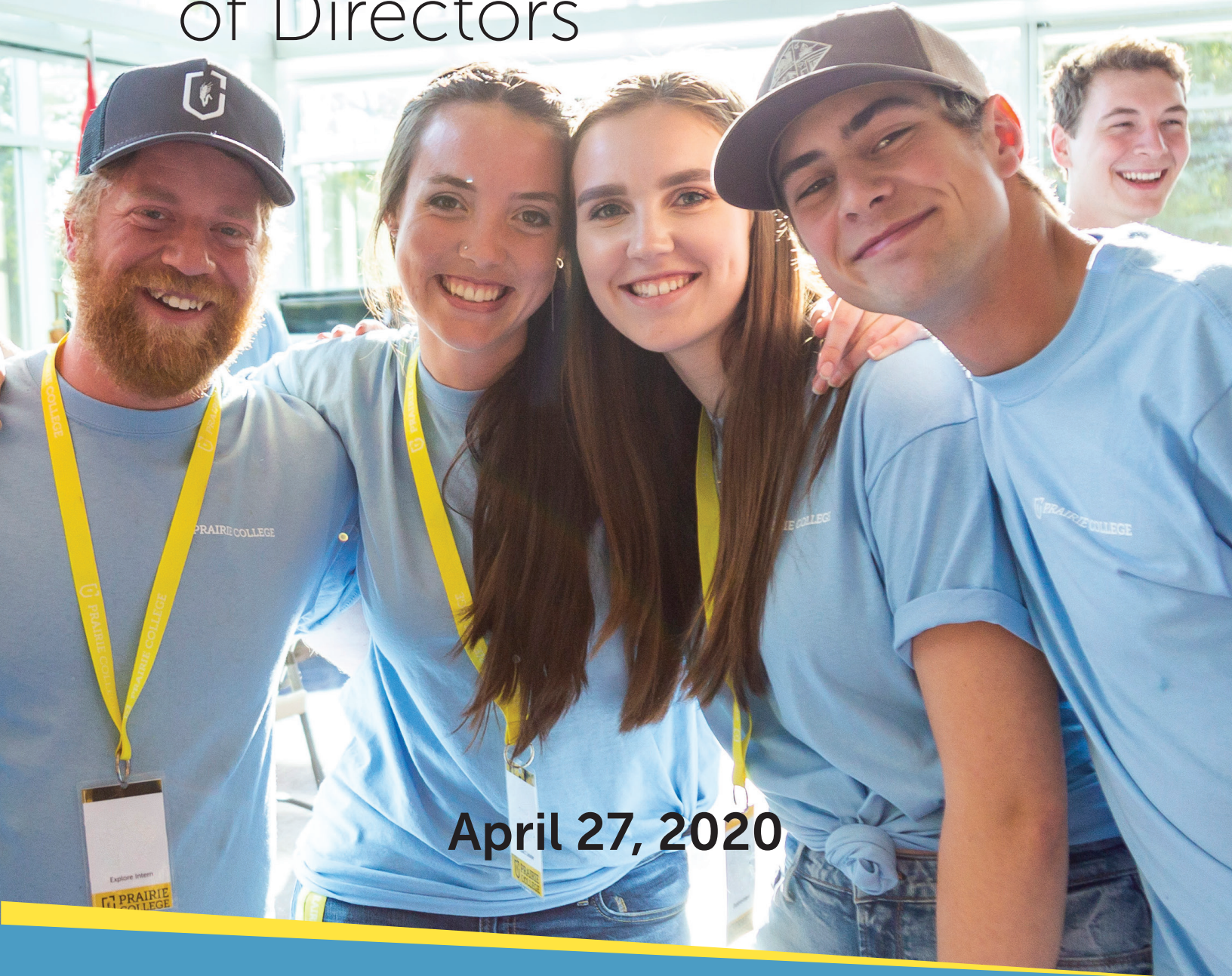


# Prairie Bible Institute **Semi-annual Meeting**

## Report to the Board of Directors



April 27, 2020



# PRAIRIE COLLEGE

## Change is Good!

### April 2020

From the beginning of time, God has been making change, bringing order out of chaos. First came creation, then, after sin entered the world, redemption, which will bring about a new creation and the establishment of His Kingdom. Throughout all of history He has been transforming people who choose to recognize Him for who He is into His image, as shown to us in the person of His Son, our Lord Jesus.

On the assumption that God is good, and that, in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, then we should assume that change, especially in the hands of a good God, is good. Even seismic change that disrupts our routines. It is a simple matter of faith, to believe that either God is at work bringing about an improvement, or He will take what has been meant for evil and turn it into good. This is the nature of God, at the core of His character. This is the good Heavenly Father we love and adore.

We have seen seismic change in our world and on our campus since we last met. The Coronavirus outbreak in China has now spread through Europe to North America, with the largest number of cases in the world being in the US. As I write this, the total number of cases in the world is still growing by 10% or more per day. Based on my opening comments, I watch with anticipation to see what God is doing in the midst of what appears to be global chaos.

Even though, at the time of writing, we are aware of no cases in the Prairie community, the impact on our campus has been shocking. A timeline of events looks like this:

- Wed/Thurs March 11-12 – Campus is buzzing with GCC meetings in the gym and dozens of missionaries visiting campus, meeting with students.
- Friday March 13 – Faculty meet to learn how to hold online classrooms. Decide to run a trial with four classes being delivered online the week of March 16-20.
- Sunday March 15 – Emergency conference call with College executives and Directors of Student Development (DSD's). Alberta Health Services (AHS) mandating closure of all public university classes. In keeping with the directive, all in-person classes cancelled immediately.
- Monday March 16 – Emergency Management Team meeting with DSD's (Board invited to join) to plan relaunch of classes in online classrooms utilizing Google Hangouts.



- Tuesday March 17 – Half of residence students leave campus. Room and board rebates are based on date of departure.
- Wednesday March 18 – All classes launched in online classrooms. Within 2 days more than 40 different classes were being delivered, some of which met four times/week.
- Friday March 20 – Chartwell's notifies the College that it will cease food services on the 27th. Decision is made to close the residence at the same time.
- Monday March 23 – Prairie's application to provide "Supplemental Unemployment Benefits" for people on temporary layoff is approved (allows us to continue to provide benefits and top up income by 25%).
- Wednesday March 25 – Meeting with all employees to explain our plan of action during the pandemic.
- Saturday March 28 – All students have left campus, staff and faculty are choosing to work from home when possible, 16 employees have been put on temporary layoff.

April 1 – Prairie is a ghost town, quietly being buried under a fresh blanket of snow.

#### Our Strategic response

Defence: The first priority for us is to be sure that we are around for the next season, so we are focussed on eliminating all collateral costs.

- Our plan for the month of April is to continue to deliver classes in online classrooms with all students expected to complete their courses and programs on time ... this is our education promise.
- Our plan for the summer is to trim costs wherever possible, taking advantage of government programs that will help us and, at the same time, hoping to ease the burden of losing reduced income. We have qualified for the Supplemental Unemployment Benefit Plan in which we are able to continue to offer benefits and top up incomes to 80% for those employees on temporary layoff.

Offence: I expect in the years ahead, this will be remembered as an opportunity for the organizations that pivoted quickly, adapting to pandemic pressures and market demands.

- Our plan for the fall is to be ready to resume classes on campus, and at the same time, be prepared to deliver those classes simultaneously in online classrooms (move to "hybrid classes").
- Throughout the summer, we are planning to deploy as many resources as possible into marketing/recruitment of students and into maintaining digital relationships with our donor-partners. We will be especially focussed on promoting our online degree programs.

Throughout the remainder of this Board report you will hear from each of the Managing Directors about ways they have been adjusting to this new reality. Each of them have been putting in long days, seeking creative solutions and working through

scenarios that none of us imagined 6 months ago. I think special thanks should go to Elaine, who stepped up as our COVID-19 lead, led us through the difficult decisions we needed to make, and began implementing steps that would protect the future of the school. Each member of our Management Team would make the Dean's list for their work during this period, but let me give a special shout-out to

- Emily Allert-House, who has managed all our communication through the period while at the same time re-tooling our marketing so that applicants are still being invited to enroll; and to
- Dr. Glenn Loewen, who has led the Faculty through the many and immediate changes needed to adapt to online classrooms. Glenn is also leading us through re-thinking our business, exploring the idea of having hybrid classrooms, and leading us through a reconfiguration of our Athletics program.

I am so grateful for our entire Management Team.

Let me finish with some reasons for giving thanks...

- I am thankful that we have a solid and stable team of high-performing professionals and executives. We are marked by living well and in harmony, by flexibility and creativity, and by high levels of individual performance. The result is that individually, we have joy in our work, and collectively, we are strong and effective. What a team God has provided for such a time as this.
- I am thankful that we have had several years of solid financial performance... good revenue growth, good cost management, and decent profitability which has given us a buffer to weather this storm. Thanks to every person on our team who has helped us manage the school. We need you and are grateful for you.
- I am thankful for students who have worked with us, flexed with us, cheered for us, and shown much grace and gratitude in the midst of one of the most difficult semesters in memory.
- I am thankful for a Board that understands the important role of governance, giving direction and encouragement as it is needed. You are important to the long-term welfare of this College and you are a powerful and critical component of our team. Thank you.
- I am so thankful for donors who have helped us rebuild our balance sheet, repair our campus, fund our student scholarships. They have stood with us and cheered for us through tough times in the past and I have no reason to doubt they will be here with us through this. Some of these faithful ones have become close personal friends with Elaine and me, and we are grateful for every one of them.
- I am so very thankful to our Almighty God, the Creator, who has brought us to this point, provided through many seasons, both good and bad. He is about the business of establishing his Kingdom under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It is our mission to be a tool he will use to build his Kingdom.

We serve at the pleasure of the Change-Master and live in anticipation of seeing him bring good, much good, out of the chaos and uncertainty that seems about to overwhelm us. It is at this point, when we are desperate for help, he delights in surprising us.

*Living expectantly ... I'm excited to see what He is about to do!*

*Mark*

Mark L. Maxwell  
President