

# Prairie Bible Institute Semi Annual Meeting

## Report to the Board of Directors



April 29-30, 2024



# PRAIRIE COLLEGE

# President's Report

## April 2024

### A SEASON FOR CELEBRATION

#### Oh, the difference a year makes!

One year ago, I came into our April Board meeting with the question, "Should we lower our Capital Campaign target of \$100 million?" It was not one of my better days, smile. We were having trouble getting traction on the fundraising, our application for a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program was facing stiff resistance...and I probably needed a break. Your response, as a Board, courageously confirmed plans to maintain the goal of \$100 million: with your help we expanded the Capital Campaign team, adding key leaders Gordon Dirks and Ray Sawatsky, and you gave Elaine and me a two-month summer break to get away and recharge. All good decisions...

We have three strategic initiatives this year: the Capital Campaign, the B.Ed. application, and Enrollment growth.

**Capital Campaign** – We have taken an unusual approach to our Capital Campaign, starting at ground-level, with our long standing and faithful donors. These were the ones who primed the pump, had great vision, and have stood with us through bad and good times over many decades. This is everybody's story, initiated by faithful donors, and it is proof that every donation is material, no matter how small.

We climbed from a low of \$1 million (M) in the spring to \$2M in the fall of 2023, and then to \$10.7M in Feb 2024. This was largely due to organizing our efforts and developing our routines. In the meantime, Gordon had been bringing his experience, skill, and relationships to bear for Prairie.

In March he let us know that a connection of his would be contributing \$10M toward our effort, specifically for the new residence. AND, in addition, there would be up to \$5M more, as long as we would raise a matching \$5M in new funds for the residence!

At the time of this writing, the leadership of our Development department is passing from Kendi Dyck to Stacey Bell. Seamlessly. These two have modelled an excellent transfer of leadership at a time when disruption could have been costly. Kendi will be moving to the US and will be growing our relationships with US donors, and Stacey will assume the role of Managing Director and join the Management Team.

Don't miss their Development Report that will give much more information.

**Financial Results** – The results of all the fundraising work bring a sparkle to our financials, as you will see in Elaine’s Financial Report as well as on the DashBoard in Appendix A.

But don’t let the shine of strong revenue take anything away from the solid work Elaine Maxwell has done in managing our core business, and controlling spending so that we are strong and sustainable across the entire campus. As CFO, she is helping each program become self-sustaining, and helping each Managing Director make good decisions on when, where, and how much to spend when making larger purchases.

Let me take this opportunity to say,

- Thank You to everyone who has given to this Capital Campaign.
- Thank you, Gordon and Ray, for your excellent leadership of this initiative.
- And special thanks to every person on our development team who are helping move this initiative forward.

**B.Ed. Application** – The final chapter on this initiative has not been written, although it feels like this story is becoming an epic. It is a test of endurance, and our commitment to this important market. I believe training K-12 teachers in a four-year program that includes our seven-course coverage of the Canon is preparing them for the most important pulpit in our country, the public school classroom.

We remain committed to this important initiative, and we are well-served by Darrel Reid who is unflinching in his determination to get this degree approved by the Province of Alberta’s Minister of Advanced Education. Thank you, Darrel. I know where we would be without you, and it ain’t pretty.

Dr. Mark Jonah’s Education Report will give you more on this initiative as well as cover the whole of our academic line.

**Enrollment Growth** – Pamela Fraser’s Marketing and Enrollment Report reflects the many new initiatives she has tried this year...some of which have worked, smile. It appears that the “Take-Over Teams” strategy is getting solid grassroots traction with many churches welcoming us onto their platforms. It is a long game, but this strategy is helping us build relationships with people in churches, allowing us to tell our story on their platforms, while at the same time providing the churches with a good quality service and a break from their pulpit routines.

Don’t miss her report, the numbers are encouraging, especially for the aviation program.

**PATC Expansion** – Under the leadership of MAFC, our flight school has flourished and gained a stellar reputation. The program is strong, well-regarded among professionals, and is now attracting a full pipeline of students. Dallas Derksen is planning for a class intake 2.5x the number in this year’s class. It is time to expand their facilities, and to provide much better classroom space on site for the simulators. We are grateful for Dallas and the PATC team, as well as for MAFC and the leadership it has and is providing.

The next stage for the flight school will be a formation of some type of shared governance between Prairie and MAFC, giving both organizations meaningful voice and influence, and in that way helping to ensure the long-term sustainability of this excellent partnership.

**Operations and Plant Management** – Andrew Siggelkow’s team is leaving fingerprints all over campus:

- Maintaining beautiful grounds, the welcome mat for our publics.
- Renewing our fleet of vehicles, while maintaining the aging vehicles.
- Clearing and crushing the concrete rubble at the back of our property.
- Repairing roofs, securing the campus.
- Re-cladding Davidson apartments.
- Planning and arranging for the total refinishing of the gymnasium floor.
- Planning and negotiating PATC’s expansion. Groundbreaking for the new hangar and classroom buildings is planned for June 15 (save the date).
- Planning and negotiating a new residence. Potential for ground breaking later this summer.

Andrew is busy, and we thank God for him.

**Campus Planning** – With the prospect of having enough funding in place to cover the costs of the PATC expansion and the new residence, we are in the process of making final plans for the construction of both projects. These will be key components of our discussions during Board meetings in a few weeks.

To get these done, we will need to address some infrastructure issues like utilities and water drainage. Eventually we look forward to tackling the stages of paving and curbing...after a century of tracking mud into our buildings every spring, it is time to deal with that mess.

**Student Community** – Student Life, with all of its tailoring, continues under the experienced leadership of Glenn Loewen, Gillian Blomsma, and Michael Bookless. Comments in our surveys about the importance of campus community and the lifelong friendships that are forming suggest that this entire team is effective in providing a healthy environment in which students can thrive. This is a team of outstanding servants who find great joy in the well-being of the students. We are blessed to have every one of them on our team.

**Team Community** – Every three years, we take the “**Best Christian Workplace**” survey, and that timeline came around again in February this year, 2024. This is a self-survey, that, in some ways, is a 360 survey on the organization, or on the leadership team, or on the CEO. It has gone up each time we have taken it since 2015, and I’m sure it will continue to do that until we stop taking it (and I’m considering that to be now, smile). For the unveiling of the result this year, I wrote a poem entitled “*Tis 2024*” that we positioned as a “Forward” in this Report. I hope you like it.

In short, the survey finds that people on our team feel valued and appreciated, understand our mission and how they contribute to it, and are fully engaged in helping us achieve our mission. Our strongest element in the survey is communication that drives engagement, and our weakest is compensation.

We have been working on our compensation levels for several years, but we are still shy of the median of our Canadian Christian higher education colleagues. Our bonus is helping correct some of our shortfall, so I believe we should keep it, and perhaps use it as a tool for closing the gap. We do not have a specific proposal on this subject, but it might merit some thoughtful conversation at the Board, along with advice to the Executive.

Thank you for making time to prepare for our upcoming meetings and the decisions we will be considering while you're here. I hope you enjoy reading each of the reports, and find joy in the headway that is being made in each area.

We are looking forward to seeing you on campus in a couple of weeks. Let me take this opportunity to thank each of you, once again, for your work on our Board.

*Mark*

Mark L. Maxwell  
President

