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JASON MAHN

From the Outgoing Editor

I wrote my first editorial for *Intersections* in the Fall of 2011. It was titled, “From the Incoming Editor,” and it sat below some wise words of advice and gratitude from Bob Haak, whose last editorial was named (you guessed it): “From the Outgoing Editor.”

Now, more than a decade later, I can here give my own words of thanks from the perspective of an outgoing editor. I am passing the duties over to Colleen Windham-Hughes of California Lutheran University in order to devote more time to the planning of the annual Vocation of Lutheran Higher Education conference. Really, though, it is Colleen’s commitments to Lutheran higher education, her leadership and scholarly gifts, and her willingness to objectively evaluate where we have been, and then creatively imagine where we might go next, that makes this transition so timely. I’m excited to see how the journal, under Colleen’s stewardship, will play a broader and deeper role in NECU’s ongoing conversation about faith, learning, and the vocation of Lutheran higher education.

It has been edifying to contact potential contributors of *Intersections* (or more often lately, be contacted by them), consider themes that would bring diverse perspective together, and edit each issue. Working with authors and our great editorial board has meant that I now know and respect scores of colleagues spanning North America—from Texas to Saskatchewan and New York City to the Pacific Northwest.

Working with Mark Wilhelm has been life-giving. Even when currents in higher education make others anxious or cynical, Mark remains hopeful, engaged, and rightfully proud of the work that our Network is doing. We will celebrate Mark’s leadership and congratulate him on his retirement at this summer’s Vocation of Lutheran Higher Education conference. (See his publisher’s comment and page 20 for more details.)

Thank you, too, to President Steve Bahls and Provost Wendy Hilton-Morrow for allowing me to devote a portion of my work at Augustana to tasks that also benefit at least 26 other institutions. It takes foresight and deep appreciation for our institutional vocation to invest in this work when the returns on investment

are harder to quantify, but valued nonetheless. Augustana will continue to publish *Intersections* on our open-access platform, as well as print and distribute hard copies.

Most of the essays in the present issue summarize comments given by Lutheran faculty, staff, and administrators at the 2022 national gathering of the Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE). Most of our 27 NECU institutions are part of that wider network. As the authors here testify, grants and guidance from NetVUE have been instrumental in supporting their work. At the same time, Lutheran institutions—with our uniquely historical and contemporary commitments to educate for vocation—have provided noteworthy leadership within these wider networks. I think that part of the work ahead of us is to own and live into that leadership role.

I am grateful to have contributed to this work, service, and leadership, and look forward to continuing it in new and different ways. Our institution work together not only in order to educate students in order to get good paying jobs, but also so that they contribute to the flourishing of the widest of networks—local communities, our democratic country, and the whole of creation itself. You couldn’t ask for more meaningful and purposeful work.



Jason Mahn holds the Conrad Bergendoff Chair in the Humanities and is director of the Presidential Center for Faith and Learning at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois.