I recently spoke to the board of a CCCU campus. They asked me to do a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, external opportunities, and threats) of higher education, with an emphasis on Christian higher education. I love interacting with board volunteers who serve our campuses. Campuses could not thrive without their expertise, wisdom, and generosity.

In order to understand the SWOT analysis, I reminded them that Christian higher education is part of a larger community of over 4,700 degree-granting institutions within the United States, with more across Canada and the world. The CCCU’s membership includes more than 185 in 20 countries.

To use an old boxing metaphor, I believe Christian higher education “punches above its weight.” Today, more than ever, the influence and impact of Christian higher education is growing because of our unique mission and calling.

CCCU institutions share three distinct commitments:

- **Christian truth:** a demonstrated commitment to the spiritual formation of students into mature Christ followers through the curriculum and co-curriculum;
- **Christian formation:** a demonstrated commitment to the intentional study and growth in one’s faith in Christ and our unique Christian perspective into our scholarship, course work, and co-curricular learning, which deepens each student’s faith. It’s a whole-of-life approach weaving one’s faith in Christ and our unique Christian perspective with more scientifi-ic, technical, practical, and vocational disciplines. That sort of holistic education, he says, is becoming rare elsewhere, though in the long run it “might prove to be a distinctive advantage for Christian higher education, vis-à-vis higher education generally.”
- **Christian witness:** a demonstrated commitment by Christian faculty and staff to integrate biblical truth throughout the institution, including teaching and research in all academic disciplines;
- **Christian formation:** a demonstrated commitment to graduate students who advance God’s redemptive purposes in the world, living out the Gospel in word and in action.

The CCCU is committed to supporting each institution’s distinct ability to expand and deepen the integration of faith in learning, both in scholarship and in the classroom. True, the SWOT analysis identifies threats that come externally. But the threat most likely to undermine an institution’s Christian mission is the atrophy of faith-integration muscles. My SWOT analysis also emphasized that because of our capacity to create a lifelong faith lens through which students see the world, Christian higher education has the educational mission to help students to flourish.

Unfortunately, human sin has led to cultural decay. We see this decay in the erosion of human character and the incivility of public engagement. What was once ugly and unacceptable behavior is now treated as worthy of imitation. There seems to be a lost appreciation for what is good, true, and noble.

But Christian higher education, done well, is the antidote to culture decay. Journalist Peter Wehner observed that last fall in the Deseret News that Christian higher education at its best “re-fines our sentiments, teaches us to cherish the true and the good, and [is] a gift beyond measure.”

To achieve this ideal, the practice and proficiency of integrating faith into all of campus life must be of highest value. It must have the investment of time, resources, creativity, and accountability.

In his essay “Response to Comments on The Soul of the American University Revisited” in the fall 2021 issue of Christian Scholars Review, George Marsden put it this way: “Only a small minority of 18-year-olds have ever recognized on their own that study in great literature, the fine arts, history, philosophy, and other languages and cultures are important to broadening their horizons and developing life-long character traits, and shaping them into responsible citizens. Such studies when integrated with solid Christian, theological perspectives have been invaluable aspects of the burgeoning of Christian higher education.”

Marsden also recognizes the variety of “valuable ways in which Christian perspectives are being integrated with more scientif-

ic, technical, practical, and vocational disciplines.” That sort of holistic education, he says, is becoming rare elsewhere, though in the long run it “might prove to be a distinctive advantage for Christian higher education, vis-à-vis higher education generally.”

The CCCU is committed to supporting each institution’s distinct ability to expand and deepen the integration of faith in learning, both in scholarship and in the classroom. True, the SWOT analysis identifies threats that come externally. But the threat most likely to undermine an institution’s Christian mission is the atrophy of faith-integration muscles.

We must exercise a daily commitment to the intentional study and practice of great thinkers and practitioners in this field. After all, Christian higher education has over a century of experience in this area of integration. Today, master teachers reflect Christ in all areas and conversations on every campus. We would do well to learn from them.

I often say we are stronger together in Christian higher edu-

cation. That is especially true when it comes to our work in this distinctive. We do not have to strengthen our faith-integration muscles alone; like all athletes, we benefit from a community of committed practitioners who share similar goals. Let’s endeavor in this work for the gold medal so that our practice of integrating faith and learning will be recognized for the excellence it brings to the educational community broadly—for those 4,700 other expressions of learning. By its excellence, our practice of integrating faith and learning is the antidote to decay that results in educational flourishing this side of heaven.
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THE COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES (CCCU) is a higher education association of more than 185 Christian institutions around the world. Since 1976, the CCCU has served as the leading national voice of Christian higher education. With campuses across the globe, including more than 150 in the U.S. and Canada and more than 30 from an additional 19 countries, CCCU institutions are accredited, comprehensive colleges and universities whose missions are Christ-centered and rooted in the historic Christian faith.

THE MISSION OF THE CCCU is to advance the cause of Christ-centered higher education and to help our institutions transform the lives of students by faithfully relating scholarship and service to biblical truth.

DISTRIBUTION
Advance is published each year in the fall and spring and is mailed to members, affiliates, and friends of the CCCU. It is also available online at www.cccu.org/magazine. Direct questions and letters to the editor to editor@cccu.org.

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IN HIS BOOK Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church, N.T. Wright says that the task of a Christian “is to live as resurrection people in between Easter and the final day, with our Christian life, corporate and individual, in both worship and mission, as a sign of the first and a foreshadowing of the second.” In other words, we live lives transformed by the universe-changing event of Easter — and the new creation that Jesus’ death and resurrection instigated and will be completed upon his return.

Like many things, this is so much easier said than it is done. As the decades and centuries go by, the constant barrage of war, famine, disease, changing cultures, new technologies and scientific discoveries, and internal and external corrupting forces have caused constant challenges for Christ’s church as they seek to live lives worthy of him. Yet it is precisely because of God’s grace and the hope Easter provides us that we can see how God has faithfully worked through his people to end war and begin rebuilding; to care for the hungry and the sick; to find ways to right long-held divisions and old injustices; to embrace and even pioneer new technological and scientific discoveries.

Personally, this is one of the greatest benefits of my own experiences as a student of Christian higher education. Certainly those who are curious and have eyes to see can explore how God is working in and through his people and how all things in creation stem from him, regardless of where they went to college or university. But there is something uniquely potent in a Christian college environment — an atmosphere dedicated to educating both mind and heart, with Christ always at the center. Particularly for those who are watching the transition from adolescence to adulthood and wrestling with who they are and what they believe, a Christian campus community dedicated to Christ-centered, faith-integrated learning can offer insights and hope that other academic contexts just can’t quite reach.

But here again, however, we are, we are faced with the reality that this, too, is easier said than done. We all know the winds buffeting higher education generally and Christian higher education broadly. That’s one of the reasons we’re taking the next couple of issues to get back to the core of the Christian higher education enterprise — when you’re facing a storm, it’s important to recognize and hold on to your anchor. For CCCU institutions, our shared anchor is the commitment to infusing the higher education learning experience with the theology, doctrines, and practices of the orthodox Christian faith — in simpler terms, the integration of faith and learning.

But what does that look like in our current context, where the pandemic rapidly accelerated trends of moving toward hybrid or online learning and away from traditional in-person learning, where an increasing number of students have little to no understanding of the Bible or basic Christian doctrine; where new faculty have not had the training to explore how Christian doctrine interacts and enhances their discipline? How do we even know when we’re being successful in this enterprise?

Some are of the questions we’re going to explore in this issue and the next. We pray that it will provide a reference and a reminder that “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure” (Hebrews 6:9).

MORGAN FEDDES SATRE is the managing editor of Advance. She holds degrees from two CCCU institutions — a master’s from Fuller Theological Seminary (Pasadena, California) and a bachelor’s from Whitworth University (Spokane, Washington).

COMMENTs Do you have comments about stories in this issue or ideas for stories in a future issue? Email us at editor@cccu.org.

FROM THE EDITOR | MORGAN FEDDES SATRE

Finding Our Anchor

AROUND THE COUNCIL

The CCCU’s Advocacy Work promotes and protects CCCU members’ 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 faith-based organizations, as well as challenges to religious character and convictions. Highlights of our recent advocacy work include:

Low Financial Value Programs | In January, the Department of Education (ED) put out a request for information (RFI) on how to identify low financial value postsecondary programs so that they can warn prospective students of programs where “total costs exceed the financial benefits provided to students.” The CCCU urged ED to take a more holistic view of education instead of a narrow approach that views education as solely or primarily about earnings after graduation. CCCU institutions support a coherent approach to education in which the development of the mind, spirit, body, and emotions are seamlessly woven together in the quest not just for knowledge but also for wisdom. Since ED’s approach promotes an incomplete and limited view of education, the CCCU asked that it rescind this RFI and not move forward with plans to create a low-value program list.

Third-Party Servicers | The Department of Education (ED) issued new guidance that dramatically expanded its interpretation of the 50-year-old law that promotes diversity in higher education. The plaintiffs aimed to prevent students from being able to pursue a third-party servicer (TPS) to determine if they were a low-cost option. The CCCU joined the American Council on Education on a comment to highlight issues and concerns with this broadened definition of TPS and asked ED to rescind the guidance. Though the deadline for reporting TPS contracts was originally Sept. 1, 2023, ED announced in April that it would delay the deadline until at least six months after the final guidance letter on this is published. Additionally, ED responded to concerns in that April announcement by clarifying that some entities would not be considered a TPS, such as study abroad programs and course sharing consortia. ED said it will continue to carefully review public comments and consider clarifying and narrowing the scope of the guidance.

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LEARN MORE

For more information about the CCCU’s advocacy work, visit www.cccu.org/advocacy.
TWO MEMBERS JOIN THE CCCU

At its latest meeting, the CCCU Board of Directors approved two new members, who join the CCCU’s expansive network of more than 185 Christian colleges and universities from around the globe:

- Universidad Evangélica de El Salvador (San Salvador, El Salvador)
- Mid-America Christian University (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma)

2023 CCCU AWARD RECIPIENTS

DAVID BROOKS
MARK O. HATFIELD LEADERSHIP AWARD

David Brooks is a New York Times columnist and a best-selling author known for his contributions to the public square as a thoughtful writer, spiritual guide, and humble leader. Established in 1997 in honor of Senator Hatfield (a longtime supporter of the CCCU), the Hatfield Leadership Award is presented to individuals who have demonstrated uncommon leadership that reflects the value of Christ-centered higher education. Past recipients include Michael Cosmavize, Congressman Tim Walberg, N.T. Wright, John Perkins, Vonette Bright, and Rick and Kay Warren, among others.

DARREN CAMPBELL
CHAMPION OF VISION AWARD

Darren Campbell is an entrepreneur and Christian college advocate. Along with his wife, Nancy, and members of her family, he opened a book and coffee shop in 1997 that grew first into the Tree of Life Bookstore before becoming SlingShot, the first textbook rental service in the industry. He has long sponsored many CCCU conferences and supported the CCCU and its membership in numerous other ways. The Champion of Vision Award is presented to individuals who have championed partnerships to promote the flourishing of CCCU institutions and their surrounding communities.

WENDY GOMEZ MATAMOROS
YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD

Wendy Gomez Matamoros is the executive director of Tesoros de Dios, a Nicaraguan-based Christian nonprofit that seeks to help children with disabilities achieve their full potential. Matamoros volunteered at the organization prior to going to college; there, she found her calling and chose to pursue a degree in special education at Dordt University, where she graduated in 2012. The Young Alumni Award is presented to individuals who have graduated within the last 10 years from a CCCU institution and have exhibited uncommon leadership or achieved notable success in a way that reflects Christian higher education.

Twenty Five Years of Leadership, Learning, and Bullfrogs

By Jo Kadlec

When most people arrive at Cedar Springs Christian Retreat Center in the summertime, they notice two things: the peaceful setting and the occasional croaks of bullfrogs. Far from the demands and hurried pace of campus life, the sounds, creatures, and blooms of rural life offer an ideal space for reflection and discussion in a spot nestled about two hours north of Seattle.

Turns out there’s been a lot of both for the past 25 years here, thanks to the CCCU’s collection of leadership institutes — including the mixed-gender Leadership Development Institute (LDI), the Women in Leadership Development Institute (WLDI), and the Multi-Ethnic Leadership Institute (M-E-LDI), which launched in 2011 — that gather at the Center every June. Almost 800 selected participants from more than 90 CCCU institutions have made the journey over the years. These attendees — vice presidents, deans, directors, and professors — had all been identified as “exhibiting prospective senior-leadership administration qualities.”

For each gathering, they arrive for the week with a packet of readings, current research, and case studies that institute facilitators have created for them. And they are invited to slow down, test ideas, network with like-minded colleagues, and explore the next levels of leadership responsibility, including setting up year-long professional development plans with one-on-one mentors.

“The location intentionally invites leaders to leave their busy lives and enter a time of reflection,” says CCCU President Shirley V. Hoogstra, who serves as an institute resource facilitator and is an alumna herself of the 2000 WLDI program. “We want people to be in a place where their imagination can be free and where God’s Spirit is optimally evident in nature. It’s a quiet place of awe that prepares you for humility and learning.”

Before they were an annual distinctive of the CCCU, the leadership institutes were a series of conversations in the mid-1990s between Karen Longman — who was serving then as the CCCU’s vice president for professional development — and Canadian philanthropists Barry and Sharon Hawes. Longman and the Haweses were concerned about the lack of opportunities for emerging leaders, specifically people of color and women leaders, within the CCCU.

Through their generosity and shared vision, they built on the Executive Leadership Development Initiative, established in 1996 under then-CCCU president Bob Andringa, that offered regular summer gatherings for new presidents and chief academic officers.
“Much of higher education has not done a good job of spoting high-potential future leaders, equipping and mentoring them,” says Longman, a scholar on leadership issues and a regular facilitator and organizer for the institutes who recently retired from the department of doctoral higher education at Azusa Pacific University in Azusa, California. “Through summer institutes like these, the CCCU is uniquely positioned to equip emerging leaders for Christ-centered higher education.”

The result is a long list of institute alumni who are now presidents, deans, provosts, and other leaders across the CCCU’s 185 member institutions. Many alumni say they still return to those original resources to refresh their thinking and stay in touch with their mentors and cohorts for mutual encouragement in their leadership roles.

The CCCU also recently launched the Karen Longman Leadership Fund to honor Longman’s long history of developing Christian higher education leaders and to support emerging leaders in the future.

“The CCCU is about giving our campuses the best possible people for leadership, and that means getting many, including women and people of color, ready to lead,” Hoogstra says. “We want them to be refreshed to lead longer or imagine new ways of leading. That’s why we are grateful for this place and for this opportunity to do just that — to equip Christian leaders to serve.”

The CCCU’s winter conferences brought presidents to Capitol Hill and hundreds of other senior leaders to sunny Florida for professional development and spiritual renewal. To see more photos from these events, visit the CCCU’s Facebook page.

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Pursuing True Transformational Civility

CIVILITY IS OFTEN GIVEN a cursory nod for how we interact with each other in the public sphere. The word suggests being friendly, polite, and courteous (at the very least). The condition of civility also suggests that societies can function by getting along, being nice, and bearing good citizenship with each other. In fact, the root word for civility is *civile*, meaning relating to public life, befitting a citizen.

But when we consider what relates to public life in Christian higher education, we must realize we are called to something much more transcendent than niceties, smiles, and courtesies. We are beckoned to bear God’s image with each other. In a world filled with “civil” societies, we make believe we care for each other; we grit our teeth through the tolerance of one another; we justify our opinions by placing Jesus on our “side” of a situation, instead of viewing our situation solely through the world-changing reality of the cross and the resurrection. We divide across ideologies and use social media to declare who goes to hell or heaven.

However, in Christian higher education, we are compelled to embody a Kingdom identity of the beloved community, where we can bear witness to Christ’s love with each other in all situations because we see the dignity of humanity in each other. When we disagree, have alternative opinions, or find ourselves with opposing social and cultural issues of a divided society, we must bend into a practice of love first, because we see the humanity in the people and ideals we oppose. We cannot bear injustice; we long to see the Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven; we are drawn to practice civility with charity.

Here are some simple practices that require very little effort to live out this deeper, fuller vision of civility every day on our campuses:

• Notice others. Their presence matters, so greet others even if they don’t greet you.
• Practice cultural humility by self-reflecting on your motives, opinions, and positions.
• Be ready with a question for someone you may not understand or agree with.
• Listen without waiting to talk.
• Remember that every human is worthy of respect because God respects every human; we are, after all, created in the very image of God.

• Make your arms wide open during disagreements. Choose words that speak life, not death, even in disagreements.
• Remember that scripture is indeed a two-edged sword, but it is not a weapon of destruction.
• In opposing views, choose the opportunity to build bridges of understanding instead of walls of division.

Now to be clear, this kind of transcendent civility can’t change the heart, but it is a way forward on our campuses, and it may offer a flourishing model for the public sphere to consider. Perhaps in the midst of this kind of transcendent civility, Christ will be seen and known. After all, Jesus did tell us we would be known by the love we have for one another.

Perhaps in the midst of this kind of transcendent civility, Christ will be seen and known. After all, Jesus did tell us we would be known by the love we have for one another.

LEN A CROUSO is the CCCU’s Senior Fellow for Diversity and Special Assistant to the President. She serves at Southern Nazarene University as vice president for intercultural learning and engagement, chief diversity officer, and professor.

As one of America’s few graduate public policy schools rooted in faith-based learning, the Pepperdine School of Public Policy firmly believes that there is a calling to public service—one that can be fulfilled through meaningful careers in government, at all levels, as well as the nonprofit sector. The school’s distinctive liberal arts curriculum for its master of public policy balances rigorous study of the Great Books with the latest skills of quantitative policy analysis.

In partnership with CCCU, all graduates of CCCU institutions qualify for special “Policy Partner” scholarships, which can range up to 70 percent of tuition.

CCCU graduates may earn up to $30,000 IN TUITION SCHOLARSHIP ANNUALLY
ON EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING | DON DEGRAAF, Ph.D.

Integrating Faith & Study Away: Becoming Bridge Builders

OUR WORLD IS DIVIDED. People draw lines and pick sides on a myriad of issues, making it harder to listen, learn, and address problems together. Some of this conflict falls upon the fault-line between those who consider themselves religious and those who do not. As recent reports (such as a Pew Research Center study last year) show, Americans are becoming less religious. The divide between religious and irreligious Americans is growing and shaping our national and local politics and contributing to a more fractured America. As a result, the challenge for higher education as a whole and especially for Christian higher education institutions is to find ways to prepare students to reach across lines of difference, build community, and offer hope and healing to a fractured and hurting world.

Within this context and challenge, over the last few years, GlobalEd programs at the CCCU have worked to focus more on helping students become those bridge builders by assisting in the development of the knowledge, skills, and virtues needed to reach across differences, learning to listen, finding common ground, and working to find ways to work together where possible. The challenge of this work is ensuring that our programs are grounded deeply in the Christian faith in such ways that they equip students to navigate the chaos of this world with timeless biblical truths. What does this mean practically in each of our programs?

The Middle East Studies Program (MESP) provides a unique opportunity for students to engage in interfaith dialogue as they interact with Muslims, Jews, and others as they explore the history, culture, and religions of the Middle East. As one recent participant shared, “My MESP semester redefined my own faith, taught me so much about other faiths, and prepared me to better interact with other cultures.” (Two alumni from the program recently had a conversation about their shared experiences attending the program a decade apart — check out “Sharing Global Perspectives: The Lasting Impact of the Middle East Program” on page 42.) Staff at the American Studies Program (ASP) challenge students to lean into polarizing issues and equip them to have constructive conversations across differences that are rooted in intellectual humility, gratitude, respect, and a concern for biblical justice. Classes encourage students to be a renewing presence within a pluralistic public square. In addition, students are placed in a wide range of internships, many with faith-based institutions, where they work to put these principles into practice; recent examples include Redeeming Babel, the Center for Public Justice, Braver Angels, and the Trinity Forum. In describing the ASP experience, a recent student shared, “My ASP experience challenged me in ways that prompted my growth, exposed me to a variety of perspectives, and provided me with support and resources to navigate Washington, D.C.”

At the Scholarship and Christianity in Oxford (SCIO) program, faith integration is focused on research, helping students see the need that academe has for Christian scholarship that provides both academic excellence and a strong faith perspective. Students often acknowledge this growth as they come to see themselves as emerging Christian scholars who are needed and who can make contributions in all types of higher education institutions, including Oxford. As one recent participant reflected, “I feel that I know myself better and have a stronger sense of what I am capable of within and outside of an academic setting. I have developed new habits and mindsets I will take with me into my university and life beyond it.”

As always, we appreciate your willingness to partner with us to provide these types of transformative experiences for students throughout the CCCU.

DON DEGRAAF Ph.D is the CCCU’s senior director of educational programs.
Research-Led Integration Thickens the Conversation

LATELY, I’VE BEEN CONSIDERING the ways a focus on research might expand and enrich our efforts to integrate faith and learning. As scholars and leaders, we see a multitude of examples among our students demonstrating the truism that the message received is not always the message sent or intended. Expanding and emphasizing our focus on academic research with students can help us better send the message and incite a faith-integrated approach.

Among other things the historian might give careful thought to by sin and uncertainty, allows for freedom and individual will, the contexts in which they work (such as environment, geography, or worldviews), and the like. While space does not provide a view of integration of faith and learning that is honest, has lasting value, and is more readily able to sustain the challenges that a thin understanding rarely weathers. Participating in research is one of the antidotes to oversimplification. In committing to the work of integration, we should be looking to expand our focus on and access to research opportunities for our students to more fully provide the tools to properly receive the message the faculty are sending and realize our goal of the integration of faith and learning.

Meanwhile, the study of history requires one to interpret chaos, confusion, multiple causes, and massive uncertainties. Consider the impossibility of answering contra-positives such as: What might have happened differently had Chamberlain agreed with Churchill about Hitler and the Nazis during the negotiations in Munich? Answer: we do not know! This does not suggest that God is not sovereign or is not involved in human history; instead, it reminds us that all the forms of causation in a particular historical event are exceedingly difficult to determine and that we do not have direct access to the mind and actions of God in any given historical moment. Even worse, we trivialize both God and the subject studied by defining God as merely another subject and cause. No, the historian’s challenge is to discuss the God of history without wrongly encumbering God with our history.

So what does the active life of research offer to this problem, whatever the discipline? When an education is oriented around the truism that the message received is not always the message sent or intended, knowledge can be held with greater commitment (even if with some degree of provisionality) knowing that she does not have the last word on the subject and that the particular item under her scrutiny is the beginning of an endeavor, not its end.

The craft of research thickens formation and undergirds a view of integration of faith and learning that is honest, has lasting value, and is more readily able to sustain the challenges that a thin understanding rarely weathers.

STANLEY P. ROSENBERG Ph.D is the CCCU’s Vice President for research and scholarship and the executive director of SCIO: Scholarship & Christianity in Oxford, the CCCU’s U.K. subsidiary.
SOCIAL SCIENCE DEGREES AT CCCU INSTITUTIONS

CHANGE IN SOCIAL SCIENCES AT CCCU INSTITUTIONS

The charts below show the changing numbers of degrees awarded in the social sciences over the last decade (left) and of degrees in all categories broadly (right).

2009-10 BACHELOR DEGREES AWARDED

- Social Sciences, General (295 | 142)
- Economics (168 | 242)
- International Relations and National Security (112 | 101)
- Psychology (2,783 | 3,590)
- Sociology (512 | 368)
- Criminology (33 | 102)

2019-20 BACHELOR DEGREES AWARDED

- Social Sciences, General (295 | 142)
- Economics (168 | 242)
- International Relations and National Security (112 | 101)
- Psychology (2,783 | 3,590)
- Sociology (512 | 368)
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PERCENTAGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE DEGREES OUT OF ALL DEGREES AWARDED AT CCCU INSTITUTIONS 2009-10 9.2% 2019-20 10.1%

DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL SCIENCE DEGREES AWARDED BY CATEGORY

Just as the overall number of social science degrees has shifted over the last decade, so too has the distribution of the particular majors students have completed (Specific numbers for each degree are given in the parentheses, first from 2009-10 and then from 2019-20.).

2009-10

- Economics (168 | 242)
- International Relations and National Security (112 | 101)
- Psychology (2,783 | 3,590)
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- Social Sciences, General (295 | 142)

2019-20

- Economics (168 | 242)
- International Relations and National Security (112 | 101)
- Psychology (2,783 | 3,590)
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PERCENTAGE OF CHANGE IN NUMBER OF DEGREES AWARDED BY CATEGORY

Given the overall changes in social science degrees awarded over the last 10 years, as well as the changes in the social science majors students are pursuing, this graph highlights the percentage of change in each major from 2009-10 to 2019-20. (Specific numbers for each degree are given in the parentheses, first from 2009-10 and then from 2019-20.)

- Economics (44%)
- Psychology (29%)
- International Relations and National Security (-10%)
- Political Science and Government (-15%)
- Sociology (-28%)
- Social Sciences, General (-52%)

The data in this report was compiled using a list of 120 CCCU Governing Member and Collaborative Partner institutions as of September 2021. More comprehensive reports with information on campus diversity and STEM are available at www.scie-uk.org/research/supporting-stem. Information on the state of STEM programs at CCCU institutions is available at https://www.cccu.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/21_Fall-Advance_Research_p37-1.pdf. For a complete list of the CCCU’s research reports and data, visit https://www.cccu.org/programs-services/research/.

Compiled by Jeff Clawson, Ph.D., Pete Jordan, Ph.D., and Stanley P. Rosenbloom, Ph.D. All data is from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).
A Conversation
with
Esau McCaulley,
Todd Ream,
Derek Schuurman,
and Andrea Scott

Defining the Integration of Faith and Learning

Exploring what the foundation of Christian higher education looks like in the current context.
The cornerstone of Christian higher education is the commitment to the practice of infusing the higher education learning experience with the theology, doctrines, and practices of the orthodox Christian faith - in simpler terms, the integration of faith and learning.

What, exactly, does this union of faith and education look like on a Christian college campus? In the wake of the trends of the last few decades and especially the disruption caused by the pandemic, what does faith-integrated learning look like in our current context?

Morgan Feddes Satre, the managing editor for Advance, brought together several scholars — practitioners who come from a broad spectrum of professional backgrounds and who serve at several CCCU institutions across the U.S. for a conversation on these questions. The full conversation (including an additional question) is available on the CCCU’s YouTube channel; this version has been edited for length and clarity.

Esaù McCaulley is associate professor of New Testament at Wheaton College (Wheaton, IL). He’s the author of several books, including the forthcoming How Far to the Promised Land: One Black Family’s Story of Hope and Survival in the American South (Convergent Books, September 2023).

Todd Ream serves at Indiana Wesleyan University (Marion, IN) as a professor of humanities, as the executive director of faculty research and scholarship, and as senior fellow for public engagement on the CCCU’s YouTube channel; this version has been edited for length and clarity.

Andrea Scott is often encountered a similar frustration in the discipline of business — because [there’s an idea, “Of course God is nowhere in business.” But that is not how my Bible reads. So when I thought about this question, I went back to the Westminster Catechism, where it says, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and worship him forever.” To me, that permeates the worldview, the perspective that I take to anything that I’m preparing for my students. I love what you said, Esaù, about being under examination [by the discipline]. What permeates my thinking is the end purpose — my end purpose to glorify God and enjoy him forever. And that colors how I view anything that I read, that I digest. That’s the way that I’ve tried to frame it for myself and whenever possible for students.

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Todd Ream: As a parent of one college student and a second who will start this fall, both at CCCU schools, I’ll take this question from the perspective of how to communicate with parents. ... What I enjoy when I talk with parents is that the integration of faith and learning is about the fact that I live first and foremost with the responsibility of trying to understand God’s story in the largest possible sense. I’m not going to be able to do that in full likely this side of eternity, but that is my first commitment to you all as parents. And in order to do that well, I have to take the responsibility of getting to know your son or daughter as a whole person. And no offense to my friends who teach at state universities, but students are not simply minds in a classroom or potential citizens. Those are characteristics of students that come into the classroom — and I do have friends at state universities who care about them more than just in those ways but we, by virtue of how we see students, see them as whole people. ... My colleagues will occasionally say that your discipline, first and foremost, is an end — it’s not. It’s a means to shape certain virtues. It’s a means to address certain vices, but it’s a means. And we do hope that in those disciplines, students go on to flourish professionally as a result of what we teach them. But if those characteristics are not there, then we’re not going to be able to help students live in the largest possible story, and in the end, that’s our first commitment.

The other thing that I try to say to them is that in biblical studies, while we’re studying the material, the material is also studying us. Students are engaging in an academic discipline that is asking you at every page the existential questions: Who am I? What does it mean to be human? What is the good life? All of these questions come up in biblical studies, and that’s part of what it means to do faith and learning on my side.

Derek Schuurman: I’ll add that I chafe a little bit at the phrase “integration of faith and learning,” in part because there are always hidden assumptions and presuppositions in every single discipline in every single classroom. And so this idea that you have to take some religious content and somehow bolt it on to your course is an artificial notion. Even in secular settings where people have this sort of idea that it’s completely neutral, I think they’re wrong. Like Esaù said, there are ideas about what does it mean to be human? What’s wrong with the world? What’s the remedy?

These things are always floating below the surface, often implic- it. In fact, looking back to my undergraduate education in a large secular school, it’s only now that I’m able to see that while none of these questions were answered explicitly, it was implicit throughout the curriculum. There was a certain idea about what flourishing was and how to achieve that. In engineering, there was this technologi- cal worldview that the world is a machine that can be manipulated and optimized. So integrating faith and learning isn’t something that you arti- ficially have to do. It’s always there. The neat thing about a Chris- tian college is that we can be very explicit about the biblical story animating every single thing in our discipline, including computer science and engineering topics where people think, “Oh, isn’t that just cold, hard math?” Well, no — technology’s not neutral, and faith has a lot to say about how we use these tools.

Morgan Feddes Satre: I want to startby asking how each of you would describe what “the integration of faith and learning” looks like in your classroom or on your campus. How would you describe what this is to students or to their parents?

Esaù McCaulley: It’s a little bit tricky for me because I actually teach Bible, and so the integration of faith and learning takes on a different vibe. I know when I talk to my colleagues in math and science and other places, they’re struggling — “should I do a devotional, or should I try to tie some theological concept to what we’re studying?” For me, my content is all biblical studies. So what I’m doing is showing that learning is actually related to faith, [whereas] everyone else is asking, “How does faith come into learning?” As a Bible scholar, I try to teach my students that biblical studies is an academic discipline — there are certain questions [we’re exploring], and we’re not in simply an extended devotional when we’re doing Bible and theology classes.

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“The I think it’s a blessed opportunity in a number of ways to be stewards of a hopeful and expansive story with our students”
Let’s discuss the changes in our incoming student population — not so much the demographic changes, though those are important — but the growing awareness that there’s a lack of familiarity of the basic tenets of Christian doctrine and theology as the American culture continues to secularize. Should faculty and administrators be rethinking the approach to the integration of faith and learning in light of this transition? And if so, how? 

Ream: I think it’s always good to be returning to this question each year, if for no other reason than we have a new class of newly minted colleagues coming into the institution. … Thinking about that logic of the nature of the story and the expansive nature of God’s story, I think in this recent period in time — and it was coming before the pandemic, but the pandemic really accelerated this — we’ve become very fearful people. We are fearful people in part because our understanding of the Gospel has become cramped, self-referential, and defensive. I think that’s what we need to check right now and what we need to be looking at when we speak with one another. We have a faculty meeting tomorrow what will be the nature of our dialogue when we’re sharing with one another? Will it reflect those qualities of a Gospel that’s cramped, self-referential, and defensive? Or will it reflect qualities of hope and the redemptive power of God’s grace in all that we are called to do and all that are fearful people. We have a faculty meeting tomorrow what will be the nature of our dialogue when we’re sharing with one another? Will it reflect those qualities of a Gospel that’s cramped, self-referential, and defensive? Or will it reflect qualities of hope and the redemptive power of God’s grace in all that we are called to do and all that are fearful people.

Those are the things that we need to be asking ourselves. I’m fortunate to work with colleagues who are prayerfully strain- ing into what a hopeful posture is, but our students are acutely aware of that [sense of fear]. So if we are selling them nothing more than what to be afraid of and who’s to blame for it, then we’ve got bigger problems than we ever think we do right now. Culturally, we have the opportunity — and I think it’s a blessed opportunity in a number of ways — to be stewards of a hopeful story and an expansive story with our students. McCaulley: My hope would be that if we understand that we’re coming into a less biblically literate age, CCCU schools would be places where there’s more to be taught biblical and theological education. I worry sometimes that market forces are causing us to sell everything except for the part that makes us unique, which is the Christian heritage. So my wish is that we would make space in the curriculum to make sure we give people the opportunity to be really formed and shaped, and that we would also invest in that real development for our faculty — because they’re also coming with the lack and the same potential opportunity for formation. 

All ideas have consequences. A couple of decades ago, graduate theological education began to remove Greek and Hebrew and reduce other requirements. Market forces drove them to do that, which means you have less well-formed pastors, which then filters all the way down into churches, which filters all the way down into our students. So each time we make a market compromise for the sake of holding a share, those ideas always have consequences. And if we are going to say that we value these things, that needs to be reflected in how we train our faculty and how we train our students.

And the second thing that I will say is that if we’re going to be a Christian institution, we should make Jesus central. Sometimes I worry that in place of a clear conviction about the person and work of Jesus, we are tempted to convert our prospective par- ents that we will give a certain ideological formation instead of a spiritual formation. I would pray and hope that we would say, “We want your students to be more deeply in love with God and his word and historic teachings of the church, even though we might be diffuse in some of our political leanings.” But I worry that in place of, “you can go here and get a good dose of scripture and theology and church history and spiritual formation and ethics,” we’re saying, “Come here and you’ll get complete ideolo- gical conformity.” And that’s just simply not what the church is. And so I would hope — this will sound overly superficial — that Christian schools would stay Christian.

Scott: I really appreciate both of those responses, and keeps coming to me is the role of discipleship. I think we have walked away from that a bit. Jesus calls us to make disciples. So often we think about that primarily as evangelism, but I think it’s bigger than that. I know that God has called us into discipleship via serving others, and that is part of the burden. When you talk about spiritual formation, we need to have fewer assumptions about what people know before we start questioning what they believe. So there is a call for discipleship, to teach, to coach, and hold accountable — it is both exciting and a little surprising the extent to which we need to walk alongside colleagues and stu- dents — that puts an obligation on [campus] leadership to be discipled by the Lord Jesus daily in order to be in a position to pour into students, staff, and faculty.

Schuurman: I would add that the fact that there’s declin- ing the logical fluency in our students is also an opportunity to knock their socks off with this sort of comprehensive Christian worldview. There’s this phrase that I love from Gordon Spynnman, a former theology professor (at Calvin) who said, “Nothing mat- ters but the kingdom. But because of the kingdom, everything matters.” This cosmic scope of redemption is really exciting. If students come in thinking, well, Christian education means attend- ing chapel and not drinking in the dorms, that’s a very nar- row, not very exciting view of what faith is. But if right from the beginning you could knock their socks off with this cosmic view of the Gospel’s implications for all of life — I’ve seen students light up.

I would echo, too, the need for faculty mentoring and train- ing. I mean, realistically, all of our faculty, perhaps with the exception of theology faculty, are in secular higher education getting their Ph.Ds. They’re basically catechized for seven years in the worldview thinking of their particular discipline, and they get their Ph.D. by being able to articulate the paradigm of their discipline in an academic way. Then you bring them into your Christian college, and they really need to be challenged and equipped to question the hidden assumptions in their dis- cipline, the philosophical presuppositions that they’ve been trained in and mentored in for six or seven years, and sift them through this comprehensive Christian worldview. Faculty real- ly are at the heart of that mission of this comprehensive view. And in order for them to articulate that to students, we need to spend a lot of effort and resources on equipping our faculty.

Ream: That’s exactly what I thought when Eswa said that he hoped that the Christian college would stay Christian. We live in an era where financial margins need to be watched quite care- fully in any number of ways. As a result, things that tend to be perceived as proactive are being cut, and faculty development and formation tends to be one of those things — it’s perceived as proactive. So we’re seeing declining investment in that at the exact same time we need to be actually increasing it in its quality and its quantity. And it needs to be lifelong in terms of one’s commitment to the academic location. I think we’ve done an adequate job of a first-year course for faculty. But how do we keep resourcing faculty in such a way that they can be models to their junior colleagues and also stay passionate and engaged over the course of their lifespan? And so one of the things that has been growing in concern for me is how we’re cutting these things at the exact same time we need to be in- creasing them.

“Blessed are those who find a good wife, which is far better than silver. She will give him good counsel and instruction. The pen of the scribe gives him excellent thinking; it is an ornament to adorn him.”

Scudder: “Will the nature of our dialogue reflect those qualities of a Gospel that’s cramped, self-referential, and defensive? Or will it reflect qualities of hope and the redemptive power of God’s grace in all that we are called to do?”

Advancenews 2023
When we think about the pandemic transitions, one of the biggest was that sudden, sometimes traumatic shift from in-person to online, and then back to in-person. As we see a growing trend toward a hybrid model, how do we keep the faith-integrated learning when we’re having increased physical distance from each other? How do we keep the humanity in our technology?

Schuurman: A residential, Christian liberal arts undergraduate experience is a many splendored thing. I teach a capstone course in Faith in Computing, and we look at digital life and at all kinds of contemporary issues and technology through a Reformed Christian lens. And one of the things I talk about is the importance of physicality. As we build all of these tools, we actually lose something. These tools are beautiful — this very meeting, we are in different parts of the country, and we’re able to do it through Teams. There are lots of blessings that come with technology in terms of making connections. But the question about what it means to be human also has to do with our physicality — the Incarnation [of Jesus] being an excellent example of the importance of physically being present. I’ve had students reflect on some of the things that came up during the pandemic, and they realize that there’s a reduction of our ability to live in community and to be able to communicate. So I think it’s been helpful for students to reflect about the limits of digital learning.

On the flip side, a lot of online education allows Christian higher education to be made accessible and obtainable to people who might otherwise not be able to move to a Christian college and live in the dorms for four years. We need a somewhat balanced approach, always understanding the importance of physical community. [The same is true] also when it comes to church. I talk to my students about online worship services, and even now in computer science, a lot of people are talking about VR and Meta and working in the virtual world. Can we actually have the Lord’s Supper in a virtual world, or is that a heretical idea? It’s a philosophically fascinating and rich conversation, especially for people who are creating these digital spaces that we’re going to be living in, but we need to give them a sensitivity to the importance of merging people into physical community, including in higher education.

Scot: I get excited about the options that the digital space has provided for learning styles. I think that was probably one of the most exciting things coming out of the manic rush to get online — we learned there were people who could experience and understand what they were learning in very different ways. They participated in class differently; they challenged other students to enter into a new way of learning. When I thought about this question, I thought about recently hearing a pastor talk about how we’re so uniquely wired with different ways to worship God - some people need nature, some music, physical activity, conversation, the list goes on and on.

In my experience, it has been truly exciting to watch how the online space has created almost a new language for people to enter into the learning space and how my “digi-church” and the bonds formed there have strengthened my own faith. Experiencing a different way of processing, engaging, et cetera, can deepen faith, deepen experience, deepen connection to the institution. What Dr. Ream was talking about before, the fear-driven response, I think we need to really back away from the fear and figure out how we can embrace more of [the change]. As believers, we have such an advantage with the Holy Spirit, we’ve got to leverage it every way we can.

McCauley: I think it’s a bit tricky. I grew up in a time before online education was normative. Most of us who have this dream of being a liberal arts educator have this visceral memory of the joy of learning in class and the influence our professors had upon us. We want to serve our students in that way. So in-person education is really important, and I still believe that. But I’ll also say that most studies show that the moment that you get flexible other means does technology, or in-person interaction, or whatever is available to us in the moment, provide us, and do we avail ourselves of those resources? I still think there’s certain blessings to in-person education, but we’ve got to take the time to ask ourselves how deep and how large is the anthropology with which we’re working when we’re interacting with students in certain spaces and in certain ways.

Ream: I would agree wholeheartedly with that. This is my 27th year teaching, so not only my student days but my first 15 years or so of teaching and administrative work were necessarily in person. …I think it’s an opportunity for us as educators, to think about what anthropological assumptions we’re bringing about students. The danger is we can flatten students’ identities greatly and [revert] back to an “information dissemination” mode if we simply see them as faces on a screen. So the question becomes, do we recognize the assumptions with which we’re working? What other means does technology, or in-person interaction, or whatever is available to us in the moment, provide us, and do we avail ourselves of those resources? I still think there’s certain blessings to in-person education, but we’ve got to take the time to ask ourselves how deep and how large is the anthropology with which we’re working when we’re interacting with students in certain spaces and in certain ways.

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Faithful Academic Freedom

An academic community devoted to faith-integrated learning can also pursue academic freedom.

AN INTERVIEW WITH PHILIP GRAHAM RYKEN AND GORDON T. SMITH

INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION are conducted for the common good and not to further the interest of either the individual teacher or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition,” states the opening of the “Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenures,” published in 1940 by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). Endorsed by more than 250 national scholarly and educational associations, this is key to understanding how higher education traditionally regarded the importance of academic freedom — the freedom to think and investigate within one’s subject without interference — in fostering the search for truth and advancing the common good of society.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY LIZZIE SWOBODA

“Kanahoma’s dedication to listening deeply is what sets them apart in higher ed marketing. They spent hours getting to know the faculty, staff, students, alumni, donors, Regents, and Trustees of Concordia University Irvine. This made all the difference, as they were able to take insider language and turn it outward in a translated form that could be heard more clearly, boldly, and widely by this generation. And we could not be more pleased!”

Michael A. Thomas, Ph.D.
President, Concordia University Irvine

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We do engage the world and the questions that emerge from outside of our immediate playing field. Doing so is not a violation of our statement of faith but a recognition that our faith is found and expressed within a broader intellectual world.

Lizzie Swoboda: Could you share with us traditional notions of academic freedom and why it is important to higher education?

Philip Ryken: Traditionally, academic freedom was designed to protect a faculty member’s ability to teach, do research, and explore the world of ideas without a lot of preconceived notions about what truths they would discover or institutional control over what the outcomes of that research would be. Galileo provides helpful historical background on this idea. In his culture, Galileo did not have the freedom to say that the Earth was not the center of the universe. There was a constraint on truth, because there was a limit on the freedom of exploration of the world and of truth. Academic freedom works to keep that from happening today.

In the popular understanding, people think of academic freedom as a faculty member’s ability to say whatever they want to say. That’s actually not what academic freedom means; it is freedom specifically in the areas of teaching and research and expertise. It is a confined freedom. It is also important to add that it is not just faculty members that need the freedom to explore ideas, it is also students and institutions within higher education.

CCCU governing members require a statement of faith from their faculty members. Can you describe how the statement of faith interacts with academic freedom?

Gordon Smith: I suggest two perspectives. First, think of the statement of faith as the boundaries of a soccer pitch: you can play within the pitch to your heart’s content — and battle for the ball and engage the back-and-forth of an intense soccer match with alacrity and skill. But out-of-bounds is out-of-bounds. And so we have freedom within those boundaries, but we are not free to play outside of them.

And yet, second, part of the vitality of a CCCU school is precisely this: it is a safe place to ask the hard questions [ones] that not so much challenge these boundaries as explore what those boundaries mean. We recognize that the game of soccer does include times when we step off the pitch and ask what is that we are doing and why the coach actually stands outside of the playing field but is a full actor in the game. I may be press-
Having said that, faculty need to respect the complexity of the issues and encourage students to think for themselves. What needs to happen in the classroom, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity affirming that this is what needs to happen in a university, it balked and screamed without any real appreciation of the gravity aff
Decreasing awareness of Christianity means CCCU institutions may need to rethink their approach to faith and discipleship across campus.

JOY MOSLEY AND GENTRY SUTTON

STRATEGIC DISCIPLESHIP
More and more CCCU member institutions are facing an issue that has become increasingly apparent in the last few decades. Students are arriving at our institutions with less and less knowledge about the Bible and basic Christian beliefs. The problem is not a new one, for Christian college and university professors have lamented students’ biblical literacy levels for years. Yet many faculty members would argue that the problem seems to be getting worse.

“As our culture has continued to shift, I have noticed that few of my unchurched students have any exposure to the Bible,” says Roy Millhouse, associate professor of biblical studies at Sterling College (Sterling, KS). “Unfortunately, I increasingly see something similar for those who grew up in the church.”

Robert Herron, professor of religion and ethics at Regent University (Virginia Beach, VA), shared a similar assessment. “When it comes to discussing the Bible with today’s students, I definitely have to start in a different place and with different assumptions than I did when I began my career,” he says. “In fact, general understanding about the very nature of Scripture is one thing that has changed over the years.”

In their 2019 book Faithful for Exiles, David Kinnaman and Mark Matlock share their research about young Christians who are “re-silient” in their faith compared to young people who were previously in the church but have drifted from faith commitments. Their research makes clear what we all know: What they call “Digital Babylon” is a monster of an obstacle to biblical literacy among students in their spheres of influence for two to five years and, consequently, have an opportunity to significantly reduce the negative impact in the lives of their students, they do offer clear delineation of those behaviors that are not compatible for Christian living.

Given both the cultural need for graduates steeped in Christian worldview training and the challenge that Digital Babylon poses to the faith commitments of young people, the issue of discipleship in our institutions is of critical importance.

Exposure vs. Discipleship

It is important to define discipleship in the context of Christian higher education, and a term of contrast may be helpful. In its recent “Moral Compass Summons,” the CCCU Moral Compass Taskforce demonstrates a succinct understanding of the cultural importance of Christian higher education:

“A Christian education has the dual focus of forming students to be faithful citizens of a Kingdom whose builder and maker is God, while also teaching them to be constructive and responsible members of the communities where they live and work. It seeks objective knowledge, which is essential in the quest for truth. An education that promotes faith and learning is a bulwark against baseless assertions, dark fantasies unsubstantiated by evidence, and destructive falsehoods that imperil our safety and stability. The temptation to fall from uncertain truth to certain untruth is a constant in human experience. [Christian] education is an indispensable means for resisting this temptation.”

Exposing students to the Bible and its content should be a cornerstone of any degree program. This exposure can be integrated throughout each discipline but mainly relevant to disciplines like the social sciences, humanities, and liberal arts. For students majoring in fields like the social sciences, humanities, and liberal arts, exposure to the Bible is essential to making a biblical integration. For students considering majors or professions in the education industry, it can be hard to know where to focus your efforts. But you don’t have to go it alone.

Start with How You Hire

One way for a campus to move toward discipleship is to be intentional about missions in its hiring practices. Institutions operate in different denominational contexts, locations, and historic missions, but our suggestion is to prioritize hiring within specific institutional context. We both have connections with

With all of the changes and challenges in the higher education industry, it can be hard to know where to focus your efforts. But you don’t have to go it alone. With over 50 years of experience serving higher education institutions, CapinCrouse provides you with the business insight and strategic solutions you need to manage today’s complex challenges and fulfill your institution’s mission.

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Empowering Your Mission

With all of the changes and challenges in the higher education industry, it can be hard to know where to focus your efforts. But you don’t have to go it alone.
Warner University (Lake Wales, FL), and so we will share some of the insights and practices from our work at Warner as examples to consider and adapt as needed in various institutional contexts. When it comes to hiring considerations, Jan Craigmiles, Warner’s vice president for HR and organizational effectiveness, told us:

Hiring the right employees is crucial to the mission success of Warner University. All employees, no matter their position, interact with our students and may be called upon to evangelize and disciple them both in formal and informal settings. As a part of our hiring process, we talk to applicants about their spiritual journey. New hires are also required to sign a statement affirming their commitment to the Warner Statement of Faith. Our faculty also reaffirm this commitment annually as a part of their academic contract.

As the provost at Warner, I (Gentry) have found that having a clear Statement of Faith that is front and center in the hiring process makes hiring for discipleship much easier. Warner’s Statement of Faith is boldly orthodox for the times, and that boldness is invaluable as I interact with applicants. We ask candidates to respond to our Statement in their application materials, and when interviewing, I review every paragraph of our Statement, one by one. I frequently see four results:

1. Candidates will avoid the cultural issues about which Warner has decided to be bold;
2. They will express disagreement with our Statement;
3. They will say they agree with certain parts of our Statement but do so reluctantly; or
4. They will agree enthusiastically, expressing gratitude that an institution of higher education has actually decided to stand on biblical truth and face in faith and obedience the possibility of public scrutiny for doing so.

Provided they have the right academic qualifications and experience, the candidates in the latter category rise to the top of our applicant pool. Here, the support and active engagement of the Board of Trustees is also crucial. A board is usually responsible for the mission fidelity and long-term sustainability of an institution. Trustees should thus play a vital and active role in discipleship, even if their campus interactions are limited. “At Warner University our board is fully committed to our mission,” Craigmiles says. “In addition to annual reaffirming their commitment to our statement of faith, our board members often ask to hear stories of student spiritual growth. Our faculty and staff play an integral role in many of these stories as they lead and guide our students spiritually.

Knowing that our students are discipled by our faculty and staff gives the board confidence that we are living out the core values and mission of the university.”

Discipleship goes beyond evangelism. The discipleship process is more than teaching people the right knowledge about God. Discipleship is tied to the curriculum.

Connecting the Programming and Expectations

Intentional discipleship goes beyond hiring and trustee involvement though. It is also important to ensure that evaluation practices complement discipleship efforts and that discipleship is tied to the curriculum.

Many institutions have, in the last few years, reduced the required number of Bible and Christian worldview hours in their core curricula. But with the power that Digital Babylon has over our students, it seems that now is the time to be adding more Bible requirements, not removing them. I (Gentry) do my best to ensure that discipleship drives everything we do on the academic side of the house at Warner, and that’s why Warner has added more Bible requirements to our curricula in recent years. Additionally, we are intentional at Warner about addressing the various elements of our Statement of Faith in our programming and expectations:

- We are intentional about having and assessing program-level objectives related to faith in the various academic disciplines.
- We have created a strong connection between faith integration and faculty review and promotion.
- We report to our trustees about how we are adhering to our biblical commitments in the hiring process.
- We discuss faith integration at almost all faculty workshops.
- We are intentional about working with athletic coaches and support personnel in helping students grow in Christ. But discipleship is owned by the whole campus at Warner. Everyone is expected to model being a Christ-follower, and staff play an integral role in discipling students. As much as possible, we offer outside-of-the-classroom activities that are co-curricular, not extra-curricular. Athletic coaches are required to submit discipleship plans, and virtually all student life and residence life activities are mission-driven. The three guiding principles of student life are hospitality, grace, and accountability. The hope and goal are for all students to experience the welcome of Christ, to feel accepted as image-bearers, and to be fully who God is calling them to be. We would be remiss to not point out that budgets must also support discipleship. As Warner president David Hoag puts it, “If an institution wants to disciple their students, they need to invest in discipling those who will be discipling students.” Budgets need to allow for investing in faculty and staff and in programming and other activities that model discipleship. As budgets are stretched thin, it can be easy to cut dollars that do not seem as directly related to instruction and other necessities—but discipleship must be considered a necessity.

We want to encourage campus leaders to prioritize Jesus’ command to go and make disciples. The historical exposure model seems all-suited for today’s students and the opportunities that are before us. A discipleship approach to higher education can and will impact our students and thereby our communities, but it must be characterized by intentionalism from one end of campus to the other.

JOY MOSLEY, J.D., M.B.A
Associate Vice President for Government & Strategic Relations, CCCU

GENTRY SUTTON, D.ED.Min.
Vice President of Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer, Warner University (FL)
As the advancement leader of Palm Beach Atlantic University, I found resources and training available through The Fund Raising School to be invaluable to me and my team. We often shared the learning with deans, chancellors and other top administrators need to be fully engaged for a fundraising campaign to enjoy success.

— Vicki Pugh

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— Vicki Pugh

THE FATE OF THE RELIGIOUS UNIVERSITY AND WHY IT MATTERS

BY EBOO PATEL
he light went on for me when Elder Clark Gilbert, a senior leader in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, with special responsibility for higher education, said this:

“I grew up in Scottsdale, Arizona as a designated driver, shuffling my drunk friends around town every weekend and constantly feeling like the odd man out. I never felt at home until I stepped foot onto the campus of Brigham Young University and thought to myself: finally, a place where I fit, where my beliefs are not only respected, but where my religious identity can actually be strengthened for a season before returning to a world where it would continue to be challenged.”

The statement struck me because it’s virtually the same story I hear from Black men who went to Morehouse and Black women who went to Spelman. It’s a version of the following: I grew up as an outsider in a majority culture that didn’t understand me. So much of what I did put me at risk. And I didn’t even know why. That is precisely what these institutions and networks are doing. We should see them for what they are — an American treasure.

Two things struck me about the gathering. First, these institutions were making the case for their importance based on goals that they share with progressives, rather than principles that typically code as exclusively conservative, like religious freedom or moral character. There were panels on increasing college affordability, improving graduation rates and focusing applied research in ways that benefit the poor. And the stakes could not be higher. It’s not just about money or moral character. It’s about how you should live life on Earth, but about how you are going to spend eternity.

And yet here they were making the case together: Diverse faith-based colleges are assets not just for their own particular communities, but for the broader nation. We excel at what everybody in higher education is trying to improve. We have poor kids of a variety of racial (and, in some cases, religious) backgrounds at our schools, getting an education, learning real-world skills, lifting each other up, working well together and graduating. And we do this because of our faith, not in spite of it. In other words, respect our values. The secular world might not understand all of what we believe and every reason we do what we do, but can’t you see the results? The least you can do is affirm that our religious identity is an asset. It is what drives our commitment and results in our excellence.

I am an interested party. I was a keynote speaker at the event. Why? Because this is as good a demonstration of Interfaith America as I have ever seen. Our nation needs to be a place where people who disagree on matters regarding heaven can still work together on important issues here on earth. That is precisely what these institutions and networks are doing. We should see them for what they are — an American treasure.

Our nation needs to be a place where people who disagree about heaven can work together on important issues here on Earth.
SHARING GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES: 
THE LASTING IMPACT OF THE 
MIDDLE EAST STUDIES PROGRAM

Reflections on the history and impact of the 
CCCU’s Middle East Studies Program

AN INTERVIEW WITH MEAGAN DOOLEY AND ANNIE VINCENT

For 30 years, the CCCU’s Middle East Studies Program (MESP) has provided hundreds of students from Christian colleges across North America a chance to participate in a Christ-centered, academically rigorous experiential program in a unique and important context. Over the decades, MESP’s goal has remained the same: to help students listen, learn, and grow in understanding and loving Middle Eastern neighbors both inside and outside the classroom.

Since its founding in 1993, the program has been housed in several locations, first in Cairo, Egypt, then in Jerusalem, Israel, before moving to its current location in Amman, Jordan, in 2014. Hundreds of CCCU students from across the academic spectrum of majors have experienced the program and come home forever changed.

To capture a glimpse of how MESP has impacted students’ career and faith journeys, the CCCU orchestrated an opportunity for two alumni to share with each other how MESP has impacted them: Meagan Dooley, a graduate from Seattle Pacific University who attended the program in Spring 2013 when it was based in Jerusalem, and Annie Vincent, a graduate of Cairn University who attended the program in Spring 2019 in Amman.

As a transfer student who was having a hard time finding community and also wanting to find an opportunity to put her Arabic studies into practice, Dooley was intrigued by the way CCCU’s GlobalEd programs brought together students from different universities. She calls her experience at MESP “the most transformational experience of my life” and knew that she wanted to come back to the region as soon as possible. She applied for a Fulbright scholarship and was awarded one in Turkey. During her time there, she reconnect ed with MESP when a cohort traveled to Turkey; the next year, she moved to Jordan to serve as a program assistant for MESP for the 2015-16 academic year. After that, Dooley completed a master’s at Georgetown University (which included fieldwork in Jordan), and now she works for Terra Tech, a contractor for USAID, where she works on a global project that does rural land tenure reform and natural research rights in eight countries.

Vincent knew from an early age that she wanted to study and work in the Middle East and had made several visits before beginning her studies at Cairn. When she learned about MESP, she was immediately drawn to the program, and her time there cemented her desire to be in the region long-term. She currently teaches English to seventh and eighth graders in Jordan, where she says she gets to use the lessons she learned at MESP every day. “I’m working in a more challenging school environment where you come in expecting a cultural gap,” she says. “MESP helped me bridge that gap.”

What follows are some reflections Dooley and Vincent shared during their conversation with Alan Haven, the CCCU’s director of marketing. It has been edited for length and clarity.

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What follows are some reflections Dooley and Vincent shared during their conversation with Alan Haven, the CCCU’s director of marketing. It has been edited for length and clarity.
Alan Haven: What are some of the lessons learned or memories you have that stand out to you from your time at MESP?

Annie Vincent: The relational side of things is the heart of MESP. The focus is on experiential learning, where it’s not just reading a book — it’s going and seeing the places that your books talk about, or talking with people who have lived through these things and hearing about things from the source. We’re learning about Islam from Muslims — we’re not reading about it or listening to a Christian speaker talk about Islam. We’re listening to people who believe it in their own lives and practice it every day. That was eye-opening [for me]. It lowered the barriers I had in my own faith that I didn’t realize were there, barriers I had between myself and Muslims. I thought, “They’re different; they’re separate. I don’t want to let them in.” I had no idea these feelings were in me. I didn’t realize that I held these beliefs until I came here, and it felt a bit of friction. Then I discovered sweet friendships with Muslims.

For instance, once a few friends and I went to a cafe just to read and do homework. As we were about to leave for dinner, the owner and waiter invited us to share this huge plat-ter of mansaf, a traditional Jordanian meal. They insisted we sit and eat with them. They had ordered it for us. We had no idea it was coming, but then they sat with us, and talked with us, and laughed about eating with our hands because you can do that here. It was such a fun moment of realizing this culture is so sweet. That’s one of many stories people going out of their way to take care of us and have fun moments with us.

Meagan Dooley: When I was in grad school, I came to Amman for the summer, and my AC broke. It was like 102 degrees, and I had not slept because it was so hot. I went to the old part of town where the repair shops were, and I didn’t know the words for breaking air conditioning heating element in Arabic. When I finally communicated [what I needed], he said, “Oh, no. We have to fix this for you now!” He didn’t sell the parts, but he spent two hours helping me find an AC repairman who could fix the unit. I’m not sure anyone would have done that in the U.S. Here I was, a white, blonde, tall stranger man who could fix the unit. I think it’s such a beautiful illustration of the Gospel and humanity from people who are not of your faith. That those artificial boundaries we have of their way to make sure that I was cared for. I think it’s such a beautiful illustration of the Gospel and humanity from people who are not of your faith. That those artificial boundaries we have of their way to make sure that I was cared for. I think it’s such a beautiful illustration of the Gospel and humanity from people who are not of your faith. That’s so beautiful, faith-building thing.

Vincent: This was the first time that I’d been so immersed in a Muslim culture with the intention to learn from it. That was not the goal of my other trips to the region. But [at MESP] we were there to learn, and that was it. I started to question my own heart. I remember visiting the mosque and just praying to the Lord, “Whoever you are, show me,” and holding that with open hands, wanting to know the truth and see who the Lord is. Throughout the course of the semester, I really came to a firmer conviction that I believe in the God of Christianity. There were just so many things I came to believe and trust more deeply. I came to trust that we’re all believers, whether or not they continue working in the Middle East, students immersed in a cultural experience while also integrating Christian faith. How did MESP affect your faith? Is it still shaping you?

Dooley: You can ask questions, but you are not trying to prove you’re right. You are just here to learn. Having that approach to a completely different religion and worldview completely different is challenging because sometimes we want to say, “No, that’s not right.” Yet I had to slow down, think about it [Islam], and hear from people who truly believe it.

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Within my MESP community, there were people from a Nazarene tradition, Baptist, conservative evangelical, liberal evangelical, mainline denominations. We were questioning and pushing each other on what we believed, and then we were interacting with our Jewish, Muslim, and Orthodox Palestinian counterparts, and they are pushing us to think about all the things we believed. That’s critical for having a strong faith in a multicultural world.

How do you think MESP can help prepare today’s college students for specific careers?

Dooley: MESP has been utterly transformational for most students, whether or not they continue working in the Middle East, international relations, missions, or other “traditional” MESP paths. We had a pre-med student on my semester. We had a math major. We had some in international relations, communications, and religion. Of course, not everybody has taken my path to go back to the region. I work in international development, I travel regularly and work with different cultures, but I know my friends who are now math teachers and doctors from my program would still
Hold things loosely. Hold your ideas, your thoughts, opinions, everything loosely, especially plans. It can be intimidating to walk into a place that is completely foreign, that is going to challenge you in a lot of different ways, but it’s so good. I think the best things in life are going to be intimidating to begin with. At the beginning of the program especially, it’s easy to look at what’s planned for the semester and wonder how we’ll do all the reading, lectures, and processing. It can look like a daunting semester, especially when you consider you’re in another culture, far from friends and family in America. Trust that this is worth it, that there is support in place, that you can always phone home. It’s such a good program. It will be hard, but it will be so good.

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Vincent: One of my favorite things right now is going to these alumni nights and getting to talk with the students who are currently in the program. I also wanted to mention the service projects, where once a week, you’re given a placement. My placement was actually here in Zarqa, an hour outside of Amman. This familiarity is part of why I was willing to come to this school. My placement was not actually at this particular school. It was at a different center in the same city. So when my company asked me about starting a partnership with this particular school in Zarqa, I said, “I know Zarqa. Sign me up.” Service projects can look different whether it’s teaching English, which mine was. Some are more tech-oriented or business-oriented, but it’s another way that you can engage with the community with an interest you already have.

Dooley: Seriously consider a non-traditional opportunity like a MESP in Amman. You are going to learn so much more outside the classroom than you do in, and you are going to enter into a culture, a faith tradition, and a history that’s rich and complex that is not well-captured on the written page. You’ll be in a relational community, a small cohort with a director and co-director who are invested in students academic, spiritual, and emotional wellbeing. You get to travel around the region with this cohort that becomes a family, and you get to take those insights back to your own classroom discussions. It completely changed the trajectory of my career. I was going to go into security studies when I came to MESP but after working in the West Bank and seeing the level of poverty, limited economic opportunities, and political restrictions, I came back and switched to a concentration in development, which has led me on my career path these past 10 years. So you may get out of MESP something different than you thought when you were going in, but it will be rich and beautiful, and it will challenge you intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually.

Vincent: MESP is different because you are entering a region that is not well-represented and understood. I mean, a lot of our understanding of the Middle East is just characterized by violence, camels, and desert. So why wouldn’t you want to dig deeper? It teaches you how to ask the right questions about yourself, your beliefs, the people around you, the world around you in a way that I think that you would miss otherwise.

Dooley: And for anybody who’s interested in peace and conflict studies or security, MESP is a huge hands-on experiential learning opportunity in a complicated region, which is profoundly unique for an undergraduate college experience.
Thoughts on the Asbury Awakening
BY TIMOTHY TENNENT

I have been reticent to write blogs or make a lot of public statements about this outpouring at Asbury because it is always better to stand in awe of something than to talk about something. I have been [to the outpouring] every day and night, and it is like stepping into a flowing spiritual river. You sense the presence and power of God working in people’s lives. Since last Wednesday when the outpouring began, I have reflected many times on Jesus’ statement about the Spirit when he said, “The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain how people are born of the Spirit.” This is not a time to “manage” this or to try to “shape” it. This is the time to simply receive from God’s hand.

Someday, we will look back on these days and thank God that he visited us in ways we will talk about for years to come. Despite the endless coverage in social media and the regular media calling this a revival, I think it is wise to see this, at the current phase, as an awakening. Only if we see lasting transformation that shakes the comfortable foundations of the church and truly brings us all to a new and deeper place can we look back in hindsight and say, “Yes, this has been a revival.” An awakening is where God begins to stir and awaken people up from their spiritual slumber. This is definitely happening, not only in Wilmore, but as this move of God spreads to other schools and communities across the nation and even the world. There are many reports that this is what is happening. But we must keep our hearts and eyes fixed on Jesus and ask for him to complete the work he has begun so that, over time, there is a lasting transformation in the lives of those who are being touched by God. This is the reason why both the university and the seminary have not cancelled classes. It is not because we are in a “business as usual” mode. Far from it. There is talk of little else in every chapel, in every classroom, in every hallway conversation, and, I suspect, in every home and apartment in the community. The desire is to “mainstream” renewal into the very fabric of our lives so that we are transformed right where we live and work and study. We all love mountaintop experiences, but we also know that it must be lived out in all the normal rhythms of life. We have to live into this desperation for God to do what we cannot do. We have to live into transformed relationships. We have to live into new patterns of life and worship. In short, we must embrace what it means to really live as Christians in the midst of a church culture that has largely domesticated the Gospel beyond recognition. We will know that revival has truly come to us when we are truly changed to live more like him at work, at study, at worship, and at witness. … Someday, we will look back on these days and thank God that he visited us in ways we will talk about for years to come. But what we are doggedly seeking is not lasting memories, but transformed lives long after the lights go out in Hughes Auditorium or Estes Chapel or all other places that are experiencing this work of grace. In short, it is not about “this place” or “that place,” whether Wilmore or any other city. It is about Christ himself. None of us “owns” this awakening. But all of us must own in our own lives his work and his gracious beckoning to that deeper place. Come, Holy Spirit!

TIMOTHY C. TENNENT Ph.D has served as president of Asbury Theological Seminary since July 2009. He originally published this reflection on his blog on Feb. 14, 2023. It has been edited for length and is republished with permission.
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