**The Women’s Council 2021-2022 Annual Report**

This report summarizes the accomplishments and efforts of the Women’s Council of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary for 2021-2022. We are grateful to God for enabling the Women’s Council to serve the seminary and students in particular.

This year marked the 95th year of the Women's Council of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. 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.  Patricia Batten spoke at the Fall Program and Aseneth Castaneda was our scholarship speaker. The Advent Program of Lessons and Carols included scholarship recipients Aseneth Castaneda as our violinist, and Jared Larson, Ron Howard and Anthony Rando as our readers.  The April program featured Professor Autumn Ridenour as the guest speaker with scholarship spotlight speaker Anthony Rando sharing his testimony and journey to GCTS.

**Music chair** Wendy Betts shared it is a privilege and delight to work with such helpful, competent, faith-inspired ladies!

Whenever asked to serve, musicians requested for programs have been very willing to share their gifts.  It was suggested that more in-house talent be used to play or sing or dance.  With the encouragement of Grace and Nancy, Wendy can reach out to those names unfamiliar to her.

The December 2021 program was more of a challenge, with Wendy not being in attendance, and some confusion of roles. The necessary change of venues from chapel to dining hall in April was refreshing and light and bright.   It was unfortunate not to have all the music shared that was planned, but certainly understandable, considering the late start and necessary food serving time.

**Social chair** Miram Boylan was  able to use her creative powers to provide  a welcome and cheerful atmosphere at each luncheon with seasonal table arrangements.

Lisa Steigerwalt continues in her third year as **Membership chair**. We were so grateful this year to return to in-person gatherings beginning this fall, while maintaining the online viewing opportunity. Due to a roof fire in the Academic Building in early 2022, we conducted both our Spring 2022 program and luncheon in Alumni Hall.   This change of place and pace was well received for its convenience and simplicity.  While attendance was lower for each of our three programs relative to pre-pandemic registration, we were grateful for a strong turnout.  Also reflecting a slight decline, we have 59 dues-paying members for the year, and we welcomed 3 new members.   We are grateful for the Lord’s provision and faithful membership of the Women’s Council during these challenging times.  We continue to communicate that membership supports the program's administrative costs, such as printing and mailing costs, so that 100% of Women’s Council gifts are applied to the Scholarship Fund.

The Scholarship Recipients for the 2021-22 academic year were Ashley de Souza, Jared Larson, Aseneth Castaneda, Ron Howard, Anthony Rando, Danielle DeLong, and Rachel Lohia. As Danielle DeLong graduated in January 2022, Rachel Lohia took her place as a new scholarship recipient starting the spring 2022 semester. As **Scholarship Chair**, Beatrice Lyons 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. In September of 2021, the Women’s Council Board Members hosted a welcome event for new students to get to know the WC Board, as well as to catch up with returning students. The students were excited to be meeting in person again after our events and programs had been moved online due to COVID.

This year, it was decided that instead of writing three separate thank you letters to the ladies of the Women’s Council who made contributions to the Women’s Council Scholarship Fund, Beatrice would write only one thank you letter a year to streamline communication.

This was the sixth year the Women’s Council chose scholarship recipients from the Partnership Program, allowing us at times to support a student over multiple years. Jared Larson and Danielle DeLong graduated after two years as recipients, and Ron Howard graduated after one year as a recipient. The monthly partner updates that these Partnership students send to their supporters are forwarded to the Women’s Council Board Members by Beatrice. 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.

**Secretary** Kathy Kishbaugh maintained orderly details for the Women's Council. Kathy fulfilled duties through the year as she prepared invitations and program bulletins for the fall, winter and spring events.  She also kept the minutes for the three board meetings.  Anne Swetland, Lisa Steigerwalt, and Grace Chmura assisted with invitation mailings and programs.

**Treasurer** Jennifer LaFountain reported that the Women’s Council maintained a healthy financial position for FY 21-22.  In May 2021, the Women’s Council Board voted unanimously to continue the $15,000/year commitment for FY 22-23 which benefits six Women’s Council Scholars in the sum of $2,500/year/scholar; as well as to not take an endowment distribution for FY 21-22.  A total of $14,007 was received in scholarship donations in FY 21-22, of which $15,000 was disbursed to six scholarship recipients.  In addition, $1,035 was received in FY 21-22 for Women’s Council dues.

An account balance year-end summary for FY 21-22 for all Women’s Council accounts is as follows:

* $1,671.41 in the Women’s Council Operating Fund, which represents dues payments, luncheon payments and expenses\*, honorariums, mailings, and office supplies.
* $14,124.34 in the Women’s Council Scholarship Fund, after scholarship disbursements totalling $15,000.
* $82,102.38 in the Women’s Council Endowment fund, after a net investment loss of $7,716.36 (calculated on 6/30/22).

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.  Thank you also for your continued support for the Women’s Council Scholarship.

**Archivist chair** Elizabeth Davis was not able to fulfill normal duties as archivist for 2021-2022 due to health issues, and Beatrice kindly stepped in on her behalf with the necessary archiving responsibilities. 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 2022-2023 include: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_: 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, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: 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, 2021-2022