

2009

From the Publisher

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Augustana Digital Commons Citation

Wilhelm, Mark (2009) "From the Publisher," *Intersections*: Vol. 2009: No. 30, Article 2.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/intersections/vol2009/iss30/2>

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Purpose Statement

| This publication is by and largely for the academic communities of the twenty-eight colleges and universities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It is published by the Vocation and Education 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

| The churchwide ministries of the ELCA remain vibrant. As I write this, Lutheran Disaster Relief has mobilized its effective systems to address the catastrophic effect of the earthquake in Haiti. From international relief work to support for leaders of local congregation-based ministries, ELCA churchwide ministries continue.

But it has been a difficult season. As was announced to college and university leadership last November by Stan Olson, executive director for the Vocation and Education program unit (VE), financial realities compelled the churchwide organization to implement an immediate ten-percent reduction in its budget for 2010. This followed earlier reductions taken in 2009, and further reductions may have to be taken in early 2010. In the wake of the reductions, valued colleagues within VE have had their positions eliminated and programs have been curtailed.

Among those programs is the distribution of unrestricted grants annually to colleges and universities of this church. The 2010 grant line is currently set at \$275,000 less than 2009 and the amount of the reduction might exceed \$600,000. Although it has been decades since direct, major support for college operating budgets has been the marker of being a college of the church, we in VE regret that such financial support can no longer be an aspect of our partnership with you. At the same time, other ministries in higher education will remain unabated. As Stan wrote in November:

“I want you to know that our commitment to the mission of these schools remains very strong. Staff here want to work with you as you help students explore the many aspects of their vocations. We want to be part of your discussions about the vocation of a church-related school. Our advocacy within the ELCA for your institutions will continue. We intend to continue helping gather peer groups of your key staff. In all this, we need your counsel for wise use of the human and financial resources we have.”

I will lead a conversation about our ongoing work in these arenas at the February 2010 annual meeting of ELCA college and university presidents. And, although all of us on the staff at VE will have new additional duties, Marilyn Olson and I will remain the primary contact staff for ELCA colleges and universities.

Those of you reading this issue of *Intersections* are not foreigners to dealing with these kinds of financial pressures. Indeed all of us are familiar with them in our private and institutional lives, given the impact of the Great Recession we are enduring. Despite the complications we all face, our commitments to our common mission remain strong, including our commitments to engaging the “other,” as the essays in this issue discuss.

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