Heritage of Innovation

ILIFF
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
Denver
YEAR IN REVIEW
2018–2019
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

As Iliff looks towards an exciting future, while building upon its founding spirit and rich heritage, I invite us to consider the real gift of innovation. Technically, innovation is the creation of a new method, product, or idea. The Iliff lens on innovation is much richer, more human. The work of being innovative is transformational. In that work we not only create new things, we evolve ourselves. We see differently, more clearly, and with greater perspective.

At Iliff, we are looking to the future through the lens of our innovative history. What does this call us to become now? In these pages, you will see how we are envisioning a new chapter of the human experience in innovation. The world of the church and higher education is rapidly changing, all of which calls for a fresh responsiveness from theological education. As an institution alive in the world, Iliff is taking seriously its opportunity to provide leadership in this generation of transition.

As you engage this work with us, know that you continue to be a vital part of Iliff’s presence and influence in the world.

Gratefully,

Rev. Thomas V. Wolfe, Ph.D.
President and Chief Executive Officer
“As an institution alive in the world, Iliff is taking seriously its opportunity to provide leadership in this generation of transition.”

Rev. Dr. Thomas V. Wolfe
The Artificial Intelligence (AI) Institute was born out of the desire to experiment and expand the reach of theological education to the ever evolving relationship between humans and machines.

Built upon the work of the Experimental Humanities Lab and the AI Lab over the 2018 calendar year, the AI Institute received funding from the In Trust Center for Theological Schools and the Henry Luce Foundation.

The funding enables the Institute to solidify its commitment to building a trust-based AI ecosystem, build relationships with industry experts, and integrate AI into our curriculum at Iliff.
On May 2nd, 2019, ai.liff launched its Tech Series with an event at the Industry co-working space in the RiNo district, one of Denver’s emerging tech hubs.

The team led workshops with entrepreneurs in the Colorado region regarding trust-based approaches to bias management in AI and machine learning development.
Our CHANGING Earth

The Center for Eco-Justice is committed to the education, advocacy, and activism of scholarship, initiatives, and resolutions on environmental justice in our changing world. Led by its Executive Director, Professor Miguel De La Torre, the Center operates as a think tank by bringing together scientists, policy makers, political leaders, academics, and religious scholars and practitioners to explore the ways the overall environmental crises intersect with marginalized communities, which is an aspect of the discourse that is usually ignored.

For its inaugural year, the Center is hosting a conference on “The Intersection of Water and Environmental Racism” on October 24 – 26. The conference will provide an opportunity for critical discussions, reflective conversations, and comparative analysis of related issues on environmental racism, justice, and activism with an emphasis on exploring solutions, innovative practices, and impactful policies.
Long-term, the Center strives to become a leading voice in developing scholarship, implementing policy initiatives, and expanding the environmental discourse so that the minoritized issues become mainstream.

In April, the Center participated at the Earth X Expo in Dallas. In addition to joining several Colorado businesses, non-profits, and higher education institutions at the Colorado Pavilion, the Center hosted a roundtable discussion on “Faith & Eco-Justice.”

Iliff President Tom Wolfe, Professor Miguel De La Torre, and Board of Trustee members Brian Mooney and Andy Quiat represented Iliff at the expo.
Time to Listen, Reflect, and Heal

Tink Tinker (Osage/wazhazhe), Clifford Baldridge Emeritus Professor of American Indian Cultures and Religious Traditions

“Like many other American institutions, Iliff School of Theology has its own history as a participant in the ongoing genocide of American Indians.

Today, Iliff is changing things. To its credit these days, especially under President Tom Wolfe’s leadership, Iliff has been deeply involved in understanding American Indian issues and is now embracing a much greater commitment to transparency.

This comes after I finished a 33-year career teaching that subject at Iliff. Thankfully, Iliff’s involvement will not stop with my retirement...”

Read the rest of Tink Tinker’s write-up at www.iliff.edu/report2019

Devin Oldman, Northern Arapaho Historic Preservation Office, at Iliff’s Redskin Tanned Hide conference (March 29, 2019)
Conversation with the Lenape Nation

“Iliff might prove to be a role model for other institutions across the American and American Indian landscape.”

Professor Emeritus Tink Tinker
(Osage/wazhazhe)
I continue to support Iliff out of gratitude for the theological education I received as a student in the 1970’s. Our world continues to need people who think and act out of a thoughtful theological framework, and who provide leadership for the present and our future. Iliff is training such leaders today and I am proud to be associated with the school.”

- Rev. Dr. Gary D. Powell ‘80

Figures are based on in-house accounting as of June 2019 and are unaudited. Final audit conclusions will be available after November 2019. If interested, please contact us for more details.

*From the United Methodist Church
FY18-19 Gifts & Grants

1. ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP & PROGRAM SUPPORT
   $916K

2. CAPITAL GIFTS
   $242K

3. ENDOWMENT GIFTS
   $1.23M

4. MINISTERIAL EDUCATIONAL FUND (MEF)*
   $728K

5. STUDENT DESIGNATED GRANTS
   $485K

Total Support
$3.60M

Operating Revenues

Tuition & Fees 55%
Housing & Miscellaneous 5%
Gifts & Grants 20%
Support from Endowment 20%

Operating Expenses

Instruction & Library 62%
Facilities 7%
General Institutional Services 31%

*From the United Methodist Church
The Ministry Incubator @ Iliff is a community of creativity to encourage and equip leaders with a heart for a particular group of people. It invites efforts that stretch imagination and boundaries beyond what denominations usually support. It is a place for clergy and laity to be co-creators of new ministries and is open to all religious traditions, as well as those leaders who identify as “none” or “done.”

In building a community of leaders who are experimenting, the Ministry Incubator is designed to follow the leadings of the Spirit while traditional religious structures are struggling.

Not waiting for denominations to find their way, it is also not requiring leaders to adhere to one theological view. Trusting the Spirit to lead in many languages and all sorts of directions, the Ministry Incubator strives to be a community providing support and respect for the new ministries.

Learn more about the Ministry Incubator at www.iliff.edu/report2019
Iliff’s 50in5 Initiative is our commitment to recruiting, nurturing, and sustaining a student body consisting of 50% racial and ethnic diversity in 5 years.

Inspired by intentional conversations with students, staff, faculty, board, alumni and the greater Iliff community, the 50in5 Initiative focuses particularly on racial and ethnic diversity in response to the following:

1. Iliff recognizes its current 35% LGBTQ student body and 41% racially/ethnically diverse faculty do not yet reflect the dynamic diversity the community envisions.
2. Iliff’s accreditation bodies noted the need for more racial/ethnic diversity in our student body.
3. Our students are expecting racial/ethnic diversity.
4. Iliff consistently seeks to address inequitable systemic structures within society and within our own institution.
5. Iliff recognizes the individual, institutional, and global educational benefits that a racially and ethnically diverse student body provides.

From left: Candise Woods ('18, MDiv), Rahdearra A. Paris Woods (MDiv Student), Bishop Karen Oliveto, Daryl Walker (MDiv Student)
FACULTY Discourse

In their own words

Meet our faculty members as they share their academic experiences and research interests that invigorate the spirited and rigorous learning environment at Iliff.

Boyoung Lee
Dean of the Faculty
Professor of Practical Theology

"...working to develop original leaders and thinkers in building inclusive communities..."

Miguel De La Torre
Professor of Social Ethics and Latinx Studies

"...standing in solidarity with the disenfranchised..."

Katherine Turpin
Associate Professor of Religious Education

"...supporting our students on their vocational journeys..."

Ted Vial
Harvey Potthoff Professor of Theology and Modern Western Religious Thought

"...addressing the complexities of staying human in the world of artificial intelligence..."

Kristina Lizardy-Hajbi
Assistant Professor of Leadership and Formation

"...pushing the boundaries of knowing, and being in the world..."

Eric C. Smith
Assistant Professor of Early Christianity and Contemporary Christian Practices

"...contributing to healing, wholeness, and in justice for persons and the world..."

Jeffrey Mahan
Ralph E. & Norma E. Peck Professor of Religion & Communication

"...deep commitments to intersectional justice, and to live faithfully in a complex and changing world..."
Eunjoo Kim  
Professor of Homiletics and Liturgics  
"...excellence in scholarship and teaching..."

Jennifer Leath  
Assistant Professor of Religion and Social Justice  
"...committed to justice practices that begin with society's vulnerable...

Antony Alumkal  
Associate Professor of Sociology of Religion  
"...valuing the fearless pursuit of truth...

Carrie Doehring  
Clifford Baldrige Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling  
"...spiritual care that changes persons and worlds..."

Rubén Arjona  
Assistant Professor of Pastoral Theology and Care  
"...committed to acts of care and solidarity in and beyond the classroom...

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“Iliff taught me who I am, they helped me to answer what to do with who I am. I will be forever grateful and indebted for their accompaniment.”

Gianna Rendon, Student of the Year

I have been blessed to spend four years at Iliff School of Theology. The reason why I came to Iliff was not the reason I stayed. I started the MDiv program in preparation to work in my Roman Catholic Archdiocese.

While I became increasingly involved in community organizing my religious network wanted nothing to do with what they called “radical politics.”

Through Iliff I found my people through my Journey cohort, “The Flock.” We have been through so much personal and vocational change together. We continue to hold space for each other even though our schooling has ended. They taught me what it means to be in an intentional community with others, especially when the greatest barrier is distance.

Read more at: www.iliff.edu/report2019

“Iliff has given me the tools to explore, discern, and articulate theological perspectives.” Mallory Everhart, Student of the Year

It is with great joy and abiding gratitude that I reflect on my time as a student at Iliff School of Theology. I came to Iliff with a deep knowing in my soul. Everywhere I turned, I was met by people who helped me articulate it – everyone from the admissions counselor and the SIFR director to first year seminar instructors and faculty.

I often joke that attending theology school has given me the reading list for the rest of my life. My time at Iliff laid a groundwork of curiosity, wonder, and critical appraisal which will stand me in good stead as I continue the work set before me to do. My formation in this place is foundational but it is by no means complete – and it isn’t meant to be.

Iliff has given me the tools to explore, discern, and articulate theological perspectives. These tools are adaptable enough to serve me well in a variety of ministry settings and to evolve as I learn more of what it means to seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.
Meet ERIN CHRISTENSEN, Grants Program Director and Division Coordinator, Institutional Advancement

“...Erin is a true gem”

Erin, who has been with Iliff since 2008, is the force behind many of the significant grants that have been awarded to Iliff. In addition to her job responsibilities with the Institutional Advancement and Admissions teams, Erin is known for rolling up her sleeves and jumping in to support many of the activities organized by the different departments. As noted by a colleague, “she never complains and consistently makes our teams better.”

From the remarks of her colleagues in nominating Erin for the award, you can see that the recognition is well deserved and long overdue.

“...she is a behind-the-scenes hero that gets everything done almost like magic...Erin is a true gem in this regard.”

“...I believe that she is the first fundraiser in the history of Iliff to secure grants of these sizes, and she just won’t quit...”

“...She knows the grant business inside and out, is always professional, and is interesting and friendly to boot...”

For the full Q&A visit www.iliff.edu/report2019
ReSource is Iliff’s innovative approach to skills development and lifelong learning for those serving in leadership today.

Spring 2019 Workshops
Leading Change in Tumultuous Times, Appreciative Inquiry.

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Eleven workshops focused on organizational effectiveness, funding, and ministry context.

Online content offered free: videos, podcasts, and more.

Going on the road! Connect with us for information!

For more information, visit resource.iliff.edu
Renewal Conference is one of Iliff’s signature events that brings alumni, students, faculty, staff, and friends of the school to gather, learn, and reflect on current issues, ideas, and developments shaping and influencing our communities and the world.

Iliff’s Renewal Conference 2019 was a huge success, setting a new registration record. In the words of Iliff’s President Tom Wolfe, Renewal is intended to be an opportunity to “explore the ways in which we can bring healing to brokenness, justice to injustice, and hope to those who are giving up.”

GET READY FOR RENEWAL 2020
Monday, February 3 – Wednesday, February 5
Save the dates for next year’s Renewal Conference where we share fellowship, learning, and deliberations on issues that impact our current communities and the world. See you there! iliff.edu/renewal-2020
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