



CONVENTION WORKBOOK

REPORTS AND OVERTURES 2023

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CHRIST CRUCIFIED

68TH REGULAR CONVENTION
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
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CUENet Update

The Concordia University Education Network (CUENet), a cooperative operation of the Concordia University institutions to provide online colloquy education for teachers continues its work under the umbrella of the CUS. Since the 2019 convention, many staff changes have taken place. Long-time Senior Director, the Rev. Dr. Ray Halm, was called to glory. Dr. Heather Stueve accepted a call, and two additional staff members have departed.

The presidents of the CUS institutions are currently evaluating the operation of CUENet and working to enhance the programs being offered. This is being done in light of a comprehensive review of CUENet that also transpired during the triennium.

Following is data related to CUENet's students, placements, and operations.

Total Enrolled Teacher Colloquy Students

	2019***	2020	2021	2022
Enrolled*	80	68	104	51
Completed	76	66	56	32**

*Not including non-teacher colloquy applicants in enrollment.

**I have sent 21 files to the universities for interviews, but I have not received interview assessments back yet.

*** 2019 numbers are for the whole year.

Total Operational Expense and Total Income

	FY22	FY21	FY20
Operational Expenses	\$417,227	\$487,530	\$517,707
Total Income	\$645,432	\$622,602	\$695,727
Tuition and Fees	\$395,498	\$230,242	\$286,404
Gifts and Grants	\$287,500	\$378,550	\$388,974
Interest	\$12,434	\$13,810	\$20,349

Goals for the Concordia University System in the Triennium—2023–2026

Completely dependent on the grace and mercy of the Triune God, the CUS seeks to achieve these goals in the coming triennium of the LCMS:

1. Ensure and defend the freedom of CUS colleges and universities to teach in accord with the church's confession and require ethical behavior based on that confession on the part of faculty, staff, and students through full implementation of the "Identity Statement" and its protocols in both on-campus and distance-education programs.
2. Increase the number of church work students by at least one-third through multiple efforts to highlight the rewarding and noble calling of service to Christ and His church in parochial education, public education, and international education. Simultaneously, increase the number of LCMS students by one-third.
3. Enhance the recruitment and development of LCMS faculty by at least 10 percent throughout the system in all program

areas and encourage all non-rostered faculty to participate in the colloquy program and thereby increase the number of rostered workers while promoting the training of students through the various graduate programs, especially in education and in other ministry areas.

4. Recommend to all students—whatever religious background—the Reformation truths of sola gratia, sola fidei, sola Scriptura while challenging materialism, pluralism, rationalism, and other worldviews that contradict the scriptural portrait of man and woman as the apex of God's creation and the object of His love and mercy in sending His Son, Jesus Christ, as Savior.
5. Present and promote the sanctity of life by underscoring the fact that men and women are created in the image of God and merit care and protection from conception to natural death by their very nature as His creatures.
6. Present and promote the beauty and goodness of marriage between a man and a woman as God's sacred order to be lived out in love and lifelong fidelity while also affirming the nobility and virtue of the vocation to a single life in service to God and neighbor.
7. Accent the quality of instruction in the liberal arts and professional programs as an expression of gratitude for God's gift of wisdom and knowledge in a life that is spent in service to God and our neighbor.
8. Increase communication and collaboration between the colleges and universities, especially in the areas of distance education and recruitment while reaching out to collaborate with other ministries of the church: Urban Ministry, Rural Ministry, Partners Abroad, etc.

A Special and Urgent Matter: Concordia University Texas

The CUS board regrets to inform the delegates to the 2023 Synod convention of an unprecedented action that was taken by the board majority of Concordia University Texas (CTX) though a significant minority voted against such an action on or about Nov. 8, 2022. Without the approval of the CUS board, the board majority purportedly adopted a governance model in an attempt to transform its governance into a self-governing and self-perpetuating board completely independent of the CUS and the LCMS and delivered its newly adopted governance documents to the Texas Secretary of State.

Previously, on Nov. 4, 2022, the CUS board considered CTX governance documents and was preparing a complete analysis and response to send to the Board of Regents of CTX, only to learn that the Board of Regents had acted on Nov. 8 without our approval or input. The Board of Regents proposed and purportedly approved a governing model, namely a self-perpetuating, autonomous, and completely independent board separate from the CUS and the LCMS.

In response, and acting in accord with the protocols of Matt. 18:15–17, the CUS Board of Directors' representatives orally made a presentation to the Board of Regents of CTX on Jan. 12, 2023, seeking repentance and a reversal of the actions taken by the Board of Regents. The CUS Board subsequently communicated with the Board of Regents with the sincere hope and prayer that they would reconsider and reverse their action for the sake of the church and for the sake of CTX, her faculty, staff, and students.

As of the writing of this report, the Board of Regents has not yet reversed its action.

As Synod Bylaw 1.10.1.4 reminds, “Christian conflict resolution seeks to *resolve issues in a manner pleasing to God*. Those in conflict are urged to proceed prayerfully in good faith and trust. Disputes are more likely to be resolved harmoniously if those involved in the conflict *recognize one another as redeemed children of God*,” that is, when we truly love one another as described in 1 John 4:9, 11 (KJV), “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. . . . Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”

Bylaws 1.10.1.5 and 1.10.1.6 get to the very heart of the matter, providing *wise counsel for Christians in dispute*:

Christians involved in conflict must always stand ready to ask for or extend forgiveness in accordance with Scripture. As the church endeavors to help bring about peace, truth, justice, and reconciliation, it always seeks to do so with a proper distinction between Law and Gospel, that is, *in the context of God’s judgment and mercy*. We are ever to be mindful that it is God who judges the hearts of sinful men and grants His gracious word of forgiveness to us all.

When there is repentance and reconciliation, the body of Christ rejoices in its oneness with Christ and with one another.

It is this love for each other, founded upon the love of God that is ours in Christ, that brought CUS to Austin to meet with the CTX regents and leadership. CUS’s stated goal for the meeting *was to seek repentance* and, thereby, reconciliation.

Here are some of the reasons for this call to repentance.

- CTX’s governance document changes are *not an “alignment with the Synod.”* CTX has been aligned with our Synod for nearly 100 years. Instead, the governance document revisions move CTX toward *becoming separate from and unaligned* with the Synod. Along with this, the governance documents provide *subscriptions to Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions that are not whole* in CUS’s view, much like that of so many other so-called Lutheran church bodies and educational institutions whose good intentions have ultimately lacked the depth of conviction to be able to withstand over time the pressures and even persecutions of an increasingly godless society.
- An attempt to distance the university from our Synod occurs throughout certain documents shared with the CUS Board. In particular, they omit all references to the doctrine and practice of our Synod, creating distance from the Synod. The university retains sole power for *it* to do all that is necessary or desirable to carry out *its* goals and purposes, this contrary to one of *an LCMS university’s primary duties* clearly stated in Synod Bylaw 3.10.6.1, that is, “*the defining and fulfilling of the mission of the institution within the broad assignment of the Synod.*”
- The documentation provided to the CUS Board further appears to *direct the university’s focus away from the Synod* toward: (a) LCMS entities such as congregations, schools, and organizations; (b) the Texas District; (c) the greater Austin Christian community (as a partner in the work of the church’s mission across the region); and (d) national/interna-

tional opportunities outside its local context, that seek it out for Kingdom work.

- A failure to emphasize compliance with the doctrine and practice of the LCMS is a departure from what we as a church body believe, teach, confess, and do. This increases the likelihood of mere shallow compliance with Article II of the Synod’s Constitution. If there is any phrase that captures the depth and entirety of the Synod’s confessional position, its heart and soul, it is the phrase “the Synod’s doctrine and practice,” which *includes the entire Synod Handbook and also its official doctrinal resolutions and statements*, a phrase referred to no less than 16 times throughout the *Handbook* (Articles of Incorporation II c; Const. Art. XI B 2–3; Bylaws 2.14.5 [d]; 2.14.7.8 [f]; 2.15.7.8 [f]; 2.16.7.6 [f]; 2.17.5 [d]; 3.6.6.4 [e]; 3.6.6.5 [e]; 3.10.6.4 [e]; 3.6.6.5 [e]; 3.10.6.4 [i] [9]; 4.1.5; 4.8.1 [b]; 6.2.1; 6.2.2.2 [c][1]; and 6.1.3 [f]).
- The Board of Regents is to act as an “agent of the Synod” and as “custodian of the Synod’s property” (Bylaws 1.2.1 [a] and [r]; 3.10.6.4 [i]; 3.10.6.4 [i][1]; and 3.10.6.5). And as with all officers and agencies of the Synod, they “shall be accountable to the Synod for all their actions, and any concerns regarding the decisions of such officers and agencies may be brought to the attention of the Synod in convention for appropriate action” (Bylaw 1.4.1).
- Finally, the Board of Regents acted less than two months after finally providing CUS with CTX’s completed proposal, thereby bypassing Bylaw 3.6.6.4 (i), and on Nov. 8, 2022, voted to separate from the Synod through the purported adoption of revisions to its governance documents.

For the last three Synod conventions (2013, 2016, 2019), the Synod has received overtures and resolutions that have requested that CUS schools draw closer to the Synod in doctrine and practice. All of these resolutions were adopted by more than 90 percent of the delegates at those conventions. While most CUS schools have already moved in that direction, *the purported changes in CTX’s governance documents move CTX in precisely the opposite direction through the removal of LCMS theological oversight*. While offering to “align” with the Texas District, CTX’s proposed governance documents describe an independent, self-perpetuating board with an expanded presidential authority, leaving the LCMS with little if any means to assure theological integrity.

CTX was founded in 1926 by members of the Lutheran, Texas, Wendish, immigrant community. One of their number, John Killian, was also the founder of the first Texas Lutheran Church that was a member of the LCMS. *For 96 years, Missouri Synod Lutherans have sent their children and their gifts* to constitute and result in the present campus and university operations. Those generations of Lutherans assumed that their support would further the higher educational mission of the LCMS and nurture students in the doctrine and practice of the Church. *The church is indebted to these saints and has a sacred obligation to preserve and enhance their investment*.

Beyond this ecclesial solidarity with previous generations of confessing Lutherans, CTX occupies a strategic location for the present and future witness of the LCMS. The city of Austin is at the epicenter of economic and demographic growth in the United States. CTX is the *only campus that the LCMS has in the southern portion of the United States* and provides an *irreplaceable platform for proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and sharing the full*

counsel of God in Sacred Scripture. Historically, the LCMS gave birth to CTX; presently, CTX is called to be faithful to her mother, to the church's confession, and to the church's practice.

The preceding analyses should demonstrate that any suggestion of separation from the LCMS is without fiduciary clarity and theological merit. We sincerely hope and pray that the CTX Board of Regents will even now willingly reverse its stated course and remain an important member of the CUS.

Dean O. Wenthe, *President*

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Concordia University Chicago

Steadfast in Jesus Christ as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, Concordia University Chicago (CUC) promotes academic rigor in its liberal arts and professional programs; grounds students in objective truth, integrity, and excellence; and practices faithfulness to the Confessional teachings of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, as it forms students for vocations in church, family, and the world.

- In 2019, in addition to the mission statement above, the university adopted a new vision statement: “Concordia University Chicago is a Christ-centered Lutheran university where truth, freedom, and vocation form students for lives of influence and service for the common good.”
- Dr. Russell P. Dawn was inaugurated as Concordia University Chicago’s 12th president in October 2019.
- Concordia Chicago responded to and weathered the storm brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic thanks to the grace of God and the resilience of our community. The university remained faithful to its mission and to delivering a high-quality education for all students.
- A comprehensive academic reorganization culminated during the summer of 2021, establishing two new colleges at the university: the College of Theology, Arts & Humanities and the College of Health, Science & Technology. Along with the existing Colleges of Business and Education, the two new colleges replaced and absorbed programs from the former Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Graduate Studies, and Innovation and Professional Programs.
- CUC’s strategic plan, *Focusing Our Future 2025*, is being lived out every day at the university. The plan’s four themes are: Formative Student Experience, Fiscal Agility and Strength, Partnerships for Mission and Excellence, and Vibrant Unified Community. This plan is an exciting and important step in CUC’s pursuit of its vision and positions the university for a thriving future.
- Lutheran teacher education, director of Christian education, director of parish music, the pre-seminary program, and the deaconess program form the foundation for the university’s long-standing church professional programs.
- The university president, directors of the church professional programs, and other members of the CUC community have been actively involved in supporting the Synod’s *Set Apart to Serve* church worker recruitment initiative.
- In 2020, CUC celebrated the 40th anniversary of the deaconess program, the only undergraduate deaconess studies program in the Synod.
- In 2022, CUC was blessed with a strong class of new pre-seminary students—one of the highest enrollments in years.
- CUC is proud to regularly host synodical, district, Recognized Service Organization, and other affiliated conferences such as: Theology Professor’s Conference, Northern Illinois District (NID) Convention, NID Joint Pastors Conference, NID Educators Conference, NID Educational Administrators Conference, NID Circuit Gatherings, Issues Etc. *Making the Case* Conference, Higher Things, and Lutheran Sports Association.
- In February 2023, the university hosted the Board for the International Lutheran Council, a worldwide association of established confessional Lutheran church bodies which proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of an unconditional commitment to the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and infallible Word of God, and to the Lutheran Confessions contained in the Book of Concord as the true and faithful exposition of the Word of God.
- Rev. Dr. Chad Kendall was named Associate Provost for Mission & Identity in late 2022. He will play a key role in ensuring that the university continues to live out its mission faithfully. His responsibilities include recruiting qualified, mission-minded faculty and administrators, as well as leading employee development in regard to the intersection of faith and the academic enterprise.
- In 2022, Concordia Chicago launched its Mission & Identity Program for faculty development in Lutheran distinctives and their importance in higher education.
- Campus Ministry continues to provide opportunities for students to receive God’s gifts and be a part of a rich community of faith, including:
 - Every new CUC student attends the “Faith Matters” orientation session with the university pastor, who presents the Gospel and offers an opportunity for Christian growth for all students.
 - Every CUC freshman is required to read portions of *Callings for Life* (CPH, 2020) which outlines Luther’s theology of vocation while also presenting the Gospel.
 - Daily chapel continues to embrace the long, rich history of Lutheran preaching and liturgy, maintaining excellence in sacred music with our numerous musicians and ensembles.
 - CUC’s Spiritual Life student organization remains the most active group on campus, living the Word of God, loving all people in Christ’s name, and serving their neighbors on campus, in Chicago, and to the ends of the earth.
 - CUC 4 Life, the university’s life ministry organization within Spiritual Life, promotes life ministry from conception to natural death, continually engaging the university community with opportunities for service and education.
- The Division of Theology hosted its first workshop for local preachers in June 2022.
- The Division of Theology hosted a Confessionalism Seminar in June 2023.