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Statement Upon Appointment to the College

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Augustana College

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Statement upon appointment to the college

News conference following his election to the presidency of Augustana College

Steven Bahls, President of Augustana College

I am deeply honored that the Board of Trustees has elected me as the eighth president of Augustana College. Dr. Thomas Tredway, who is retiring after 28 years, has led the college to become one of the finest liberal arts and sciences colleges in America. It humbles me to have the opportunity to build on his work. In doing so, I am reassured that I will be drawing on the expertise and commitment of the many members of the Augustana community who have dedicated their energies and often their entire careers to advancing Augustana.

Having grown up across the river in Iowa, I've long been impressed with the outstanding reputation of Augustana College. As a former University of Iowa debater, I have fond memories of squaring off against Augustana in college debate tournaments. And, as the dean of the only law school affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, I'm quite familiar with Augustana's reputation as one of the nation's finest church-related colleges.

Augustana's mission is as relevant and critical to our society today as it was when the college was founded in 1860. Students today face challenges that the college's founders could not have imagined. Issues of domestic security, changing international alliances, religious fanaticism, changing family structures, complex ethical issues raised by scientific and technological advances, attacks on the value of diversity, widespread lapses in business and professional ethics, deepening environmental concerns, limits on civil liberties and a host of other concerns call for a new generation of creative leaders.

I am convinced that tomorrow's most effective leaders will have had a broad education rooted in the liberal arts and sciences. A liberal arts education is second to none in helping students learn to think critically, express their ideas well and become creative problem solvers. Without a moral compass, however, a strong education is a waste. Augustana is committed to providing its students with an education that "develops qualities of mind, spirit and body necessary for a rewarding life of leadership and service in a diverse and changing world." Augustana does all of this within the open and empowering Lutheran traditions in higher education. My central role as the next president of Augustana College will be to facilitate the faculty and staff in enhancing the college's already strong base in a way that prepares students for a rewarding life of leadership and service.

There are many attributes of Augustana that attract me:

While many colleges seek to be all things to all people, thereby diluting their effectiveness, Augustana's strategic focus on providing top-quality liberal arts and sciences education is unwavering.

Augustana's faculty members are personally committed to their students. Students here aren't taught by the hundreds in lecture halls or through distance learning. They learn in small, interactive classes and collaborate closely with their faculty-mentors.

The college's wonderful living and learning environment facilitates student achievement. At the same time, its location in the Quad Cities enables students to continue their education off campus as they serve the broader community. It is no secret that a fine liberal arts education, with its favorable student to faculty ratio, is expensive. One of my top priorities will be increasing the resources available to the college, both in endowment and annual giving. The best liberal arts colleges have a distinct institutional identity. Over the first months of my presidency, I'll ask all constituencies of the college to work together to develop strategic priorities, including working to implement a general education requirement that responds to the ever-changing world in which we live.

There is no doubt that better learning takes place when there is diversity among students, faculty and staff. I will work diligently to increase racial, geographic and socioeconomic diversity at the college to provide a richer experience for all. I also intend to work to improve the college's national visibility and recognition.

Though much has changed since Swedish settlers founded Augustana College, its commitment to quality and to the liberal arts has not changed. The next decade will bring challenges and opportunities to our society and to the Augustana community that we can't foresee now. As we address these challenges and seize the opportunities, it will be my distinct honor to work with a community so clearly marked with a spirit of caring, cooperation and passionate involvement.



Accounting	Communication Studies	Geography	Music	Pre-Optometry
Africana Studies	Computer Science	Geology	Music Education	Pre-Pharmacy
Anthropology	Creative Writing	German Studies	Music Performance	Pre-Physical Therapy
Art	Economics	Greek	Neuroscience	Pre-Physician Assistant
Art History	Elementary Education	Graphic Design	Non-Profit Leadership	Pre-Seminary
Asian Studies	Engineering	History	Development	Pre-Veterinary Medicine
Biochemistry	Engineering Physics	International Business	Philosophy	Psychology
Biology	English (Literature)	Japanese	Physics	Religion
Business Administration	English (Writing)	Landscape Architecture	Political Science	Scandinavian Studies
Chemistry	Environmental Management	Latin	Pre-Dentistry	Secondary Education
Chinese	& Forestry	Library and Information	Pre-Law	Sociology
Classics	Environmental Studies	Science	Pre-Medicine	Sociology (Social Welfare)
Communication Sciences	Ethics	Mathematics	Pre-Music Therapy	Spanish
& Disorders	French	Multimedia Journalism	Pre-Nursing	Theatre
		& Mass Communication	Pre-Occupational Therapy	Women's & Gender Studies