

Prairie Bible Institute **Annual Meeting**

Report to
the Board of
Directors

October 23-35, 2019



PRAIRIE COLLEGE

Education Matters!

October 2019

It was a bad day. After spending it skiing the beautiful slopes at Sunshine Mountain with friends, the phone call told me my parents had been killed in a car accident, a head-on collision on ice in northern Alberta. My brother, sister, and I shared the inheritance equally, each getting about \$7,000. When I got the money, I wanted to be sure to never lose it. After a few weeks of deliberating, I decided to spend it by going back to school, because I would never lose the education. I thank God for the full-ride scholarship Baylor University provided, that covered all the rest of my costs, allowing me to get an excellent MBA in Finance.

I don't think I was any smarter when I completed my MBA, but a lot more doors suddenly were open to me! What I didn't know about accounting or marketing or management, I did my best to hide, and I began learning in earnest after graduation. And I'm still learning.

The foundation of education that I received from Prairie, Trinity Western, and Baylor allowed me to have a delightful, interesting, and varied career, and to be a life-long-learner.

Education does not just open doors to careers, it comes at a time in a young person's life when friends are made, partners are chosen, priorities are set. Several colleges and universities do a great job of handling this key role in the development of people who are transitioning to adulthood, while many other schools play down this role and miss the opportunity. As a result, college and university education is often (rightly) undervalued, because higher education has failed to deliver in the way it should.

A college like ours should:

- provide an opportunity for a student to dive into the great truths of life; great spiritual, social, and natural truths. It should allow the student to explore alternative perspectives, but it should help guide the student to healthy and appropriate conclusions in light of Biblical understanding and evidence.
- introduce students to the rigors of real life including interpersonal conflicts, competing priorities, and completion deadlines.
- help students find and embrace the spiritual and ethical plumb lines that will survive the currents of social and cultural pressure.
- provide the tools that will help its graduates influence culture for good, provide a reasoned voice in the "public square," and respond in love to the greatest needs of the world.

In other words, the work we do matters! It matters to the local church, to our country, to the world, and to the global community of the living God. I believe we, at Prairie, are missionally aligned with the role we have been given in society, and I believe we will be valued as culture-makers in the decades to come.

To fulfill this role, we need to find the balance between keeping ourselves anchored to our core values and adapting to a changing environment.

Staying Anchored

Among the many changes we have introduced in the past decade is the re-emphasis on our core value of being Bible based. Our intent has been to offer full coverage of the Canon to all degree-earning students, which we satisfy by having all students take the seven courses that provide for the full reading and study of the Canon – all 66 books. This is in stark contrast to many schools like ours that have reduced their required Bible coverage to two survey courses, providing an overview of both the Old and New Testaments.

I believe this approach to the Scriptures will have our students better prepared to serve the public, whether in pulpit ministries or in the marketplace – and the Biblical content is an excellent complement to our professional/technical training.

I am sure there will be times in our future when we feel pressure to reduce our “core Bible coverage” from seven courses to something more in line with other colleges. Glenn and I believe that this course offering is so strategic to the role we play, that should it ever become a discussion item in the future, it is a decision that could only be made with the knowledge and approval of the Board. Therefore, we will be recommending that a clause be incorporated into Board by-laws, ensuring that the governors are part of any decisions to reduce the school’s commitment to coverage of the Scriptures.

Seeking Innovation

To serve our role well, we will need to continue to be innovative. The evidence is in our favour suggesting that we have become industry leaders on many innovations. These include:

- Full reading of the Canon in 7 courses that are taken by all degree-earning students.
- Delivery of our first year of schooling (our Bible-immersion Encounter Program) in three penitentiaries (Bowden Min and Max, Drumheller Min and Max, and Edmonton Max).
- Our suite of online programs and degrees.
 - BAM – Pastoral
 - BAM – Youth Ministry
 - BA Intercultural Studies

- BTh
- Encounter – one year Bible immersion
- Diploma in Bible – two year Bible program
- BDiv – Business (in process)
- MA – Global Christian Education Leadership (in process)
- Accelerated (5-year) MDiv degrees in partnership with Taylor and Carey.
- Fast-track ACAC membership

The next programs that are in discussion are majors in Social Work (in partnership with Medicine Hat College) and Chaplaincy, off the back of our ground-breaking work in prisons.

This year, the initiatives that are getting the most attention are:

- Marketing & Enrollment – new organization-wide strategy to include brand management, corporate messaging, and digital marketing.
- Business major with multiple minors – Intercultural Studies, Outdoor Leadership, and Sport Management.
- Masters degree in Global Christian Education Leadership (fully online) in partnership with ACSI and Teach Beyond.

Innovation is essential for the college to adapt to market needs, and in that way survive or thrive. It is possible that the best training we can provide will not be in the skill-proficiencies that our programs demand, but in the life skills that are developed in our Bible and humanities courses. Most of our students will have multiple careers, some of which do not even exist right now. The question is, have we prepared them so they can adapt to new opportunities that did not exist when they were in college?

Ongoing Major Initiatives

Campus Master Planning has not changed materially, although we continue to make small modifications to it. We think we are close to understanding what the campus should look like over the long term and are now costing-out various components and determining priorities for implementation.

Capital Campaign continues to be a major component of our focus. Bringing down the Imbach building has been helpful, the cost of which was mostly covered by initial major donors to the campaign. We continue to seek a lead investor who, along with a group of major donors, will form the core of the campaign. We have several conversations in progress and the major donors are coming together. Now we need that "lead!"

As we have said previously, we recognize that we have never before tackled anything of this size. We will only be successful if God decides to tip His beaker and grant us great favour with donors. Then again, we really want goals that can only be achieved with His help... it makes life so much more exciting!

Planning for the Centennial in 2022 continues under Kendi Dyck's leadership.

The Strategic Plan, under Nathan Rooke's leadership, is now close to complete with updated Goals, Objectives, Activities and Outcomes that will set our course for the next several years. Assuming it meets your approval, we think that it is nearly ready for adoption by the Board. We will be looking forward to hearing your advice along with improvements you may have to them. (see Appendix)

Strategic Partnerships have been formed with many external organizations. We have recently completed Memorandums of Understanding with Taylor Seminary, Carey Theological College, Avant Ministries, and World Team Canada, and are discussing "potential partnership" with Medicine Hat College and Briercrest. Our longer term goal is to establish one or two external partners for each program. We are grateful for all of our strategic partnerships.

Conclusion

We continue to feel that we have much favour from God, from our friends and donors, as well as from our alumni. We believe we have a distinct role to play in our society: to bring the love of the God of the Bible to our everyday places of work.

We have called this year "the year of our gratitude" in response to the goodness God has shown us, and we are trusting Him, who sees beyond the horizon, to lead us forward.

We continue "to know Christ and make Him known."

A stylized, cursive signature in blue ink that reads "Mark".

Mark L. Maxwell
President