



## Spring 2021 Classis Report: Redeemer University

The 2020/2021 academic year has come to a close at Redeemer, and we are thankful for the ways that our community was able to navigate the challenges due to the pandemic. Despite the many adjustments required to meet public health guidelines in order to offer in-person learning, we are grateful that for the majority of the year we were able to successfully offer dual-delivery learning for our students. This past year has been unlike any other in Redeemer's history, but the Lord has continued to provide for and sustain our students, faculty and staff. We continue to work toward the mission of discipling the next generation of Christian leaders prepared to share the hope and love of Jesus Christ in whatever callings and careers God leads them into.

With regret, we announce that Dr. Robert J. Graham will be resigning from his position on May 1, 2021. Dr. Graham has served as president of the university since August 2018. He is stepping down due to ongoing health concerns related to a serious medical challenge experienced early in his tenure, as well as some family concerns, in which pandemic-related travel restrictions have posed additional challenges for him and his U.S.-based family. Redeemer is grateful for Dr. Graham's humble and effective servant leadership over the last few years. He has used his gifts to move the university forward despite these unprecedented, exhausting and challenging times.

With this significant change, we remain confident that Redeemer's momentum will continue without interruption. The board announced the appointment of Dr. David Zietsma, provost and vice president, academic, as interim president. The next step will be a full and competitive search process for a new president.

On January 27, Redeemer University and the Centre for Christian Scholarship hosted the event, "Reading While Black and Reformed." It was moderated by Dr. Jessica Joustra and featured Rev. Dr. Esau McCaulley, recipient of the 2020 Emerging Public Intellectual Award, in conversation with Dr. Vince Bacote (both faculty members at Wheaton College). It was an exciting and informative evening that left us wanting to hear more. It's free to watch on Redeemer's youtube page. As soon as permitted, Redeemer also plans to have Dr. McCaulley on campus to receive the award and engage the campus in further discussion.

This past February, students, faculty and staff celebrated Gratitude Week. This is a week-long reflection and series of events highlighting the contributions made by generous supporters. Redeemer continues to be immensely grateful for the financial contributions from our support community, and we are on a mission to help students understand the impactful role donors play at keeping their tuition low.

In September 2020, Redeemer broke ground on a new residence and learning facility that is scheduled to open in time for the fall 2021 term. While the top three floors of the building will be living spaces, the bottom floor will accommodate exciting learning spaces including the new Centre for Innovation and



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Entrepreneurship. The Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship is an initiative coming out of *Learn. Forward.*, Redeemer University's Strategic Plan 2025.

On June 12, we will come together as the Redeemer community to virtually celebrate the Class of 2021. Just over 150 new graduates will join the ranks of over 6,400 alumni. We praise God that young people are entering their next phase of life feeling ready for whatever may come.

This past year has been unexpected and challenging to navigate, and as we start to see some hope of the pandemic coming to an end, we ask for continued prayer for our leadership, as well as our students as they determine plans for the fall. As we look forward to what the coming academic year will bring, we are so grateful for the Christian Reformed Church's faithful financial support to Redeemer. Many blessings as you continue serving your community in God's service.

Hank de Jong  
Associate VP, External Relations