

**MISSION AND IDENTITY REPORT
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Vice President, Mission and Identity**

As the university begins this new academic year, I too have turned my attention to a new aspect of ministry and work within the Mission and Identity division. Some start-up challenges are quick to accomplish such as moving to a new office location. Other aspects call for intentionality, time, reflection, and strategy to advance the work that I will do alongside of my colleagues. As I write this report I am acutely aware of the differences in the work patterns of my life and the changes that have come with this position. Yet I am committed to the unfolding of this division and look forward to the year with anticipation.

Since mid-August I have been setting the foundation for the work of the division. Moving from a loose affiliation between campus partners to a new and vibrant pattern of life together calls for reflection and change. Through one on one conversations and team meetings, I focus on convening and strategically connecting the offices of Campus Ministry, Congregational Relations, Seminary Relations, as well as the

university's interfaith efforts and the Theology and Christian Leadership program. Planning has begun for a division retreat early in December to map out our goals, priorities, and strategies for 2016.

While this report provides a snapshot of some of the work of this new division in terms of the university's strategic goals, there is more to tell about the work being accomplished:

- Lutheran Identity Tour to Germany in June led by Bishop Guy Erwin, Kapp Johnson, and Paul Evenson
- Executive Skills for Pastors in July
- Retreat with Lord of Life congregation student leaders and all the activities and worship services planned for students
- The celebrations of Jewish holidays on campus and "Judaism and Starbucks" being offering to steward the conversation about Jewish life on campus
- The seminarians from St. John's Seminary joining the ministry this fall: Joseph Govindu, Ian Hollick, Athanasius Okure, Raphael Reniva, and Art Taylan
- Fostering relationships with pastors and congregations through the Congregational Partners in Education matching scholarships
- The search process for the new Director of Congregational Relations

Guide students to discover and live their purpose

An ongoing task is to communicate the inclusive principles of Lutheran higher education that are central to the university and to the student experience. As a part of New Student Orientation, members of the division addressed the students and parents about the distinctiveness of the university manifested through six commitments: welcome, inclusion, freedom, vocation, diversity, and service. On two rather windy days this past summer we interviewed staff, faculty, and students asking them how they experienced communal life on campus. Their thoughts captured on video and our reflections about these commitments made for a lively telling of the Cal Lutheran story as we live out our convictions in daily life.

We participated in the orientation for new faculty members and to Peer Advisors who work with incoming first year and transfer students, anchoring our presentations in the story of our mission and identity.

The University Chapel theme this semester is "Room at the Table" which evokes the question of how much room is at the table and for

whom. We will enter into deep wondering about inclusivity, segregation, immigration, racism, evangelism, and purpose from the vantage point of both religious texts and human experience. Often times selecting music for the community's song at a chapel service can be a challenge especially for Kyle Johnson, the coordinator of chapel music. Recently at PLTS, he held a class in hymnody selection when poetry is available but music is not. An example of this was seen at the PLTS Founders Day worship when a poem called "PINK" was placed into an appropriate meter and sung as the hymn of the day. This fall the Jewish festival of Rosh Hashanah and the Muslim celebration of Eid-al-Adha will be honored at University Chapel. Selecting music for these occasions can be a delicate and nuanced task. Dr. Johnson's research and capacity to take poetry and place it into sing-able meter will be highlighted through the use of four hymns well chosen for the worshipping community.

A delegation of students and staff attended the President's Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge conference in September. They joined representatives from universities across the nation from different religious and non-religious backgrounds to discuss their vision for interfaith cooperation and learn how to tackle community challenges on their campuses. Our team included the Interfaith Interns as well as the new Director of the Community Service Center, the first Cal Lutheran employee to have interfaith cooperation as a part of her job description. You can read about the work of the Interfaith Allies through the [report](#) submitted to the Vesper Society regarding the Cummings Interfaith Grant.



Funding from the Teagle Foundation grant to incorporate interfaith pedagogical strategies across the college curriculum has enabled a third course to be offered to undergraduates this fall. "Community Development," a pre-established Political Science class, is team-taught by professors in Religion and Social Science. Launching the course through an established class provides a platform for deeper impact with students who might not have paid attention to interfaith otherwise. In addition, the class will serve as a platform for students majoring or minoring in Religion to do research projects related to interfaith cooperation in our community.

Through this same grant Colleen Windham-Hughes is developing [colloquia](#) to support faculty capacity for addressing issues of interfaith in the classroom. The colloquium defines "interfaith" as the "commitment to common life—a civic purpose of sharing space and goals in which all values contributing toward this purpose are welcomed and respected." Toward this civic end, faculty are encouraged to adopt Diana Eck's distinction between diversity and pluralism and to follow Windham-Hughes's lead in distinguishing between the truth claims of religious persons/groups and the behavioral strategies involved in civic life.

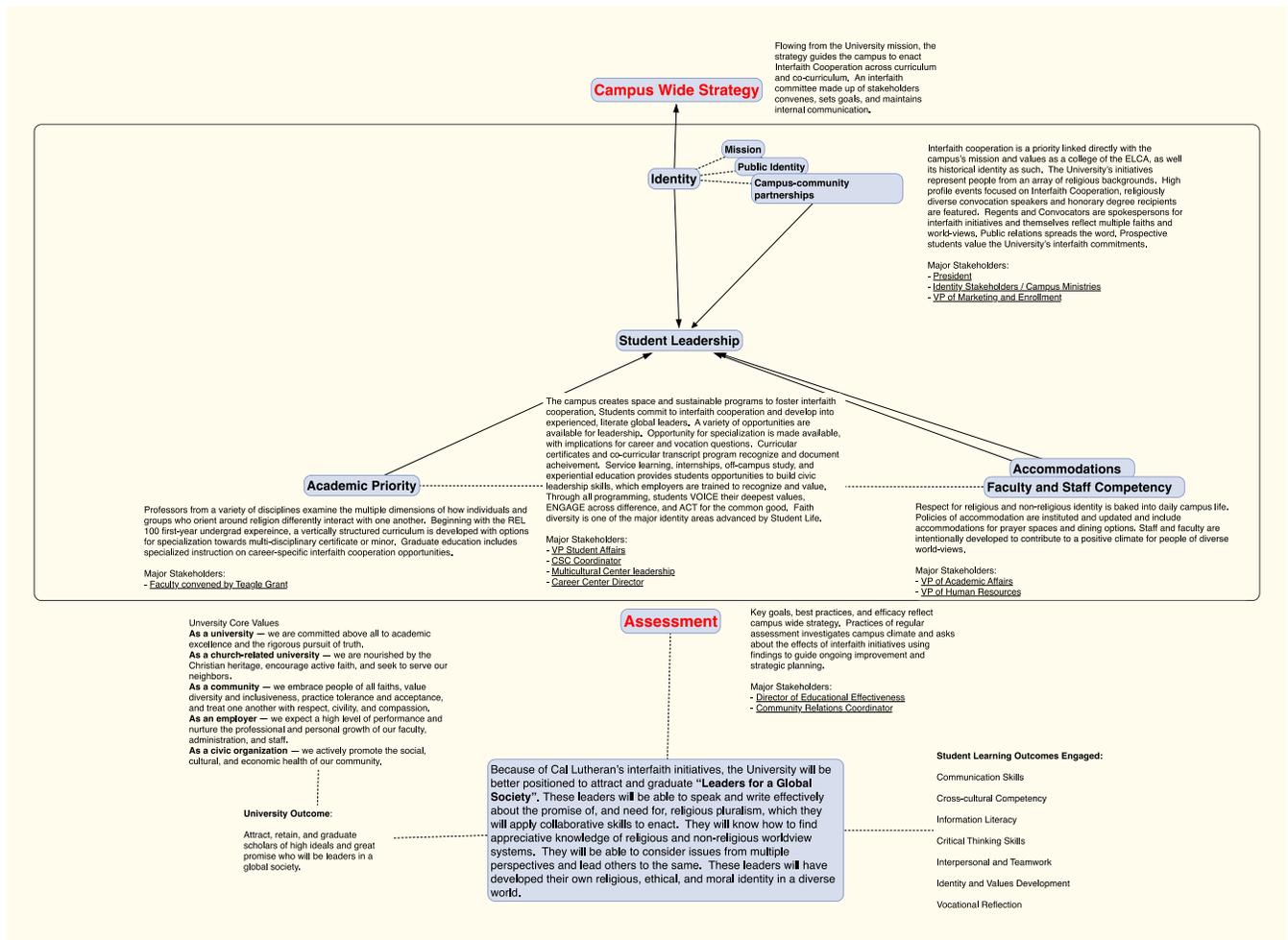
Continue to set high institutional academic standards

For the first time students in Theology and Christian Leadership participated in Festival of Scholars, offering theological reflection on everyday issues such as disability, service, and professional work. This shows the rigorous academic preparation and reflection that accompanies the practical experiential work of internships.



Support student achievement across all programs

A strategy for advancing interfaith cooperation was developed by Rahuldeep Gill, Melinda Roper, Colleen Windham-Hughes, and myself to enact Interfaith cooperation across the curriculum and co-curriculum. To fully institutionalize this strategy will take time and effort yet advances are being made this year.



A monthly Interfaith Lunch for staff members providing staff a place to speak out of their own faith or philosophical tradition and learn how to appreciate the commitments of others has begun this fall.

Attract students of high ideals and promise

Cal Lutheran took a team of 8 to the National Youth Gathering in Detroit. The team was composed of Alex Egertson, Eliza Roemisch, and Carlee Wood (undergraduates from the Thousand Oaks campus), Sean Janssen, a graduate student from PLTS, Holly Johnson of PLTS Admission, Amanda Wallin of Undergraduate Admission, Scott Maxwell-Doherty, University Pastor, and Colleen Windham-Hughes, faculty in Religion. Team members engaged in one-on-one meetings with prospective students, participated in the Synod Day for Southwest California and Pacifica, connected with admitted students, alumni, parents, bishops, and friends, and helped to bless groups leaving for

service. Each team member had a specific role, the most public of which was the social media campaign "RiseUpCLU."

