

Feb 15, 2021

## Dear Class of 1998,

As many of you would likely agree, 2020, quite a year. Last year had many peaks and valleys, filled with heartbreak, extreme ambiguity, and still for many great blessings. As we experienced a year of darkness and ever-changing extremes, it's good to know that there were still many beautiful outcomes, new starts, and hearts full of giving and love.

With everything that transpired, it seemed a year of constant change causing pivotal transformation that was greatly needed on many fronts; personally, for many, and of course at Concordia as well. On campus when COVID took its hold in the spring, the entire faculty and staff focused on taking care of core student needs, pivoting to handle the situation as best as possible, and of course, take the summer to prepare for a year ahead that would likely continue to be like none other. Some things of course had to drop, including the coordination of the normal class letters. This year, we're taking a different stance and sending a Winter letter, rather than one during the Summer; perhaps this will also help usher in a time of change, pivoting to the better, for all of you and yours, and of course those in need across the globe. Hopefully as many still live, work, and learn remotely, this will allow a few minutes to take in what is truly important, remind ourselves that we shall persevere, and remember we are there to support each other near and far.

## Concordia Updates

Concordia recently announced three changes to be implemented in Fall 2021: the launch of a new pricing structure for tuition, a change to its academic framework by establishing a schools model within the college, and the introduction of the Cobber Flex Year.

Beginning in Fall 2021, the price for annual tuition will be \$27,500, which is more than \$15,000 lower than current tuition – a reduction of over 35%. The change in the college's pricing model will benefit continuing students as well. Historically, students have seen an average annual tuition increase of 4% or about \$1,700 annually. In the upcoming year, the increase in the out-of-pocket tuition costs for continuing students will be limited to \$800 and no more than \$1,000 for 2022-23 and 2023-24.

To further prepare students, Concordia implemented an academic reorganization to clearly name three schools. Under the new academic model, Concordia introduced the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Health Professions. These two new schools join the Offutt School of Business to encompass all areas of the college. The new schools model resulted in the appointment of two new deans. **Dr. George Connell** is serving as dean of the School of Arts and Sciences and **Dr. Cynthia Carver** is dean of the School of Health Professions. As school deans, Connell and Carver join **Christopher Mason**, who was appointed dean of the Offutt School of Business in January 2020.

Concordia also established a Cobber Flex Year option. The Flex Year option offers current students and those enrolling in Fall 2021 two tuition-free semesters of study beyond their anticipated graduation date. The Cobber Flex Year allows students whose college experience has been affected by the pandemic expanded possibilities to learn in ways they find most compelling.

In the midst of a pandemic, Concordia continued its work to support the vitality of our faith and learning mission. In March 2020, as the realities of COVID-19 swept the nation, Concordia transitioned to distance learning. Concordia was able to transition back to campus for the fall 2020 semester. In-person instruction and residential living were offered with modifications to academic and campus life. Each teaching space was measured to determine appropriate occupancy and classes were held in larger spaces when necessary. In addition, some classes were offered as a hybrid approach and virtual learning attendance was available for those who could not meet in-person.

## Class Alumni Notes

It's so exciting that in such times as we've all experienced that stellar things continue to happen for our class members. Truly sharing their light bright in the world and adding to it in their unique ways.

- **Jennifer Bain** took a new position as a high school career counselor at Perham High School in Perham, MN. *Enjoy the new position Jennifer!*
- **Paula (Fannemel) Timm** started a new career as an English teacher at Vandenberg Middle School in Elk River and also got married at her home to husband Steve, on November 27, 2020. **Congratulations Paula and Steve!**
- **Melissa Gjellstad** welcomed a bright light into the work during August with the arrival of daughter Aurora Ragnhild. **Wonderful news and such a blessing!**
- **Kevin Wollin** has been working in the Public Information Center of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. Additionally, he has continued his studies in the field and is slated to graduate with his Masters of Public Administration from Hamline University in St. Paul, MN in Spring 2022. **Wow! What a great way to grow and expand!**

## Giving Update

In a year like none other, the generosity of alumni like us has helped propel the college forward while supporting the students it serves. A few of the highlights from this year include:

- More than \$2.1 million was raised for *The Cobber Fund for scholarships and support* to help make sure a Concordia education is possible for every one of our students.
- *During the start of the pandemic, \$59,000 was raised for emergency funding* for food, transportation, and other critical needs.
- This fall, *841 Cobber fans gave \$87,890* to make sure our athletes have the resources they need to compete despite COVID-19.
- This holiday season, *1,809 virtual Christmas Concert attendees donated \$68,552* in honor of this Concordia tradition and our student musicians.
- In just ONE day, donors *fully funded the Cobber Food Pantry*.

## Final Thoughts

May 2021 be a year of positivity for all of you, your families, and friends; keep those that matter the most close. Seek ways to stay positive as we work to return to a semblance of full normalcy. Be kind and giving of help where it is needed and don't be afraid to ask for help as well.

We can only move forward by supporting those around us, looking out for each other, and truly focusing on what matters. The only constant in life is change, let us adapt, grow, and find ways to make the best of our time, and create change for the better in this world.

Best regards always,



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