

# **REPORT TO THE FELLOWSHIP COUNCIL OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF GRACE BRETHREN CHURCHES FROM GRACE COLLEGE AND GRACE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

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This report is presented at the request of the Fellowship Council and provides a summary of the institution's (Grace College and Grace Theological Seminary, hereinafter Grace) educational work that relates to the ministry of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches (FGBC). While Grace is not owned by the FGBC and defines the relationship as a voluntary association with the FGBC, the institution is happy to comply with the Fellowship Council's request for a report. Grace is committed to the vision of the FGBC insofar as that vision corresponds to Grace's incorporated activities as an accredited Christian higher education institution and to its stated mission: "Grace is an evangelical Christian community of higher education which applies biblical values in strengthening character, sharpening competence, and preparing for service."

This report focuses especially on recent changes at Grace and their purpose.

## **Period of Growth**

**Enrollment.** For the fall 2007 semester total institutional enrollment was 1406, a record. Early recruitment number for the fall 2008 semester indicate continued growth since the applications, accepts, and deposits continue running ahead of one year ago. These numbers have all gone up over the past several years. Within the institution the undergraduate and graduate in counseling programs continue showing enrollment increase, while the prison education program and the Seminary are holding steady.

**Facilities and Land.** As most are likely aware the Grace campus facilities have expanded over the past years. During 2007 the new 60,000 sq. ft. Orthopaedic Capital Center opened. Its threefold use is for campus, community, and businesses, and to date all three areas have already made multiple uses of the building. Just recently a campus donor gave a gift to purchase an additional 11.5 acres of land adjacent to the campus. The land is ideally situated for further building and provides a land connection between the north part of the campus (buildings) and the south part (Miller Athletic Field).

## **Period of Institutional Changes**

**Strategic Plan.** In 2006 Grace approved the 2006-2010 strategic plan for the campus that included eight comprehensive goals. Many initiatives are being pursued to accomplish these goals. Among these goals were administrative adjustments and overall academic program evaluation and changes. The following items give a summary overview of accomplishments related to these goals.

**Administration.** Several administrative changes have occurred. During the summer of 2007 Grace appointed a new provost, Bill Katip. His appointment ended seven months of review and interviews. He was selected because of his commitment to the campus mission and its association with the FGBC, his Ph.D. in higher education administration, his twenty-three years of successful higher education administration experience, and his graduation from Grace. He has done a lot of good work since arriving. With this change several other internal changes have happened [fewer senior administrators reporting directly to the president (provost, chief financial officer, chief operations officer, and chief advancement officer)]. All other senior administration report to the provost.

**Operational Structure.** The above administrative changes have brought the hiring of an assistant provost, the establishment of a provost systems council, a deans' council, and realignment of several internal offices. All these changes are for the purpose of gaining additional efficiencies, improvement of workflow, and program development. Several major change are described below.

**Formation of Schools.** During December 2007 an announcement was made that Grace was reorganizing internally around "schools." A school is a self-contained educational unit that has responsibility for programming, specific educational requirements, and accountability for recruitment, retention, and placement. The existence of a school implies that more graduate programs are offered, an even higher percentage of faculty members have doctoral degrees, more research is being done by faculty and by faculty and students together, and more service is rendered to the region around the campus (research that addresses regional needs, helping the region find new opportunities, etc.). Each school, of course, must meet all Grace institutional requirements but has increased freedom to pursue its particular goal and increased accountability for all that it does. Furthermore, a dean who is appointed by the senior administration and reports to the provost leads each school. For the time being four schools have been established, though in the future other schools will be added. These schools should be thought of as *internal* organizations of activity within the campus. The four schools are the School of Arts and Sciences, the School of Music, the School of Ministry Studies, and the School of Adult and Community Education. Two of these schools require further explanation.

**School of Ministry Studies.** The school will begin operating for the fall 2008 semester, allowing for evaluation and formation of the school during the spring 2008 semester. Establishment of the school is for the purpose of championing quality student learning in both the study of the text of the Bible and the philosophy and practice of ministry. The structure of the school includes all undergraduate and graduate programming in Bible, theology, and ministry at Grace. In order to achieve this structure at the end of the spring 2008 semester the college's Religious Studies Department will cease operation as it currently exists. In particular the seminary philosophy and approach to biblical education and ministry will guide all aspects of the School of Ministry Studies. Projected strategies include multiple internship experiences for both the undergraduate and graduate programming of the school. Moreover, the goal is to surround the Grace faculty with both a ministry advisory team and a cadre of ministry practitioners whose instruction can supplement the resident teaching faculty. As a result of all of the noted changes Grace

wants to improve its service to the church. More information about the School of Ministry Studies will be given as further information is available.

**School of Adult and Community Education.** After extensive evaluation and review a School of Adult and Community Education was approved in November 2007. This school's purpose is to serve the adult population with educational programming within the region of north central Indiana. In keeping with Grace's institutional mission and purpose this school has been formed to engage those who may not be believers but who are willing to study at Grace, given its Christian commitment. For that reason the board of trustees unanimously approved that as part of this school's admissions process students applying will not be asked to give a statement of faith but will be asked to sign the following commitment:

I agree to show respect for the faith commitment that Grace practices and agree to abide by certain of the institution's community guidelines (avoidance of disrespecting others, sexual misconduct, illegal drugs, gambling, coarse or obscene language, tobacco, alcoholic beverages, and such conduct) while on campus or engaged in Grace activities. I certify that all my answers on this application are complete and true to the best of my knowledge. Furthermore, I understand that falsifying any part of this application could result in a failure to be admitted or registered.

This change applies *only* to the School of Adult and Community Education.

**Educational Services.** A number of changes in educational services have taken place. For sure, such changes do not come without pain. Six full-time faculty members will conclude their full-time teaching service to Grace at the end of the spring 2008 semester. Several academic programs are either being entirely eliminated (Religious Studies, Social Work, German) or altered in order to achieve projected improvements (Computer Information Science and Physical Education). Please be clear on this point. All department reductions are due either to declining or continuing low enrollment or to a change in the direction of a program or to both. The latter two programs are being moved to another department (Business Department will include Management of Information Systems and Sports Management).

On the other hand a number of faculty members are being added (counseling, biology, teacher education, two in business, English, history). Furthermore, there are numerous other adjustments to other institutional programs, though none quite so dramatic as the above. Steps have been taken to ease the pain where possible. A window of early retirement opportunity has been extended to all employees who qualify, including faculty members being eliminated. In spite of all of these changes it appears that less than ten students will likely transfer their education to another institution. In those cases every attempt will be made to help those students.

## Looking Forward

**Institutional Mission.** Though Grace is undergoing a number of changes Grace is deepening its commitment to its mission by attempting to extend further application of the mission to the multiple services that Grace provides. Part of this effort is being invested in serving the region around the campus, thereby carrying Christianity to places and to people we have not served.

**Delivery Systems.** This month Grace launched its first online course from the seminary. This is the very beginning of more to come. A hybrid masters program from the seminary (majority of online with some face-to-face instruction mixed in) is already being developed for implementation in the near future. Furthermore, additional graduate programs are being developed in teacher education and eventually in business.

**Challenges.** Of course, many challenges remain. Several are worth noting. It is important that Grace makes good on all of the announced changes that are outlined above. It is one thing to announce changes but another to nurture the changes so that success is achieved. Funding higher education continues being a concern. The vast majority of funding for Grace comes from a collection of individuals (some inside the FGBC and many outside the FGBC), foundations, and the region around the campus. Gifting to Grace from FGBC churches is very modest. For the year just ended the amount of gifts to Grace from churches within the FGBC represented 0.5% of the institution's total revenue. Serving our region more aggressively is a new world for Grace and one that is exciting but very challenging. Much wisdom is needed for knowing how to render that service in a Christ-honoring way.