

Spring 2023

Dear Members of Classis,

It is a good time to be involved in the important Kingdom work of Calvin University! As your representatives on the Calvin University Board of Trustees, we are happy to provide you with this report. In January the Board met virtually, a practice post-pandemic to hold one meeting a year online. Here are some updates from the meeting and other developments since then.

Calvin as Global Campus – The Board recently voted to approve the addition of the Master of Teaching program into Calvin’s long-established portfolio of educational offerings. Calvin’s Global Campus directive has supported the growth of existing and new graduate programs, including expected launches in 2023-24 of new degrees in teaching, public administration, data science, and nursing. By the end of 2023-24, a portfolio of 12 graduate programs will be in place, up from three only 2½ years ago. Graduate programs are widely available online, in both part-time and full-time modes. Also, in partnership with the School of Health and the DeVries Institute, the Global Campus welcomed over a hundred learners in non-credit-bearing “microcredentials” and similar learning experiences (learn.calvin.edu).

Faculty Promotions and Hiring – The Board ratified hiring five new faculty members and approved the promotions of others. What an experience to interview these highly qualified and deeply Christian faculty members who shared their thoughtful approach to Reformed academic pursuits and who bring so much from their diverse backgrounds. Each one will have a positive impact on enhancing the university’s global perspective and culture.

State of the Students Presentation – The Board heard from the Student Senate President about the results of their student survey which assessed the ethnicity, gender, political and religious affiliations, and views of the student body regarding Calvin’s academics and operations. The data show a student body diverse in thought and opinion, as well that students from the CRC have decreased in number and proportion in the last five years. Overall there is an improvement in students’ mental health due to a return to a sense of community.

Dirk Pruis Appointed CFO – Prof. Dirk Pruis was appointed as the university’s Vice-President for Finance and Chief Financial Officer in January. Prof. Pruis demonstrated effective leadership and long-time service to Calvin University previously in a similar role and as a respected faculty member in the School of Business. The university’s current financial position shows a strong balance sheet and favorable external debt ratings, allowing it to proceed with capital projects and other key initial priorities.

University Approves Statement on Interfaith Dialogue – The statement is part of the effort to foster a collaborative and engaging academic and student culture and create a welcoming campus environment that engages broadly with society while maintaining the university’s core mission and values. It intentionally reaffirms Calvin’s commitment to maintain a vibrant

Reformed Christian community while pursuing dialogue outside of the local Reformed community, around the globe, and with those outside the Christian faith. To do so Calvin is providing ongoing development programs which cultivate deep commitments to Reformed Christianity, promote vibrant Christian community, include globally-diverse expressions of Reformed Christianity, and support ecumenical/interfaith dialogue.

Emerging Technology – The Board received a presentation on emerging technologies which continue to challenge society -- including security and education, e.g., ChatGPT. We discussed areas of concern and opportunity, and how Calvin can adopt emerging technologies to enhance its education model while providing needed thought leadership in the field.

Enrollment Update – The Board received an update on Calvin’s student recruitment numbers which showed the highest ever applications and admissions, and highest ever international interest. At the Classis meeting, we expect to be able to present up-to-date data about student numbers. One trend to note is a decline in numbers of children of alumni attending Calvin.

University Governance – The Board received a presentation on university governance from a task force appointed in the fall to recommend improvements to the effectiveness of Calvin’s governance model. This report highlighted the roles of both faculty and board assemblies. The new “school” structure within Calvin and the growth of graduate programs are two of the reasons behind this review.

Strategic Plan Progress and Future Goals – The Board learned about progress toward *Vision 2030* with a focus on delivering flourishing students, flourishing employees, and a flourishing community. The university investments and initiatives are aligned with the timing of Calvin University’s upcoming 150th-anniversary celebrations. President Boer reiterated his pledge to “recommit to our engagement with our own church and our own community, showing that our mission is not just abstract but put into action for the welfare of the CRC, the city and communities around the world.” Denominational engagement is building up, as is community engagement, particularly in areas where Calvin has been seen to be missing.

Canadian students highlighted in the news – Two recent news stories out of Calvin describe the experiences of outstanding students: Catie Kramer, a first-year student who hails from Scarborough Grace CRC [When-the-journey-and-the-finish-line-both-matter](#), and Calvin hockey athlete Jacob Siebenga from Surrey, B.C, who was named to the Team Canada roster for the ACHA world cup tournament in Europe in April. The team is being led for the 3rd time by Calvin’s head coach for men’s hockey, Mike Petrusma, who is originally from Ontario. [Petrusma-and-Siebenga-to-help-lead-team-Canada](#).

We humbly ask for your prayers for Calvin in your home congregations, to encourage and support Calvin in its mission “to think deeply, act justly and live wholeheartedly as Christ’s agents of renewal in this world.”

Sincerely,
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Canada East Regional Trustees