



December 12, 2022

Dear Classis Huron:

Greetings from the Guelph Campus Ministry Board!

As you know, the Guelph Campus Ministry community, through the leadership of Sara DeMoor, provides a hospitable place for students, staff and faculty to learn and grow, a place to serve and be served, and a place to be formed in our identity in Christ. Speaking winsomely, insisting on truth and accountability, and spreading God's message of hope in the COVID-restructured university culture is a challenging task.

Students need a word of hope! As a board, we continue to celebrate the ministry because of the tangible ways that our CRC churches have been able to make a difference. Let me highlight just a few:

- 1) Brianne Gayfer was hired this fall 2022 to help coordinate and administer in a part-time role. She is a PhD student in clinical psychology and has journeyed with us for a number of years. She has a Baptist background and appreciates the emphasis of the ministry on **cultivating faith on campus that is robust, integrated with learning, and credible to graduate students**. She is working well with Sara and even adding some things to our ministry that we did not anticipate!
- 2) After two years of off-campus pivoting with weekly Community Dinners, students are grateful to return to the longed-for rhythms of Wednesday night dinners in Raithby House, our on-campus home. GCM partners with another Christian campus ministry, Ecumenical Campus Ministry (ECM) in offering home-cooked meals provided by our local supporting congregations, and these dinners (and the Acts Bible study after dinner) are an important **grounding moment of belonging and connection** for students in the midst of their stressful week of classes, reading and study.
- 3) Dr. Peter Schuurman led the faculty ministry in the winter semester and now Sara has taken on the task this fall. The Faculty and Staff Bible study is meeting in person again on campus, and this has been a wonderful way to reconnect staff and faculty with each other and our wider ministry. Faculty burnout has been an issue and we find younger faculty are less likely to attend.
- 4) Our board meetings are functioning well, allowing us to ask good questions about the vision and work of GCM. With four other board members representing three congregations (Jenn Adema, Trudy Mafe, Marge Siertsema and Peter Schuurman), we work well together and are planning a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration for the Fall of 2023, along with the Waterloo Campus Ministry, which shares its origins with us in this classis. All will be welcome to join us in remembering what God has done through the decades of this ministry! Be ready to reserve the date when it is confirmed!
- 5) I should add that **we are still looking for a new board member** to be our liaison to Classis Huron and the Classical Ministries Committee. Suggested names are welcome.

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*A ministry of the Christian Reformed Church at the University of Guelph*

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- 6) And, of course, the big news with Sara is that she moved right up beside the university this past summer and now can walk to campus every day. Her family is settling into Guelph schools and churches and her husband has taken up the position of principal at the local Christian school.

There is much more to say about Sara's work, some of which we hope you have heard in classis meetings and through her preaching in your congregation. Recent activities include co-leading a Bible study on the book of Acts, hosting a pumpkin-carving social organized by GCM student interns, and organizing a "church crawl" where **students are invited to attend different churches in town** together on specified Sundays. Her pastoral counselling of students continues and faculty are also approaching her for pastoral care.

One small story of her work. Sara was a part of a Student Memorial Tree Dedication at the campus Arboretum, which was a ceremony primarily for the families and friends of students who have died in the past year. She was the last of various university leaders to share some reflections, and **spoke of the very real grief and loss, but also about hope**, expressing it from her faith perspective. Bereaved parents spoke gratefully to her after this service. As a board, we see this kind of witness to the campus as being a way in which faith in our resurrected Lord can be especially meaningful and helpful to others.

**There is much more to say, but in sum, we want classis to know that the GCM board is duly impressed with Sara's work and the influence of the ministry on the wider campus.** She has gone beyond the call of duty in many ways during COVID, and we have approved a sabbatical for her during this coming 2023 winter semester. We are in the process of **hiring an interim campus minister** to keep the ministry going and the pastoral presence available for all who come looking for that message of hope and comfort.

*It is for these reasons and for so many more that the board is thankful to God and to all our supporters, especially our closest partners, the Christian Reformed churches of this classis. We wish to also thank classis for your faithful support of GCM.*

*The purpose of this letter is to give classis a small window into GCM's current status as well as to appeal to each of the supporting churches to please include GCM on your church's upcoming budget and/or offering schedule. Please consider ways that you can be a part of God's ongoing work at the University of Guelph. We also ask that you keep the GCM board, Sara DeMoor, Brianne Gayfer, the students, staff and faculty of GCM and the University of Guelph in your prayers. We wish to serve our campus, to guide the wandering, be faithful in our learning, and to listen well to God's leading in all that we do.*

We are grateful for the supporting churches of GCM and for God's providential care for this ministry.

In Christ,

*Bruce Bos*

Guelph Campus Ministry Board Chair

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