

CLASS OF 2013

CONCORDIA COLLEGE CLASS LETTER
FEBRUARY 2021

Hello from your Class Agent!

Hello, Class of 2013!

I loved reading all of your updates, adventures, and experiences from the last year and beyond. Especially in the past year we've had, it was so lovely to see so many triumphs and joys from each of you. I hope you enjoy reading each other's too, and perhaps -- in a year that's been filled with isolation and solitude for so many -- seeing some familiar names will encourage you to reach out and reconnect with some fellow Cobbers.

Read on for a general update from campus, a campus giving update, and all of your updates! If your update didn't make it into this edition of campus updates, feel free to share your own on our Class of 2013 Facebook page!

Be well,
Kelsey



Campus Update

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.

Campus 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.

Thank you to those who have already given this year! Be on the lookout for the “Raise it Up” Fund-the-Need campaign in March. You are sure to find an area of campus that aligns with your passions. The class of 2013 can truly make a difference in the lives of current Cobbers!

CLASS UPDATES



Matt Hansen

Last fall I began studies at the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina as I prepare for Word and Sacrament ministry in the ELCA. I also adopted a kitten named Juniper. It's been great being back down South, close to family and great BBQ.

Megan (Wagner) Ceplecha

This year I got married and my husband and I bought our first home in the Twin Cities. We have been busy with renovations and taking long walks down the aisles at Lowe's.

Hello, fellow Cobbers! I hope this update finds you in good health and spirits (all things considered, of course). My spouse (Andreas Rekdal, '12) and I continue to try to make the best of pandemic conditions here in Chicago. We are both privileged to work from home and benefit from the joyous distraction of our pup named Halo. Andreas celebrated his 5th year work anniversary at Built In Chicago, where he is a managing editor. I am getting through my 3rd year of doctoral studies at the University of Chicago and intend to take my qualifying exams in the spring of 2021 (universe willing!). These days we are cherishing time outdoors, calls with loved ones, and board games. Despite losses big and small in 2020, I hope you all are also finding ways to enjoy and take refuge in the little things.

Kristi del Vecchio



Brent Haagenenson

Completed Doctor of Psychology Degree from Saint Mary's University of Minnesota and began working at Natalis Counseling and Psychology Solutions.

Kelsey (Stahl) Lage

We welcomed our first born into our lives in March of 2020. Our little boy has been a bright spot in a challenging year.

In the past year, I was promoted to Director of Advocacy and Engagement for my organization, but that was secondary to the major legislative achievement I along with my many partners in the affordable housing industry were able to achieve. After years of advocacy at the federal level, we secured the ability to finance more than 130,000 additional affordable homes across the country. I

encourage all who reads this to not underestimate the power of your voice in advocating your own members of Congress to support equitable policies.

Megan John



My husband, Kerry, and I live with our dog, Charlotte in the suburbs of Chicago. We spent the majority of 2020 working on house projects, navigating the “work from home” life, and mastering the art of yeasted doughs. We’re looking forward to meeting up with family and friends more often in the year ahead!

Brooke (Grussing) O'Connell

Kelsey Kava

Hi all! I planned to transition out of my live-on Residence Life role at the end of the 2020 academic year, and the pandemic created a bit more flexibility and change with that. After two wonderful years at Concordia -- and six working in student affairs and living on-campus in Portland, OR, and Moorhead -- I finally live off-campus! I moved to the Twin Cities and am roommates with Megan Schefter, a fellow '13 grad, in Saint Louis Park. It's been wonderful living in a big city again and being able to safely see some other Cobbers who live here, too. I pivoted away from Student Affairs and work as the Studio Manager for a brand new Orangetheory Fitness that opened up in the North Loop neighborhood of Downtown Minneapolis. OTF was a community and workout I found when I moved back to the FM area and I'm so grateful that my job is helping create that community for so many others.

Sarah Odendahl

I am thrilled to announce the addition of my son, Isaiah, who we welcomed in September 2020.



Life in the Hurtig-Stoddard household continues! Adrian (2 YO) has an impressive vocabulary although he rather stubbornly refuses to use most words in daily conversation, preferring instead the subtle art of miming. He loves school, books, and singing at the top of his lungs (preferably “You’re Welcome” from Moana). As for me, this year has allowed me to dedicate time to reading (for fun!) and binge-watching various shows. 2021 looks to be filled with surprises as well, as we welcome a second (human) baby in May and we transition our household from Clovis, NM to Great Falls, MT where we will be much closer to home. I also finally got my own Class of '13 Cobber Ring!

Jennifer Hurtig

Marsha Werner

I opened my own private practice, and my husband opened his own business. I've continued working toward my PsyD. My oldest daughter is a senior and getting ready to graduate.

Jessie Sheldon

Hello Cobbers! I am still teaching at LILA (Lakes International Language Academy-Forest Lake, MN) in a second grade, Spanish immersion classroom and still loving it despite the craziness of the pandemic. Hope all of my fellow cobbers are doing well and staying safe and healthy!

The biggest thing I did during this pandemic year (besides establish and facilitate our local joint county unified command COVID response) was I earned my Master's in Cybersecurity from the University of North Dakota! This was a huge accomplishment for me and for our fam! I've been getting more involved in the State's cybersecurity response so this degree will not only help me to pursue additional duties but also allow me stay updated with the proper security clearances to do my job. Other than that, just living the dream! My wife and I celebrated our 12th anniversary recently (on January 4th) and our kids (8,7,6,4) are growing up faster than ever! Take care everyone!

Ben Gates



The year of 2020 was a year of blessings for us. Many memories shared together with my family. My fiancé and I spent time with our three kids building projects for our home, planting a garden, assembling many puzzles and lego sets, as well as traveling to see nearby family. We also shared the unity of our family in August with our wedding. We look ahead to 2021 and are excited to add a baby girl to the crew! We wish you all many blessings and joy in 2021!

Savannah
(Daudt) Stringer

Ariel Sacher

Ariel is on their last year of their Doctor of Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine (DAOM) degree at Bastyr University in Seattle, WA. They are a licensed acupuncturist, Kung Fu instructor, and professional TA at Bastyr University.

Andraya (Abrego) Perron

We have a baby due on February 4! We are looking forward to meeting them by the time this update comes out!

Hello Cobber Classmates! 2020 was, thankfully, a stable year for me personally. I have settled into my new house after becoming a homeowner in 2019. My new place is still in Montevideo, MN, just across town from where I was before. There have been no major fixes to be made to the house, and I don't mind keeping up with the little things. I am still a mechanical engineer at the same job I've had for five years, and I continue to get more involved with the family farm raising corn and soybeans. I still enjoy leading the robotics team at Dawson-Boyd High School, now into the sixth season. We participate in the FIRST Robotics Competition. I have missed playing trombone in community bands and musicals and I look forward to when those opportunities are available again. However, I have made time for staying closer in-touch with some geographically distant friends. I hope everyone else is healthy and happy, and I look forward to hearing from you, or at least reading your updates.

Dustin Johnson

Katie Campbell

Hi everyone! After living and teaching in Brainerd for several years post-graduation, I've recently moved to St. Louis Park and am teaching 6th grade language arts at Orono Middle School. Although the city life I imagined hasn't exactly been possible over the past year and a half, I have really enjoyed being closer to my siblings and my grandparents. I became obsessed with house plants during the pandemic and have just a ridiculous amount of greenery going on now, so if you ever want to trade cuttings, hit me up! Hope you're all healthy and happy. :)



Christie (Bunge) Sederquist

Ryan and Christie are loving mountain life in Leadville, CO. Christie continues to teach elementary special education and Ryan is teaching online 5th grade this year. They cross country ski, run, bike or hike every day. They are very excited to be expecting their first child at the end of the summer. They have found great teaching and community at their church and continue to strive to give God glory in all they do!



Despite the pandemic, I was very fortunate to have a good 2020. For me, it was a year of personal growth and discovery. Staying home for nine months gave me a lot of time to reflect on what I'm doing with my life, where I want to go, and how I want to get there. While there were some disappointing parts of the year, like only reading eight of my planned twenty-four books (something about being stuck inside did not inspire me to read), not getting to travel and visit friends and family like I would have liked, and not being able to eat a meal at my dining room table for months because it was my desk, there were many positives as well. I expanded to manage fifteen Airbnbs in the Fargo Moorhead area, hosting mainly travel nurses and other hospital staff working to fight the pandemic. I grew my team (digital marketing) at Eide Bailly to double the size it was at the beginning of the year (we're hiring!). I watched the entirety of The Mindy Project and the Office (again). I did one hundred New York Times crossword puzzles with my girlfriend, Callie. And last but not least, I kept all twenty-seven house plants alive. All of that while living in a constant state of mental stress and existential dread. Cheers to 2021!

Noah Ford-Dunker

Melissa (Manuel-McInerney) Ratliff

I am still teaching both high school History and Art at Havre High School in Havre, MT where I have been employed since graduating Concordia in 2013. I am also still a member of the Havre City Council and am planning to run for re-election in 2021. 2020 was a challenging year for educators, but I learned to enjoy the simple quiet of being home for 3 straight months teaching online (and doing plenty of home improvement projects). My husband and I bought our forever home in 2019, a classic mid-century modern house that had enough space for our whole family. My oldest stepson Austin is enjoying his 2nd year at Concordia as a wrestler and Accounting major. My 17 year old stepdaughter Marissa has been navigating high school and working full time during Coronavirus and my 12 year old stepson William has been adjusting to the modes of schooling as well. In June I was elected as an Eastern Delegate with the Montana Democratic Party where I got to proudly cast my vote for Joe Biden and Kamala Harris at the DNC in August. Although I was sad to miss out on experiencing the DNC in Wisconsin, I'm glad the committee made the safe decision to hold the convention virtually. I also designed the pins for the Montana Delegation! In October we were blessed with the long awaited news that I was pregnant and due with our first child together in June 2021. I recently found out we will be having a baby boy and I cannot wait to dress him up in Cobber gear!



I left a job I had been at for six years teaching 7-12 choir, to teach in a smaller town closer to our home. I now teach K-12 Music & Choir at Grand Meadow School in Southeastern Minnesota. On October 12th, 2020 I gave birth to my second child, my baby girl Nolah Justine Albrecht. Her big brother Abram turned 3 in October and he is in love with her! Adjusting to a new job while 36 weeks pregnant in a pandemic was nerve wrecking, but it can only make things feel easier from here on!

**Nikita (Welder)
Albrecht**

Laura Dahlstrom

This year has brought, as I'm sure it has for most, several changes in my life. It started (end of Feb) with a trip across the ocean to Eswatini, Africa, where my roommate and I visited a dear friend of ours. It was both of our first time in Africa, and we had an incredible time! We returned to the U.S. by the skin of our teeth, just days before travel bans were enacted as the pandemic made its way west. Just a week after returning, things around the US began to shut down as cases increased. The company I was working for was unfortunately forced to cut back our hours, and then ultimately laying off most of our staff as business suffered. Along with thousands of other Americans, I found myself applying for unemployment, and although very uncertain and humbled by the circumstances, I had great peace and hope that there would be light in the darkness. The unexpected change allowed me time to truly rest and reflect in a way I hadn't in years. I was able to update my portfolio and resume (which I hadn't done since graduation) and even had opportunities to work freelance. Eventually I found a position open at Scheels in the Marketing Department, which I gladly applied for immediately. At the same time, my roommate had been house hunting and put in an offer on a home. She closed the same day I was offered the position at Scheels, so we moved and I started a new job a few weeks later - just in time for my 30th birthday! A new home, a new job, and a new decade - this year, as I'm sure with many others, has challenged me to treasure the lasting things in life (family, friends, faith) and to hold the temporary things with open hands. I keep thinking back and wondering if I would have believed a year ago I would be here. Its been such a full year with incredible joys amidst such darkness and trial. I know I am not alone in that. May God bless you in 2021!

Stephanie (Paulson) Mattson

2020 was definitely a crazy year. However, it also brought exciting things! As a family, before the pandemic hit the US, we took the kids to Disney World for the first time. It really was the BEST way to kickoff the New Year. Our son, Callen, celebrated his 1st birthday with a Zoom birthday party with his grandparents. Our daughter, Cara, turned 4 over the summer and we were able to celebrate out at the lake with her grandparents (socially-distanced, of course). I started as a Project Coordinator with Ulteig Engineers in October, which has been great so far. To close out the year, we made a big move from Moorhead, MN over to Breckenridge, MN to be closer to my husband's work in Wahpeton, ND. After living in Moorhead for 11 years, it will be interesting to get acquainted with a whole new town. We're looking forward to new adventures in 2021!



Kaia Lunde

Wow, I could say so much! If you want to learn more or catch up feel free to send me an email or FB message, it would be fun to hear from you! This year was full of surprises, disappointments, canceled plans, frustrations, but also joy in the Lord and a year of growth as I learned to trust Him in the midst of all the uncertainty. I currently live in Grand Forks, ND and am in my second year of teaching English Language Learners at Century Elementary. Although I didn't study teaching at Concordia, I felt God's specific calling on my life to be a teacher in 2015. I was working as a paraprofessional at an elementary school with students from all over the world and the principal shared he felt I really needed to be a teacher. After praying about it for months and wondering how God would provide the finances, I began to apply for programs. I was accepted into a program and began classes online to earn a Master's in Education degree with an endorsement in working with English Language Learners. God then provided an opportunity for me to live in Spain and work on classes from there and when I returned to Grand Forks, He provided a teaching job for me! I taught a class called world languages for three years, where I taught Spanish, German, Latin, and French. I enjoyed it a lot and was involved in chaperoning school trips, coaching track, and leading the Fellowship of Christian Athletes group. When I finished grad school in August of 2018, I agreed to teach one more year at the middle school. After that year I began to look for English Language Learners jobs and applied a few places. I was offered the positions I applied for, but decided to stay in Grand Forks another year for the position that opened in the district. That's the position I've now been in for two years and I love it! Last year I had students from 10 different countries in my classes and I teach students in small groups of 2-6. Due to Covid this year, my biggest group is 3, since I'm not allowed to mix classes, but also have groups of 2 and then a few 1-on-1s. I love the creativity and freedom I'm given in my position to create lessons that are engaging, fun, creative, and put a spin on what kids are learning in their classrooms. My classroom is known as a place where kids have a lot of fun and often don't realize how much they are learning! I come to work each day super thankful I'm able to do something I love as a job! The 2.5 hard years of grad school is not a stage of my life I'd like to repeat, but I'm very thankful that time studying, doing research, working through hard things taught me a lot about myself and how dedication and hard work pays off! Outside of school, I've volunteered with a Somali refugee family in town until they moved to Seattle, WA. I volunteer with an organization that helps refugees and new Americans with their resettlement, acclimation, and assimilation process to life in America. I plan an annual women's conference called IF: Grand Forks and I love that it brings women together of all ages, denominations, backgrounds, ability levels, and races! Everyone is invited to come and it's beautiful to see how God works every year through this conference! I'm involved mentoring college-age students through a program called Young Life and have led a young adult ministry in my community. This year I've been learning to slow down and enjoy rest and Sabbath as God as designed it. I still get together with people for meals and have loved cooking and trying new recipes! I work at Natural Grocers 1-2 days a week and then teach water aerobics at the YMCA. I find creative ways to exercise and am enjoying this season God has me in and the freedom I have. I do look forward to seeing what God has in store in the future and look forward to continuing to use my gifts to honor Him! I hope to get to travel more in 2021 since 2020 was a year where I only was able to travel in the US. I do want to be able to explore, learn, from grow from experiences abroad and am open to a friend joining me as a travel buddy! So, let me know if you are ever interested! I don't know what 2021 holds, but I know Jesus is my Savior and He is trustworthy and true. He holds the future and is my refuge. I'm thankful I'm on this journey with Him as my trusted Guide and Shepherd!

Laura DeRosier

Hello all! This past year has held so many more surprises, quarantines, masked outings, Costco shopping trips, and pandemics than I expected! But, among the madness of adjusting to a new way of living, life went on (kind of) as per usual. I have now entered into my third and last year of my Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy. I am so excited to be graduating in the fall! I continued to work as a Community-Based Therapist within a program that supports children and families within the foster care system. The "community-based" part was put on hold for a few months last spring so I got really good at playing Zoom Eye-Spy and Feelings Charades during my crash course in telehealth. Another exciting development was my engagement and subsequent wedding planning! My fiancé, Jeremy, and I will be getting married in Brooklyn, NYC in October! I'm crossing my fingers I'll be more focused on not tripping in my dress than on whether or not my mask is ruining my makeup.

Cheers to all of you for making it through this strange year!

Jackson Hall ('13) and his wife welcomed Luka Mark Hall on December 7, 2019, weighing 7 pounds and 3 ounces and 19 inches long. Luka is now a busy and very happy one year old, and he loves being outside and hanging out with his dog, Shep.



Jackson Hall

Matthew Tingblad

During my time at Concordia, I had a life-changing moment where God infilled me with a vision to see people saved and made whole by His amazing love. So after graduating, I did some ministry work with Cru and then attained an M.Div in pastoral in general ministries from Talbot School of Theology, Biola University. Now I am a speaker and author with Josh McDowell Ministry, a ministry whose mission is to serve others until the whole world hears about Jesus. We want to see true followers of Jesus everywhere who live, support, and share their faith because they know that the Christian faith is reliable, relational, and relevant for their lives. I have relocated to Dallas, TX for this mission and I am absolutely thrilled to be a part of a ministry that has reached millions of people around the world for the good news of Jesus. You can find me on my social media channels using these simple redirect links:

<https://matthewtingblad.com/youtube>

<https://matthewtingblad.com/facebook>

<https://matthewtingblad.com/twitter>

Soli Deo Gloria.

Katie Webster

Life has been busy and wonderful these past 8 years. I had my 3rd son my last year in Concordia. I went on to to work for the National Guard for a couple of years working with military families od deployed soldiers. In 2015 I started a new Career at the Mexican Red Cross. Working in disaster and helping those impacted by disaster. I started as. Disaster Program Specialist and after 3 promotions and fast forward to our current year, I am the Regional Disaster Officer the Minnesota Dakotas region (MN, ND, SD). I oversee all three states and manage a team of 20 disaster prigram managers and over 500 American red cross volunteers. I was featured in Area Women in 2017 Holiday issue featuring my deployment to Hurricane Harvey, and have received a number of accolades as the first female Regional Disaster Officer for the Dakotas along with the first hispanc Regional Disaster Officer for the three states. Im thriving jn my career and love every minute of it. COVID hasn't slowed me down and I have been blessed beyond measure that my family and myself have remained healthy and stable through this entire pandemic. I was the acting chief of staff for the Colorado wildfires, recently, and have supported jumpers Disasters within our own three state region. My oldest son graduated from army basic training this year, my middle son is a sophomore and my youngest son is in his 2nd grade year. My husband is nearing retirement with the Army National Guard and preparing for a second career in home inspections. Excited to share some updates and look forward to reading others.



Regina (Laufmann) Reed

2020 was a big year for my family. In January my husband and I finally got moved into our new home. We had about six months to settle in before our son was born. The COVID pandemic made trying to get prenatal appointments and giving birth more stressful, but we are overjoyed to have a healthy baby boy. His name is Sieger, and he is always happy and full of smiles.



Steph Barnhart

What a great time to be a freelance events producer, eh? Ha! Guess again fellow Cobbs. As of March 2020, the business I was building around cannabis science competitions and events is on indefinite pause. What is life if not a series of pivots, anyway. After several months of grappling with pandemic adjustments, and turning our kid's bedroom into a third grade classroom, and many long, life-pondering walks around our neighborhood, and a few epic (safe!) camping trips, I started working for a small, cannabis law firm - fully remote from my living room where I regularly get pelted in the back with Nurf during Zoom calls, and trip over science experiment supplies or Lego pieces. No weddings, babies, or moves here. Just trying to keep up with the daily national news. Read some books this year, including several I'd highly recommend: Michelle Obama's "Becoming," Colson Whitehead's "The Nickle Boys," and a super fun fiction story about Yemeni international coffee trade called "The Monk of Mokha," by David Eggers, and "Big Friendship" by my favorite podcasters, Aminatou Sow and Ann Friedman. Last thing! To all our classmates working in public health and the health care system: THANK YOU. Please be well, be safe. When it's safe to gather again, my forever-invitation to call me when you come to Portland still stands.

Love, Steph.

Maya Gascoyne & Max Muehlip

Both Max Muehleip and I (Maya Gascoyne) have some good news to report from 2020... we welcomed a beautiful new baby girl named Maple! Maple (born October 2020) joins big brother Magnus, who turned 3 in January 2021. Maple brought us so much joy in a year with so much anxiety and stress, and we are forever grateful; she really saved 2020 for us. I am an elementary music teacher in my seventh year of teaching, and Max is a chiropractor and nutritionist. Our family is happily settled in Portland, OR. Stay safe and stay healthy!



Sarah (Luse) Fuller

2020 was quite the year! Max (fellow Cobber) and I celebrated our four year wedding anniversary in July and are welcoming a baby girl this February! Max is a 3rd year internal medicine resident at Hennepin Healthcare in Minneapolis, MN and I'm in marketing at TCF Bank. We are looking forward to welcoming a new little one to our family and wish everyone health and happiness in 2021.



Didn't get to share an update or want to stay connected throughout the year? Check out the [Class of 2013](#) Facebook group for updates from campus and other ways to stay connected to your fellow Cobbers!