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From the Publisher

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From the Publisher



I am writing this publisher's note the day after a federal district court ruled in favor of Harvard University in its defense of the university's practice of using race as one factor in its admissions process.

I agree with Barbara Mistick, the new president

of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, that "Harvard University's successful defense of its admissions process in federal court is a win for the entire higher education community's efforts to diversify enrollment and create opportunities for students from all sectors of our nation to achieve their dream of a college degree." Harvard's vindication also supports Lutheran higher education's commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion, which was the focus of the 2019 Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference. (Two notes for readers: First, know that NAICU is the Washington lobbying office for NECU institutions and most other church-related and private higher education. They do terrific work on your behalf every day. Second, beginning with the 2020 conference, NECU's annual summer conference will be labeled the "Vocation of Lutheran Higher Education Conference.")

A commitment to diversity sounds contemporary, but for Lutheran higher education, it is an old and foundational commitment. Its root is the claim that Christianity is open and available to all. Christianity's commitment to universalism has all-too-often sadly translated into cultural and even political imperialism. Nonetheless, the commitment remains that the gospel is to be spoken to and meant for all. The earliest Christians affirmed that all people were welcomed because, in Christ, God shows no partiality.

The Christian commitment to diversity is also reflected in our basic confessional document, the Bible. The early Church rejected attempts by some Christians to harmonize the four diverse gospel books of the New Testament into a single, biographical narrative about Jesus. The early Christians insisted that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John truly are "gospels," not biographies of Jesus, conveying four different takes on the *good news* (the meaning of "gospel") from God revealed by Jesus. Diversity in the four testimonies to the gospel, despite the resulting complexity and even contradictions contained within them, was to be honored.

This core Christian commitment to diversity means that Lutheran higher education also is committed to diversity. In our day, that commitment requires a concomitant commitment to equity and inclusion, as was demonstrated well at the Vocation Conference in 2019 and in the essays of this issue of *Intersections*.

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