



Pursuing Excellence

UNDER THE CROSS



MARTIN LUTHER COLLEGE

Dear WELS District Convention Delegates,



You have given us a task of enormous importance. Eternal importance.

You have asked Martin Luther College to train pastors, teachers, and staff ministers for WELS congregations, schools, and missions around the world. We are humbled and honored to do this work you have entrusted to us.

For the last three years, you've helped us make great strides through *Equipping Christian Witnesses*. Together, we've built the Betty Kohn Fieldhouse. Together, we've funded countless matching grants in the Congregational Partner Grant Program. Together, we've encouraged many in a new generation to consider training for gospel ministry. Thank you.

But our partnership in raising up a new generation of gospel workers isn't a quick sprint. It's more like a marathon. Thankful for the momentum gained these past three years, we are transitioning to a new strategic plan called *Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross*. It builds on how God has blessed us during *Equipping Christian Witnesses* and asks for God's ongoing blessings. As you read, you'll see that we have bold goals. That's because we are fulfilling a Great Commission.

As we share our goals, you'll notice a thread running through them: recruitment. Even as we train today's candidates for ministry, we keep our eye on tomorrow's candidates as well. We are intent on enrolling more and more students who have the heart and the gifts for ministry.

Let's think about these prospective students for a moment. They're pondering two decisions:

- What will I do with my life?
- Where will I spend the next four years pursuing that goal?

This is key! They are comparing college campuses, asking themselves:

- Will I be comfortable here?
- Will my gifts be valued here?
- Will I grow here—in my faith, my character, my potential?

We want to tell them—and show them!—that at MLC the answer to these questions is yes.

Why this emphasis on recruitment? Many of you know the reason firsthand. Your school or congregation is struggling to fill a vacancy right now. Teachers, pastors, and staff ministers are in short supply. After Call Days at MLC and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, about 140 classrooms and 100 pulpits remain unfilled.

And the situation will not soon ease. WELS schools are growing, and each additional classroom needs a teacher. A synod initiative visualizes 100 new missions in the next 10 years, and each new pulpit needs a pastor.

Clearly, our synod needs more people to study for gospel ministry. Clearly, MLC needs to offer an excellent college experience at an affordable price.

Under God's blessing, this casebook lays out a plan that could enable this to happen. We are pursuing excellence under the cross. It's a task with eternal importance. We thank God for your partnership with us.

In Him,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rich Gurgel". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Rich Gurgel
MLC President



Pursuing Excellence

UNDER THE CROSS



Pursuing Excellence

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As family in Christ, MLC pursues excellence under the cross in preparing called workers for our synod and its mission fields around the world.

FOUNDATIONAL BELIEFS

God loves us.

We pursue excellence under CHRIST's cross as God's fully loved children who know our heavenly Father is already perfectly pleased with us in Christ.

God gifts us.

We pursue EXCELLENCE under the cross by giving God the best his grace inspires in us with the unique talents he's given each of us.

God emboldens us.

We pursue excellence under OUR OWN cross as we die to mediocrity and apathy and rise in Christ with the courage to take risks for the gospel.

KEY INITIATIVES



We embrace our family's identity.

We pursue excellence under the cross as we delight without apology in being a confessional Lutheran faith family whose defining mission is to equip and support the current and future generations of faithful pastors, educators, and staff ministers.



We empower our family's formation.

We pursue excellence under the cross as we encourage spiritual and intellectual growth for our entire family; support the physical and emotional health of each family member; and engage gracefully in difficult conversations to move our mission forward.



We expand our family's reach.

We pursue excellence under the cross as we strive to reflect the "every nation, tribe, people, and language" reality of God's people (Re 7:9) by working to become a more welcoming home for students of all ages and backgrounds who have gifts for ministry.



We endow our family's home.

We pursue excellence under the cross as we make MLC significantly more affordable without sacrificing an excellent college experience on a beautiful and well-equipped campus.



Endow the Family's Home *by*

We're so grateful our students are dedicating their lives to gospel ministry! They're working hard in all their courses—from Christian Doctrine to Teaching Reading to Greek and Hebrew. They're also working hard to make tuition payments—through jobs on campus and in town, doing everything from office work to milking cows! We're proud of them for being so diligent, but we're concerned as well. We want our students to be excited about their vocation, not worried about their cash flow. We don't want money nightmares to haunt their ministry dreams.

**By June 2027, with God's help,
we will work with families to meet these goals:**

FIRST-YEARS: NO LOANS!

Our goal, in partnering with students and families, is that no MLC student will need to take out loans their first year of college.

Why is this important? We want high school students who are unsure about their future to give MLC a chance. After a semester or two here, ministry preparation often captures their hearts, and they stay, graduate, and serve the church. For many years, when MLC was a more affordable option, that is precisely what happened. But now, our financial aid packages struggle to compete with those of other colleges. Too often, students who are on the fence make their college decision based on dollars and cents rather than ministry inclinations, and they enroll elsewhere.

GRADUATING SENIORS: LOW LOANS!

Our goal is that MLC seniors will graduate with an average debt that is no more than 50% of the base starting salary of a called worker. For example: The base starting salary for WELS teachers in 2021-22 is \$30,600. If we were to meet our goal, the average debt for 2022 grads would be no more than \$15,300. That figure right now is \$18,896.

Why is this important? As our graduates enter their ministries, we want them to concentrate on the joys of gospel ministry—preaching, teaching, and serving in their new congregations and schools—without being overwhelmed by financial worries.

From the Class of 2022:
Lynnea Starzl was assigned to St. Lucas in Kewaskum, Wisconsin. Her fiancé, Jacob Zabell, will be attending Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in the fall. Morgan Gosch (*right*) was assigned to California LHS.



Would you like to help us boost our financial aid? Simply go to mlc-wels.edu/donate and direct your gift to any of the options on that page.

Or text AID to 507.233.4344.

Boosting Financial Aid



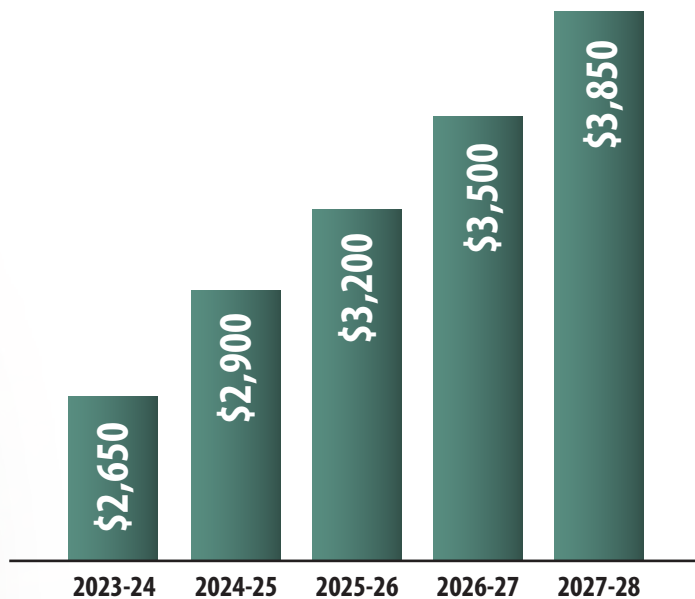
Maggie Gabb

receives a Congregational Partner Grant from her congregation, St. Paul's in Beverly Hills, Florida. She says: "Not only is it encouraging because I don't have to work as much . . . it's also really encouraging to see how many people support me back home, 1,500 miles away."

How will we accomplish these goals? With a **10% Boost**

BOOST CPGP BY 10% ANNUALLY

Through the Congregational Partner Grant Program, students have received up to \$2,000 every year: \$1,000 from their congregation and a \$1,000 match from MLC. In 2022-23, we increased the annual maximum to \$2,400—\$1,200 from the congregation and a \$1,200 MLC match. A 10% increase every year would really make a difference for our students.



BOOST FINANCIAL AID BY 10% ANNUALLY

We award scholarships and grants based on merit (factors like GPA, class ranking, and leadership abilities) and on financial need (as determined by the FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid). A 10% increase every year in this aid would decrease the financial burden on students and families.

Why is this important? A college education at MLC should not cost more than similar schools students may be considering, such as Bethany Lutheran College, Wisconsin Lutheran College, or Concordia University Wisconsin. And because our students are training to be pastors, teachers, and staff ministers—not healthcare professionals, engineers, or lawyers—it may take them many years to pay off a substantial college debt.

BOOST FINANCIAL WELLNESS

We want to extend our financial wellness training to high school and middle school students and their parents. We've found great success in teaching MLC students about budgeting, responsible uses of credit, emergency funds, and more. If we could begin that training earlier, then when those preteens and teens reach college age, they and their families will already have a head start financially.



Endow the Family's Home *by*

We're seeking more Legacy

When you establish a Legacy Scholarship, you can . . .

- Honor a loved one by naming the scholarship after them
- Support a specific area of ministry training that's important to you
- Specify whether the scholarship supports students based on their merit or their need
- Know that you are making a significant difference in students' lives
- Receive a personal thank-you letter from a scholarship recipient
- Receive special tax benefits
- Leave a lasting legacy at MLC
- Glorify the Lord of the Church!

KOINONIA FUND



This scholarship fund was established in 2015 by Dale and Marsha Krause, members at Emanuel Lutheran Church in New London, Wisconsin. *Koinonia* is a Greek word meaning fellowship or communion with God and with fellow Christians.

Dale (1947-2021) was a US Air Force veteran who served in Turkey. Following military service, he worked 40 years in finance at Bemis Company in

Neenah, Wisconsin. Marsha (b. 1948) worked at Aid Association for Lutherans (now Thrivent) and as a paraprofessional in the Shiocton public school system. Both volunteered generously at Emanuel over the years, Marsha as a teacher aide and as treasurer of the Ladies' Evening Circle, and Dale as congregation president and a member of several boards and committees. Both served on the congregation's 125th Anniversary Committee. In addition, Dale served as a committee member and volunteer at Fox Valley LHS, as a delegate to WELS district and synod conventions, and as a member of MLC's Governing Board.

The couple has two sons, Shane and Brett. "Both of our sons decided to enter the pastoral ministry, for which we are grateful," Dale said. "We are also grateful for the material blessings God has poured out on us. We decided the best way to share those resources is to help future pastors in the preseminary program at Martin Luther College." *Income from this fund is distributed in grants of \$500 to preseminary students who are completing their final year of study. One such recipient is Alex Dimke. Like all our scholarship recipients, he wrote a note of thanks:*

*Dear Mrs. Krause, I want to sincerely thank you for your kindness and generosity. . . . I have been richly blessed to study at MLC for four years in the classroom and one year of field experience in the country of Peru. . . . I am married to Noelle Boucher of Denver, Colorado, who is currently a teacher in North Mankato, Minnesota, at Jesus Loves Me Learning Center. Your support affects us both as she continues in her ministry and aids in providing for our family as I continue my studies. . . . When I began MLC as a freshman, I was uniquely prepared to participate in the field experience program of teaching English as a second language in Lima, Peru. My heart has been yearning ever since for the foreign mission field, and I hope to serve in that capacity one day. . . . **My whole college career has been made possible by donors like yourselves.** God be with you.*

Alex Dimke MLC '22



Establishing More Scholarships

Scholarships—like the ones we feature here.

GREFE FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP

Ethan and Rebekah Grefe have two sons, one of which has a developmental disability. “We are grateful to God for his gift of a son with a developmental disability,” they said. “It is our prayer that children with special needs may grow spiritually and academically through a Christ-centered education. We are excited to support and encourage the training of teachers who have a heart for serving students with special needs in our WELS schools.” *Grege Family Scholarship recipients are juniors and seniors with a special education major who demonstrate financial need.*



JAMES K. HUHN MEMORIAL SCIENCE SCHOLARSHIP



Jim Huhn (1940-2018) found his calling as a high school science teacher. A devout Christian, he found evidence of God’s presence in science, and he let his studies of the wonders of Creation lead him closer to God. He taught at Watertown High School in Wisconsin for 36 years before retiring as their physics teacher and science department chair. “Over his decades of service, James inspired countless students,” said his wife, Karen; daughter, Rebecca (Cox); and sons, Steve and Todd. “We decided to establish this scholarship so he could continue to inspire others.” *James K. Huhn Memorial Science Scholarship recipients are students majoring in secondary science education who demonstrate scholastic merit.*

You choose the size and scope of your scholarship.

FOR EXAMPLE . . .

An annual gift of **\$1,000** could be awarded as one or two smaller scholarships per year.

An annual gift of **\$10,000** could be awarded as several scholarships every year.

An endowed scholarship of **\$25,000** would allow us to award 4% annually in scholarships.

We’ll help you set it up.

Mark Maurice
VP for Mission Advancement
mauricme@mlc-wels.edu
507.354.8221 x386

Beth Scharf
Resource Development Counselor
scharfbm@mlc-wels.edu
507.354.8221 x241

WELS
Ministry of Christian Giving | 414.256.3209



Endow the Family's Home *with*

THANK YOU! Before we look to future campus improvements, **THANK YOU!** for the most recent campus updates.



BETTY KOHN FIELDHOUSE

Turf—36,000 square feet of it. Made possible by many initial gifts and the transformational gift of Robert and Betty Kohn, our new fieldhouse features batting cages, golf simulators, track & field equipment, and more. Our athletic teams, PE classes, intramurals, and other student groups love it already.



Please join us for the **DEDICATION** on Orientation Weekend, August 20-21.



CENTENNIAL HALL AC

It's not new, but it's cool. A generous donor funded air conditioning for this residence hall that's been anchoring the north corner of campus since 1950.



CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT CENTER

You belong here! This is a place for our students to learn about people whose cultures are different from theirs. A place where everyone on campus can remember they belong.



Campus Enhancements

we have to thank our Lord—and you—
Take a look!



PATIO COURTYARDS

Two new patios. This one between Concord and Augustana Halls, and another outside the library, allow students to build relationships around the firepit or finish up a group project in the sunshine.



WELCOME CENTER

Newly Knighted. This photo board—filled with the names and faces of the 2022-23 first-year class—marks one entrance of our spacious Welcome Center, where the Admissions and Financial Aid staff are ready to assist prospective students.



JESUS, FISHER OF MEN

Caught! A visual reminder of the God whose love captured us and the reason we exist: to share that love with others. Funded by the MLC Alumni Association.



NEW TENNIS COURTS

Putting a whole new angle on “love” and “serve.” We’ve moved our courts to the MLC Athletic Complex near the fieldhouse.



Endow the Family's Home *with*

Our campus tells a story. Every brick and tree and sidewalk reflects who we are and what we value. We want our campus to honor the God of glory and reflect the integrity of our mission. To students specifically, we want our campus to say, "Here, we value every gift God has given you—all of which can be tuned to ministry. Here is a place for you to grow." Please take a look at our Master Site Plan and visualize the future with us.



A "LUTHER HEIGHTS" RESIDENCE HALL



You may recall that our newest residence hall was built more than 50 years ago. Students notice. We find it hard to compete with other colleges that have newer facilities with many appealing amenities. That's why this residence hall is essential. **Visualize** it overlooking our main entrance on Summit Avenue. Visualize four-student two-bedroom suites, each with a shared bathroom and shower. Visualize students collaborating on projects and papers in the glass-encased Skyline Studies on each corner. . . . The gifts you graciously gave through *Equipping Christian Witnesses* have moved this project closer to reality, and we're excited to take it to the finish line.

MUSIC FACILITIES

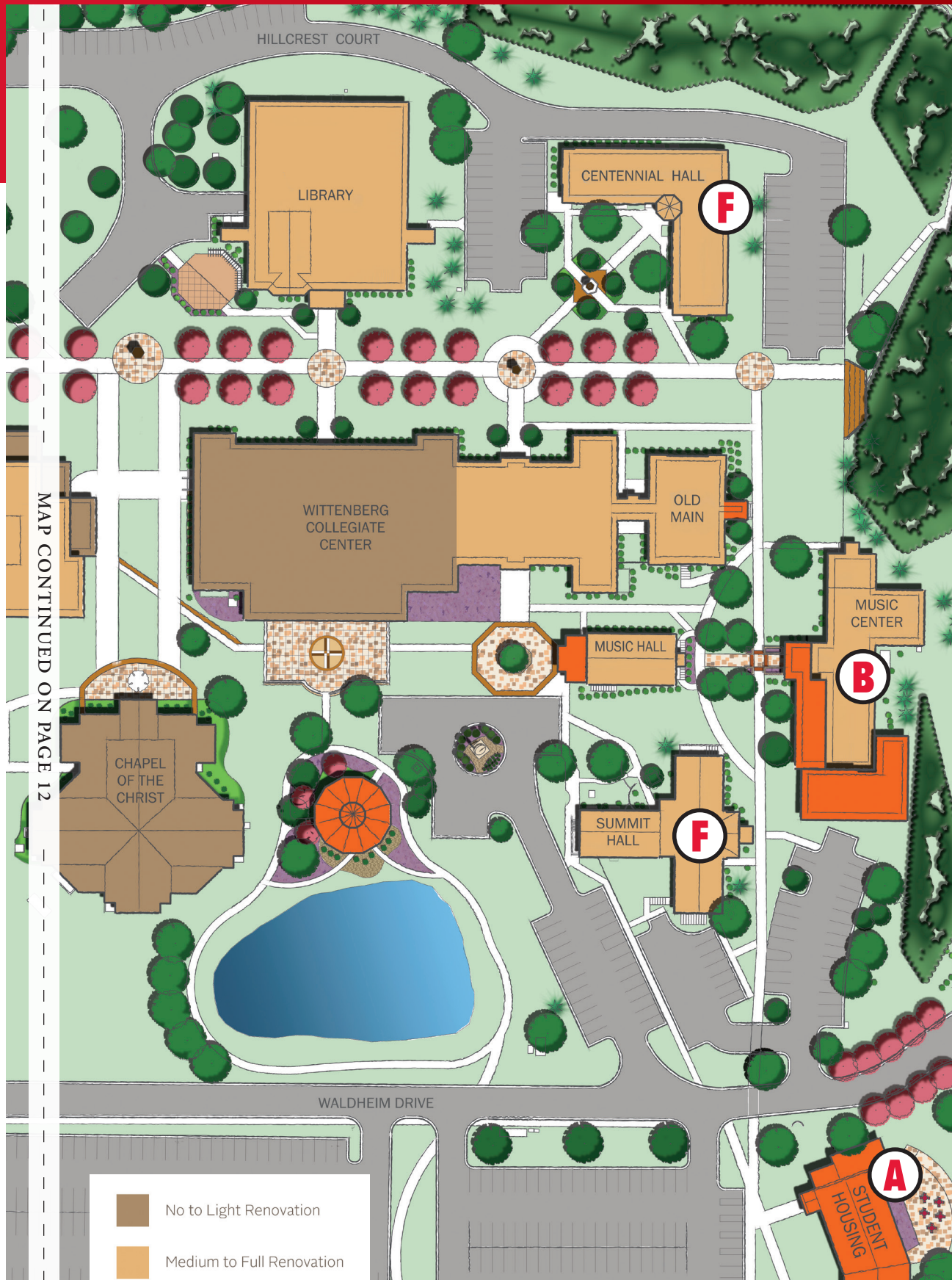
Of the 135 graduates in 2022, 128 sang in a choir, played in the Wind Symphony, and/or took music lessons at least one semester. That's 95 percent. They may also have performed in the musical, pit orchestra, handbell choir, or worship ensemble. Because worship and music are such important aspects of ministry, we want to respect and support our students' musical gifts. We already have a wonderful music faculty. We need wonderful music facilities.

B MUSIC CENTER

Visualize a renovated and expanded Music Center with acoustically appropriate rehearsal space for an 80-member Wind Symphony and a 60-member choir. Instrument and music storage areas. A soundproof rehearsal room for the worship ensembles. New classrooms for Teaching Music and Music Technology. Additional practice rooms. Restrooms and lobby space. Visualize the exterior of the Music Center updated with brick to align it with the architectural aesthetic of the rest of campus.



Campus Expansions

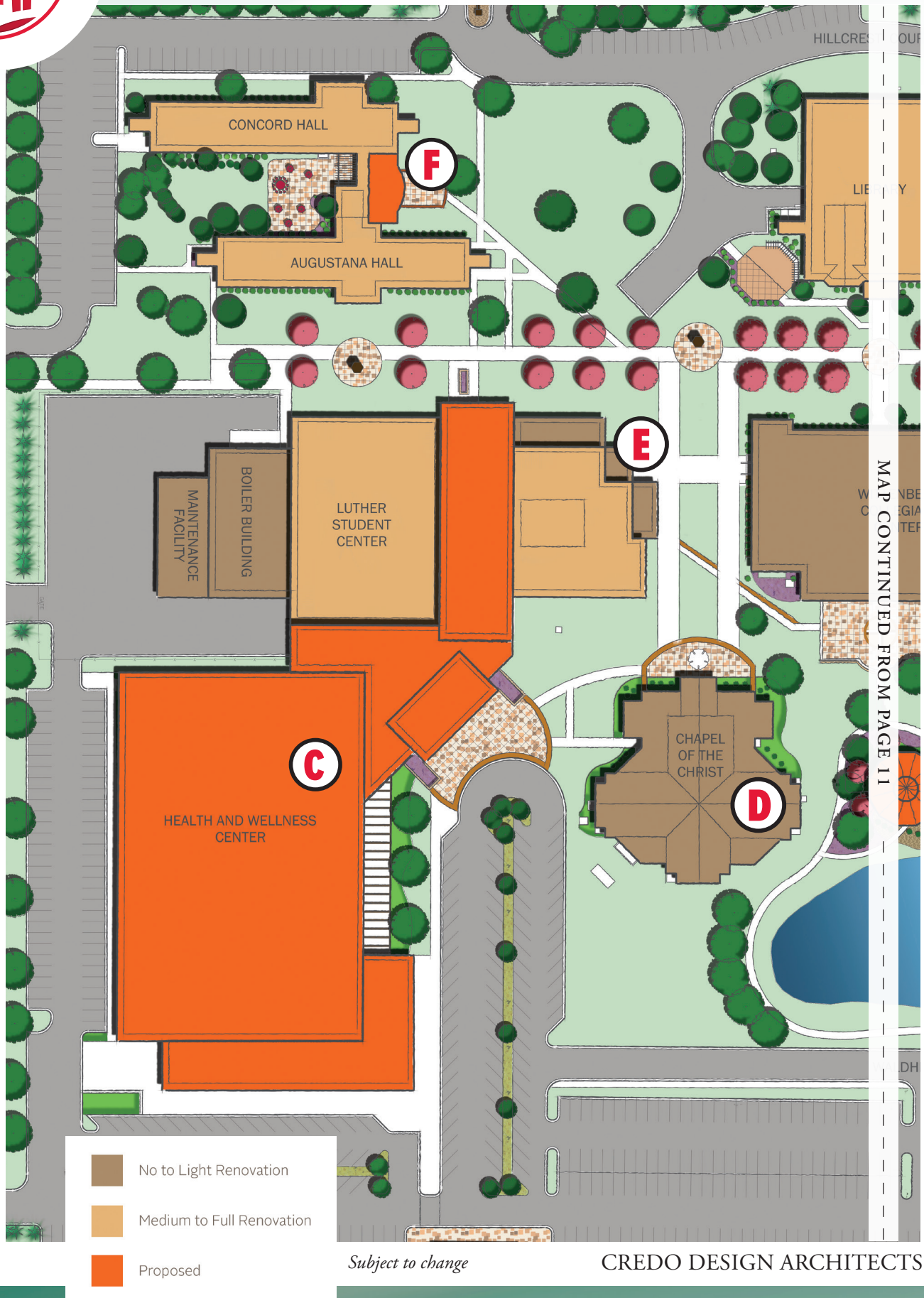


Subject to change

CREDO DESIGN ARCHITECTS



Endow the Family's Home *with*



Campus Expansions



C HEALTH & WELLNESS CENTER

Visualize a center that could impact every student every day—through intercollegiate competition, intramurals, PE courses, fitness, and recreation. Visualize dozens of students playing intramural basketball on four courts—well before 11 pm, which is game time on many a night now. Visualize runners on the track surrounding the courts and walkers getting in their steps on the mezzanine above. Visualize training rooms, weight rooms, and classrooms for PE, Teaching PE, and Coaching—all conveniently adjacent to gym space. Visualize teams practicing on campus instead of renting space at other facilities. Visualize the addition of JV teams to our programs—allowing more students to develop their gifts for future use in ministry.

UPGRADED ATHLETIC FIELDS

Visualize turf athletic competition fields. We are the only college in our conference that still plays on grass, which means our baseball and softball fields are often unplayable in spring. Visualize upgraded seating at the football bowl to accommodate spectators of all ages. *(Not pictured on site plan.)*

D CHAPEL LOWER LEVEL

Visualize acoustically designed spaces for both a 100-voice choir and our handbell choir. Recording technology. Storage space for band and choir risers, stands, chairs, and 450 choir robes—with air quality management. We're happy to announce that detailed planning for this work has begun.

E SOCIAL SPACES

Our small student union is currently more of a hallway than a hangout. **Visualize** more “third spaces”—such as this enhanced solarium with a separate entrance—where students are meeting to relax for an hour—talking, laughing, encouraging each other on the journey.

F OTHER RESIDENCE HALL UPGRADES

Our buildings are not timeless, even if the Word spoken within them is. Thousands of men and women have used our residence halls well—and the wear and tear shows. We are not attempting to offer luxury apartments. We simply want to offer what students would consider normal college facilities. **Visualize** tired restrooms receiving facelifts, gathering spaces renovated for student comfort, and dorm rooms furnished with new desks, beds, and window coverings.

IT'S A BALANCE

“Wow! I didn't know this campus was so beautiful!” We're delighted when we hear this from visitors, parents, and especially new students. We want our campus to be attractive—a place where students are happy to spend four important years of their lives.

We also know we must walk a fine line between keeping MLC *attractive* and keeping MLC *affordable*.

That's why we put a lot of time, thought, and prayer into each improvement we make.

As we reevaluate our campus master plan, we've been gathering input from Credo, a higher education consulting firm, as well as faculty, staff, students, parents, and synod leaders.

We want to be wise stewards of the financial resources God gives us—and take excellent care of the students he leads to our campus as well.



Extend the Family's Reach *with*

An Alternate Path to the Teaching Ministry

We cannot overestimate the blessings of the four years our traditional students spend together on campus—in chapel and classroom, on field, court, riser, and stage. Some people who want to become teachers, however, cannot pursue the traditional four-year on-campus experience. That's where Competency-Based Education comes in. CBE is an online option that awards degrees based on competence rather than credit-hours. It recognizes adults' life experience and job-embedded skills, and allows them to earn their college degrees while staying in their own communities. CBE works especially well for non-traditional ministry candidates, including second-career individuals and unique urban people groups. These adults are highly motivated, and they already demonstrate gifts for ministry. But they cannot uproot their families, quit their jobs—some of which are at WELS schools!—and come to the MLC campus.

These potential teachers cannot come to MLC, but MLC can come to them. Dreams can be fulfilled . . . and classrooms can be filled . . . through Competency-Based Education.

Why is this important? Because WELS classrooms need more teachers. God has blessed our Lutheran schools, especially our urban schools, with incredible growth. But Martin Luther College's traditional program simply cannot supply all the teachers our schools need. Our enrollment is not large enough.



Urban schools like St. Marcus Lutheran in Milwaukee need more WELS teachers.

SUPPLY & DEMAND

The Numbers Are In!

DEMAND

We need WELS teachers in our schools

50 Teacher vacancies (2020)

90 Teacher vacancies (2021)

140 Teacher vacancies (2022)

SUPPLY

We have potential teacher candidates for the CBE program (2019 survey results)

600 Second-career candidates

33 Urban minority candidates

Competency-Based Education



Middle school students at St. Croix Lutheran Academy-St. Paul

Church Leaders Are Asking for CBE

“There is no more critical need in urban gospel ministry than raising up qualified Christian teachers from among the people of color connected with our schools. **The development of an online competency-based degree program by our WELS College of Ministry is truly a godsend.**”

Rev. Daniel Leyrer

Pastor, St. Marcus Lutheran Church & School
Milwaukee
First Vice President, Southeastern Wisconsin District

“Divine Savior Ministries has four academies and a special needs school. We have been blessed with tremendous growth, which means we need more teachers. All our campuses have called positions that have not been filled. This is a real concern. **We are excited that MLC is pursuing a competency-based education program** for qualified candidates who are already serving in our schools.”

Timothy Biesterfeld

Head of Schools, Divine Savior Academy
Miami & Delray Beach, Florida
Austin & Houston, Texas

“I hear from people every week who want to become WELS teachers, who are willing to do the coursework to get their bachelor’s degrees and their ministry certification. But they cannot quit their jobs and uproot their families to come to New Ulm. In some cases, they are already working in a WELS school, as a teacher’s aide, for instance. CBE would allow them to keep working while they get their degree.”

Dr. John Meyer, MLC Director of Graduate Studies & Continuing Education

Meet a possible CBE candidate:

“I serve as an academic support teacher at Divine Savior Academy. Having established a life in Miami for the last 15 years, my family and I are 100% invested in our work, school, and church, making it impossible for us to relocate to New Ulm to pursue ministerial education. At this point in my life, an online program to earn a bachelor’s degree in education would be a tremendous blessing to me and my role at DSA.”



Jessica Spiegelberg,
Academic Support Teacher,
Divine Savior Academy

How can you help?

Pursuing Excellence Under the Cross is more than a campaign. It's our long-range strategic plan for preparing the next generation of called workers for *your* congregation through *your* WELS College of Ministry. *You* can be a catalyst to help realize a generational vision for our future called workers.

PRAY for God's continued grace to increase the number of future teachers, pastors, and staff ministers.

SPREAD THE ENCOURAGING WORD about your WELS College of Ministry by scheduling an MLC Sunday at your congregation and by encouraging any women and men you know who have gifts for ministry.

FINANCIALLY SUPPORT STUDENTS

Financial Aid: Give a gift in any amount to help us make the 10% boost!

Scholarships: Establish a named scholarship to assist students based on merit or need. (*Mark or Beth will help you set it up. See their contact info on page 7.*)

- \$1,000 minimum: Annual named scholarship fund to support at least one student each year. This scholarship needs to be renewed annually.
- \$25,000 minimum: Endowed scholarship to support at least one student per year for many years.

Campus Facilities: Gifts will be directed to campus enhancement priorities.

- \$5,800: Refurbish one room in a residence hall.
- \$30,000: Renovate small gathering spaces in Augustana Hall.
- \$62,000: Renovate a large gathering space and small gym in Centennial Hall.
- \$\$\$ We are seeking special gifts for the new Luther Heights residence hall. Please contact us for more information!

Competency-Based Education:

- \$50,000: Design of academic courses
- \$25,000: Technology support



Pursuing Excellence
UNDER THE CROSS

A SPECIAL WAY TO SUPPORT MLC

Be an MLC Sustainer by setting up a recurring gift

We deeply appreciate each recurring gift to the MLC Fund, which supports students every day. It's easy for you too!

- **It's automatic.** Set it up and relax, knowing you're supporting MLC in an ongoing way.
- **It's easy to set up.** Choose an amount as low as \$5 a month!
- **It's easy to adjust.** Family situations can change. If you ever want to adjust the amount of your monthly gift—or cancel it entirely—you can, no questions asked.

Text **FUND** to **507.223.4344**
Go to **mlc-wels.edu/mlc fund**

FOUR WAYS TO GIVE:

Text GIVE to
507.223.4344

Go to
mlc-wels.edu/donate

Call
507.354.8221 x295

Send your check with the coupon below to
MLC, 1995 Luther Ct, New Ulm MN 56073

I'd like to give \$_____ for Financial Aid Facilities Competency-Based Education MLC Fund

Name(s): _____ Congregation: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: (_____) _____