

2020-2021 Annual Report

This report summarizes the accomplishments and efforts of the Women's Council of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary for 2020-2021. We are grateful to God for enabling the Women's Council to serve the seminary and students in particular.

This year marked the 94th year of the Women's Council of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. This year's programs were presented virtually due to the COVID 19 pandemic. We are grateful for all the support and coordination from the media department that made our programs possible this year. The Fall and Advent Programs featured a Scholarship Spotlight with testimony from one of the six Partnership Program Women's Council Scholarship recipients along with special music. Liz Arthurs spoke at the Fall Program and Kristen Challapalli, who was to have spoken at the cancelled April 2020 program, was our scholarship speaker. The Advent Program of Lessons and Carols included scholarship recipients Ashley de Souza, as the speaker and James Holt, Kimberly and Charles Fick as our readers. The April program featured all of our Scholarship Recipients with Danielle DeLong and Jared Larson telling their stories and the other four giving brief updates.

Music Chair Wendy Betts coordinated special music for each virtual program. She is grateful for the technical know-how of Zoom and Live Stream creators and for media-audio experts who are not intimidated by technology and is thankful to all musicians and board members who helped promote and readily participate in the online programs. In spite of the COVID pandemic year, we managed to move forward with lovely hymn singing, piano playing, vocal soloing - sharing God's great gift of music with our wonderful ladies of faith. The organ did not work, so the piano was capably played by Rose Hausman. Whenever Wendy asked a student or member or "outsider" to share their music gifts, they responded positively and joyfully. The programs presented have been true and bold witnesses to the life of Christ we hold close.

Since the programs were all virtual this year, **Social Chair** Dorine Waller was not able to use her creative powers to create a welcome and cheerful atmosphere at each luncheon with seasonal table arrangements.

Lisa Steigerwalt continues in her second year as **Membership Chair**. Lisa was instrumental in managing the logistics for the virtual programs, coordinating media and the program participants and creating the PowerPoints that accompanied the videos. There were 61 dues-paying members for the year, 8 less than last year, and we welcomed 9 new members! These new members include a member of our GCTS Board of Trustees, a member of the GCTS faculty, and a faculty spouse! We are grateful for the Lord's provision during the challenges of the pandemic as membership has remained consistent. We continue to communicate that membership supports the program administrative costs so that 100% of WC gifts are applied to the Scholarship Fund.

The Scholarship Recipients for the 2020-21 academic year were Danielle DeLong, Ashley de Souza, Charles and Kimberly Fick, James Holt, and Jared Larson. As **Scholarship Chair**, Rose Hausman communicated with the students throughout the year to introduce herself and the Women's Council to the new recipients, to relay information about upcoming Women's Council programs, to work with the designated speakers, as well as to encourage all of them in response to their monthly reports. The students particularly missed the in-person programs and luncheons where they have had the opportunity to get to know the members of the Women's Council. The students also missed the annual gathering of new and returning scholarship recipients with the Women's Council Board at the beginning of the year.

To help connect the ladies of the Women's Council with the students, Rose writes a personal letter three times during the year to all of those who made contributions to the Women's Council Scholarship Fund. Because of COVID and the absence of any in-person programs, our total contributions of the year fell a bit short but were supplemented with surplus from past years to meet the new goal of \$15,000.

This was the fifth year the Women's Council chose scholarship recipients from the Partnership Program, allowing us at times to support a student over multiple years. Kimberly and Charles Fick graduated after four years as scholarship recipients and James Holt after three years. The monthly prayer letters that these Partnership students send to their supporters come to Rose and Rose forwards them to all Board members. In addition, the scholarship recipients' bios are listed on the Gordon-Conwell Women's Council website with updates, written by the students themselves, posted twice a year at the end of each semester. We do this to enable all of us to get to know them better and pray for them throughout the year.

After seven years in her role as Scholarship Chair, Rose is retiring from the position and considers it a real privilege to have worked together with Board members to support these students as they prepare to go out into the world with the good news of the gospel.

Secretary Kathy Kishbaugh maintained orderly details for the Women's Council. Kathy fulfilled duties through the year as she worked with seminary staff to schedule Women's Council program meetings, update documents, and prepare the fall invitation and program bulletin. Anne Swetland, Lisa Steigerwalt, and Grace Chmura assisted with invitation mailings and programs.

Treasurer Erica Giovanniello reported that the Women's Council maintained a healthy financial position for FY20-21 despite all programs being held virtual, due to Covid. In May 2021, the Women's Council Board voted unanimously to continue the \$15,000/year commitment for FY21-22 which benefits six Women's Council Scholars in the sum of \$2,500/year/scholar. A total of \$12,970 was received in scholarship donations in FY20-21, of which \$15,000 was disbursed to six scholarship recipients. In addition, \$1,215 was received in FY20-21 for Women's Council dues.

An account balance year-end summary for FY20-21 for all Women's Council accounts is as follows:

- \$1,400.78 in the Women's Council Operating Fund, which represents dues payments, luncheon payments and expenses*, honorariums, mailings, and office supplies. (*Due to Covid, the luncheon portion of the programs were cancelled in FY20-21 as we were not able to gather in person for the safety of all).
- \$15,117.34 in the Women's Council Scholarship Fund, after scholarship disbursements totaling \$15,000.
- \$89,818.74 in the Women's Council Endowment fund, after a net investment gain of \$15,495.90(calculated on 6/30/21).

All three of the Women's Council accounts remain in a healthy financial position, thanks be to God, and to all who generously contributed to the Women's Council Scholarship Fund and to those who paid their annual dues. As a reminder, dues payments assist the Women's Council to offer quality programs and to pay guest speakers and musicians an honorarium. Thank you also for your continued support for the Women's Council Scholarship.

Archivist chair Beatrice Lyons, entered records of the Executive Board minutes, program invitations, scholarship letters, printed programs and program minutes into their respective notebooks.

Executive Board members continuing in 2021-2022 include: Grace Chmura: President; Brinn Weaver: Vice President; Jennifer LaFountain: Treasurer; Beatrice Lyons: Scholarship Chair; Miriam Boylan: Social Chair; Kathy Kishbaugh: Secretary; Lisa Steigerwalt: Membership Chair; Wendy Betts: Music Chair; Elizabeth Davis: Archivist; and Ex-Officio members Rhonda Gibson, Immediate Past President; Nancy Sunquist, wife of the seminary President. Members-at-Large continuing to serve include: Anne Swetland and Camille Bishop.

All of our work could not be accomplished without the support of the staff and administration of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. We thank President Sunquist and many departments of the seminary, including the advancement team, which assists with invitations and registration, and the communication and media departments which serve us so well through the year.

As President of the Women's Council, I especially want to express gratitude to the entire Women's Council for their interest in and care for seminary students. The impact is eternal. We have seen growth in attendance at programs and an increase in giving – all by God's good grace to us.

Respectfully Submitted,

Grace Chmura
President, 2020-2021