

## President's Report October 2012

A new school year: two steps ahead, one step back, but still moving forward.

We continue to enjoy a strong sense of harmony and unity on the campus, a gift from God and perhaps the most important measure of our community health. This is well illustrated by the improved level of returning students. It is also seen in the teamwork that pulled together the renovation of Founders Hall, our classroom building. It could also be seen in our Homecoming in July.

- **Rebound in Returning Students:** The school year is now underway and our enrolment is almost exactly flat compared with last year (287 paying students in both years). The bad and good news is that our new student numbers fell the same amount as our returning students climbed. We have been very encouraged by the nearly 40% rebound in returning students. We are already ramping up our marketing to try to recover the ground we felt we had gained in attracting new students. (Student numbers are attached).
- **Capacity Utilization:** In May, we proposed to Prairie Christian Academy (PCA) that we share Founders Hall, our primary classroom building. This would move them into a better quality facility and would improve the utilization of that building. Our faculty led the renovation of the third floor. Everyone on campus pitched in to paint walls, clean floors and rooms, and move furniture. Then PCA moved into the second floor to do their renovation. By September that building was humming, taking its occupancy rate from around 30% to 100%. PCA also moved into the Oasis and the Small Banquet Room, taking those two rooms from probably less than 10% occupancy to 100%. Then we vacated the High School building, which is probably our oldest and most inefficient building.
- **Homecoming:** In July we celebrated our 90<sup>th</sup> year with an excellent Homecoming with 650 registered alumni coming back for the event. We estimate that we had 1000 people attend when we add in our registered guests, our walk-in guests and our staff & faculty family. The event was hosted by our staff and faculty, which was much beyond most of their job descriptions.

It is a privilege to work with a team of professionals that takes this level of ownership.

**Strategic Plan:** We have given a considerable amount of time around the campus thinking about our longer term direction. You will have received a draft version of this prior to our meeting together and it will be a substantial part of our discussion when we get together.

Our theme in Community Chapel this fall is "Unshakeable," a review of the great pillars of our faith which transcend time, cultures and denominations. We have chosen this theme as a way of communicating the foundations upon which the school continues to stand and as a statement of solidarity with the global Church.

### Industry Trends

I have observed five trends that relate to our role in higher education, each of which merits our consideration. We are giving these a lot of thought as we explore alternatives and research what our best responses should be.

- I. Renewed Interest in Bible – As we have renewed our emphasis on Bible and made it central to our education we have seen a vital interest in the Scriptures, both among parents and pastors as well as among our college-age students.
- II. Distance Education – There is a large component of college and university education that is happening on line and we need to determine how we can take advantage of this channel.
- III. Pricing – Many colleges and universities are offering their courses on-line for free or at sharply reduced rates. Given the possible interest for Bible training in English in the greater world, we need to define our pricing strategy with the greater world in mind and be prepared for surprising interest.
- IV. Vocational Education – The higher education schools that are growing quickly are the vocational colleges that offer programs that lead to certifications and qualifications for specific careers. Nursing is a classic example of such a program. We are finding many organizations who are willing to join us on our mission. We will be tailoring our programs along the same track, including Bible College training which leads to pulpit ministry.
- V. Partnerships – A traditional African proverb says, “If you want to go far, go with others.” One of the keys to strong schools is their ability to find healthy complementary partnerships. This is Biblical, it demonstrates good Christian community and it produces far superior results in less time and at lower cost. We continue to seek strategic partners and welcome your suggestions and connections.

As a member of our board, you are very much a part of what God is doing on this campus. We need you and appreciate your joining us in this effort to improve Biblical literacy so that we can “know Christ and make Him known”.

Again, many many thanks for the roles you play,

*Mark*

Mark L. Maxwell  
President  
October 9, 2012