only been in place for a few years, Toms says they have seen tremendous growth and a new energy on campus from those who have finished the program and are taking what they’ve learned into their continuing education.

“I now have an ongoing [reference] request list from students [who went to USP] who are applying to Master of Public Health programs, and from students who are heading to medical school... It’s interesting to see – three, four, five years in – how those students are now turning that experience into a vocational calling and a deeper understanding of how they want to go about their vocation,” Toms says. “So it feels more integral [to our campus] than just sending them to a third-party provider somewhere and hoping they have a safe and good experience and then trying to welcome them back into the classroom afterward.”

For Westmont, Huntington, and SEU, the value of working with programs who share their faith-centered approach to education and commit to doing what they can to meet the institution’s needs is immeasurable, despite the fact that it means important tuition dollars going to a program that is off-campus.

“While universities do sacrifice some income to send students to LA FSC and other [CCCU] programs, the sacrifice is almost always worth it,” says Matt Webb, an instructor of film production at Huntington and one of the faculty who regularly visits Huntington students at LA FSC. “What LA FSC and other programs offer are opportunities, experiences, and connections that CCCU students would not otherwise receive at their home institutions. I think that colleges and universities should consider this an investment in their students and an investment in programs that they can’t offer on their own campuses, and therefore get excited about the unique opportunities that Best Semester programs provide.”

Similarly, Hylan says that the partnership with CMC covers gaps and offers opportunities SEU faculty can’t. “For us the financial loss is justified, in part, by not having to hire additional faculty to cover what is offered at CMC,” he says. “Another part of the justification – for the university and the students – is that it is a fabulous and practical experience for our students.”

Toms noted how helpful it was to work with USP and the CCCU in setting up Westmont’s partnership, both because they recognize the financial realities CCCU institutions face and also because they are committed to providing programs that benefit both students and institutions.

“I send students to CCCU programs because I truly believe that they are the best curricular and pedagogical fit for what I’m trying to do with students,” she says. “I have visited many programs. I’ve done lots of external reviews; I’ve been in the field of study abroad for a couple decades. I send students [to a CCCU program] because it is the highest quality program that I know ensures rigorous learning, provides a depth of cultural immersion, and really translates culture for my students.”

MORGAN FEDDES SATRE is the CCCU’s communications specialist and managing editor of Advance. She is an alumna of both Whitworth University and Best Semester’s L.A. Film Studies Center and is currently pursuing her M.Div. at Fuller Seminary.

**Thank You**

Dan Nelson
Chief Institutional Data and Research Officer

Jeff Olson
Director of Financial Aid

Thanks to Bethel University’s Dan Nelson and Jeff Olson for 20 years of faithful service to the CCCU and its institutions by gathering the data for the Annual Financial Aid Survey of CCCU Institutions.

**ADVANCE | SPRING 2019**
ARIZONA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY (Phoenix, AZ)

From 2002 to 2016, Arizona Christian University (ACU) increased its enrollment from 280 students to 820 (a growth factor of 2.9). At capacity at its current campus, ACU announced plans in November 2018 to relocate to the former campus of Thunderbird School of Global Management in Glendale, Arizona, which will more than triple classroom building space.

ACU President Len Munsil noted a number of changes that contributed to ACU’s growth. “We transitioned from a Bible college to a Christian liberal arts university by adding a humanities-based CORE curriculum that is integrated with 18 hours of biblical studies, resulting in a Bible minor for all students, and added majors in political science, communication, biology, and psychology,” he says.

Munsil noted that ACU’s enrollment success has depended on its marketing and, the school celebrates its status as a ‘covemitment to being influential leaders.” ACU also has increased minority enrollment from 10 percent to 40 percent.

ACU is part of a growing trend of universities trying to organize itself in the great works of world literature through its CORE Christian liberal arts program. The program uses a cohort-based, learning-learning model, all students in a major take their CORE courses together, ensuring a strong social bond over their college years.

TRACY MUNIS, an associate professor of political science, led the CORE program development committee. “The ACU CORE is unique within American higher education – seeking to reclaim the liberal arts for the Christian tradition by training students to consider the great ideas of human history within the biblical worldview framework and to use this rich understanding of the human experience to transform culture with the truth of God.”

The program begins with the first-year experience – two courses that introduce students to the ACU community and provide biblical worldview training. After that, students take four humanities courses during their sophomore and junior years. “The courses span human history,” the ACU website notes. “Students read and discuss original texts to consider how human beings in other times and cultures understood their world and answered the big questions of life – about God, about what it means to be human, about purpose and meaning, about truth, beauty, justice, and goodness.”

CALIFORNIA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY (Riverside, CA)

California Baptist University (CBU) increased its enrollment from 2,165 in 2002 to 10,486 in 2018 (a growth factor of 4.8). With Wayne Meeks, senior vice president for marketing and communication, said CBU has added a number of new professional programs as part of its growth strategy.

Since the Great Recession, increasing numbers of students have been choosing majors with close links to career paths. CBU’s College of Nursing offers degrees from the bachelor’s level up to a doctorate in nursing practice. It also offers two master’s degrees: one for students with a bachelor’s in nursing and an entry-level one for those who took a different major. CBU’s College of Engineering includes a blend of traditional programs (such as civil engineering and mechanical engineering) and others linked to specific careers (such as biomedically engineering and construction management). There are 10 different engineering programs in total, each of which have the important hallmark of the Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology (ABET).

An interesting career-course connection is part of CBU’s aviation science department, launched in 2013. It teaches students flight and aviation management as they pursue such careers as airport manager, commercial pilot, and a 21st-century job “airman aviation system pilot.” The department has “pilot pathway” agreements with over a dozen commercial airlines. As part of its spiritual development program, CBU includes small groups called FOCUS (First-Year Orientation for Christian University Students). The groups are required for freshmen and undergraduate transfer students; they are usually led by seniors trained by spiritual life staff. Worship in large groups has been facilitated by the construction of a new arena, though its 5,000-seating capacity is still not sufficient to accommodate all CBU students in a single service.

CBU has included the Great Commission in Matthew 28 as part of a statue of a globe – known as the Kugel – that serves as a literal touchstone for students. They first lay hands on it during their freshman orientation week, and they touch it again on graduation day, when they’re dressed in their cap and gown regalia, prepared to go out into the world.

COLORADO CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY (Lakewood, CO)

Colorado Christian University (CCU) increased from 1,801 students in 2002 to 7,052 in 2016 (a growth factor of 3.9). President Don Sweering credits three factors: a clear brand, multiple delivery systems, and intentional discipleship.

CCU’s clear brand is a conservative, Christian university. “Our educational model consists of three pillars: competence, character, and Christ-centered faith. This model has been largely abandoned by many colleges and universities. But there is life and vitality in it,” Sweering says. “We aspire to be a Christ-centered university. We are not moving away from this, but leaning into it.”

The university also has two colleges to deliver education: the College of Undergraduate Studies and the College of Adult and Graduate Studies. Our appeals to the traditional learner, the other to the non-traditional learner, Sweering says. The third factor is intentional discipleship. “In our traditional undergraduate program, students are accepted to CCU only after providing a pastoral recommendation, a personal testimony, and signing a lifestyle covenant.

Once students arrive, CCU has an intentional program to keep their spiritual fire burning. Freshmen attend weekly spiritual formation groups. On Wednesday nights, mandatory discipleship groups of only five students are led by seniors. Over their years at CCU, students must attend 180 chapel services and complete 180 service hours. To that end, students are asked about their journey from God’s campus to the alpine beauty of frontier ranch on the edge of Gunnison National Forest for a spiritual formation retreat that also includes seniors, who are contemplating their mission in the world after university. ‘Families who come to us want to know that their children will grow stronger as a community. Colorado Christian University takes its middle name seriously in everything we do,” Sweering says.

Jim McCormick, vice president for student life, says several enrollment innovations happened after CCU combined its student life and enrollment departments. In 2008, CCU began attracting Christian higher education fans and has fostered relationships with more than 400 partner high schools, most of which are Christian. The high school in vivo CBU representatives speak at chapel services and on retreats, and 144 of them have claus CCU dual credit program. CCU considers the 4,700 high school students taking these dual credit courses to be among the most promising admission candidates. As CCU’s student body has grown, so has its diversity; while Colorado’s population is 87 percent Caucasian, more than a third of CCU students come from non-Caucasian racial and ethnic backgrounds.

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY IRVINE (Irvine, CA)

Concordia University Irvine increased from 1,808 students in 2002 to 4,299 in 2016 (a growth factor of 3.9). Undergraduate enrollment has increased by about 500, growth in graduate and adult degree completion programs accounts for the rest.
CUI attributes its growth to curriculum change and development. It has added new undergraduate majors such as economics, physics, nursing, and business administration, as well as emphases such as kinesiology, commercial music, and business data analytics. New graduate programs include coaching and athletics administration, counseling, organizational leadership, international studies, educational technology, school counseling, and healthcare administration, a doctorate in educational leadership launched in 2014. Many graduate programs are offered fully online.

In 2010, CUI redesigned its general education curriculum and introduced a core program. As Peter Senkbeil, provost and executive vice president, explains, “Most undergraduate general ed programs offer a wide range of choice. We went in the opposite direction.”

In the first year, students take a pair of courses at the heart of the debate over human origins: theology and biology. Students also take linked courses in philosophy and math, as well as history and literature. The history/literature pairing is divided into pre- and post-Reformation courses. The courses involve students studying primary texts, rather than filtering them through a textbook.

While some might expect criticism of this mandatory curriculum, CUI’s student surveys say otherwise. Students completing the National Survey of Student Engagement showed improvement in seven out of eight areas compared to CUI students who took the survey prior to the core program.

CUI has also taken steps to recruit and serve an increasingly diverse population and to provide innovative diversity-related experiences. In 2012, CUI hosted its first Diversity Leadership conference, aimed at helping Spanish-speaking high school female students plan for college. Additionally, students experience an academic version of the Jules Verne novel Around the World in 80 Days through CUI’s unique Around-the-World Semester. Students complete 8 units in eight courses and earn a minor in global cultural studies.

Senkbeil says that all of CUI’s programs incorporate its identity as a Christian-centered university, even for students from differing faith backgrounds. “Stressing the Gospel can lead to common success. We don’t make students sign a statement of faith to come here. We welcome Muslims, Buddhist, and agnostic students who want to attend; while they’re here, we expose them to the Gospel.”

**POINT UNIVERSITY**
(West Point, GA)

When Dean Collins started out as interim president of what was then Atlanta Christian College in 2006, survival was the main goal. It was an uphill battle. The institution had limited financial resources; its facilities were outdated and in need of a major overhaul. A firm of consultants estimated that it would take $17 million to make facilities fit for its current number of students, as well as a 150% increase in enrollment above 2006 levels. Faced with these daunting numbers, Collins persuaded his board of trustees to announce a plan to move to a new location.

**SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY**
(Lake City, FL)

Southeastern University (SEU) peak enrollment in the 2000s was 8,079 students, and, like many other institutions, it faced challenges following the Great Recession. By 2011, enrollment had fallen to just over 2,500. In February 2011, SEU welcomed its new president, Kent Ingle, who set the course to change SEU’s direction dramatically.

In 2014, SEU signed to evoke a spirit of service: a monogrammed towel as a reminder to follow the example of Christ’s service. Jessup and its students have strong connections with local churches. More than 80 percent of students report weekly church attendance, and about 60 percent of Jessup’s applicants come from church relationships.

Additionally, as part of its spiritual formation program, Jessup requires small group and chapel attendance as well as a service requirement. The spiritual life emphasis extends all the way through graduation when, Jessup administrators give students a symbol designed to evoke a spirit of service: a monogrammed towel each spring. Jessup’s president spent water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. "Our success has come from a deep integration into the regional spiritual and economic landscape. We know which degree programs will be most highly valued by our local church, business, and educational partners."
UPON SIGNING THE Higher Education Act (HEA) into law on Nov. 8, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson said, “I doubt that any future Congress will ever erect a prouder monument for future generations.” And his words run true – this sweeping law that was crafted primarily to establish financial aid for college-bound students is a monument to our nation’s belief in the value of a college education. It governs student aid programs and lays out the rules and regulations for higher education institutions to be eligible for Title IV programs.

The HEA is supposed to be renewed, or “reauthorized,” every four to five years. The HEA has been comprehensively reauthorized eight times, most recently in 2008, as well as amended and extended by Congress numerous times.

CASTING LIGHT on the REAUTHORIZATION OF THE HEA

Taking a closer look at the key items CCCU institutions should keep an eye on in the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

By Chin-Chin Minniear

For a full overview of all the HEA’s provisions, visit www.cccu.org/HEA-Primer.
During the 2008 reauthorization process, Congress sought to hold colleges and states more accountable; to foster innovation; to help students make better borrowing decisions. Yet tuition and borrowing continue to rise. In fiscal year 2017, the government financed roughly $100 billion in student loans, $30 billion in need-based grants, and $30 billion in income tax preferences for postsecondary students. CCCU students take out smaller loan amounts and are far less likely to default on payments than their peers (see “Reality Check,” page 24), but national trends aren’t as promising. Forty million student borrowers are currently paying off $1.5 trillion in student loans, and by 2023, nearly 40 percent are expected to default. In addition to the burden of student debt on borrowers and their families, the volume of debt is concerning due to the taxpayer exposure and liability.

Although many policy changes affecting student aid can now occur outside of the reauthorization process (e.g., through spending bills and federal rules), comprehensive reauthorization remains the best option for tackling these issues. Many are looking to the next reauthorization to address priorities such as college affordability, college accountability, better information for consumers, improved college access and completion rates, accreditation and oversight, and fewer federal regulations.

**INSIDE THE BELTWAY: ARE THE STARS ALIGNED?**

The committees with primary jurisdiction over the HEA reauthorization are the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee and the House Education and Labor Committee. After high hopes for HEA action in the last session of Congress, reauthorization negotiations stalled in the Senate. Meanwhile, the House introduced the PROSPER Act, which was reported out of committee but reauthorization negotiations stalled in the Senate. The committees with primary jurisdiction over the HEA reauthorization are the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Labor Committee. After high hopes for HEA action in the last session of Congress, reauthorization negotiations stalled in the Senate. Meanwhile, the House introduced the PROSPER Act, which was reported out of committee but stalled in the Senate. When the current session of Congress began on Jan. 3, the House introduced the PROSPER Act, which was reported out of committee but stalled in the Senate. When the current session of Congress began on Jan. 3, the House introduced the PROSPER Act, which was reported out of committee but stalled in the Senate. When the current session of Congress began on Jan. 3, the House introduced the PROSPER Act, which was reported out of committee but stalled in the Senate.

The Problem:

**IN THE HEA REAUTHORIZATION TOP FIVE THINGS TO LOOK FOR**

1. FAFSA Simplification
   **Proposed Solution:** Shorten the FAFSA and make it accessible. Chairman Alexander has proposed releasing a new onetime application for federal student aid. A detailed review of the form is known for being lengthy and complicated, yet every current and prospective college student is required to complete the form on an annual basis in order to determine eligibility for financial aid. Beyond the form itself, the requirements to refile the FAFSA every year can be an onerous process, particularly for students whose parents are divorced or for students from low-income families. Congressman Scott has proposed ideas such as adding a recertification process whereby dependent Pell Grant recipients would be required to complete the FAFSA just once before college and then re-certify (instead of filing again) each subsequent year. Another possibility is presumptive eligibility for Pell Grants, whereby an applicant whose family satisfies the income criteria and has received certain means-tested federal benefits (like SSI or SNAP) during a specific time period could automatically qualify for Pell.

2. Loan Repayment Simplification
   **Proposed Solution:** Help students manage and repay their loan debt by simplifying the loan repayment system. Chairman Alexander has proposed reducing the number of repayment options to two: a flat 10-year repayment schedule or a schedule based on a borrower’s income. In both scenarios, payments could be automatically deducted from paychecks. For those choosing the income-based system, a percentage of monthly “discretionary income” would be deducted automatically from their paychecks. Discretionary income would be calculated by subtracting out the cost of necessities (based on a government-determined standard). This income-based system eliminates the current process of borrowers having to certify their income each year, and it allows for loan payments to automatically go on hold during periods of unemployment. The advantage here is for graduates with lower incomes, whose loan repayment would be spread over a longer time. Automatic collections should help reduce the default risk and ease the administrative burden for borrowers. A person who makes payments but hasn’t paid off their loan in full after 20 years could also potentially have their loan excused.

With that in mind, we’ve compiled the top five provisions to watch in the coming year.

**TOP FIVE THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN THE HEA REAUTHORIZATION**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>House Democrats</th>
<th>Senate Republicans</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Expand college access</td>
<td>1. Simplify FAFSA</td>
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<td>2. Improve affordability</td>
<td>2. Simplify loan repayment</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Promote completion</td>
<td>3. Create new accountability</td>
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Although Republican and Democratic priorities look different at first glance, the reality is that they are intertwined.
3. Accessibility and Affordability

The Problem: Low-income students and students of color continue to face barriers to pursuing four-year degrees, which federal programs have always aimed to combat. Low-income students remain less likely to complete their bachelor’s degrees as compared with middle- or high-income students. Some common barriers cited include the cost of college, too few pathways to a four-year degree, and the lack of support services in college. Legislators have suggested various changes to financial aid, including to the federal Pell Grant program, created in 1972 to provide funding for low-income students.

Proposed Solution: While Pell Grants have historically had bipartisan support, some question the program’s efficacy and also suggest that increases in Pell might be linked to increases in the cost of college. One idea has been to demand more “skin in the game” from institutions seeking increases in aid and to suggest that any such aid be given only to students on a clear path toward graduation.

One proposal worth noting — developed by the National Association of Independent Colleges & Universities (NAICU) and supported by the CCCU — is called Pell Plus. Instead of distributing Pell Grants at the same flat rate over a period of six years, third- and fourth-year students who are on track to graduate could double the amount of federal aid received in their Pell Grant (an amount that would then be matched by the students’ institutions) during those years. This would give increased aid for needy students and promote on-time completion. Pell Plus would also allow students who have run out of Pell eligibility but have less than one academic year left in their studies to be able to access additional Pell aid to get them over the finish line.

Chairman Scott supports the expansion of Pell eligibility as well as “restoring the purchasing power” of Pell Grants. In addition, he has suggested incentivizing the states to provide more funding for college tuition, offering tuition-free community college, and providing additional supports for traditionally underserved students (e.g., first-generation students, parents, working adults) such as college access programs, free child care on campus, and tutoring services that focus on learning skill-building. Scott also supports facilitating more points of entry into post-secondary education, such as high-quality certificate programs and tuition-free community colleges.

4. Second Chance Pell

The Problem: Although the Pell Grant program initially included incarcerated individuals, passage of the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act effectively blocked incarcerated individuals from accessing grants. Not only is education in prison associated with reduced recidivism, but it also results in good behavior and creates leaders who have a calming influence on other inmates and even prison employees. A 2019 report by the Vera Institute of Justice and the Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality makes the case that providing education to incarcerated individuals would not only lower recidivism and save millions each year in correctional costs, but it would also increase wages and provide a foundation for breaking intergenerational cycles of poverty and crime. Additionally, it would provide a larger labor pool of skilled workers.

Proposed Solution: Repeal the prohibition on Pell eligibility for incarcerated students. Under the experimental Second Chance Pell program (in place since 2016), federal Pell Grant funding has been given to otherwise qualified students who are incarcerated and who are eligible for release back into the community. Expanding this program beyond the current 67 post-secondary institutions could be a first step. Senator Alexander has signaled a willingness to repeal the ban as part of reauthorizing the Higher Education Act, and House Democrats are sure to support such a measure.

5. Religious Mission

The Problem: The House Republican-backed bill from last Congress (the PROSPER Act), though not given a floor vote, provided protections for the freedom of assembly and religious liberty, with language designed to ensure that all campus practices and policies stemming from an institution’s religious beliefs would be respected as part of its “religious mission.” But in the current political environment (where compromise is king), religious liberty language is more likely to be excluded because of its controversial nature.

In 2018, Chairman Scott criticized the Department of Education for relentlessly chasing away “civil rights protections, including civil rights protections in education.” He is a co-sponsor of the Du No Harm Act, which seeks to limit the use of 1993’s Religious Freedom Restoration Act, the law designed to protect religious individuals and organizations against government interference with the practice of their faith.

Proposed Solution: Encourage legislative language clarifying and protecting “religious mission” that
is modeled after the language that federal rulemakers recently reached consensus on. In early 2019, the Department convened a negotiated rulemaking committee to revise its regulations related to the Title IV federal student financial aid programs. Among other things, the Department sought to make changes to regulations related to religious institutions’ participation in the Title IV programs.

We closely followed the negotiated rulemaking process that resulted in the committee agreeing upon clarified guidelines for accreditors to respect the mission of a school, particularly a school with a “religious mission.” If the final outcome of the negotiated rulemaking process is disagreeable to Chairman Scott, he could attempt to neutralize or negate the newly written Department regulations by amending the HEA legislation, but such action may not be realistic if it were to slow or halt progress on HEA.

CONCLUSION

Although Republican and Democratic priorities look different at first glance, the reality is that many of them are intertwined, since change in one area is likely to affect change in another area. For example, if the FAFSA form became easier to complete (Republicans’ first goal), then more potential students, particularly those from less-resourced families, would likely wish to apply for and receive financial aid (Democrats’ first goal). In addition, by creating new accountability structures for post-secondary institutions (Republicans’ third goal), this would help to prevent the proliferation of low-quality schools, which in turn could help to achieve Democrats’ third goal of promoting college completion.

At the end of the day, any legislative or regulatory changes made to higher education programs should be pursued with the express intent of better serving the students. At the CCCU, we advocate on behalf of our institutions to support that very goal.

Chin-Chin Minniear is the CCCU’s legislative director. She holds a bachelor’s degree from the University of Chicago, a master’s in public policy from the University of Michigan, and a master’s in clinical psychology from Wheaton College (IL).

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E ONE LIVED in northwest New Jersey, near the Crayola Crayons factory store in Easton, PA. The brand name Crayola is one that most children, particularly in North America, grew up with. Who didn’t have the ubiquitous box of multicolor Crayola crayons to use for coloring as a child? Being that this delightful factory store was nearby, Marylou once suggested we go on a field trip to Easton, to which I reluctantly agreed. I told myself that I was going to go to observe the children. I would enjoy watching how crayons were made, learning just what activities they might have, and learn more about the world of color. I was anticipating a cognitive experience.

I went from section to section, floor to floor, watching and enjoying the various exhibiting and demonstrations about how crayons were made, colored, packaged, and marketed. Fascinating. I’d make comments such as: “Our friends and their children would really enjoy this trip,” and so on. Eventually, we got to a section that had crayons of every color imaginable, with delicious names like “blueberry pie” all amidst seemingly endless reams of clean blank paper. The message shouted to all who entered was this: “Explore, create, and make something, using our crayons and other products.” All around, people, mostly small children, were hard at work – using scissors, and all kinds of Crayola products. I was observing it all.

THE CREATIVE SIDE OF LEADERSHIP

Developing your artistic side can transform your leadership.

By Eugene B. Habecker
And then it happened. Marylou, her- self an artist, went quickly to work. She hurriedly but beautifully sketched and colored, folded and cut, created and recucted. She then looked over at me, and said something like, “Why are you just standing there watching and observing? Grab some paper, crayons, and start coloring something—anything—and don’t be afraid to color outside the lines.” My reponse? SHeer terror.

If I were 5 again, I would have respond- ed to her invitation with joy and abandon- ment. I loved coloring. I remember get- ting beautiful Crayola crayons as gifts, with dozens of beautiful colors nestled in straight rows and packed neatly together in the box. The bigger the box, the bet- ter. And color away I did, until one day in some school class, according to my teacher, my coloring became no longer adequate. I was told I had no artistic tal- ent. So, when the art competitions came along, I simply slunk back to the corner, defer- ring to others. My interest in art was put on hold.

Therefore, being told to “color outside the lines” decades later simply terrified me. By that time, I had completed three graduate degrees, including a law degree and a PhD from reputable universities. I had spent much time in intellectual dis- covery and theoretical analytics. I had already completed one 10-year university presidency and was then serving as presi- dent of another leading New York-based nonprofit. Now here I was at the Crayola factory, immobilized by the words “color outside the lines.” Why?

ACADEMIC TRAINING DIDN’T DO IT

All of my academic training taught me many things, but creativity and doing art were not on the list. My CEO leadership experiences had taught me to stay within the lines, whether adherence to a strategic plan once developed, budget parameters once approved, board policy once imple- mented, or alignment with the mission once established. The key to good bud- get control is to stay within the lines. In other words, to ask me or other students of leadership to color outside the lines goes against almost everything we have experienced or been taught as leaders. The inference was that the really good leaders focus on the “hard” stuff, things such as managing budgets, pursuing conservative financial analysis, exploring the particu- lars of market research, not taking undue risks, and staying up-to-date with tech- nology strategy.

Julia Cameron, in her classic The Artis- ter’s Way Workbook, encourages people like me to face this question: When did staying within the lines become the norm? … In essence, Cameron is suggesting that we cannot think our way to creativity as much as we do our way to creativity: “[W]e awaken our creativity by using it, not through theory. You will not learn to be fearless, but you will learn how to cre- ate despite your fears.”

Several years ago, I was attending a conference of university presidents. The overall theme was dealing with presi- dential leadership in tough times. We all knew that indeed the times were tough, perhaps tougher than at any other time in the history of higher education. Each of us recognized that maybe we were currently seeing only the tips of the icebergs that would face in the years ahead.

One of our plenary speakers was the president of the Art Institute of Chicago, Dr. Walter Massey. After discussing the many challenges faced by the contem- porary president, he offered “key drivers” to help manage and lead during turbulent times. I eagerly embraced and acknowled- ged each one of his points:

1. the importance of vision and mission (“nothing new here,” I quickly concluded);
2. enhancing quality (“of course, that’s a no-brainer”);
3. institutional loyalty (“again, of course”);
4. organizational effectiveness (“yawn”); and
5. creativity (“yikes”).

He went on to explain that as leaders we all need to be explorers, noting that playful creativity is essential to social and economic entrepreneurialism.

IF I WERE 5 AGAIN, I WOULD HAVE RESPONDED TO HER INVITATION WITH JOY AND ABANDONMENT.

What is playful creativity? Leaders have often heard of the need to create new busi- nesses, new jobs, new programs, and new solutions to meet new needs—in essence, to think outside the box. The leadership mantra of the moment is, “We’ll not be able to ‘cut the budget’ enough to manage our way out of our financial distress.” And all of us have heard the saying: “If you al- ways do what you’ve always done, you’ll always get what you’ve always got. Now is that what you want?” But here was a dis- tinguished former liberal arts university president—now art institute president—linking effective leadership to creativity and artistic expression, and identifying the need for creativity as a distinctive leadership soft skill. Indeed, he was chal- lenging all of us as college and university presidents to engage in more personal cre- ativity and to foster more creativity in the workplace. I was reminded of the late Pe- ter Drucker’s challenge to business schools to focus more on opportunity finding, not just on problem-solving.

Then a light bulb went on about my Crayola “outside the lines” experiences of many years before. At some time in my life I had pushed down the creative, ar- tistic side of me. I had subordinated the “soft” stuff, to the “hard” stuff, in essence, the analytical, intellectual side of me. At some time in my life, I had concluded that only the “hard” skills mattered in management and leadership, and if “soft” skills were in play, they were far less rel- evant and certainly less important. Col- oring outside the lines at its worst was a frightening, unpredictable experience.

Oh, at its best, could it become an act of faith? Again, to paraphrase Cameron, art is a spiritual act. It takes faith to move onto the page, the stage, the easel—or the leadership platform of leading in unchart- ed waters.

I was not alone as a leader as someone not gifted in coloring outside the lines, as I have heard this from many other leaders. In the words of another, I had come face to face with this question: “If you want your team members to think outside the box, why are you coloring inside the lines?”

Here I was learning from Dr. Massey that leaders without an authentic creative side may ultimately be unprepared, if not in- adequate, for the contemporary demands of leadership. Why? Because of our inabil- ity to color outside the lines, or to think outside the proverbial box, we may be unable to see, let alone understand, the multifold new opportunities that are ev- erywhere, all around us.

WHY OTHER CCCU LEADERS RECOMMEND THIS BOOK

“Gene Habecker is a both/and leader. He is wired to do the hard skills of leadership well— and this deeply personal book reveals how he learned to do the soft skills of leadership effectively. In addition to learning from Habecker’s expe- riences, you will encounter a trea- sure trove of wisdom from other top-level leaders in the book. The Softer Side of Leadership is per- sonal, practical, and probing. It will challenge any leader to keep growing in ways that matter.”

Jay Barnes, President, Bethel University

"When Gene Habecker speaks to the topic of leadership, the wise and prudent person listens. Few people in this world have the depth and breadth of experiences in the position of chief executive as does he. In The Softer Side of Leadership, he shares lessons that can only come from digging deep into a lifetime of experience and doing so with a servant’s heart.”

Lowell Haines,
President, Taylor University

“Gene Habecker is a both/and leader. He is wired to do the hard skills of leadership well—and this deeply personal book reveals how he learned to do the soft skills of leadership effectively. In addition to learning from Habecker’s expe- riences, you will encounter a treasure trove of wisdom from other top-level leaders in the book. The Softer Side of Leadership is personal, practical, and probing. It will challenge any leader to keep growing in ways that matter.”

Sandra Gray,
President, Asbury University

“Gene Habecker is a both/and leader. He is wired to do the hard skills of leadership well—and this deeply personal book reveals how he learned to do the soft skills of leadership effectively. In addition to learning from Habecker’s expe- riences, you will encounter a treasure trove of wisdom from other top-level leaders in the book. The Softer Side of Leadership is personal, practical, and probing. It will challenge any leader to keep growing in ways that matter.”

Jay Barnes, President, Bethel University

Adapted from The Softer Side of Leadership: Essential Soft Skills That Transform Leaders and the People They Lead (by Eugene B. Habecker, Deep River Books LLC, 2018); with permission of the author.

EUGENE B. HABECKER is president emeritus of Taylor University (Upland, IN).
CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION stands at a critical point in its history. Many institutions face declining enrollments; escalating discount rates; fractured faculties; a rise in mental health needs of students; and ideological clashes over theology, politics, and culture. These colleges and universities, once considered bastions of evangelicalism, are emerging as battlegrounds in a new chapter of the long-standing culture wars, a tension particularly palpable since the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

An unfortunate casualty of such tumult is the peaceful campus life many institutions took for granted. Evangelical institutions writ large now find themselves “identity-stressed,” struggling to convey what they are for amid all the presumptions of what they are against. When we, as leaders on these campuses, talk about our work, it’s often in a framework of “challenges.” Without diminishing the significance of the many challenges bombarding Christian colleges, we believe other important considerations champion our work. At the risk of stating the obvious, the Christian college has much to offer the college student, particularly with regards to the generative, aspirant, and often elusive notion of “campus life.” Moreover, an opportunity has long existed to champion the Christian college experience in a way that resonates with the broader higher education landscape.

An exemplar in that pursuit was Ernest L. Boyer. A graduate of two Christian colleges (Messiah College and Greenville University), Boyer was an educational innovator and reformer, and arguably the most respected voice on education in the 1980s and 1990s. He was chancellor of the State University of New York (SUNY) system, Commissioner of Education under President Jimmy Carter, and president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (CFAT). Published in 1990, his Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate persists to this day as one of the best-selling higher education texts of all time. That same year, Boyer and his associates at CFAT published another profound work entitled Campus Life: In Search of Community. This report was the result of a yearlong, nationwide survey of college presidents and chief student development officers. Boyer and his associates at CFAT, in particular, sought to understand (and combat) the “breakdown of civility” on America’s college campuses.

By Drew Moser, Todd C. Ream, and Kayla Hunter

A recurring challenge, or a new opportunity?
We must ... champion the ways our institutions have long been purposeful, open, just, caring, disciplined, and celebrative.

A PURPOSEFUL COMMUNITY
Boyer argued a college was a community where faculty and students work together and the academic and the cocurricular are integrated. He encouraged both faculty and student personnel professionals to be viewed as teachers – common educators for a common cause.

A JUST COMMUNITY
A college campus, Boyer said, is a community where dignity is affirmed and equality is pursued. For instance, Boyer believed America’s colleges were a shining example to the country of how to bridge a widening gap between rich and poor.

AN OPEN COMMUNITY
A college is a community where freedom of thought and expression is protected. On this point, Boyer revealed in the power of language to exchange ideas. He referred to it as a “sacred trust” as he attempted to find a third way between the communal and the academic and the cocurricular.

A DISCIPLINED COMMUNITY
Boyer reasoned that a college is a community where governance promotes and protects the common good. He advocated for a more open and inclusive campus, but he also argued all colleges ought to have a clear code of conduct developed by the campus community in a manner that cultivates investment and ownership of the overall health of the group.

A CARING COMMUNITY
A college is a community where members are supported and service is embraced. Boyer believed a college committed to service would allow students a valuable opportunity for engagement throughout the generations.

A CELEBRATIVE COMMUNITY
A college is a community where tradition and heritage are remembered. Boyer quipped that a “community of learning must be held together by something more than office parties or a common grievance over parking.” He promoted meaningful gatherings of the faculty, staff, students, and leadership to celebrate shared values and purpose.

In many ways, Boyer devoted his career to translating the formative power of Christian higher education to a wider audience. This framework, coupled with the many challenges facing today’s campuses, presents an opportunity to reconsider and translate Boyer’s concepts to current and future generations of Christian higher education leaders.

At almost any point in time, collaborative, generative conversations among curricular and cocurricular leaders are essential to the health of college and university campuses. As noted, this particular epoch is proving to be incredibly challenging. As a result, we have worked on updating and expanding the original Campus Life report to more explicitly connect the profound ways in which Christian higher education seeks to embody these principles: Campus Life: In Search of Community—Expanded Edition.

Drew Moser is co-editor of Campus Life: In Search of Community—Expanded Edition (June 2019, IVP Academic). He is Dean of Student Engagement and an associate professor of higher education at Taylor University.

Todd C. Ream is a professor of higher education at Taylor University, a senior fellow with the Lumen Research Institute, and the publisher for Christian Scholar’s Review. With Drew Moser, he served as a co-editor for Campus Life: In Search of Community—Expanded Edition.

Kayla Hunter, a 2019 graduate of Taylor University’s Master of Arts in Higher Education and Student Development program, is the head volleyball coach at Norwell High School in Ossian, Indiana.

May it be so. 

Drew Moser & Todd C. Ream

EPILOGUE
Walking the “Narrow Ridge” of Christian Calling and Academic Excellence

Beck A. Taylor, President – Whitworth University
Love as God Intended

Our work centers on loving others as God calls us to. But what does that look like?

BY PATRICK GRAY AND JUSTIN SKEESUCK

WHEN WE SHARED STORIES

from our 500-mile wheelchair journey through Spain at the CCCU’s Presidents Conference and Multi-Academic Conferences this year, we talked about love as God intended. But conversations with attendees were filled with questions that dug deeper. Soon we were exploring the difference between love with conditions and the love God designed.

In Matthew 22, Jesus turned the religious world upside down when a Pharisee asked which was the greatest commandment.

Jesus replied, “'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'” (Matthew 22:37-39, NIV)

The two greatest commandments are simple: Love God! Love others! But to end this passage here would do a disservice to the intention of Jesus’ words. In verse 40, Jesus continues, “All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.

All—not just some. This includes the verses we use to make ourselves feel better about our hate-filled rhetoric toward other religions or people who live differently than us; the verses historically used to justify slavery or to elevate one person to a higher status than another. Every passage, every teaching should be examined and applied through a lens of loving God and loving others. Every bit of scripture must reflect a love for God and a love for others. If it doesn’t, we have lost sight of the love God has for us, and we no longer reflect the love he has for others.

But what does this kind of love look like? If we return to Jesus’ teachings in Matthew, we get a pretty clear picture of love as God intended:

“Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. ... Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” (Matthew 25:34-40)

When we do these things, we are not only loving those around us; we are loving God, because loving God is loving our neighbors—all of them. This includes the neighbors who don’t believe what we do, the ones who don’t live as we do. This includes our Muslim neighbors, our immigrant neighbors, our homeless neighbors, and our addicted neighbors.

In our time as students at CCCU institutions (Point Loma Nazarene University and Northwest Nazarene University), the seeds were planted and a hunger cultivated for a deeper understanding of God’s unrelenting, reckless love. It knows no bounds, is unoffended by any behavior, and bridges the gap created by anything we do, no matter how far we wander or how lost we become.

Our hope for our brothers and sisters that lead at Christian colleges and universities far and wide is that they understand of the love God designed for us. And a love for others. If it doesn’t, we have lost sight of the love God has for us, and we no longer reflect the love he has for others.

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