

2018 Report to ELCA Synod Assemblies

Established in the fall of 2017, Augustana's new **Presidential Center for Faith and Learning** sponsors initiatives related to the college's Five Faith Commitments: interfaith engagement, social justice, spiritual exploration, vocational discernment, and reasoned examination of faith.

The new center is directed by Dr. Jason Mahn, Augustana associate professor of religion and author of *Radical Lutherans, Lutheran Radicals* (Cascade Books, 2017). You also may recognize him from his work within NECU and his editorship of the journal *Intersections: Faith, Learning, and the Vocation of Lutheran Higher Education*.

In collaboration with Augustana faculty, Campus Ministries, CORE (Careers, Opportunities, Research, Exploration) and community leaders, the center organizes speakers and other events related to Augustana's faith commitments. It also houses the college's pre-seminary program for students who discern a future in the ministry. Currently, six seniors in pre-seminary studies plan to graduate with the Class of 2018.

This year the Presidential Center for Faith and Learning and Augustana's Campus Ministries also have been hosting celebratory events and opportunities for discussion and learning in honor of the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. Events planned as part of Homecoming and winter Symposium Day drew alumni and members of the campus community to reflect on Augustana's roots and the modern-day relevance of Lutheran higher education.

I believe that what especially matters today is the generation of Augustana students and young alumni who are making an impact because of how they learn, what they learn and what they do in the world. I agree with Dr. Mahn that the world desperately needs our graduates, who are able to respond both capably and compassionately to the great needs of the world.

I am constantly heartened to see how our students, faculty and alumni live out Augustana's mission and connection to the values of the Lutheran church. The period of time that has passed since my last report has been a notable one within the history and mission of Augustana College. It has been a year infused with celebration, actions toward a greater common good, more students interested in a ministry vocation than in recent years, and the introduction of our Presidential Center for Faith and Learning.

I anticipate sharing news of the center's good works throughout the coming years.



Steven C. Bahls, President

