HELM’S MISSION AND PURPOSE

With the whole church, Higher Education and Leadership Ministries works to help proclaim and embody the reign of God and to be part of the human transformation that is the mission of the Church of Jesus Christ by developing and nurturing leaders who will renew and transform the church in the coming generations.

HELM AND THE PRIORITIES OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

HELM responds to the mission priorities of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)—new congregation establishment, congregational transformation, becoming a reconciling and anti-racist church, and leader development—by making those priorities inform all our activities. Thus:

- We work to add value for church leadership to both the undergraduate and ministerial educational experiences.
- We support ministries with students as they provide a locale for exploring and refining vocation.
- We seek in our entire ministry to nurture and embody the values, knowledge, and practice that will nurture leaders who will help local Christian communities—and the ministries that support those communities—to be creative, faithful, and mission-driven.
- As a member of The Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation, we work to train, coach, and support pastoral leaders committed to the renewal of Christian life and mission in local communities.

RESOURCES FUNDING HELM’S MINISTRIES

HELM funds its ministries through a variety of sources (2011 Figures):

- From Designated and Non-Designated Investments: 45%
- From Disciples Mission Fund and related sources: 31%
- From Individual Gifts (Annual Fund): 15%
- From Fees and Program Income: 5%
- From Foundations: 4%
DIRECT LEADER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

GOAL: HELM will create programs to identify, support and nurture undergraduate students with strong potential for church leadership—both lay and ordained—in partnership with congregations and other Disciples and ecumenical agencies.

HELM Leadership Fellows

In May we named six new HELM leadership fellows in the class of 2016.

- Taylor Facen of Warren Avenue Christian Church in Dallas, TX who attends Howard University
- Abigail Moore of Webster Groves Christian Church in St. Louis, MO who attends Yale University
- Alison Lasher of The View Christian Church in Portland, OR who attends Eureka College
- Kasey Smith of Woodmont Christian Church in Nashville, TN who attends Tulane University
- James Bishop of Torrey Pines Christian Church in La Jolla and Pacific Beach Christian Church in San Diego, CA, who attends Point Loma Nazarene University.
- Andrew Benson of Gordon Street Christian Church in Kinston, NC, who attends North Carolina State University.

They join 19 continuing fellows. You can learn more about all of them at http://helmdisciples.org/helm/fellows.htm. Of the 25 fellows, 11 are male and 14 female. Thirteen attend Disciples-related colleges and universities. Ethnically, two are African American, two Asian, one Hispanic and 20 Anglo.

We are very pleased that Rev. Hollie Woodruff was willing to enlarge her contract staff duties with HELM and is now Director of Undergraduate Student Programs, taking charge of the Leadership Fellows as well as the Disciples Student Fellowship and Share—the biennial national student gathering.

At the fall 2012 Fellows Conference we introduced a revamped Leadership Fellows program to enthusiastic response from the fellows. Leadership Fellows 2.0 will bring each fellow into direct contact with particularly creative Christian communities—both traditional congregations and emerging communities. Each fellow will spend time investigating the community s/he has chosen, with guidance from a group of volunteer coaches from across the church. (We have just conducted two conference calls to orient these coaches, who will meet several times with their respective fellows, in person or by telephone or Skype.) Fellows will make reports on their research and, with the guidance of their coaches, identify questions for further research and observation. They will share their learning with each other at the annual conferences.
Our goal is to bring the fellows into direct contact with local Christian communities in order to demonstrate the breadth and depth of what is happening as Church is both dying and being reborn in local communities and to give them experience and insight into how Christian communities are created, renewed and transformed.

Beginning in 2013 we will recruit and take applications for the Leadership Fellows from college and university first year students rather than from high school seniors. We believe this will enable us to identify more of the students we are looking for with the help of college and university chaplains and campus ministers, as well as through local congregations, advertising, social media and word of mouth. We are running scenarios about the best way to make this transition, whether this is now a three-year program, and whether it will enable us eventually to bring more students into the program.

Funding: Scholarships funded from 12 designated funds
Annual Conference from designated funds that allow non-scholarship use and from Ethnic Minority Ministry Fund
Staff Support from Operating Fund

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

GOAL: HELM will pursue long-term projects to identify, nurture and support potential leaders of Disciples congregations and institutions.

The Bethany Fellowships

The Bethany Fellowships, funded under the Lilly Endowment’s Transition to Ministry project, provides peer support and training in spiritual disciplines to pastors in their first few years in congregational leadership. HELM is the titular grantee for the program, which completes its third five-year grant period in 2012, but a separate staff and a Bethany Fellowships board of directors conduct the program. As grantee, HELM staff supervise the program’s finances and reporting to Lilly. In 2011 we negotiated an additional increase in the fee we receive for these services from $8,000 to $10,000. We believe Bethany Fellowships is an exemplary program, and very consistent with HELM’s mission and ministry and with the goals of the Hope Partnership.

Funding: From Lilly Endowment; no funding from HELM
Staff Support from Operating Fund

HELM Ministerial Student Grants

In 2012 HELM funded nine HELM Ministerial Student Grants in cooperation with The Pension Fund of the Christian Church, which shares a portion of an endowment they hold, the Hughey-Peery Fund. The Pension Fund has informed us that they will now draw income from this fund depending on whether the Pension Fund declares a “good experience credit” for a given year. We expect that this will reduce the available funds
significantly, and will require us to rethink the best use of the money. We will most likely not be able to offer these grants every year, and certainly not in 2013.

Funding: Hughey-Peery Endowment held by Pension Fund
Staff Support from HELM Operating Fund

**Goal: HELM will work with emerging leaders to help us become a pro-reconciling and inclusive church.**

**Disciples Leadership Institute**

We have successfully restarted the Disciples Leadership Institute, with support from Disciples Reconciliation Ministries. Thirty young Disciples Leaders met August 20-24 at the Scarritt-Bennett Center in Nashville, TN for the first national conference of DLI since 2008. The group, made up of 22 new and 8 returning participants aged between 23 and 40, included 11 African American, 10 Anglo, 5 Hispanic and 4 Asian participants. During the week, participants engaged in structured discussion of their personal faith journeys and the faith communities that nurtured them. They also worshiped, relaxed, and played together. The DLI Steering Committee, which includes HELM director, Yvonne Gilmore-Essig, is planning for multiple “regional DLIs” in various parts of North America in 2013. We have received a continuation grant from Reconciliation Ministries to help support this.

Funding: Grant from Reconciliation Ministries;
HELM Ethnic Minority Ministries Fund
Staff Support from HELM Operating Fund

**COOPERATIVE LEADER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING**

**UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION**

**GOAL: HELM will assist partners throughout the church in efforts to develop and nurture leadership.**

**The Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation**

HELM continues to work in close communication with Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation, staying informed about Hope’s ministry and programs and working to make our ministry congruent with our shared mission to nurture leaders who will lead into more effective, meaning-filled and faithful forms of Christian community. I am in frequent communication with Gilberto Collazo, president of Hope Partnership regarding both the short and longer-term nature of our relationship.

Funding: Staff Support from HELM Operating Fund
T. A. Abbott Award

On October 30, 2012 HELM’s president traveled to Barton College to present the 2012 T.A. Abbott Award for Faculty Excellence to Dr. Rodney Werline, the Barnhill Professor of Religion.

Funding: $1000 award from T.A. Abbott Fund
Staff travel from T.A. Abbott Fund
Staff support from HELM Operating Fund

Institutional Changes

President Todd Parnell of Drury University, has announced his retirement and David P. Manuel will become president there in May, 2013. Dr. John Marsden, currently Provost at Barton College, has been named president of Midway College.

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

GOAL: HELM will facilitate cooperation between the church and its institutions of theological education in their joint responsibility for the recruitment, education and nurture of the church’s leaders.

Disciples Seminarians Conference

The 2013 Disciples Seminarians Conference will be held March 14-17 at the Scarritt-Bennett Center in Nashville, Tennessee. We have completed the process of identifying current ministerial students at both Disciples and non-Disciples theological institutions, secured financial support commitments from the General Ministries, and begun the planning the event in conjunction with the General Cabinet.

Funding: Polity Fund
Contributions from General Ministries
Student Registration Fees
Staff support from HELM Operating Fund

Disciples Scholars Breakfast at AAR and/or SBL

Chalice Press elected to renew support for a breakfast reception for Disciples scholars and teachers at the 2012 meeting of the American Academy of Religion and Society for Biblical Literature on November 18 in Chicago. This is the first breakfast since 2009, due to complications created by the temporary severing of relationship between AAR and SBL. I’m pleased to report that we had an enthusiastic group of over 50 participants at the breakfast and I hope we will be able to continue this tradition, with the help of Chalice Press.

Funding: Breakfast subsidy from Chalice/CBP
Staff support from HELM Operating Fund
Association of Disciples for Theological Discussion

ADTD met October 5-7, at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis. The Association—an opportunity for Disciples scholars to share their research—is now 55 years old and in its eighth year as a self-sustaining organization, with HELM providing administrative and financial services.

Funding: Annual Meetings self-funded through ADTD Fund
        Staff support from HELM Operating Fund

Council on Theological Education

The council will meet February 27-March 1, 2013 at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis. A written report is in the meeting documents package.

Funding: Meeting and staff support from HELM Operating Fund

STUDENT MINISTRIES

GOAL: We will develop national linkages among students and student groups with the aim of nurturing students for church leadership.

Council on Ministries in Higher Education

The council will meet February 22-24, 2013 in St. Louis. Kevin Tatlock, a student at Chapman University becomes chair of the council in 2013, and will begin service as a HELM director ex officio.

Funding: Meeting and staff support from HELM Operating Fund

Student Ecumenical Partnership Team (STEP)

SHARE 2012

SHARE 2012 was a very successful event for a disappointing number of participants. Twenty-five Disciples and five UCC students participated in what leaders and participants both judged an effective introduction to the changing nature of Church, the options for new communities, and new ways of thinking about leadership. We were able to get the services of an extraordinary group of resource people: Carol Howard Merritt, author of *Reframing Hope* and *Tribal Church*; Rich McCullen, pastor of Missiongathering Church in San Diego; Rick Morse, Vice President for Mission Initiatives at Hope Partnership; Christian Piatt, author, blogger and co-editor of Chalice Press’s WTF (Where’s the Faith?) Series; Neal Watkins, director of youth ministry at the Community Church of Vero Beach; and Chapman church relations staff, Nancy Brink, Kari Kempf and Cisa Payuyo
The Student Ecumenical Partnership

On November 13, at my initiative, four UCC staff people and HELM’s president met by conference call to discuss the future of the Student Ecumenical Partnership, through which the HELM and student ministries staff of the United Church of Christ have jointly planned and conducted ministry programs for and with undergraduate students.

The consensus of this meeting was that current priorities, staffing and funding structures of the two denominations make it difficult to work together in the formal administrative way that characterized the past 20 years. While we will continue to consider members of both denominations as potential clientele for each other’s programs, we will not maintain an ongoing structure nor plan joint programs. This means that SHARE 2014, for example, will be a Disciples event, to which UCC students will be invited, but UCC participants will have to be subsidized ad hoc by the UCC. This also means that the STEP Leadership Team will need to be replaced by a coordinating committee of Disciples students with a name yet to be determined.

Funding: Spainhower Campus Ministry Fund
          McAllister Campus Ministry Fund
          Post-Color-Iden Campus Ministry Fund
          Staff support through Operating Fund

Ecumenical Campus Ministry Team (ECMT)

The Ecumenical Campus Ministry Team held its fall meeting September 5-6 in Chicago, Illinois.

ECMT’s program of consultation and training for ecumenical campus ministries, focusing on capacity building, fund-raising and board development, continues to develop. Dr. Galen Hora continues to provide expert staffing. Almost 200 campus ministers and ministry board members participated in 10 one-day workshops on basic fund raising in 2010-2011. In 2012, in addition to the in-person workshops, Dr. Hora has begun to offer free or low-cost webinars on basic topics around fund raising and board development, and created a Facebook page (ECMT Friend Raising) for ongoing discussions.

ECMT has also scheduled a joint national gathering of campus ministers and college/university chaplains to be held at Loyola University Water Tower Campus in Chicago June 26-28, 2013. We expect 350 participants from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, The Episcopal Church, The United Methodist Church, The Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Church of Christ and The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The event keynote speaker will be Dr. Diana Butler Bass, author, most recently, of Christianity After Religion, The End of Church and the Birth of A New Spiritual Awakening. We anticipate to be able to provide some subsidy to Disciples participants at this event.
These projects are funded using accumulated funds held by the National Council of Churches but soon the member denominations will need to begin contributing to the common fund. (These contributions are proportional to denominational size, which means ours will be modest, probably $500-$1000.)

Funding: Spainhower Campus Ministry Fund
       McAllister Campus Ministry Fund
       Post-Color-Iden Campus Ministry Fund
       Staff support through Operating Fund

COMMUNICATIONS

WWW. helmdisciples.org

We are working with The Stryker Group, our web and IT services vendor on a rebuild of the HELM web site, which should be up and running in Spring, 2013. We will be able to update and revise this web site ourselves. We very much look forward to this.

We are depending more and more on social media to publicize and promote our ministry and virtually all of our communications are now digital. HELM’s Facebook page now has 330 “Likes”, up from 311 in April, and our Twitter feed has 302 followers, up from 265.

As we launch our new web site we also realize that we must create an online payment processing system for receiving donations and other payments. While there is some expense involved, this capacity is now taken for granted by most potential donors. We are investigating options and vendors.

PLANNING A FUTURE FOR HELM’S MINISTRIES

The HELM board of directors has completed a planning process and directed the president to consider options and bring proposals for a strategic partnership that would strengthen the ability of the ministry to make more of its resources available to nurture leaders for the next generation of Christian communities with the expectation of a specific plan and the steps required to implement it by May, 2013.

The General Board has reviewed Report No. 1313 from Higher Education and Leadership Ministries. The report is submitted to the General Assembly for consideration and discussion. No action is required. (Discussion time 12 minutes)
Appendix 1: A Timeline for Strategic Planning

May 2012
HELM Planning Committee Report adopted as “basic trajectory for HELM’s future”

May 2012--December 2012
Continue Core programs
Begin eliminating non-core-mission activities.
Relocation Committee is created
Exploratory Conversations with potential ministry partners, including Church Extension Financial and Missional Resources (CEFMR), begin

January—May 2013
Continue Core Programs
Begin efforts to revitalize and enable board support.
Continue creation of Strategic Plan

• Continue partnership and structure conversations with CEFMR
• Research how HELM resources can impact non-traditional education for ministry.
• Explore possible funding sources for research institute; consider alternatives.
• Begin Conversations with undergraduate and theological staff partners regarding leader development

May 2013
Strategic Plan presented to board
Short-Term Relocation Plan presented to board
Partnership proposal presented to board, if appropriate
October 2013

Office relocation

May 2013—May 2014

Strategic Plan refined
Partnership proposal refined
Elimination of non-core functions continues

May 2014

Final Strategic Plan approved
Partnership proposal approved, if appropriate
Appendix 2: Action on Strategic Planning Elements May—December 2013

May 2012--December 2012

Continue Core programs

Begin eliminating non-core-mission activities.
- Taylor Scholarship program returned to FCC Winterset, IA
- Student Ecumenical Partnership de-institutionalized
- Beginning exploration of new administrative home for ADTD

Relocation Committee is created
- Ed Strong to chair
- Tom Wood, former board member and board chair
- Darrel Hughes, AmerenUE executive, member Compton Heights Christian Church

Exploratory Conversations with potential ministry partners, including Church Extension Financial and Missional Resources (CEFMR), begin
- Initial meeting with Rick Reisinger (Church Extension Financial Resources) and Gilberto Collazo (Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation) on November 7
- Second meeting scheduled December 9.

January 2013-May 2013

Begin Conversations with undergraduate and theological staff partners regarding leader development

- Conversations are being organized among undergraduate teachers around student vocation and leadership development and grant funding being explored.