

2012

## From the Publisher

Mark Wilhelm

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### Augustana Digital Commons Citation

Wilhelm, Mark (2012) "From the Publisher," *Intersections*: Vol. 2012: No. 35, Article 2.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/intersections/vol2012/iss35/2>

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# Purpose Statement

This publication is by and largely for the academic communities of the twenty-six colleges and universities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It is published by the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit of the ELCA. The publication has its home at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois, which has generously offered leadership and physical and financial support as an institutional sponsor for the publication.

The ELCA has frequently sponsored conferences for faculty and administrators that have addressed the church-college/university partnership. The ELCA has sponsored an annual Vocation of the Lutheran College Conference. The primary purpose of *Intersections* is to enhance and continue such dialogue. It will do so by:

- Lifting up the vocation of Lutheran colleges and universities
- Encouraging thoughtful dialogue about the partnership of colleges and universities with the church
- Offering a forum for concerns and interests of faculty at the intersection of faith, learning, and teaching
- Raising for debate issues about institutional missions, goals, objectives, and learning priorities
- Encouraging critical and productive discussion on our campuses of issues focal to the life of the church
- Serving as a bulletin board for communications among institutions and faculties
- Publishing papers presented at conferences sponsored by the ELCA and its institutions
- Raising the level of awareness among faculty about the Lutheran heritage and connectedness of their institutions, realizing a sense of being part of a larger family with common interests and concerns.

## From the Publisher

Leaders in ELCA higher education built in the not-too-distant past a four-legged stool, upon which we have metaphorically sat together in conversation about the mission and identity of post-secondary education in the ELCA. The legs supporting this collaborative conversation are: (1) the annual Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference for faculty and administrators; (2) the Lutheran Academy of Scholars for faculty development on the topic of Lutheran mission and identity in higher education; (3) a similar opportunity for development of senior administrators through the Thrivent Fellows program; and (4) this journal, *Intersections*, serving a medium for the circulation of essays related to the mission and identity of Lutheran higher education.

A lively conversation has resulted, successfully moving Lutheran higher education away from the fruitless, hackneyed, and wrong-headed discussion of whether “the colleges are leaving the church and the church is leaving its colleges” to reflection on the theme of education for vocation. Having made that shift, we now face the need to extend the conversation deeper into our institutions, among their constituencies, and to the rest of this church. Progress gained will have limited impact and potentially no long-term success unless the conversation is extended beyond its large but very limited audience of college and university personnel. Those outside the conversation still frame their thinking about being a college of the ELCA in the tired, old rhetoric of “is the college leaving the church/is the church leaving its colleges?” The work of a generation could easily be lost if we cannot successfully extend the conversation to the larger community. Ad hoc steps are often taken to make such a move. We must, however, build standing tactics to extend the conversation as leaders once built the tactics for a sustained internal conversation.

MARK WILHELM | Program Director for Schools, Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit, ELCA