

## Alumni Spotlight: Laura Lynch (MACL '19)



**Current Title:** Director of Development, Christian Study Center (CSC) of Gainesville

**Family:** husband Jay; 4 children (Jon, Elizabeth, David, and Michael); and 3 grandsons with another on the way!

**Favorite Professors:** Dr. Gwenfair Adams and Dr. Justin Holcomb

**Favorite Classes:** Theology of the Pentateuch & Dynamics of Spiritual Life

**Favorite Memory:** Lunches with classmates and professors after hours of lectures

### What made you decide to study, and to pursue the degree you did, at Gordon-Conwell?

I chose Gordon-Conwell because I had a desire to learn more about God, and other intellectual curiosity. I was interested in making more connections between my work with the CSC and my life, especially as my responsibility with children was decreasing—my youngest was starting high school when I began my studies. Seminary was quite a switch from my work as an RN.

While maintaining a strong orthodoxy, Gordon-Conwell has a broad ecumenical approach that appealed to me. I knew seminary would add to my skill set, (i.e., public speaking, computer presentations, etc.), with a view toward my service at CSC and church. Overall, I want to remain willing to stretch and not stay "comfortable" as I age.

### Where and in what capacities are you currently serving?

I am the co-founder, with my husband, and current director of development of the Christian Study Center (CSC) that serves the University of Florida. Our center began 23 years ago. The CSC movement is a collection of various organizations associated with universities around the country at places like Yale, MIT, UNC-Chapel Hill, Duke, University of Minnesota, University of Wisconsin, Berkeley, and others. Although there are different emphases, the mission of each is to support the scholarly mission of the university and to provide classes, lectures, reading groups, hospitality, and even residential facilities. We engage with students conversationally about the life of the mind and heart and the intellectual tradition of Christian faith. Our Center is a beautiful two-story building with a craft coffee shop, Pascal's, as part of the ministry. Being a block from campus enables us to serve as a meeting place for students, faculty, and neighbors. Under the guidance of the coffeehouse manager, the "Barista Society" provides a loving community of spiritual formation and work experience for 10-12 baristas.

**What do you love about your work?**

I love that the CSC brings people together and provides a place to talk conversationally about deep issues in our culture and in our lives. Although we have the support of several churches, the CSC is not church affiliated or associated with any political group.

**What are the biggest challenges of the ministry/work you are doing?**

Helping people understand the distinctive role of the ministry—we are not a church; we are not a campus ministry group. We support the work of universities and hope to see students, faculty, and neighbors live fully integrated lives of faith, dealing with their work and academic calling as vital to their service to God.

We have navigated many transitions, most recently the retirement of our first executive director (last summer) and our first office administrator (this summer). So much of “success” is having the right people in the right places.

Living in a post-Christian culture brings its own challenges. Although we may have been viewed with some suspicion by some university faculty twenty years ago, today it is even harder to find local faculty to engage with us. Although some of it is related to increasing pressures on faculty and bureaucratic mandates, some of it is also related to our cultural moment.

There is always more work to be done in development, and because of my part-time status the challenge is getting the work done and being satisfied with “a day’s work in a day’s time.” Thankfully I have helpful board members and a good team!

**How has your Gordon-Conwell education served you in your current ministry/work?**

I received a whole new group of wise friends and advisors. I learned to love the Lord more deeply and to appreciate the variety of Christian traditions and people in my classes. I gained more confidence in handling God’s word and in making presentations. I marveled in all the learning available and grew in my love for the mission of God in all its diverse forms.

**Do you have any publications or links to share?**

My writing consists mostly of journaling and letters! However, I do edit a CSC newsletter, Under Consideration. The resources of the CSC are available to anyone online and in person in Gainesville, FL where we serve the University of Florida. Offering deep Christian thought, our podcast, “For Your Consideration: A podcast of the Christian Study Center of Gainesville,” is available on your favorite podcast app.

You can learn more about our Center and access all of these resources at the [Christian Study Center of Gainesville website](#).