

Crafting Your Cal Lutheran Story

*Convocators Meeting
October 8, 2015*

*Drawn from Marshall Ganz,
“Public Narrative, Collective Action, and Power”*

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A great story has a great plot

Why do we care?

“A plot engages us, captures our interest, and makes us pay attention. **‘I got up this morning, had breakfast, and came to school.’** Is that a plot? Why? Why not?”

How about the following: **‘I was having breakfast this morning when I heard a loud screeching coming from the roof. At that very moment, I looked outside to where my car was parked, but it was gone!’** Now what is going on? What is the difference?

A story begins. An actor is moving toward a desired goal. Then **some kind of challenge appears. The plan is suddenly up in the air. The actor must figure out what to do. This is when we get interested.** We want to find out what happens.”

- Ganz

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The short story of Cal Lutheran

Cal Lutheran is a mid-sized independent university located in Thousand Oaks, which is halfway between Los Angeles and Santa Barbara. Our students are open-minded and strong academically, and **our focus is on helping them explore their passions and discover their purpose. We're best known for providing one-on-one attention** – both from faculty and everyone else at the university – because we believe that this attention is what helps students identify and pursue that purpose so they can change the world.

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Facts – The Backbone of the Plot

- **Open-Minded and Diverse Student Body**
 - Dynamic mix of open-minded students that represent 52 countries and 33 states
 - 2015 entering class the most diverse in school history
 - 16.8% of incoming freshmen identify as Lutheran.
(Entire TUG population in Fall 2014 was 11% Lutheran)
- **Graduation Rate**
 - We guarantee a 4-year graduation as part of our 4-to-Finish Graduation Guarantee Program
 - 67% percent of our incoming freshmen graduate in four years, compared to 18% at Cal State schools or 63% in the UC system
- **Outcomes**
 - 97% of graduates from the class of 2014 were either employed or in graduate school within nine months
 - 80% of graduates from the class of 2015 that reported having a job at graduation said they had landed a job in their field of choice

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More Facts

- **Undergraduate Affordability**
 - Annual undergraduate tuition and fees are \$38,430. Total cost of attendance for a student living on campus is \$57,641.
 - Our average financial aid package in 2014 was \$30,270
 - Among the Cal Lutheran graduated class of 2014, the average indebtedness in student loans was \$24,000 – 15% below the national average
 - For students who are admitted to Cal Lutheran and one the top UC Schools, our CLU Guarantee will match the UC cost of attendance (\$23,424 this year.)
 - We have “frozen” our Bachelor’s Degree for Professionals tuition at \$580 per unit until 2020, providing predictability to our non-traditional undergrads

- **Graduate Programs**
 - Graduate School of Education is thriving as the job market for educators resurges
 - Graduate School of Psychology just received American Psychological Association accreditation (a big deal!) for our PsyD.
 - School of Management is launching a new MBA for Experienced Professionals in the Fall

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Connecting your story to “our story”



When talking with congregations, the most powerful message will connect your personal story to "our" story (the story of the Cal Lutheran community,) and then to the story of "now." (Why immediate action is required, why the listener should support Cal Lutheran.)

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The story of self

What was your “choice point?”

“We construct stories of self around *choice points*—moments when we faced a challenge, made a choice, experienced an outcome, and learned a moral. We communicate values that motivate us by selecting from among those choice points, and recounting what happened.” - *Ganz*

- Where did you come from?
- What were your choices and why did you choose to get involved with Cal Lutheran?

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The story of us

How does your story of self link to what you see as the values of Cal Lutheran?

- Since you chose to be involved with Cal Lutheran, how have you experienced the community?
- How do Cal Lutheran’s shared values connect to your own?

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The story of now

How are the actions you're taking shaping your desired future?

- What is your vision for your future, and how will Cal Lutheran impact that?
- If the person you're talking to shared that vision, and invested in it, how would that impact the world for the better?
- What is the hopeful vision we can all share?

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Practice your speech

Keep it SHORT! Less than 1 minute.

You can address these 3 points in any order that makes sense.

- **SELF**
What was your "choice point?" Where did your plot take a twist and become interesting?
- **US**
How does the Cal Lutheran community/values connect to your own story and values?
- **NOW**
Why should your listener care or invest further? What is your vision for the future – what message of hope are you offering?

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Example

How I came to work at Cal Lutheran.

- **SELF**
After years of climbing the career ladder in corporate America, I found that the work I was doing felt soulless. So I quit. I had always volunteered in higher ed, and when I started my own consulting firm, I was able to turn some of those volunteer connections into clients, and I began to focus my consulting practice on higher education. Cal Lutheran hired me as a consultant, and then one day, unexpectedly and out of the blue, offered me a job in a newly created position. I decided to embrace the opportunity to pursue my passion for higher ed full time.
- **US**
It's been a great experience for me. Cal Lutheran has not only been a welcoming community, but the institution is also very courageous and has let us try a lot of new things in marketing. Some have worked, and some haven't, but we're definitely not standing still.
- **NOW**
We've made a lot of progress in 3 short years, and data show that our efforts are paying off. If we keep investing in marketing, I'm confident that we will continue to build our reputation and attract great students who will transform their communities and the world.

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Your turn!

Questions?
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