

November 2025

In September, Calvin University received the #1 ranking for undergraduate teaching from *U.S. News & World Report*, arguably the most popular source for college rankings. This external validation indicates an internal reality at Calvin. Put simply: Calvin professors, many of whom are leading scholars in their field, prioritize teaching and mentoring students over everything else.

As Calvin University continues in its 150th anniversary year, the faculty and staff remain ever so committed to fulfilling the university's enduring mission to equip students to think deeply, to act justly, and to live wholeheartedly as Christ's agents of renewal in the world.

A few key ways Calvin is continuing to fulfill this mission in 2025 are through an ongoing:

- commitment to the integration of faith and learning
- dedication to the liberal arts
- expansion of student opportunities

Commitment to the integration of faith and learning

The university's commitment to integrating faith and learning dates back to the school's founding in 1876. That commitment has only deepened over time, especially in recent years with the founding of the [de Vries Institute for Global Faculty Development](#), which provides Calvin faculty with the resources and support to do this work well. The university's recent receipt of a three-year, \$488K virtue formation grant is another example of how this work continues to expand.

Dedication to the liberal arts

Calvin is unwavering in its commitment to preparing students holistically to engage in a complex world. It's never been about grads *just* getting a job, it's always been about preparing them to be Christ's agents of renewal. And by the testimony of our students, graduates, and their employers, it's clear that their ability to be critical thinkers, clear communicators, ethical decision makers, and creative problem solvers is what sets them apart from their peers.

Expansion of student opportunities

Calvin students have access to rare opportunities for a university of its size. The reason this happens is because professors are both well-respected and well-connected in their fields and extremely accessible to their students. Calvin students comment often about how surprised they are with the access they have to their professors—not just professionally, but personally. This proves to be extremely valuable for students, who testify to professors connecting them with projects and internships that match their interests and writing detailed recommendation letters for them that demonstrate their familiarity with the student and their passions.

Board of Trustees October 22 – 23 Meeting Update

At our recent Board meetings, the Board welcomed five new trustees that were approved by Synod 2025 at their June meeting: Craig Lubben – at-large (Kalamazoo, MI), Nancy Schoonmaker – at-large (Grand Rapids, MI), John Valk – region 2 elected (Fredericton, BC), Cathy VanDonselaar – region 5 at-large (Denver, CO), and Leslie VanderGriend – at-large (Seattle, WA).

The board heard from faculty and student panels about academic excellence, shared governance, and Calvin through the lens of students. These conversations were invaluable and reinforced the importance of our collective voice in shaping Calvin's future.

The Board reviewed the requests from two Synod 2025 advisory committees:

- 1) Provide a rubric which informs and guides the recruitment of, and qualifications for trustees.
- 2) Further define the use of indefinite exceptions to confessional subscription.
- 3) Address the percentage of trustees who must possess convictional alignment with the confessions.

The requests were assigned to various board committees to address and report back at the January 2026 trustee meeting.

Classis region trustees gathered to discuss their role and plans for interactions with their various Classis regions.

The Board affirmed the university's budget methodology and approach for assessing academics, student life, and operations. The board also encouraged the continued and ongoing work that will strengthen our financial sustainability and mission.

Items presented for approval included:

- Tuition rates for fiscal year 2026-27
- Membership of the Executive Committee, appointment of trustees to University Advisory Councils, and Board Standing committees for 2025-26
- Future Board Meeting Dates
- Audited Financial Statements for June 30, 2025

The university is described as a Reformed Christian liberal arts institution affiliated with the Christian Reformed Church in North America, dedicated to teaching, learning, and scholarship. The Board recognizes that the university cannot avoid contentious issues on which stakeholders may disagree. Instead, it calls for engaging these issues with truth and love, following the example of Christ. Trustees were reminded to address concerns - drawing on biblical principles such as those found in Romans 14.

Calvin's mission endures. Calvin has navigated various chapters of change in our 150-year history, and with God's guidance, we will continue to serve our students and community faithfully in this next chapter. We are reminded of our mission to educate students to think deeply, act justly, and live wholeheartedly as Christ's agents of renewal in the world.

This document outlines key information, including developments of the October 2025 Calvin University Board of Trustees meeting, with the intention of it being shared with the Christian Reformed Church classis clerks for distribution with classis meeting materials. This document is also a resource for Calvin University Classis Region trustees when asked about Calvin University.