

HIGHER EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP MINISTRIES

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Reviewing 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 both higher education and the Church of Jesus Christ.

"In order to develop and nurture transformative leaders for the church and the wider human community, Higher Education and Leadership Ministries develops partnerships between the church and higher education that are creative and reconciling meeting places of faith and understanding." (Provisional Mission Statement, May 2003)

Higher Education and Leadership Ministries pursues its mission within five categories of activity: Direct Leader Development Programming, Cooperative Leader Development Programming, Governance, Resource Development, and Administration.

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.*

Leadership Fellows Program

We welcomed six new Leadership Fellows in the summer of 2007. They are: Jesse Stephenson, Columbus, Georgia, and Transylvania University; Alexis Westerhausen, Virden, Illinois, and Culver-Stockton College; Caroline Hamilton, Lewisville, Texas, and TCU; Courtney Waters, Memphis Tennessee, and Rhodes College; Jenny Faenza, Springfield, Tennessee, and Georgetown University; and Sarah Cheon, Claremont, California, and the University of California-Berkeley. We currently have 19 fellows. Ten are students at Disciples-related colleges and universities.

The seventh Leadership Fellows Conference was November 2-4 at National City Christian Church in Washington, DC. The conference focused on the marks of a transformed church—what does God want us to lead the church toward? General Minister and President Sharon Watkins, Brite Divinity School President Newell Williams, retired pastor Marshall Dunn, and new church planter Yvonne Gilmore-Essig spent the weekend with the fellows as resource people and mentors.

Twenty-six percent of the current fellows are people of color, and we continue to work to increase the number of non-Anglo applicants and also to increase the number of young men in the applicant pool. Applications for the Leadership Fellows Class of 2012 became available in December 2007.

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

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

The Bethany Fellowships

HELM is now in our third year as grantee for the continuation of the Bethany Fellowships, a project in the Lilly Endowment's "Transition to Ministry" program. We will make our third report to the Lilly Endowment in May 2008. HELM will continue to provide financial and programmatic supervision to the Bethany Fellowships while the program seeks to become self-sustaining in 2010. The HELM president serves as a director of The Bethany Fellowship, Inc.

A New Project to Strengthen Ministerial Leadership

In 2008 HELM will announce a new program of grants to Disciples ministerial students for special projects and opportunities designed to add value to their education and strengthen their potential for congregational leadership. We plan to refine our use of the income from the Hughey-Peery Fund, which comes to us annually from the Pension Fund of the Christian Church, to make grants for special study projects, internships, educational travel, and other activities. We are still working on details of the application and selection process at this time, and we will consult with the Disciples theological institutions before formally launching the program.

Emerging Leaders and Cross-Cultural Learning

Disciples Leadership Institute

The second gathering of the Disciples Leadership Institute, HELM's project to create personal and professional linkages among younger congregational leaders from both new and established congregations and across the divides of race, culture and language, took place August 13-17 at Vallombrosa Retreat Center in Menlo Park, California. There were 28 participants, one-half from new congregations, and one-half non-Anglo. Participants continue to affirm the uniqueness of this experience, which focuses on theological and cultural similarities and differences and on the commitment to Christ and to the church that transcends those differences. Governed by a steering committee of participants, DLI will hold its first conference without foundation support at Eden Seminary in St. Louis in August 2008. Interest in this project is great among younger church leaders, and the steering committee hopes to find ways to use what we are learning to expand or "franchise" the project across the church.

COOPERATIVE LEADER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

***GOAL:** HELM will create recruitment initiatives, coordinated with the undergraduate institutions, to increase the proportion of Disciples students within the student bodies of Disciples-related colleges and universities.*

Undergraduate Recruitment

A consultation with chaplains, church relations directors, and admissions staff from the Disciples-related colleges and universities on the recruiting of Disciples students and how the church and the institutions can coordinate their efforts in this new era initially scheduled for February 26-28, 2008, has been postponed. HELM is ready to proceed with this project when certain scheduling and structural concerns are resolved.

HELM Web Sites

The HELM web site and STEP website are very powerful tools for our ministry. We are able to promote our programs (Leadership Fellows, Campus Chaos), respond to particular occasions and needs (collecting pastoral continuing education opportunities, reviewing campus ministry resources, responding to the Virginia Tech shootings) and feature the writings of Disciples students about their lives and their faith. We hear that more and more students and others look to the HELM website first for information they need. We changed our web hosting vendor, which increased the capacity and reliability of the web site.

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

Young Adult Commission

HELM is still an active partner with Disciples Home Missions in the work of the Young Adult Commission through the participation of Brad Lyons, as staff liaison

First Christian Church, Winterset, Iowa

The HELM staff and board of directors, assisted by the board's investment committee, manage the scholarship endowment of First Christian Church of Winterset, Iowa, and administer the application process through which the congregation awards around \$60,000 each year to young people in Madison County, Iowa. We meet annually with congregational leaders and follow their guidelines for investments and application process.

Hyde Park Christian Church, Austin, Texas

HELM also assists Hyde Park Christian Church of Austin, Texas, in administering the Alvin and Elsie East Scholarship program, which distributes almost \$50,000 annually.

GOAL: *HELM will work to heighten consideration of the mission and ethos of church-related higher education among faculty, administration and other institutional leaders through inter-campus and intra-campus conversations.*

Council of Colleges and Universities

The Council of Colleges and Universities met July 21-22, 2007, at Texas Christian University during the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) with chief executive officers present from seven of the fourteen colleges and universities related to the church by covenant and from one historically related school. The council has discussed how the undergraduate institutions relate structurally to the church and how those relationships might be strengthened.

Leadership Changes

Scott D. Miller is now President of Bethany College, following the retirement of G. T. Smith. Todd Parnell has become the 16th President of Drury University, after serving as Interim President.

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 next Disciples Seminarians Conference will be held March 5-8, 2009, in Nashville, Tennessee. HELM manages and plans the Disciples Seminarians Conference on behalf of and in cooperation with the other general ministries of the church and the theological institutions. While HELM holds one endowment for support of the conference, it is insufficient, and in recent years the other general ministries have contributed to the event on an *ad hoc* basis each biennium. We have asked the Council of General Ministries to begin a conversation on the purpose and goals of the conference, who should participate, and how it should be financed in the long term.

Scholarships

Joseph Blosser, a Ph.D. student in Theological Ethics at the Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago, has received the William Gilbert and Florence Gilbert Jones Scholarship, which goes each year to a Disciples doctoral student who is also an ordained minister, or intends to be ordained.

Ann E. Dickerson Scholarships, established for female Disciples Ph.D. students in religious studies, were awarded to Kristel A. Clayville and Patricia "Tish" Duncan, both of the Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago; to Kathleen Gallagher Elkins of Drew University; and to Christy M. Newton of the Disciples Seminary Foundation and the Graduate Theological Union.

The Fund for Theological Education – Partnership for Excellence

HELM continues to recruit Disciples students for the programs of the Fund for Theological Education. FTE programs that continue in 2008 include: (1) The Doctoral Fellows Program and Dissertation Fellows Program for African-Americans, (2) The Ministry Fellows Program for current M.Div. students, and (3) The Undergraduate Fellows

Program for students considering ministry and theological education. In addition, in 2008 FTE will continue its Congregational Fellows Program, which provides scholarship funds for ministerial students to match scholarships from their home congregations. Lilly Endowment has just granted FTE \$6.3 million to continue its work. Information about all FTE programs is available at www.thefund.org.

Association of Disciples for Theological Discussion

ADTD met October 12-14, 2007, at Phillips Theological Seminary in Tulsa. The Association is now in its third year as a self-sustaining organization, with HELM providing administrative and financial services. ADTD also celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2007 with a celebratory brunch at the home of ADTD member D. Newell Williams in Fort Worth during the General Assembly.

Disciples Scholars Breakfast at AAR/SBL

Sixty Disciples scholars and students attended the annual Disciples breakfast during the joint meeting of the American Academy of Religion and the Society for Biblical Literature, November 18 in San Diego. HELM and Christian Board of Publication/Chalice Press jointly host this event, with HELM providing administrative services and CBP a monetary subsidy. In 2009 and following years—whether temporarily or permanently is not clear—AAR and SBL will hold separate meetings in separate cities. We are not sure at this point whether HELM and CBP will sponsor the breakfast at one or the other or both of these meetings.

Continuing Education Networking

In March a continuing education opportunities page was added to the HELM web site. Theological institutions and regions have been invited to send announcements about continuing education opportunities to HELM for posting on the site.

GOAL: HELM will help lead efforts to respond to the needs of non-ordained pastoral leaders, and to the church's need for them.

The Nazareth Consensus

The General Commission on Ministry has produced a new draft revision of the Policies and Criteria for the Order of the Ministry, which incorporates many of the recommendations of the Nazareth Consensus regarding the status, preparation and validation of non-ordained ministers. HELM stands ready to work with the regions and the theological institutions, if needed, to help coordinate the delivery of ministerial education, as mandated by the new policies, to these leaders.

Council on Theological Education

The council met March 7-9, 2007, in St. Louis. Among other matters, the council discussed needs and resources related to Latino/a theological education with Huberto Pimentel, National Hispanic Pastor; heard a report on the General Commission on Ministry's developing revision of the Policies and criteria for the Order of the Ministry; and reviewed the promotion of the Thanksgiving Special Offering. Mark Miller-McLemore of Disciples Divinity House at Vanderbilt Divinity School was chosen as council chair through 2009, and Kris Culp of the Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago, will serve as the council's representative to the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The council will meet April 2-4, 2008 at Brite Divinity School.

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

Due to scheduling problems among the council's members, we were unable to schedule a meeting in 2007. The council will meet as early as possible in 2008.

Student Ecumenical Partnership Team (STEP)

The Student Ecumenical Partnership includes Disciples and UCC undergraduate students and continues to work to develop a national network of students and those committed to ministry with students in order to support individual journeys of faith; foster the churches' commitment to ministry with and for students and advocate for their needs and concerns; and encourage student participation in state, regional, national and international ecumenical student events

STEP members wrote the meditations for the 2007 Advent Reflection Guide, a series of daily devotions for the advent season published by the Higher Education Ministries Arena. The STEP web site also includes recommendations for study materials for campus ministry groups with annotations by STEP Team members.

Two students have accepted two-year terms on the STEP Leadership Team. Brandon Cook is a sophomore psychology and German major at Transylvania University. His home congregation is May's Lick Christian Church near his hometown of Georgetown, Kentucky. Chrissy Stonebraker is a sophomore at Hiram College majoring in accounting with a minor in religious studies and political science. Her home congregation is First Christian Church in Niles, Ohio. Concluding service on the STEP Leadership Team are Kelly Rand, a senior at Texas Christian University from Olathe, Kansas, and Trayce Stewart, a senior at Hiram College from Willoughby, Ohio.

Council for Ecumenical Student Christian Ministries (CESCM)

CESCM is the U.S. affiliate of the World Student Christian Federation and provides ecumenical opportunities for student fellowship, leadership training, and social witness. In 2007 CESCM made strategic revisions in its structure and its relation to HEMA (see below), making the organization more clearly student-led and freeing HEMA staff from participation in CESCM meetings, except for a single staff advisor, which for the next three years is the HELM president.

Higher Education Ministries Arena (HEMA)

HEMA is the organization of staff professionals in student ministries representing several Protestant denominations. It will continue to meet twice annually, at the same time as CESCM. HEMA provides a comprehensive directory of campus ministries and ministers, publishes study and devotional guides for students, operates a job listings service for campus ministers, and will continue to provide consultation and resource services to CESCM through the staff advisor. HELM manages HEMA's web site and is overseeing a redesign of the online campus ministry directory.

United Ministries in Higher Education (UMHE)

UMHE has been dissolved by action of its three member bodies (Disciples, UCC, PCUSA) and its assets have been distributed according to the proportions of past contributions. HELM received about \$2,500, which we will make available to the STEP Team for its work.

Council for Higher Education Ministries (CHEM)

CHEM is the legal entity (501 c 3 corporation) that houses the three student-ministry working groups above (CESCM, HEMA and UMHE), along with other occasional projects. CHEM is in the process of dissolving its corporation and moving into the administrative structure of the Education and Leadership Ministries Commission of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. We expect this process to be complete by late Fall 2008.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND FINANCE

The 2007 HELM annual fund raised slightly over \$105,000, a record amount, though less than the annual reduction in Disciples Mission Fund support since 1997. However, with income from other sources up slightly and expenses less than budgeted, HELM ended 2007 with a surplus of approximately \$17,000 rather than the \$44,621 deficit budgeted.

ADMINISTRATION

Facilities and Equipment

We have signed an extension of our lease for the offices at 11477 Olde Cabin Road in Creve Coeur through 2013. We are very pleased with these facilities and with our relationship with the landlord and very happy not to have to consider moving again in the near future.

As planned, we replaced two office computers this year. We will complete the replacement of aging computers in 2008.

Internet Programming

We continue to move quickly to take advantage of Internet capabilities to help fulfill our mission. We have moved our web hosting and e-mail to a new vendor with greatly increased reliability and capacity.

General Assembly

We are extremely pleased that a gift from a friend of HELM's ministry enabled both Leadership Fellows and STEP Team members to travel to and participate in the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Fort Worth. This is a very significant growth and learning experience for the students.

Staff

2007 was a year of challenge and change for the HELM staff. The president completed eleven months of medical treatment in May and returned to full-time service in June. Elnora Hinson, who came to work for HELM in 1997, officially retired at the end of September 2007. We are very pleased that Janice Martin joined our staff in February 2008 as administrative assistant. Brad Lyons completed a sabbatical during the second half of 2007 and Linda Plengemeier entered her 20th year of professional service to the church through this ministry.

HELM AND THE CHURCH'S MISSION AND VISION

The HELM staff and board of directors intend that all of our ministry serve not only the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Church in the largest sense, but also the particular gifts and intentions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). We are pleased to have the opportunity to consider our work in the context of our church's priorities:

What are your long-range planning goals and how are they integrated into the mission and vision of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)?

The HELM board of directors and staff are currently in the midst of a strategic planning process to determine priorities and goals for the next five years. Not knowing the final outcome of that process, we can imagine that our goals will speak to how we can use the resources and relationships available to us to help nurture leaders (laypeople as well as clergy) who are competent to be and share the good news, and to lead congregations toward true community, deep spirituality, and a passion for justice. We hope to help raise leaders who approach those tasks with a sense of urgency and zeal.

In that context, it is likely that HELM's goals for the next five years will focus on (1) renewed relationships between the church and its higher education institutions and a search for new ways the church can add value to the educational experience, (2) the nurture of relationships among emerging leaders across cultural boundaries, (3) the education of non-ordained pastoral leadership (4) the search for new resources for our work, and (5) maintaining an openness to new ways we can use all our resources to serve the church and its mission.

Knowing the current priorities of the church are to start new congregations, transform existing congregations for mission, nurture leadership for these new and renewed congregations and become a pro-reconciling/anti-racist church, what is the role of your general ministry in fulfilling any of these priorities?

HELM sees itself, the higher education institutions and our other partners at the very center of these priorities, since the nurturing of transforming leadership is crucial for them all. We believe our work with the HELM Leadership Fellows, with value-adding programs for ministerial students, as a renewed facilitator of cooperation among the educational institutions, and as a sponsor of a grass-roots effort to create relationships among young leaders across the divides of culture and paradigm, are significant contributions to the fulfillment of the church's goals.

In what ways are you partnering with other expressions of the Church and with other general ministries?

In addition to the colleges and universities and theological schools, we work with other general ministries in relation to the Seminarians Conference and the Young Adult Commission. We partner with congregations in the management of scholarship programs and promotion of Disciples educational institutions. We provide services for organizations like Bethany Fellowships and the Association of Disciples for Theological Discussion. We partner ecumenically with campus ministries and with the other denominations involved with STEP, CESC, and HEMA.

How has your ministry served to strengthen congregations for mission?

All the work we do is explicitly intended to nurture mission-driven leaders so that whoever they are—lay or clergy, male or female, young or old—they will lead mission-driven congregations. That is the alpha and omega of our purpose—to do what we can with the resources we have to nurture that kind of leader for a renewed and faithful church.

Table 1. Enrollment at Disciples-related undergraduate institutions

Institutions in Covenant	Total Enrollment (Full-time Equivalent)			Disciples Enrollment			Disciples Pct. Of Total Enrollment		
	2007	2006	change	2007	2006	change	2007	2006	change
Barton College	1,005	1,012	-7	22	28	-6	2.2	2.8	-0.6
Bethany College	808	829	-21	22	35	-13	2.7	4.2	-1.5
Chapman University	4,095	3,987	108	100	120	-20	2.4	3.0	-0.6
Columbia College	1,820	1,743	77	23	21	2	1.3	1.2	0.1
Culver-Stockton College	821	853	-32	47	53	-6	5.7	6.2	-0.5
Drury University	1,591	2,826	-1,235	71	79	-8	4.5	2.8	1.7
Eureka College	682	734	-52	36	41	-5	5.3	5.6	-0.3
Hiram College	1,172	1,130	42	33	12	21	2.8	1.1	1.8
Jarvis Christian College	661	616	45	30	19	11	4.5	3.1	1.5
Lynchburg College	2,005	1,995	10	194	151	43	9.7	7.6	2.1
Midway College	1,376	1,148	228	211	108	103	15.3	9.4	5.9
Texas Christian University	8,925	8,672	253	352	362	-10	3.9	4.2	-0.2
Transylvania University	1,146	1,103	43	93	94	-1	8.1	8.5	-0.4
William Woods University	848	788	60	11	13	-2	1.3	1.6	-0.4
TOTAL	26,955	27,436	-481	1,245	1,136	109	4.6	4.1	0.5

Table 2. Enrollment at Disciples-related theological institutions

Institution	Headcount in All Degree Programs			Total M.Div Students		
	2007	2006	change	2007	2006	change
Brite Divinity School	260	278	-18	148	166	-18
Christian Theological Seminary	262	262	0	152	153	-1
Lexington Theological Seminary	153	141	12	74	78	-4
Phillips Theological Seminary	170	187	-17	127	146	-19
Disciples Divinity House at the University of Chicago	23	28	-5	14	14	0
Disciples Divinity House At Vanderbilt	23	23	0	21	21	0
Disciples Seminary Foundation	42	54	-12	27	37	-10
TOTAL	933	973	-40	563	615	-52

Institution	Total Disciples M.Div Students			Total UCC M.Div Students		
	2007	2006	change	2007	2006	change
Brite Divinity School	46	56	-10	5	4	1
Christian Theological Seminary	59	58	1	4	4	0
Lexington Theological Seminary	54	53	1	3	3	0
Phillips Theological Seminary	40	48	-8	6	6	0
Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago	14	11	3	0	0	0
Disciples Divinity House At Vanderbilt	21	21	0	0	0	0
Disciples Seminary Foundation	22	29	-7	5	8	-3
TOTAL	256	276	-20	23	25	-2

Source: Institutional reports to Higher Education and Leadership Ministries, Fall 2007 and Fall 2006