The Council of Colleges and Universities of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

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Members of the Council: The presidents of the fourteen colleges and universities in Covenant with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) are members of the Council that meets annually in conjunction with the Council of Independent Colleges.

Mission Statement: The Colleges and Universities of the Christian Church advocate for the 14 colleges and universities in covenant with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to all our constituents by working together on common goals that provide students with an exceptional liberal arts education, that integrate both reason and faith, and that lead to a humane and fulfilling personal and public life.

The Council focused its work in 2015 on developing and implementing strategies to highlight the 14 Disciples colleges and universities in covenant with the Church in order to increase our schools' presence with Disciples and the enrollment of Disciples students. The Council continued to expand its focus on enrollment through direct contact with high school students who indicate a relationship with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The Council's implementing strategies included involving college and university presidents, chaplains, admissions staff, and public relations staff. The following is a summary of the Council's accomplishments.

a. In 2014-15, Executive Committee: The Chair of the Council and Treasurer, Kenneth Garren, President of Lynchburg College, is also a member of the HELM Board. David Arnold, President of Eureka College, is the Vice Chair of the Council. Norval Kneten, President of Barton College, is the Secretary of the Council. Scott Miller, President of Bethany College, immediate past Chair of the Council. President Kneten will retire from Barton in June 2015. John Marsden, President of Midway College, was elected Secretary at the Annual Meeting of the Council, January 4, 2015. Guy Waldrop is the Director for the Council. He reports to the Council officers and represents the officers as directed by the Executive Committee.
b. The Director continues to be in contact with Disciples college chaplains regarding recruiting Disciples students, promotion of high school events at the General Assembly, contacting congregations about the Special Day Thanksgiving Offering, and sharing best practices for ministry serving college students.

c. Admissions staffs of our colleges coordinated strategies to encourage Disciples high school students to consider applying to Disciples colleges. The Council has purchased lists with over 18,000 names of high school students (sophomores, juniors, and seniors) who are affiliated with the Disciples Church from the National Research Center for College and University Admissions. Students on this list were contacted the following ways in 2014: They were mailed two postcards calling attention to the all 14 colleges; the TCUCC website, www.tcucc.org; and the Facebook page, www.facebook.com/TCUCC. This list of students was shared with all 14 schools so each institution could make direct contact with Disciples students.

e. The TCUCC.ORG Website has been in operation since early July 2011 and provides a link to each of the 14 schools. It has a link to an email address that is monitored by the Director for the Council. Christopher Higgins, Director of Digital Media in the office of the General Minister, is under contract with the Council to be the Webmaster. A form was created on the website for youth to register name, address, phone, email, etc., so youth may request information about our schools as needed. Also, tracking options were installed on the website in December 2011.

f. A Newsletter with articles from all colleges and a link to each school’s website is emailed each quarter to over 18,000 high school students who are seeking information about colleges.

g. The Council sponsored the “Disciples Got Talent” high school youth event at the General Assembly in July 2013 with over 300 youth participating.

h. All colleges were represented at the General Assembly with a booth in the Display Area. A power point presentation promoting all of the colleges was presented during the Assembly business session along with a report from Scott Miller, President of Bethany College and Chair of the Council.

i. In 2013 the Council was given the responsibility for interpreting and promoting the Special Day Thanksgiving Offering designated for colleges and theological schools. Resources were developed for congregations and college chaplains recruited students to send letters to the pastors of congregations to promote the
Offering. College presidents, chaplains and public relations staff as well as regional ministers were sent information about the link to the Disciples Mission Fund page listing resources for the Thanksgiving Offering (video and print).
http://www.disciplesmissionfund.org/SpecialOfferings/ThanksgivingSpecialDayOffering/tabid/481/Default.aspx

j. The Council was invited in 2014 by Lexington Theological Seminary to participate in the Lilly Grant study on student debt, “Conversations on Stewardship and Finance”. David Arnold, Richard Valentine and Guy Waldrop represent the Council on this task group.

The goal of each of our Disciples liberal arts colleges and universities is to offer education and religious models that prepare students to live and lead as informed and productive citizens in a pluralistic world. Our colleges and universities continue to carry out the Disciples historic tradition that the life of the mind enriches the life of the spirit. The Council affirms that our schools are partners with the Disciples Church in implementing the Disciples common mission priorities of developing and renewing faith communities, educating leaders for today and tomorrow, and for respecting human diversity and celebrating pluralism. That partnership can become much stronger as Disciples encourage youth to attend our Disciples related colleges and universities.

The Council of Colleges and Universities appreciates the cooperative efforts provided by members of the staff in each of our schools. The Council values the opportunity to serve the youth in the Church by preparing them for leadership in the church and society. There are over 30,000 students in our schools, and only two to three percent are Disciples. The Church and our schools need to continue to work together to dramatically increase enrollment of Disciples so that the church and society has leaders who have the heart, mind and skills to renew our institutions and work for a more humane and peaceful world.

The financial resources for the Council come from the Disciples Mission Fund designated for undergraduate institutions. The Council presidents voted in 2010 to reallocate 5% of the DMF funds designated for undergraduate institutions for the purpose of employing a staff person to strengthen the relationship between the undergraduate institutions and the church. The annual budget for the work of the Council is $30,000. The 2015-16 Budget will be developed later this year.

In light of the transitions with Higher Education and Leadership Ministries, the Council and the President for HELM, Chris Dorsey, have been in conversation about how our colleges and universities and HELM may function in corporative ways to strengthen the relationship between our institutions of higher education and the Disciples Church. Specific conversations are ongoing about HELM absorbing the work of the current Director of the Council into the operating
structure of HELM. It is the desire of the Council and HELM to have a new structure in place by July 2015.

**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Council of Colleges and Universities of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).