Greetings, Class of 2018!

It's time for another class letter! Each year the Office of Alumni Relations asks their class agents to gather updates from their fellow classmates and compile them into a letter. The purpose of the letter is to keep 2018-ers up to date in each other's lives as well as the life of the college. If you'd like to take a look at our 2018 letter or browse other class letters, you can do so here. If you haven't yet, please also join our Class of 2018 Facebook page here!

I hope everyone is thriving in their post-grad lives! It's hard to believe over a year has passed since our diplomas were handed to us. Some days it feels like forever ago, but some days it feels as though we were students on campus just yesterday; the passage of time is so weird, haha! But yes, I hope you are doing exceedingly well and that you have been able to follow a path that fulfills and excites you!

Roll Cobbs,
- Corinne Burrell
UPDATES FROM CONCORDIA

Music:
- "The Concordia Band was invited to perform at both the Minnesota Music Educators Association Mid-Winter Clinic in Minneapolis and the North Dakota Music Educators Association Conference in Bismarck. In addition, the band was also invited to be the featured collegiate band at the Westman Honour Band concert at Brandon University in Brandon, Manitoba. The band is in the beginning stages of planning their international tour to Spain in May of 2020."
- "The Concordia Orchestra completed a very successful fall domestic tour with performances in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Repertoire included Symphony No. 3 by Florence Price, Scheherazade by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and Concerto for Trombone by Jim Pugh, which featured Concordia Professor of Low Brass Dr. Nathaniel Dickey on trombone. Also joining the tour was guest conductor Christoph Rehli-Fankhauser, professor of conducting at the Lucerne University of Music in Switzerland."
- "The Concordia Choir completed a highly successful tour through the Pacific Northwest in March. The tour featured concerts in Washington, Oregon, Montana, North Dakota, and Minnesota. The Choir also had engagements with ten high school choirs, as well as The Choir of the West at Pacific Lutheran University and a collaboration concert with The Singers - Minnesota Choral Artists at the Ordway in St. Paul. Work is now being done to plan the Choir's 2020 tour to the Southeast United States. Dr. René Clausen announced that he will retire following the 2019-20 academic year, concluding his service as professor of music and conductor of The Concordia Choir."

Athletics:
- "In the spring of 2018, Concordia had only one team – women’s basketball – with a female head coach. Fast forward one year, and with the hiring of new volleyball head coach Faith Dooley, the Cobbers now have 5 additional female head coaches mentoring student/athletes. Dooley, who was an All-American at the University of North Dakota, joins women’s golf head coach Kari Weidner-Ceniceros, Maureen Greiner of women’s hockey, Rebecca O’Shurak from women’s soccer and NDSU All-American Laura Januszewski who coaches both the men’s and women’s cross country teams. The rise of female head coaches was recognized by University of Minnesota’s Tucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in Sport in their 2018-19 coaching report card that cited Concordia as the top college in the MIAC for the increase in female head coaches over the past year."
UPDATES FROM CONCORDIA

Athletics continued:
- "Concordia men’s track and field junior Matt Bye, Moorhead, won the heptathlon at this winter’s MIAC Indoor Championship Meet and went on to finish 11th in the event at the NCAA National Indoor Meet held in Boston, Mass."
- "The Cobber men’s hockey team earned its seventh consecutive berth in the MIAC playoffs this season. Concordia finished conference play with nine league wins which was the most since the 2013 season. Sophomore forward Tyler Bossert, Fargo, led the MIAC in scoring and went on to earn All-American Second Team honors to become the ninth All-American in program history."

Other Updates:
- "Concordia’s outstanding tradition of preparing students for medical school is now available to those who have completed an undergraduate degree. This intensive, 1 year program is designed for highly motivated individuals with excellent academic records, who have earned a bachelor’s degree from an accredited four-year institution, but lack most or all of the prerequisite science courses needed for admission to medical school. Our program is ideal for career changers, and individuals deciding later in their academic journey, to pursue a career in medicine."

- "Concordia sent 12 members to the American Forensic Association National Individual Events Tournament (AFA-NIET) at the University of Alabama, where 60 colleges and universities from across the United States competed for top honors. Concordia was one of only a few smaller colleges that placed in the top 15, which is dominated by larger research institutions."

- "The Center for Student Success has a new home in the Normandy. The beautifully renovated space is open and light making for an inviting space for students. The center includes academic support, Orientation and First-Year Transition Programming, the Peer Mentor program, and the Diversity Coordinator for Student Support Services."

- "A dinner was held April 4 to celebrate the naming of Dr. Dan Biebighauser as holder of The Sigurd and Pauline Prestegaard Mundhjeld Endowed Chair of Mathematics. Biebighauser is a 2002 graduate of Concordia and joined the faculty in 2006. The holder of the Mundhjeld chair is to be a person who has provided exemplary service in teaching and scholarship in the field of mathematics and who is known and respected in the field."
A lot has changed for me since the last alumni letter went out! After graduation, I moved to St. Paul, MN to live with my partner (2015 Concordia grad Isaac Lovdahl) and work at the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Twin Cities as their Digital Marketing Coordinator. Since then...

I got engaged! Isaac proposed last August by having a small choir of his friends (many of them Cobbers) sing me a song he had written based on the Parks & Recreation quote "I love you and I like you." I said yes, of course.

My year in St. Paul was truly life-changing. I formed incredible friendships, took in amazing art (seeing Lizzo is and will remain the single greatest highlight of my life), and did some serious soul-searching. Now--surprise!--I'm back in Fargo! We moved up in early June, and starting in August, Isaac will pursue his master’s degree in choral conducting at NDSU. As for me, I am enjoying a much-needed break while applying for jobs in the area. It’s definitely scary to not have a job or a definite plan for the future but I am excited about some prospects, and in the meantime, I am enjoying spending time with friends and family, exploring Fargo by bike, and getting started on wedding plans!

- Katie Beedy
Since graduating with a biology degree, I have spent time in Australia, working for Americorps in Nevada, traveling to national parks, and working as an NDSU research specialist. I’ve also received an assistantship to get my masters in Plant Pathology at NDSU!

Fellow 2018 grad Derek has a great position at a fast growing bio-manufacturing company, and also loves working part time at Great Northern Bicycle Co. We ran our first half marathon together this spring and in the meantime we live downtown, where you can catch us spending all our money at Vinyl Taco.

- Olivia Hamilton
I recently celebrated my one year anniversary at Jewish Family Service of Houston and am still learning something new everyday. On a more personal note, my dog had a formal bark mitzvah and is now the most Jewish member of my household. I also purchased a house with my boyfriend and enjoying making my Pinterest board a reality!
-Andie Palagi
After graduating from Concordia with a B.A. in Elementary Education and minors in Spanish and Psychology, I found myself instead at the largest German Immersion school in North America, conveniently located 20 minutes from my hometown of Shoreview, where I currently reside. I am 1 of 4 English teachers at the school of about 600 K-8 students and I am so happy to be continuing on for my second year with the same students - looping 3rd grade into 4th - and welcoming my section of new 5th graders as our school prepares to possibly expand our building. I also coached the school's first year of track and field as the Throws coach alongside (L to R): a Wisconsin Badger alum, a fellow Cobber (Marty Fankhanel '11), and a Hamline Piper (Roll Cobbs!) - all pictured below 🎉. This summer I'll be rewriting curriculum with one of my fellow English teachers, traveling, visiting the German Language Village - Waldsee - to see my coworkers/friends, helping incoming teachers from Europe, and preparing for my second year!

- Emily Albers
Hi everyone! Last August, I began my adventure in graduate school at MSU-Moorhead, which is pretty much right across the street from Concordia! What can I say, I couldn’t get away from campus. I’m studying school psychology and just finished up my first year in mid May, and I’m happy to say that I love what I’m eventually going to be doing. I had some practicum experiences in many different schools throughout the school year, and I worked with many students who have truly challenged me. Seeing those kids grow and learn better because of my help is incredibly rewarding. I’ve also made many new friendships in my program—my entire year was spent with my cohort, pictured below. I have one year left of classes and then a yearlong internship...to say I’m excited is an understatement! During the school year, I was also a part of the Fargo-Moorhead Choral Artists, a choir in the area. I’m very much looking forward to singing with the group again this upcoming year. This summer, I’m looking forward to taking some time off from school and spending time with my family back in Wisconsin!

- Claire Studt
At the end of May Jake Hanson (’19) and I moved from Moorhead to Northeast Minneapolis to be closer to our families in Blaine and I am loving it here!! One week after the move Jake surprised me by proposing, and I said yes of course! We are super excited to be engaged and to explore the Twin Cities this summer ❤️

- Sarah Strand
Hello all! After graduation I spent the summer in the Fargo-Moorhead area hanging around family and friends. In August, I packed my bags for a program called the World Race, an 11 month - 11 country mission trip. I was in Latin America for 4 months, spent 3 months in Africa, followed by 4 months in South East Asia. I have experienced new cultures, new people, new food, and plenty of new perspective! Traveling the world serving underprivileged communities and sharing the gospel has been one of the most impactful life experiences especially on my faith. Upon returning home at the end of June I will say hello and then good by in two short months as I will be moving to Portland, Oregon. I have been accepted to the College of Optometry at Pacific in Forest Grove. I am excited to move to the West coast and enjoy a new adventure! (Pictured me with some of my English-Khmer students in Cambodia)

- Rachel Osmundson
My last day at the Minnesota Children's Museum was last Friday! Not gonna lie, adjusting to not being a student was a process and figuring out how to react to an unfulfilling job was not easy! However, I will be starting a new job as an Alumni Associate at St. Catherine University in St. Paul on Tuesday, June 25th! This past fall I also joined an orchestra! I play violin with the East Metro Symphony Orchestra, and they’re a lovely bunch. This past year I also went to a few concerts and saw Hamilton, Anastasia on Broadway, and Michelle Obama on her book tour! I spend a lot of time with friends and family and I even participate in a weekly “fam din,” where we rotate which friend hosts a potluck style meal followed by a viewing of the Bachelor haha! All in all, it’s been a great year! This past year has me especially grateful for the wonderful and supportive group of friends I have (pictured looking at the Stone Arch bridge❤️)

- Corinne Burrell
It's been about 10 months since I uprooted myself from Minnesota and made the move to China and I am loving it here. Although it can get a little lonely without my friends and family back home, I feel well adjusted to living in China (but I did miss the snow). My coworkers even tell me my Mandarin has improved!
This past year I was also able to travel to a few places I've always wanted to visit: Thailand, Singapore, Japan, Korea, Philippines, and Taiwan! Not many people can jet off to nearby countries whenever they would like so I feel extremely lucky to have been where I have been.
This summer I'll be traveling back to Minnesota to spend some time with family and friends before heading back to China to work again (but this time with a raise and promoted position)!
Getting used to being an 'adult' has been difficult at times, especially being abroad. There have been some high highs and low lows, however, I wouldn’t trade it for the world. I’m excited to see where this next year will take me and experience the upcoming adventures!
(Pictured is my flatmate and I in Kyoto, Japan)
- Sunny Lee
After graduation I set off for a month in Spain with the Segovia May Sem. It was an amazing opportunity to experience a new culture, great food, the best host family, and become closer with fellow cobbers and professors for my last Conco class. I not only grew my Spanish skillset but also I grew personally as well and walked away with a shifted mindset. After flying back to Fargo I moved down to the cities to be closer to family, friends, Wil, and to start my career. I tried on a few different hats that weren't quite what I had in mind for an after college job. I finally landed in a new role in Pension Administration at Willis Towers Watson and couldn't be happier. This year my partner and I also rescued a dog, Scarlet, and we have had a blast hiking and visiting dog parks. It's been an up and down year but one filled with growth, a lot of time with family and friends, and new adventures. Here is a picture of my family, Butternut (the cat), Scarlet, and Wil.

- Melanie Nicole Olson
For the last year, I’ve been teaching elementary music in Albert Lea, and am so excited to start my 2nd year after a relaxing summer! I teach Kindergarten-5th grade and I can’t wait to keep seeing and helping my students grow. I also got to have a choir made up of 4th and 5th graders and it was the biggest it’s been in a while, and I loved hearing them grow, and we got to go around the district and perform with the choirs from the other elementary schools which was so much fun! I live with my boyfriend Keegan and we are enjoying exploring around southern MN and being closer to both of our families. We saw Kacey Musgraves live which was incredible and I got to finally see the musical “Dear Evan Hansen” which was life changing. We also got to travel abroad for the first time to be at our god-son’s baptism in Achim, Germany, which was an amazing experience!

-Maggie Kielas
After graduation I moved to Duluth to go to school at The College of St. Scholastica for my masters in Occupational Therapy! I was able to run one more year of track, and I have been loving school and the people at CSS. David Supinski is attending medical school at UMD and also was able to run one more year of track. We recently got engaged and are excited for our future together!

- Maria West
After graduation I moved to West Fargo where I became a full-time direct support professional at Community Living Services supporting individuals with disabilities and also picked up a “fun” side job as a server at Granite City Food and Brewery! I also volunteered at the New American Consortium for wellness and empowerment a couple times a week while applying to graduate school for most of the fall.

It has been very fun getting to know a new side of Fargo-Moorhead and appreciating what it has to offer more than I ever have before! I’ve really enjoyed forming close friendships with my coworkers and learning how to balance work-life and self-care. I was able to plan a quite a few trips this year to Boston, New Orleans, Washington D.C., Duluth, and Madison. I hope for one more trip before grad school!

In the fall I’ll be starting a masters program at University of Wisconsin-Madison for Counseling Psychology. I am super excited to go back to school after such an intense year of growth! I’ll be moving in with fellow cobber Sean Fee which will be a nice reminder of home. I am a little sad to leave Fargo-Moorhead after 5 formative years here, but ready for the next chapter 🎉🎉

- Natalie Rivera
After graduating I moved to downtown Fargo and began a Fellowship with Dakota Medical Foundation. During my time there I learned a whole lot about addiction in our community. By lieu of my experience there, I was exposed to a critical root cause - Housing! That new passion led me to where I am now, Fargo Housing & Redevelopment Authority, whose mission is to empower others to achieve independence through housing.

I have treasured living downtown, and recently moved to an apartment right by Island Park where I can swing in my hammock to my heart’s content. Amidst lots of camping, bike riding, and coffee drinking, we are so lucky to have so many wonderful friends within walking distance. Our cat is light of my life and a constant source of mischief, who we “adopted” from Joey’s family in November. We couldn’t imagine life without her. ☀️ Being close to family has been very special, and I’m happy to watch my little brother (Class of 2020) grow at Concordia.

Wishing everyone success and fun as we enter year 2 of post-grad!

- Kirsten Stave
Last August, I started my first year teaching at Christian Heritage Academy. I was blessed with 19 brilliant third graders, and the most supportive staff and parent community group. Aside from my students keeping me busy, I also welcomed a new golden retriever puppy into my life named Maisey. She has been full of puppy love and energy, and keeps me on my toes just like my students do! This summer, I will continue teaching swimming lessons, attending concerts, camping, spending time at the lake, golfing, and playing on a sand volleyball league. I am beyond thrilled to begin my second year teaching in just a few short months, after a much needed summer break!

- Abby Carlson
After my internship ended in September, I’ve been hired as a contractor at KNOCK Inc! I’m still loving it here, filming events and client videos, editing, and creating motion graphics! I’ve been learning so much and love the work I get to do. I recently moved to Northeast Minneapolis with Will Bennett, and we couldn’t be happier with our new place, near breweries, the local farmer’s market, and tons of parks! Can’t wait to see what the next year has in store.

- Bailey Tillman
Last August I moved to La Crosse, WI to begin my grad school adventure at the University of Wisconsin La Crosse. I’m working on my Master’s in Student Affairs Administration. Year one was a bit rocky with cohort, assistantship, and health drama, but I successfully wrapped up the year about a month ago. I will be spending the summer in Thousand Oaks, CA where I have an internship in the student life office at California Lutheran University. It’s just like Concordia, but in a warmer climate and with beaches! I will be helping to plan their orientation for incoming students in that fall as well as help train their orientation leaders. I look forward to spending my summer with an awesome group of students and spending my free time at the beach!

- Larkin Tyll

After spending the year working in sports tech in Minneapolis and traveling along the ATP and WTA tennis tour, I recently took a new job (also in tech) at Bite Squad (also headquartered in Minneapolis) where I’m in marketing on the growth team. It’s exciting and fast paced and I love it! Between jobs I took the opportunity to go to Cartagena, Colombia alone to get some much needed time for myself! Looking forward to the next chapter.

- Kayla Dostal
I've made it one year with Sanford as an RN! In the last year I have worked so hard, but it has been worth it. In addition to caring for some of the best patients, I have entered into a few leadership roles within my unit. I'm one of two senators on Nursing Senate, I'm the Performance Improvement Representative, and I have started to train new nurses on our unit. Nursing is one of the most fulfilling jobs that I have had and I look forward to what else it has in store for me.
- Sofia Olesen

I've had quite the life change in the last few months. In January I started working at Bellecour in Wayzata as a host in one of the best restaurants in the state, in February I was accepted into a Masters Program at the University of Redlands in Vocal Chamber Music, I'll be working with Christopher Gabbitas, a former member of The Kings Singers! After that great news I told the team at Bellecour that I had a small interest in restaurant management and was offered a training position as a Junior Restaurant and Bakery Manager! It has been amazing, a lot of work and an enormous change. Look us up at bellecourrestaurant.com!
- Andrew Joseph Swartchick
I graduated Concordia with a major in Psychology and Neuroscience minor. I planned on going into private medicine for my whole life. However, I’ve just completed my first year of graduate school in the Masters of Public Health program at NDSU, with a focus on food sustainability, accessibility and security. I currently hold the position as a Food Security Coordinator at a local church. I also will be coordinating SNAP benefits at the Moorhead Farmer’s Market this year. I realized how I wanted to help a much wider range of our community and prevent health concerns before they have a chance to wreak havoc on peoples’ lives. While it wasn’t at all what I thought I’d do, I’m so happy and I feel like I’m really making a difference for people who often don’t have their voice heard.

Moral of the story: If you still don’t know what you want to do after college, don’t freak. Things have a way of working themselves out when you least expect it.

- Tia Ann Schmitz

Since graduation, I moved to NYC where I am one semester away from receiving my Master's Degree in Violin Performance from NYU. This summer I am in Colorado at the Aspen Music Festival and School, where I am an RA and will be performing until August.

- Michael Abramyan
Following college graduation in May 2018, Reyna Bergstrom moved to Flathead Lake in Montana to work for a fourth summer at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp. As the Art Coordinator, she spent her summer days getting her hands dirty by teaching pottery, running around with kids, and spending nearly every weekend hiking in Glacier National Park. Following a whirlwind of a summer, Reyna returned to Fargo in September without any plans. After some traveling and working a few part time jobs, she accepted her first “big girl” job in November on Concordia’s Communication + Marketing Team as a Content Specialist. Reyna now spends her days running Concordia’s social media and loves engaging with current students, faculty, and alums. In the months to come, Reyna will be preparing for Miss North Dakota in June 2019, as well as continuing to travel and spend time with loved ones. In her free time she enjoys painting, writing, and eating arguably too many avocados.

I have spent the last year living in Lincoln, Nebraska where I moved to begin graduate school and complete my dietetic internship. The program ends this August and then I'll be moving back to Fargo to begin my job search. I'll also continue working towards my masters degree in dietetics. In personal news I got engaged last December and have been busy planning my wedding which will be this October! I'm very excited for what lies ahead both personally and professionally!

- Erica Hauf
Taylor (Trager) Kolling married Adam Kolling (Class of 2017) on Saturday, August 4, 2018! She is employed at Fairview Health as a Registered Nurse.

Jacquelyn (Hanson) Stevens married Kasey Stevens (Class of 2018) on Saturday, August 4, 2018! She is employed at St. Mary's Catholic School as a Jr. High Science Teacher.

Josiah Kohlmeyer started a position as Data Scientist at Nihilent Inc on Monday, September 10, 2018!

Nick Brandt started a position as Education Production and Camp Coordinator at Metropolis School of the Performing Arts on Monday, December 3, 2018!