Intersections

Volume 2026 | Number 63 Article 1

2026

Full Issue

SPRING 2026

Intersections

Faith, Learning, and the Vocation of Lutheran Higher Education

IN THIS ISSUE

Vocation Ground Game: Equipping for Civic Engagement

Intersections is a publication by and largely for the academic communities of the twenty-eight institutions that comprise the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities (NECU). Each issue reflects on the **intersection** of faith, learning, and teaching within Lutheran higher education. Published by the NECU, ***Intersections*** extends and enhances discussions fostered by the annual Vocation of Lutheran Higher Education Conference, together lifting up the vocation of Lutheran colleges and universities. It aims to raise the level of awareness among faculty, staff, and administration about the Lutheran heritage and church-relatedness of their institutions, especially as these **intersect** with contemporary challenges, opportunities, and initiatives. ***Intersections*** publishes pieces on vocation from perspectives in all areas of Higher Education at Lutheran colleges and universities, including students. We publish artwork, short reflections of 500-600 words, and features of 1500-2500 words. We're especially interested in the following: insight from your research, teaching, or advocacy; your perspective based on your campus/position/location; and student perspectives on any of the above.

On the cover: Emerald St. Laurent is a Senior Theology and Psychology double major at Texas Lutheran University. She recently traveled to Holden Village with a group of TLU students and faculty, serving as the trip's unofficial photographer. Since there is no cell phone service at Holden, she chose to bring a DSLR camera and to use the trip as an opportunity to develop her style as well as to capture memories and moments of the group throughout our adventures.

CALL FOR ARTISTS

Submit your artwork for the cover of Fall 2026 *Intersections* "Vocation: Beyond Walls, For the Common Good" to the editor, Colleen Windham-Hughes: **windhamh@plts.edu.** High resolution files of photographs, digital art, paintings, drawings, sculpture, fiber or mixed media pieces are accepted media formats.

Intersections

Number 63 Spring 2026

EDITORIAL TEAM

Lamont Anthony Wells Publisher
Colleen Windham-Hughes Editor
Leanne Paetz Graphic Designer

PUBLISHED BY
The Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities

INTERSECTIONS ONLINE
http://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/intersections/

PUBLISHED AT
Augustana College
639 38th Street
Rock Island, Illinois USA 61201

GUEST EDITOR: William O'Brochta
Austin Trantham and I work together in the American Political Science Association's Civic Engagement Section. It is through conversations there that we developed the idea for this conference and these essays, proceeding to systematically review all faculty doing civic engagement work at all our ELCA institutions and institutions nearby Texas Lutheran University (TLU) to collate our final group of political scientist participants from a rich variety of institutional types and backgrounds. We were fortunate to be joined by a dozen TLU students who also presented at the conference, plus engagement from TLU students and faculty throughout all our sessions. Our hope is to continue to organize formal and informal gatherings among political scientists at faith-affiliated institutions to encourage fellowship, resource sharing, community development, and scholarship on faith, vocation, and civic engagement.

Contents

LAMONT ANTHONY WELLS | COLLEEN WINDHAM-HUGHES

FROM THE PUBLISHER & EDITOR

We have heard it and we have struggled with it ourselves: *vocation* as a word and a concept can seem abstract or high-fallutin'. It can seem out of reach, esoteric, even reserved for the privileged. Yet here is what we witness time and again in Lutheran higher education and in our own lives: ***vocation is ground game.*** Vocation is nothing less than what we live out each day in what we do and how we live with others. Sure, it can be hard to connect with the fullness of the concept in each moment, yet because vocation is connected to each person's gifts and the giving of them to neighbors, our lives present many opportunities to receive, refine, and reflect on vocation. Doing so deepens relationships with others and enlivens meaning in us.

The centerpiece of Lutheran higher education is vocation, emphasizing "the development of the whole person (mind, body, spirit), love of neighbor, and social and environmental justice."[1] This requires an approach to education that expects transformation in the lives of students, staff, and faculty. How do you educate for transformation? You bring your ground game. You introduce students to the ground game of others. You invite students into a ground game and equip them for civic engagement.

In an era where democracy feels threatened and justice work can be labeled as partisan or fringe, vocation in Lutheran higher education affirms that civic engagement is not elective nor theoretical. It is practical. It is living our faith in public. As the late Rev. Jesse Jackson often said, "justice isn't charity...it's what we demand of our common humanity." His vocational witness showed us what it looks like to take our faith to the streets, to the ballot box, and to the halls of power without losing sight of justice or hope. Rooted in questions of neighbor-love, vocation shapes students to ask not only what they will do with their lives, but how will their lives help to repair the world. Lutheran higher education nurtures students to become citizens who can stand in conviction and love, welcome differences with bravery, and work for a democracy that embraces the dignity, equity, and belonging of all.

In this issue you will read a first person account of the role of Lutheran higher education in engaging students in civic life and the shape it has taken in a recent graduate. And you'll peek into several examples of ground game from the Civic Engagement and Faith Perspectives conference, held at Texas Lutheran University in the Fall of 2025. See the introduction to this section by Dr. William O'Brochta, our guest editor.

Rev. Lamont Anthony Wells is the Executive Director, Network of ELCA (Lutheran) Colleges and Universities (NECU). As an international human rights activist, he focuses on enhancing and expanding access to education in equitable ways among global populations. | lamont.wells@ELCA.org

Colleen Windham-Hughes, PhD, MDiv, is Rector of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary at California Lutheran University. Contact Colleen for conversation about this issue or to discuss your ideas for upcoming issues: windhamh@plts.edu

Ready to explore Vocation Ground Game? Join us this summer at the Vocation of Lutheran Higher Education Conference at Augsburg University in Minneapolis, Minnesota, July 13-15, 2026: "Beyond Walls, For the Common Good: Lutheran Higher Education and Civic Responsibility." In an age marked by polarization, inequality, and public distrust, Lutheran higher education is uniquely called to witness to faith active in love through its contributions to the civic and common good. The 2026 Vocation of Lutheran Higher Education Conference invites participants to step "beyond walls" — of campus, culture, and comfort — to rediscover how core values of faith and sharing "good news" shapes our shared responsibility for the world.

Rooted in the Lutheran tradition of two kin-doms and vocation as service to neighbor, this gathering explores how our institutions embody public faith: nurturing civic imagination, moral discernment, and courageous leadership. Together, we will examine how Lutheran colleges and universities can help heal the social fabric, cultivate democratic engagement, and advance justice for all people through education that integrates faith, reason, and the call to serve.

Endnote

1. *So That All May Belong: Lutheran Roots for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice* (2025)

KYRIE FAIRBAIRN

I am a Treaty Partner

I must start off by saying that I am not Indigenous and living in the U.S. I experience privilege from being white. I am from Ferndale, Washington, and grew up on unceded land that has been the Lummi Nation's since time immemorial.

I had long prioritized social justice in my life, from advocacy for local education initiatives to leading young voter sign ups to promoting resources for women's reproductive health — long before Lutheran higher Ed took me into its (loving) grasp. That being said, growing up the granddaughter of a Lutheran pastor, I'm sure the tenets of Lutheranism played a role from the start.

When I took a class called "Indigenous Rights and Practices" during my junior year at California Lutheran University, I anticipated interest in the subject but did not predict the profound impact it would have on me. The class allowed me to have conversations that changed my world view and shifted how I perceived my obligation towards the land I grew up on. I gained knowledge about the political landscape surrounding tribes in the U.S. in a way I had not previously experienced. Most importantly, I took away an identity as a "treaty partner."

My work in the class focused on the Treaty of Point Elliott of 1855. The Treaty of Point Elliott was signed by numerous Coast Salish tribes, as well as the future first governor of the Washington territory, Isaac Stevens. The Treaty made many promises — guaranteeing healthcare, opportunities for education, and the maintenance of tribes' traditional fishing rights. However, not unlike every other treaty the U.S. has signed with a tribe, this treaty has been broken time and time again. Let me repeat that so it sticks with you — every treaty a tribe has signed with the U.S. has been broken. 368 broken promises.

> "The U.S. Government has broken their promises, and many of us have looked the other direction while they have done so."

As a part of the project, I interviewed a former Chairman of the Lummi Nation, and we had a conversation about the inextricable nature of the Treaty: salmon, land, orcas, and people. During the conversation about the Treaty, the Chairman emphasized repeatedly that *I am a treaty partner*. He said too often treaties are thought of as just "Indigenous things" and "relics of the past." He underscored the constitutional obligation to understand treaties as the supreme law of the land. The Chairman urged me

Kyrie Fairbairn grew up alongside the Pacific Ocean; graduated from California Lutheran University studying Political Science and Philosophy; and is currently working in Washington, D.C. in the U.S. Senate. She loves bodies of water, stories, and long, crowded tables. | kyriefairbairn@gmail.com

to understand that the Treaty of Point Elliott is just as much *my* treaty, as it is *his*.

The U.S. government, largely comprised of white, protestant, heterosexual, wealthy men, have incessantly put the full onus on tribes to uphold and fight for what was promised in jointly signed treaties. A treaty at its core is a promise; it is a partnership. Promises require commitment to be upheld from all sides, and when a party is not a good-faith partner, treaties do not function, and one of the partners loses recognition in the process. The U.S. Government has broken their promises, and many of us have looked the other direction while they have done so. They have stolen land, killed animals, kidnapped children, and purposefully eradicated the languages and cultures that have sustained Indigenous people since time immemorial in immeasurable ways, an unquantifiable number of times.

As a country, our conversations with Indigenous nations, our government-to-government partners, have long been riddled with white people speaking over Indigenous voices and failing to honor formal treaties. These conversations have come with a disregard for differing opinions, and ears shut to cries that demand access to land, clean water, and healthcare. We have a duty to uphold our treaties — that in and of itself is public interest and civic engagement. When we do not do so, we disregard our government partners, our neighbors, and our friends.

My understanding of myself as a treaty partner has led to me sharing this perspective. While I fully accredit the language and knowledge of being a treaty partner to the Chairman, I have California Lutheran to thank for giving me the steppingstone to uncover this identity that should have been there all along.

I have pursued opportunities to delve further into the idea of being a treaty partner, focusing my undergraduate philosophy capstone on Indigenous sovereignty and U.S. treaty breaches, by comparing arguments made by John Locke and Vine Deloria Jr., a Standing Rock Sioux theologian, author, and Indigenous activist. I have used my position as a U.S. Senate staffer to advocate on behalf of tribes. I am now applying to law school to continue to grow in this treaty partner identity in a new way.

"I challenge you to identify and understand the treaties that affect the land of your home. I aim to stir a curiosity in you to learn about the promises that impact places and living things dear to you."

I am a treaty partner because my ancestors signed the Treaty of Point Elliott and I have benefited immeasurably from it. The treaty is full of flaws and problematic promises, items that scream colonization and assumptions of misplaced authority and superiority. But it also reserves rights and guarantees vaccines and education. I have a responsibility to uphold the treaty and respect it as the supreme law of the land. I challenge you to identify and understand the treaties that affect the land of your home. I aim to stir a curiosity in you to learn about the promises that impact places and living things dear to you.

I know I have failed and will continue to fail in upholding my treaty. However, a much more significant failure would be declining to acknowledge, share, and fight for the promises stated in the Treaty of Point Elliott altogether. Sharing the verbiage of being a treaty partner, is a step I am taking as I walk on, practicing ownership and responsibility.

WILLIAM O'BROCHTA, GUEST EDITOR

Civic Engagement and Faith Perspectives

Faculty, staff, and students at member institutions of the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities (NECU) have long called for and practiced civic engagement — defined here as knowledge of social and political institutions and processes, skills to participate in civic life, and an interest in acting to better one's community (Adler and Goggin 2005). As of August 1, 2025 with the adoption of the ELCA social statement *Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-Being of All*, we are formally called to live out a mission that includes civic engagement as a cornerstone of our educational efforts.

The social statement makes this call in two parts. First, "To have a strong democracy, members of the public must know how civic institutions are supposed to function and how they are called to participate" (ELCA 2025, article 47). In other words, civic engagement is critically important. Second, the singular mention of higher education in a statement that runs more than fifty pages is "To urge faculty, staff, and administrators of ELCA-related colleges, universities, and seminaries to renew and emphasize education toward callings in public service, and to model and encourage dynamic civic participation among their students" (ELCA 2025, resolution 15).

To address such a substantial and meaningful call, we seven political scientists (and students) gathered for a conference. The social statement and the specific charge of NECU institutions is much more than can be achieved through a conference, but a conference is something concrete and, importantly, it does represent a meaningful step forward in several ways. First, to our knowledge, the conference was the first intentionally constructed gathering of political scientists from NECU member institutions in recent memory. Second, the conference brought together scholars working on both civic engagement pedagogy and scholarship across institutions from different faith traditions. As a central theme, participants were asked to reflect on "How is your civic engagement work linked to your institution's faith-affiliation?"

This essay will discuss the conference from several perspectives. First, it will briefly overview some of the ways that civic engagement is part of the call of NECU institutions. It will then recap some of the main themes and calls to action from the conference. Finally, it will introduce the short essays that follow from the other political scientists who participated along with the perspectives of two student participants.

William O'Brochta, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Texas Lutheran University and Director of Professional Development for the American Political Science Association Civic Engagement Section. | wobrochta@tlu.edu

The Importance of Civic Engagement at Lutheran Institutions

As Kleinhans (2018, 120) argues, "Martin Luther considered governmental authority to be one of the structures through which God exercises providential care of the created world." This is because "individuals flourish only as they are embedded in larger communities" (NECU 2018, 7). Those communities include people, all of whom are our neighbors, and Luther demonstrates that radical hospitality and neighbor justice mean engaging with and caring for everyone (Peñaranda 2023). Since neighbors are necessarily both members and non-members of the church, Lutherans are called to be faith-based and interfaith-dependent and to engage in their communities including government, non-profit, and community groups (Stortz 2016). How do Lutheran higher education institutions heed this call? A variety of authors in *Intersections* have provided their own reflections and experiences from their institutional perspectives (e.g., Carlsen 2008; Hughes 2021; Marichal 2007; McDonald 2011; Tunheim 2012).

We seek to extend and to expand the existing conversation beyond these excellent examples, and this conference represents one step in that direction. While Luther calls us to consider civic engagement as part of our vocation, other religious leaders similarly call their adherents and affiliated institutions to perform civically engaged work. At the same time, public higher education institutions have a natural and often statutorily mandated responsibility to serve their community. Instead of arguing that Lutheran institutions exclusively operate in this space, we find it instructive to be guided by these perspectives and to adapt them in ways that fit our own institutional characteristics. Civic engagement can be done differently at Lutheran institutions, but our approach is best guided by our own Lutheran values, the experiences of those at other Lutheran institutions, and the knowledge and understanding of those from different faith perspectives also called to value civic engagement.

Conference Overview

The conference took place at the Chapel of the Abiding Presence on the campus of Texas Lutheran University (TLU). Faculty were political science professors selected based on their own expertise in civic engagement scholarship and practice as well as to represent a variety of institutions that share geographic location, institutional size, and/or faith-affiliation to TLU. Faculty came from California Lutheran University, Valparaiso University, Muhlenberg College, Saint Leo University, St. Edward's University, and Baylor University. Through this diversity, the conference aimed to demonstrate how institutions and faculty have approached and successfully navigated a wide-range of opportunities and challenges related to civic engagement work. More than a dozen TLU students presented as part of the conference in a variety of sessions designed to engage participants in meaningful conversations on different aspects of the conference theme.

The conference format focused heavily on discussion — with each other, with students, and with the audience — and, therefore, included no traditional lectures or presentations. The first day started with introductions, goal setting, and a session exploring how civic engagement has been included in a variety of religious texts. That session, led by TLU theology and philosophy professor H. David Baer, presented textual snippets on politics from authors with various faith perspectives. Discussion centered around whether and how faith is integrated into or separate from politics and civic life. A key question was whether these thinkers considered politics as encompassing civic engagement.

Following this grounding work and a conference-themed chapel break, attendees were treated to two student-led panels approaching civic engagement at faith-affiliated institutions from two perspectives. First, students Ainsley Lake, Monica Sitachitta, and Emerald St Laurent focused on what faith-affiliation means for the student experience and the opportunity to perform civic engagement work. These students were some of those who traveled with TLU faculty Kathleen Seal, Tiffiny Sia, campus pastor Rev. Wes Cain, and me to Holden Village in May 2025. Their discussion focused on the extent to which students understand and subscribe to the values that undergird a faith-affiliated education, as these values are inclusive of a range of religious perspectives. The students also emphasized that, while religious activities on campus can help promote student belonging

and engagement that then further civic life, lack of engagement in religious life is a symptom of larger challenges with student belonging, sense of purpose, and vocational discernment.

Students Andie Lozano-Lomeli, Allegra Negrete, Izzie Stephens, and Ruby Wilsford then considered challenges and opportunities of doing civic engagement at a faith-affiliated institution. Each of these students have led civic engagement initiatives at TLU. Their discussion focused on how civic engagement work is only possible through comprehensive planning and alignment across all elements of student life. Students must be recruited with a clear sense of and subscription to the institution's mission. Curricular and co-curricular offerings and experiences must deliver on these mission-based principles. Faith-affiliated institutions — and especially Lutheran institutions — have long stated the importance of mission, but it requires a comprehensive, institution-wide effort for students to be able to clearly articulate why the education that they are receiving at a faith-affiliated institution is distinctive, how that education helps them to live out their vocation, and the extent to which civic engagement is a mission-aligned point of distinction.

"Our faith-informed missions can be used to provide strong guidance for civically engaged action if our institutions clearly articulate these principles."

The afternoon featured students leading discussions on essays prepared by the faculty attendees, the finalized versions of which follow this essay. Mase Aleman, Gigi Baeza-Smith, Ainsley Davis, Matthew DeLeon, Jenna Newman, and Eleanor Puchot served as discussants. From these conversations, participants noted the commonalities between many of the strategies and challenges of doing civic engagement work across faith-affiliated institutions. Despite the participants coming from different locations, institutional sizes, and faith affiliations, participants recognized that there can be a stronger connection between our faith affiliations and civic engagement. Our faith-informed missions can be used to provide strong guidance for civically engaged action if our institutions clearly articulate these principles.

Call to Action

With a clear framework established regarding the student and faculty experience of doing civic engagement work at faith-affiliated institutions, the remainder of the conference was dedicated to reflections, next steps, and idea generation. Through our discussion, participants developed a series of calls to action for students, faculty, staff, and institutions to further the connection between our faith-affiliations and civic engagement.

Our call to students is to seek out opportunities to participate in the mission of their institution, to discern their vocation, and to increase their civic engagement. Faith-affiliated institutions add value when students see their time at these institutions holistically but also understand how faith-affiliated values are truly important for a fruitful and productive life.

Our call to faculty is to invest in civic engagement work as part of the core of their disciplines, alongside other components of their institution's mission. Civic engagement must be embedded as an institutional mission in all the work in which we engage. Doing so allows students to see how civic engagement fits into their vocation and to do so in a variety of contexts.

Our call to institutions is to actively use faith-affiliated language to live into and to promote our own mission. Institutions that aim to be everything to everyone or that follow short-term opportunities and trends lack a clear identity. Civic engagement is a traditional strength of faith-affiliated — and particularly Lutheran — institutions. Institutions may be hesitant to clearly define how their faith-affiliation shapes all components of campus life. As many institutions aim to bolster enrollment, they must move boldly forward, advertising and acting to define the type of students and the type of engagement that they wish to foster. Part of such a movement toward our mission and so that all may flourish is focusing on the well-being of faculty and staff and ensuring that they

ave the capacity, resources, energy, and direction to lead students to become more civically engaged.

Our call to NECU and to the ELCA is to provide more opportunities for faculty to engage with one another, to problem solve, and to develop relationships across campuses. Faculty have the expertise, knowledge, and interest in supporting their institution's mission and, more generally, in collaborating to address common cross-institution problems like those associated with civic engagement work.

Participant Essays

Each faculty participant was asked to reflect and to prepare a short essay on the conference theme, and these essays follow. The essays demonstrate a range of approaches to thinking about the role of institutional faith-affiliation in civic engagement work. A. Lanethea Mathews-Schultz frames her courses around the core values of the Muhlenberg family, who themselves found their Lutheran faith as a calling to participate actively in civic and political life. Haco Hoang brings these connections into the modern day, describing how partnerships with the Lutheran Office of Public Policy provide grounded opportunities for civic engagement work that reflects institutional values. James Old reminds those interested in civic engagement work that the transition between rooted historical and religious values and contemporary practices is often challenging — amid financial and enrollment challenges, how can Lutheran institutions continue to meaningfully fulfill their civic engagement mission?

We were fortunate to expand faith affiliations beyond Lutheranism to include participants from Baptist and Catholic institutions. David Thomason describes how Christians are called by their faith to be involved in civic life and the furtherance of democracy and to do so in a way that is intentionally inclusive. Austin Trantham zooms in on specific core values that form the basis of an Order of Saint Benedict education. Finally, Rebecca Flavin shows readers a Baptist perspective that civic engagement is a global calling to meaningfully build and sustain community.

The section concludes with an essay from students Emma Bohmann and Monica Sitachitta, who describe their thoughts and reflections from the conference. They identify several challenges linking faith to civic engagement work, especially in contexts where faith affiliation is less central to institutional identity and where other institutional concerns are seemingly more urgent. Nevertheless, their essay, and indeed the call of the entire conference is that meaningfully linking our faith affiliations to civic engagement work is critically important for democracy, for our students and their vocational discernment, and for the health and identity of our institutions.

Works Cited

Adler, Richard P., and Judy Goggin. 2005. "What Do We Mean By Civic Engagement?" *Journal of Transformative Education* 3(3): 236-53.

Carlsen, Mary S. 2008. "Engaging the Local Community: Why Bother?" *Intersections* 27: 6-12.

ELCA. 2025. "Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-Being of All."

Hughes, Krista. 2021. "Community-Building on Campus and Beyond." *Intersections* 54: 9-10.

Kleinhans, Kathryn A. 2018. "Good Government and the Vocation of Citizenship: A Lutheran Perspective." *Dialog* 57(2): 120-25. doi:10.1111/dial.12392.

Marichal, José. 2007. "Why Diversity and Civic Engagement Don't Talk to Each Other on College Campuses: The Need for Public Work." *Intersections* 25: 25-30.

McDonald, Joseph. 2011. "Lutheran Colleges, the Lutheran Tradition, and the Future of Service-Learning." *Intersections* 34: 17-22.

NECU. 2018. "Rooted and Open: The Common Calling of the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities."

Peñaranda, Nicolette Marie. 2023. "The Gospel According to Civic Engagement." *Dialog* 62(1): 71-74. doi:10.1111/dial.12804.

Stortz, Martha E. 2016. "Why Interfaith Work Is Not a Luxury: Lutherans as Neighboring Neighbors." *Intersections* 44: 9-20.

Tunheim, Katherine A. 2012. "Practical Approaches for Lutheran College to Engage Civil Society." *Intersections* 35: 20-22.

SAVE THE DATE

Vocation of Lutheran Higher Education Conference

Augsburg University, Minneapolis, Minnesota | July 13-15, 2026

TOPIC: **Beyond Walls, For the Common Good: Lutheran Higher Education and Civic Responsibility**

In an age marked by polarization, inequality, and public distrust, Lutheran higher education is uniquely called to witness to faith active in love through its contributions to the civic and common good. The 2026 Vocation of Lutheran Higher Education Conference invites participants to step "beyond walls" — of campus, culture, and comfort — to rediscover how core values of faith and sharing "good news" shapes our shared responsibility for the world.

Rooted in the Lutheran tradition of two kin-doms and vocation as service to neighbor, this gathering explores how our institutions embody public faith: nurturing civic imagination, moral discernment, and courageous leadership. Together, we will examine how Lutheran colleges and universities can help heal the social fabric, cultivate democratic engagement, and advance justice for all people through education that integrates faith, reason, and the call to serve.

Participants will:

1. Reexamine Lutheran theological frameworks (vocation, two kin-doms, grace and freedom) as resources for engaging public life with humility and hope.
2. Explore practices of civic learning and community engagement that align with Lutheran identity and contribute to local and global well-being.
3. Strengthen institutional commitments to the common good, including democratic participation, ecological stewardship, and social equity.
4. Build interdisciplinary networks among faculty, administrators, and students to sustain faith-informed civic engagement initiatives across NECU campuses.
5. Discern how Lutheran higher education can model public trust, moral leadership, and hospitality amid pluralism and division.

For more information and registration details, contact Grace.Marcus@elca.org

A. LANETHEA MATHEWS-SCHULTZ

Leaning-In to the Civic Lessons of Our Namesakes

Muhlenberg College was named to commemorate Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg (1711-1787), German immigrant and patriarch of Lutheranism in the United States. The choice linked the College to the Lutheran faith and to a political dynasty exemplifying the promise — and responsibility — of democratic engagement. This is revealed in oft-repeated stories of college lore that I share with my students at the start of each new semester.

The first takes us back to the American Revolution before Muhlenberg College existed to Henry's son and Virginia Lutheran minister, John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg (1746-1807), who reportedly openly struggled with the question of revolution. Standing before his congregation in January of 1776 and drawing inspiration from Ecclesiastes, General Muhlenberg is said to have ripped off his clerical robes to reveal his officer's uniform, shouting: "There is a time to preach and a time to pray. But there is also a time to fight, and that time has come now!" Legend has it that more than 150 men kissed their families, left the church with Muhlenberg leading the way, and joined the Revolutionary cause, becoming the core of Virginia's 8th regiment.

Historians doubt the veracity of the account of "General Pete's" famous 1776 speech, but his legacy nonetheless lives on — a copy of the original marble statue of General Muhlenberg found in Statutory Hall in the U.S. Capitol sits at the center of our campus green and it is in his honor that one of our eateries — the "General's Quarters," or "GQ" — is named. After the war, General Muhlenberg resettled in Pennsylvania, where he was elected to the first U.S. Congress. His brother, Frederick Augustus Conrad Muhlenberg (1750-1801), was also elected from Pennsylvania, becoming the first Speaker of the House of Representatives and the first to sign the Bill of Rights.

This is the history — itself a lesson about civic engagement and the nation's founding–that Frederick Augustis Muhlenberg (1818-1901) (Henry's great-grandson and General Pete's great-nephew) inherited and transmitted to Muhlenberg College when he became our first president. Although less dramatic than General Pete's call to fellow patriots, President Muhlenberg's inaugural address continues to inspire teaching and learning at the College. He said: "No education is complete unless it prepares a man to discharge all his duties properly in this world…this kind of education contemplates the education of his conscience and the cultivation of his heart." If they are observant, students will find references to the "education of conscience" and "cultivation of heart" on

A. Lanethea Mathews-Schultz, Ph.D., teaches classes on gender and politics and American political institutions as a Professor of Political Science at Muhlenberg College. | mathews@muhlenberg.edu

our website and note familiarity with phrases like “ethical and civic values” and “lives of leadership and service” in the College’s mission statement.

> “Whether or not my students themselves are Lutheran, I seek to convince them that they are part of the community forged by our namesakes.”

I share these stories with my students not only because I hope to clue them into the statues they encounter on campus—although seeing the history around us is a useful goal. Most of my students are unfamiliar with the Muhlenbergs; many are surprised to learn of the College’s links to the ELCA (we certainly do not hide this connection, but it is evidently not something we emphasize in admissions). Whether or not my students themselves are Lutheran, I seek to convince them that they are part of the community forged by our namesakes. We are part of Muhlenberg civic history. We can — and should — *lean-in to the Muhlenbergs*. Their shared values, sense of civic duty, and willingness to lead when it is “time to fight” offer inspiration for our own education and democratic engagement today.

Work Cited

Susan Clemens Bruder, “Connecting the Past, Present, and Future: Muhlenberg College,” *The Periodical* 57, no. 1A2 (1013-2014): 3-44.

HACO HOANG

Teaching and Mentoring in Service of Civic Engagement

The mission of California Lutheran University (Cal Lutheran) is to "educate leaders for a global society" who are committed to service and justice, and to help our students "discover and live their purpose." Faith-based and liberal arts institutions, such as Cal Lutheran, are poised to cultivate a civic-minded ethos that embraces values and reason. As a political science faculty member, I foster a culture of civic engagement through my teaching, mentoring, service and scholarship. As an educator, I teach courses that examine phenomena which shape political life, such as Community Development, Public Policy, and Women and Politics. In these courses, students examine how public policy impacts stakeholders in all spheres of society, and they develop skills to be civically engaged. Students read original policy documents to mitigate content bias and are taught how to analyze policy by identifying real world issues, examining the causes of problems, and proposing recommendations that are feasible. By understanding the complexity of political life, students develop the skills and knowledge to be civic-minded individuals and agents of change in society. Student projects have addressed topics including maternal morbidity rates among Black women, violence against Native American women, youth activism, and generational wealth in low-income communities.

Most, if not all, students in political science pursue internships, service, or volunteer opportunities with political campaigns, local government and civic organizations, which I help them identify and secure through the personal and professional networks I cultivated while working in public policy and political campaigns. By involving students in research, I mentor students on how to use their academic skills to produce scholarship that contributes to public discourse and civic engagement. For example, my students and I have presented our research findings about the impact of the *Dobbs* abortion ruling at academic conferences and in the larger community, particularly during the 2022 and 2024 elections.

One of the most effective ways that my civic engagement activities and Cal Lutheran's mission align is the meaningful collaboration I forged with the Lutheran Office of Public Policy, which is based in Sacramento. For the past two years, a delegation of Cal Lutheran students participated in Lutheran Lobby Day to advocate for legislation that supports the ELCA's social statements and priorities in California's proposed budget. The ELCA social statements are the denomination's most authoritative teaching documents on major social issues. The purpose of the statements is to guide the Church's teaching, policy

Haco Hoang, Ph.D., is a Professor of Political Science and Pre-Law Program Advisor at California Lutheran University, where she teaches public policy courses. | hhoang@callutheran.edu

advocacy, and moral deliberation. For 3 months, I prepared students by having them research the ELCA's social statements and current issues facing California. They are trained to be policy advocates through mock policy writing and practicing oral presentations. Students work with the ELCA members to lobby legislators in the California State Assembly and Senate on legislation that aligns with the Lutheran Church's social statements, including affordable housing, child tax credits, clean water in schools, environmental justice, and immigration reform.

I am fortunate to be able to teach and produce scholarly work that cultivates knowledge and foster skills that can be applied to civic-minded activities, such as public policy, advocacy, and community activism. Faith-based institutions like Cal Lutheran serve as incubators for students, faculty and the entire community to develop civic skills, norms, and a sense of community, which are essential to meaningful and transformative civic participation. During these tumultuous political times, the ELCA social statements facilitate and strengthen our resolve at Cal Lutheran to root our civic education of students in academic analysis and the Lutheran tradition of higher education that engages both faith and reason.

"Faith-based institutions like Cal Lutheran serve as incubators for students, faculty and the entire community to develop civic skills, norms, and a sense of community, which are essential to meaningful and transformative civic participation."

JAMES OLD

Community-Based Research as Engaged Citizenship

Last fall, I taught a section of Valparaiso University's first-year experience course. My course theme was "Re-Thinking Citizenship." During one session, I asked my students to consider the different communities to which they belong — families, schools, even online — and to write about a specific action they had taken that demonstrated their "citizenship" within that community.

When I read their responses, I was surprised to find that many of them thought of citizenship in terms of random gestures of kindness toward strangers. Many students talked about service projects like showing up at food banks with boxes of canned goods. One described drawing smiley faces on customers' cups at Starbucks. But few students described actions that contributed to genuine communities built on enduring and reciprocal relationships. They gave, others received. End of story. These responses reflect a common model of "service" that is well-meaning and charitable, but also transactional and simplistic. While this approach may lead to many worthy actions, genuine civic engagement requires more.

"It is hardly a surprise that growing up with few compelling examples of citizenship, our students' understanding of the concept is limited."

In its mission statement, Valparaiso University states an intention to "prepare students to lead and serve in both church and society." The first step in fostering this kind of civic engagement is to nurture connections between students and communities. We must do so at a time where the students' own communities are increasingly fractured and fragile due to political, economic, and social polarization. It is hardly a surprise that growing up with few compelling examples of citizenship, our students' understanding of the concept is limited.

How can we counter this? Community engagement is central to a Valpo education. In the first-year program, students participate in "Field Work" projects that connect them to the broader community and build civic skills. Valpo students commit hundreds of thousands of hours each year to community outreach and service learning. One project that I have been involved with is the Community Research and Service Center (CRSC). In this office, Political Science students conduct research projects for local governments and non-profit organizations. Over thirty years, CRSC students have completed dozens of projects, from surveying community members about their perceptions of local needs to evaluating the effectiveness of after-school programming.

James Paul Old, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor and Chair of Political Science & International Relations at Valparaiso University.

This kind of community-based research teaches students that genuine community engagement depends on building long-term relationships. These projects require sustained collaboration in which research is only the beginning of a process of discerning and responding to community needs. We draw on our partners' local knowledge and expertise, while they count on us to gather data, analyze it carefully, and communicate findings in ways that are useful to them. This work demands patience, communication, and accountability over time.

One challenge for community-engaged education is that it is resource intensive, demanding significant faculty time and sustained institutional funding. During periods of enrollment decline and financial pressure, these programs become difficult to sustain. At Valpo, this has meant significantly scaling back CRSC operations to reflect this reality. We are exploring partnerships with other campus units and new funding sources to expand our capacity, but that remains a work in progress. Community outreach may be central to our mission, but that does not mean it is easy — or inexpensive — to sustain.

If institutions are to be true to their missions, they must invest in these programs. The CRSC enables students to apply their research skills and intellectual training to benefit communities while learning the discipline of building genuine partnerships. My hope is they come to see their Social Sciences education as the foundation for a life vocation. In these kinds of experiences, our students can begin to transform from well-intentioned individuals into, engaged, and generous citizens of their communities and the world.

DAVID THOMASON

An Ecosystem of Democracy

A well-founded premise is that public policy is initiated by self-interest. A group petitions the city to expand public parks for new pickleball courts. Residents living in a neighborhood request that their county install a stoplight at a nearby intersection. Both of these succeed because specific interests bring the concerns to those making public decisions. Democracy is rarely this simple. Often, we are driven to public advocacy because we recognize that our self-interest is at odds with others on the same issue. The stakes are higher when the conflicting public problem ties into our deeply held beliefs. Given the opportunity, should the tools of power be used to make public life mirror our deeply held beliefs? For example, should Christians invoke a state requirement to display the Ten Commandments in public schools, require Christian prayers in school, or mix Christian theology in public school curriculum?

A central problem of democracy is whether and how individuals and groups can simultaneously advocate for personal values, while also recognizing, tolerating, and respecting the public sphere as a shared space of divergent, competing, incommensurable held values. Some resolve this by an agency of dominant power in the public space, overtaking the system with the values they support at the expense of all others that disagree. In other words, some claim that since their values are the truth and the democratic majority is on their side, then what is stopping them from transferring their values into law?

Is this how faith-based institutions should equip students to engage as citizens of our democracy: teaching that faith is a catalyst to overpower and dominate other interests in society? I suggest it is not. Rather, I see faith-based institutions equipping students to understand and promote a healthy ecosystem of democracy. As Romans 3:23 states, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Human beings are flawed, imperfectly conveying God's truth.

> "The tools of faith-based civic engagement should lead students to pursue universal values while acknowledging how imperfectly humanity applies them to social, political, economic, and even religious institutions."

Unlike public universities, faith-based institutions should help students embrace their faith with conviction, encouraging them to connect how their faith can guide them in addressing public problems. Faith-based institutions must promote the recognition of humanity's incomplete grasp

David Thomason, Ph.D., is the Executive Director of the Kozmetsky Center for Civic Engagement at St. Edward's University, where he is also an Associate Professor of Political Science.

of truth. The tools of faith-based civic engagement should lead students to pursue universal values while acknowledging how imperfectly humanity applies them to social, political, economic, and even religious institutions.

Christian citizens should advocate their beliefs with virtue and tolerance, even when other participants are locked in a zero-sum outcome. Faith-based institutions should promote a public space more akin to an ecosystem of interests, with a healthy promotion of the American republic. Transferring religious values directly into political institutions endangers any open society, especially when those values belong to a single religious tradition. The American founders understood this in the First Amendment, that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion."

Christian citizens should advocate for public values that can best promote shared aspirations of justice, liberty, equality, and peace among all citizens and non-citizens. Instead of mounting the Ten Commandments on a wall or prayer in public schools, we should ask whether either promotes a healthy ecosystem of democracy. Teaching self-restraint and limits is a critical part of a faith-based education. An ecosystem of democracy provides a more properly understood, respectful approach to promoting self-interest in a community of competing and often incommensurable values. It should be the responsibility of faith-based institutions to cultivate the civic virtues of tolerance, respect for the law, and using reason for public discourse; some of the virtues the American Founders understood as cooperatively unifying a deeply held faith and an active democratic participation, while optimistically encouraging strong citizens for this world, as well as hope in the one to come.

AUSTIN TRANTHAM

Bringing Core Values to Life through Civic Engagement

I teach and serve at Saint Leo University, a private Catholic institution rooted in long-standing Benedictine values. These Core Values — Community, Excellence, Integrity, Personal Development, Respect, and Responsible Stewardship — inform the daily work of our students, faculty, and staff, and are held in high esteem across campus. Whether working with civically minded students, promoting democratic discourse on campus with my faculty colleagues, or directly educating students in the classroom, my civic engagement efforts are guided by a desire to advance these founding principles.

I was honored to serve as a Faculty Advisor for Saint Leo's "Why Vote?" campaign, helping to guide student leaders to promote the inviting and inclusive theme of "Empower, Elevate, and Educate." Everyone worked tirelessly to plan and execute the university's first "Civic Engagement Day." Multiple community organizations participated in informative sessions discussing the impact of civic engagement, and the direct impact that college students can make through targeted activism. The event culminated with a conversation between the student organizers and a member of the Florida House of Representatives. This gathering demonstrated our Community Core Value, inviting "all of us to listen, to learn, to change, and to serve." Subsequent activities included presentations and informal events aligning with National Voter Registration Day and Civic Engagement Week. This work illustrates the Saint Leo Core Value of Excellence, which includes a call to "develop the character, learn the skills, and assimilate the knowledge essential to become morally responsible leaders."

Each year, I am privileged to collaborate with colleagues on an event celebrating Constitution Day that meaningfully engages the Saint Leo community. We invite faculty members from various disciplines to discuss a thematic issue relating to civic engagement and constitutionalism in order to link Founding principles to modern political and social issues. In 2025, I moderated our conversation on "Immigration, Citizenship, and the Constitution" with professors in criminal justice, history, and political science. While differences of opinion were expressed on topics regarding assimilation and cultural heritage, the evening cultivated with insightful student questions. I thoroughly enjoyed leading an event that directly engages our Core Value of Respect, noting the importance of "unity and diversity…the free exchange of ideas, and… learning, living, and working harmoniously."

Finally, I strive to cultivate civic awareness through my teaching by connecting students directly with community leaders and opportunities for democratic dialogue. In my American State and Local Government course, students

Austin Trantham, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Saint Leo University.

"Though some are initially nervous about this prospect, all come away appreciating the opportunity to hone their civic knowledge, critical thinking, and oral communication skills."

covered with a former student, Luke King, now Judge/Executive of Cumberland County, Kentucky. He discussed the creation of the Cumberland County Civics Club, a pioneering initiative in youth civic engagement. Students in my Introduction to Politics class participate in the Unify Challenge, practicing respectful discourse on policy issues with peers from other institutions holding differing political perspectives. Though some are initially nervous about this prospect, all come away appreciating the opportunity to hone their civic knowledge, critical thinking, and oral communication skills. These efforts correlate with the Saint Leo Core Value of Personal Development and our emphasis on the "development of every person's mind…to help strengthen the character of our community."

It is gratifying to work at a faith-based institution that intentionally strives to promote Core Values, and my work in civic engagement has certainly benefited from engaging with these mission-based practices to educate and empower students, colleagues, and the community.

REBECCA FLAVIN

Civic Engagement, "Baylor In Deeds," and Engaged Learning

Baylor University's mission is "to educate men and women for worldwide leadership and service by integrating academic excellence and Christian commitment within a caring community." The University's current strategic plan, "Baylor in Deeds," strives to deepen this commitment to preparing our students for civic engagement through academic and character formation and expands our longstanding motto, *Pro Ecclesia, Pro Texana*, with an additional, broader global focus — *Pro Mundo*. "Baylor in Deeds" is inspired by Christ's Sermon on the Mount, where he instructs us, "let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Among the foundational pillars of this strategic plan is providing students with a "transformational undergraduate educational experience" including experiential learning opportunities outside the classroom.

Baylor's Office of Engaged Learning (OEL) is a campus hub that connects students to these opportunities for engagement beyond the classroom including research, internships, and public service work in local, state and national communities, endeavoring to embody Paul's exhortation in the First Epistle to Timothy, "to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share…so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life" (I Timothy 6:18-19). Through these learning experiences, the OEL equips students to "transform the cultural, social, economic, and political contexts around them so that they might help to create a world that is more just, fair, inclusive, equitable, and sustainable — one in which all flourishing is mutual." We achieve our goals when our students orient their learning toward the needs of others, participating in civic engagement not for self-interested reasons such as bolstering their resumes but in service of the greater good.

"We achieve our goals when our students orient their learning toward the needs of others, participating in civic engagement not for self-interested reasons such as bolstering their resumes but in service of the greater good."

One of OEL's more recent initiatives is working alongside academic departments across campus to build the Engaged Learning Distribution List (ELDL) for Baylor's College of Arts & Science's Core Curriculum. While the

Rebecca Flavin, Ph.D., is the Director of Engaged Learning Curriculum and a Senior Lecturer of Political Science in Baylor University's College of Arts & Sciences.

requirement is only in its second year, the EL DL already boasts approximately 50 unique undergraduate courses from more than 20 distinct departmental prefixes, including disciplines spanning Arts and Sciences divisions as well as offerings from other colleges. Moreover, over 75% of these courses are either newly developed or revised for this requirement, underscoring widely shared enthusiasm for this work that will continue to blossom through "Baylor in Deeds."

The College's learning objectives for the ELDL include an explicit commitment to civic engagement: "Students will use knowledge gained and skills developed in the course to cultivate civic virtues and contribute to the public good." Among the courses currently offered in the ELDL, those in the Philanthropy and Public Service Program (PPS) enroll the most total students, including PPS 1101 Learning for the World and PPS 2101 Community Based Global Learning. Each of these courses requires between ten and twenty hours of community-engaged service during the semester, with most students in PPS 1101 and PPS 2101 volunteering with English as a Second Language (ESL) programs offered at a local church and community college. Data from the Global Engagement Survey (GES) for courses offered in the 2024-2025 academic year is encouraging and indicates that students show improvement in both civic efficacy and global civic responsibility between the pre-test administered at the start of the semester and the post-test administered at the end of the class. These results bear witness to the positive impact that community engaged learning has in our quest to train students for "worldwide leadership and service" grounded in our Christian commitment to love our neighbor as ourselves.

EMMA BOHMANN | MONICA SITACHITTA

Fragmented in Faith: The Concerns and Hopes Found in Student Spirituality and Civic Engagement

We — Emma, who works with Campus Ministry, and Monica, who is on the soccer team and is a Resident Assistant — participated as students in the Civic Engagement and Faith Perspectives conference. In reflecting on the conference and on our own observations, the connection between faith and civic engagement is increasingly central to day-to-day student life and our imaginations of where we want ourselves and our institution to be. Here, we offer our perspectives on the challenges and the necessity of linking civic engagement to our institution's faith affiliation.

The causes of civic engagement and spiritual engagement exist in a cyclical pattern: low spiritual engagement inspires less motivation for other areas, but also, low motivation in general — due to students not taking advantage of campus resources, generally being overwhelmed with their workload, personal stressors, and pressure from other campus involvements — might stimulate less spiritual engagement. Many of our classmates attend class irregularly for a variety of personal reasons, but also because they say that attending class is not worth the investment. As these students' commitment to completing the most central part of college — attending class — is often lacking, it is challenging for faculty, staff, and peers to encourage student intellectual, spiritual, and community development. This is the more basic problem that must be solved before spiritual and community engagement among our student body can even be addressed — students are easily overwhelmed by their foundational college experience, and they are not able to seek out "extra" ways to spend time.

We benefit from a tight knit group of active student organizations on campus that address a range of civic or advocacy-focused causes with a small team of executives and regular members. The actual impact of these organizations on campus and in the community necessitates widespread acknowledgment and a consistent drive from the student body to support these efforts.

Emma Bohmann is a freshman English and Theology double major at Texas Lutheran University. She also works as the TLU Campus Ministry Freshman/First-year Engagement Coordinator.

Monica Sitachitta is a sophomore Communication Studies and Dramatic Media double major at Texas Lutheran University. She also is a TLU Resident Assistant and works for TLU student media producing student journalism.

Monica hosted an extremely successful Campus Living event recently where more than seventy students attended to get a free snack. This was great, but the event also aimed for students to hang around and build community when, in actuality, most students got their slushy and left. Emma faces this challenge in Campus Ministry, as student leaders and faculty and staff struggle to figure out how to reach our current student body. Chapel attendance is low, and Campus Ministry-sponsored events successful in the past now result in few participants. If these groups, however, existed on a version of our campus that was truer to its established Lutheran values, students might have better recognition of the importance of fellowship opportunities.

As our Lutheran student population continues to dwindle, it becomes clear that the Lutheran prioritization of civic engagement can no longer be assumed in incoming students. While there has been a commendable attempt to incorporate some Lutheran values in the curriculum and in campus engagement opportunities, there is still clearly a disconnect between that work and the results among our student body. It must be widely understood, then, that teaching Lutheran values — and making them a mandatory central point for student life — does not necessitate student participation in the Lutheran faith or any faith for that matter. Once we establish the distinction between Lutheran values and practicing the Lutheran faith, there are immediately more opportunities to develop our campus identity and culture. Lutheranism has much to guide us on how to live a better and more just life in communion with others. A core Lutheran value is neighbor justice, which, in a campus life context, suggests active engagement in accompaniment service with fellow students and with our community in Seguin. This service should reflect a desire to see better outcomes for those whom we serve alongside. Additionally, keeping the Lutheran value of open and welcoming communion central to our university's identity would create a broader understanding of why most of our students are not, in fact, Lutheran; our doors are, clearly, open to all who wish to receive an education here. It would also encourage students of various faith backgrounds, or of no faith background at all, to explore how they can express their individual perspectives in a way that is constructive to a more intellectually diverse student body.

Other issues appear more important than our connection to our Lutheran identity. More than ever, our age group is isolated, overwhelmed, financially strained, and anxious about their futures. As a Lutheran institution with a rich tradition of close community, we should value that unique gift as an avenue to solve those broader issues our students may face. It is a hopeful prospect that many institutions do not necessarily have: to harness our most ingrained Lutheran principles in a way that can relieve the strains that are not unique to our own student body, but are still widely felt. Civic engagement appears as non-essential compared to these issues. As a university, many of the civic engagement experiences in which our students participate are incentivized by course assignments, athletic requirements, or financial remuneration. These experiences exist largely because of individual efforts to enhance campus civic engagement, as no one individual can change the landscape and culture of campus life. Incentivized participation is important, but it does belie the greater intentionality of the process of discerning why one wants to become engaged and committing to that process selflessly.

> "And while it is also essential to Lutheran higher education that we meet the needs of all neighbors by opening our institution's doors to people of every faith or belief background, we must not let a perceived aversion to our unique Lutheran perspective deprive our student population of the applicable elements of our university's established values."

Yet, by focusing on our Lutheran identity, civic engagement quickly becomes essential and an essential component to starting to address these issues. One of the key foundations of Lutheran higher education is civic engagement, the idea that each person is called to neighborly service for the purpose of bettering the

world. Discernment of the best way to do that service, based on our gifts, resources, and inclinations, can only happen through spiritual engagement. And while it is also essential to Lutheran higher education that we meet the needs of all neighbors by opening our institution's doors to people of every faith or belief background, we must not let a perceived aversion to our unique Lutheran perspective deprive our student population of the applicable elements of our university's established values.

Every issue we, and other students, faculty, and staff, have identified may not be solved at once. There should not be an attempt to regress our entire student body back to the times of required chapel attendance. That is because the goal is teaching Lutheran values — a central one being inspired and purposeful civic engagement — but not the Lutheran faith, exclusively. It is essential that we honor our diverse levels of faith and civic engagement backgrounds, but to truly honor that and to fully educate each student, there must be a reflection of passion for this change from individuals in every corner of our campus. Our institution cannot convey a sense of shame or shyness on the topic of our Lutheran name. Professors, especially those who engage conversations surrounding faith and vocation, should encourage a curiosity about the Lutheran heritage of those concepts. And students should be introduced to the possibility of restorative faith and civic engagement that inspires more glad work in their academic, athletic, and social efforts, rather than chapel and community service days tacked on to the end of their already long to-do lists. This is how identity is cultivated; either we fully embrace our Lutheran name by reflecting those mandatory Lutheran values, or we explore a new identity wholly that is rooted in something else that better reflects our current student body.

When we confront our Lutheran heritage as inheritors of this institution, we also confront the need to, on a basic level, communicate to our fellow students that service to neighbor as inspired by our faithful discernment and practice — from whatever spiritual source they choose, not exclusively Lutheran — is not optional, elective, or extracurricular; it is something we must do whether we realize it or not. The intentionality and quality of that work, though, determines how our university is regarded by the world.

Intersections

Augustana College
639 38th Street
Rock Island, IL 61201-2296

The Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities

Augsburg University MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA
Augustana College ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS
Augustana University SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA
Bethany College LINDSBORG, KANSAS
California Lutheran University THOUSAND OAKS, CALIFORNIA
Capital University COLUMBUS, OHIO
Carthage College KENOSHA, WISCONSIN
Concordia College MOORHEAD, MINNESOTA
Gettysburg College GETTYSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
Grand View University DES MOINES, IOWA
Gustavus Adolphus College ST. PETER, MINNESOTA
Lenoir-Rhyne University HICKORY, NORTH CAROLINA
Luther College DECORAH, IOWA
Luther College at the University of Regina
SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA
Midland University FREMONT, NEBRASKA
Muhlenberg College ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA
Newberry College NEWBERRY, SOUTH CAROLINA
Pacific Lutheran University TACOMA, WASHINGTON
Roanoke College SALEM, VIRGINIA
St. Olaf College NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA
Susquehanna University SELINSGROVE, PENNSYLVANIA
Texas Lutheran University SEGUIN, TEXAS
Thiel College GREENVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA
Valparaiso University VALPARAISO, INDIANA
Wagner College STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK
Waldorf College FOREST CITY, IOWA
Wartburg College WAVERLY, IOWA
Wittenberg University SPRINGFIELD, OHIO

Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America