

Giving Thanks
President's Report to the Board

"...whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him..." (Col 3:17)

Giving Thanks – With Thanksgiving season in the air, I cannot imagine a better title for this report on the state of affairs at Prairie College.

- We continue to enjoy harmony among our staff and faculty as we maintain our focus on our mission to train young adults to meet the greatest needs of the world.
- We each consider it a high privilege to be involved in the transformational work God is doing in our lives, in our college, and most importantly, in our college students as we strive "to be, and inviting others to be, lovers of God."
- We feel that the students are engaging well with the Scriptures and growing in their Christian walk, both as individuals and as a community.

We are most blessed by the Most High, and have much for which to give Him thanks. Keep reading... I think you will agree when you see more of the picture.

Our Commitment to Prayer – We continue to embrace and grow in our culture of prayer, encouraged this semester by our Community Chapel series entitled "A House of Prayer." We believe that prayer is the catalyst for spiritual health and corporate growth. You as a board set the standard with your monthly week of prayer and fasting as our leadership group. We meet come together as a team each Wednesday morning for 30 minutes of prayer, which is in addition to departmental prayer routines that vary across the campus. We believe that the good report that follows is a direct result of answers to prayer...our prayer as a team, together with your prayer on our behalf. Thank you and thanks be to God.

Faculty – We thank God for our talented and dedicated faculty who provide premium leadership across the campus.

- We began this school year with a terrific Convocation chapel that included the commissioning of our GlobeTREKKERS who then left on their trip around the world. What an amazing privilege to have Brian Doerksen leading us in "Jesus, Hope of the Nations" and to hear the students singing their hearts out.
- Dr. Carmen Imes has arrived to fill the very important Old Testament Professor position on our Bible/Theology faculty team. She is already fitting in and breathing life into the great stories of the older testament.

Financials – We will be presenting you with our audited financial statements and asking for your adoption of them at the end of the month. Subject to minor edits, it appears that our total revenue in the past year (ended June 30, 2017) was \$9.5 million (vs. \$7.6 million in 2016) with a surplus of \$1.4 million (vs. a loss of \$0.4 million in 2016). In the year, we were able to spend \$600,000 on the maintenance of the campus. Our total donation revenue was close to \$3.4 million, up from \$1.7 in the previous year. We are so grateful to God for the friends he has given us and the work we can do with their resources.

Scholarships – We believe our best long-term investments are in the students. We were able to award \$577,000 in scholarships this past year and would like to grow that substantially over the next few years. Our largest current need in scholarships is for prison inmate scholarships. We now have 18 students enrolled at Bowden Penitentiary and are being invited to open a similar program (the one-year Bible-immersion program) at Drumheller Penitentiary. The cost of tuition is about \$4,000 per student per year. We rely on scholarships to cover these costs so we can continue to offer training in these critical prison settings.

Enrolment numbers – When all numbers are factored in, we are at about the same number of total students as last year.

- Returning students is the bright spot, at 151, up from 118 last year. This is an indicator of the quality of our programs and strength of our community, two areas that have been the focus of our work over the past 5 years.
- New students numbers were disappointing, at 117, down from 145 last year. This is a primary focus for us this year. We are implementing several new strategies to see if we can find new ways of attracting students.

September applications – From early indications, something appears to be working. Our goal was to have 20 new applications in the month of September, which compares with an average of 17 over the past five years and with 29 apps in September 2016. Our total apps were 43 in the month, plus another 5 on-line applications!

Enrolment is a key component of our ability to impact the world for the Kingdom, please keep it high on your prayer list. Let's pray these students in.

Program development – We continue on track toward having delivery of three full degrees fully on-line by June 30, 2018, and are beginning to think hard about delivery of a graduate degree shortly thereafter. This will be a topic of discussion during our board meetings.

In addition, we are considering the possibility of having a Business “*Builders*” program as well as a *Mid-Wifery* program. Our plan will be to step into those majors when God provides the funding and a champion for each. Until then, we watch and pray. These will also be topics of discussion when we meet.

Our governing objective continues: to have each program among the best of its type in the world, not a small ambition. In addition, our goal is to provide an atmosphere of harmony and productivity as we model healthy Christianity, living and working well together.

Partnerships – We are grateful for the many strategic partnerships that God has provided, illustrated by the following examples:

- **MAFC** has been increasing its presence and investment in our flight school and is assuming management of the school this fall. The final steps have yet to be approved by their board, but we have every reason to believe that this will proceed as expected. We

believe this will be a long-term relationship that will significantly benefit both Prairie and MAFC.

- **Alberta Baptist Association** has invited us to partner with them in the training of their young people. They have appreciated our commitment to **Scripture** as well as our focus on **spiritual formation and community**. This is a relationship that has been in formation for many years, so we are delighted to be formalizing our relationship and look forward to being part of their educational strategy and contributing to their growth. We will be asking for your approval of this partnership during our upcoming board meeting.
- We continue to work closely with **Bowden Institution** in the delivery of our “Encounter” program (the first year “Bible immersion” courses that form the foundation of all our degree programs) and have been invited to launch a similar program in January in **Drumheller Penitentiary**. We believe these open doors are a gift from God (with special thanks to Prison Fellowship Canada for helping open these doors for us). We feel privileged to be guests in those facilities. We thank God for the leadership He has provided in Gord Allert and anticipate large potential as we watch doors into other prisons swing open for us.

In partnership with others, we are hosting two conferences this year that should help raise our flag in new ways, in broader circles and hopefully attract new students.

- **Black Forest Academy** in Germany is the host site for a “*Summit on biblical education and Christian formation practices*” we are convening at the end of November for international MK schools. 18 of the 20 schools that we invited have responded by confirming their plans to attend, many of them sending two representatives.
- **World Vision Canada** and **CrossRoads Church** (Red Deer) are partnering with us to host a conference on Global Social Justice in January. This will be an opportunity to showcase many of the organizations that are intervening on behalf of the most oppressed people in the world (who helped us create our GSJ program). It will also showcase our program and our plan to prepare students to work with these organizations. This is a multi-faceted partnership of many organizations and we are honored to be working with each of them.

On Thursday evening, October 26, we will be hosting our **Annual General Meeting for Partners** at which time we will discuss our plans for the next 5 years, as we look ahead to our centennial celebration in 2022. Please plan to join us for that evening. If you are visiting friends or family in the area, please invite them to join us as well.

Thank you for your investments of time and money, and especially for your prayer, in the work that God is doing here,

Mark

Mark L. Maxwell, President
October 12, 2017