Alumni

GORDON CONWELL

Alumni Spotlight: Deana Nail (MDiv ’12)

Current title: Networked Education dean of students and MDiv program director. I will be moving to Director of Thriving in Ministry in late January.

Favorite professor: Dr. Steve Klipowicz

Favorite class: Preaching: Principles & Practices with Dr. Haddon Robinson

Favorite memory: Dr. Robinson providing feedback on my first sermon (Believe me, I learned a lot.😊)

Please tell us about your various administrative roles and what courses you teach at Gordon-Conwell.

I currently serve in several roles—Networked Education dean of students, Networked Education MDiv program director and adjunct faculty member in the Department of Practical Theology. As Networked Education dean of students, I work collaboratively with other departments to create structures that help students connect with Christ, each other, and their calling. In my work as MDiv program director, I provide academic input and advise students on questions of calling, formation, and course schedules. As an adjunct faculty member, I have the great blessing to teach Spiritual Formation for Ministry.

How did God weave together your Gordon-Conwell education with other life events to bring you back to Gordon-Conwell as an administrator and faculty member?

God wonderfully and purposefully brought me back to Gordon-Conwell through a series of multiple closed doors and a solitary door of opportunity. After graduating with my MDiv in 2012, I worked bi-vocationally—full-time as an office manager for an ink-and-toner company and part-time as a pastor. Despite many attempts to secure a full-time pastoral position, I continued to look for ways to serve God’s Church beyond my part-time pastoral role. A lone door opened when Dr. Steve Klipowicz called, offering an opportunity to return to Gordon-Conwell and work alongside him in serving MDiv and MACM students. Since that time, God has opened doors to serve and teach our amazing Gordon-Conwell students. I am so thankful to him, our students, and the wonderful faculty and staff with whom I have the privilege to minister.

What will you be doing in your new position with Thriving in Ministry, and what are you looking forward to in that role?

As director of Thriving in Ministry, I will work to create care and equipping structures that connect our alumni pastors with God, each other, and his vision for the church. I look forward to meeting our amazing alumni pastors, hearing their heart, and developing

environments that best help them thrive amidst the physical, vocational, relational, and spiritual demands of ministry.

What are some things you love about your work?

I absolutely love seeing students develop a deeper love for Christ through their studies and their interaction with classmates, faculty and staff. I enjoy creating environments (conversations, group discussions, assignments, etc.) that guide students in exploring the theological, spiritual, and practical depths of John 15:5 in which every moment of life flows from a total dependency on Christ. I also cherish the opportunity to walk alongside students as they grow in their call to Christ and their commitment to live out their gifts and passions wherever God places them.

What's unique about teaching at Gordon-Conwell?

Because of our multi-denominational culture, Gordon-Conwell offers students, faculty, and staff the opportunity to center our unity around who Jesus is and what he came to do. Consequently, Christ remains front and center in every aspect of our seminary. In addition to our Christ-centered unity, our denominational diversity also shapes our respect for each other as we listen to and learn from various theological viewpoints ranging from baptism to church governance.

How has teaching in a multidenominational setting shaped your own faith, ministry, or view of the Church as a whole?

Teaching at Gordon-Conwell continually reinforces the vital necessity of unity in Christ. In a world so torn by hatred and division, echoes of Jesus' word in John 17 reveal the transformative power and importance of a united Church. I pray that my life, my teaching, and my ministry serve to unite people with Jesus and one another…for such a time as this.

How has your own Gordon-Conwell education served you in your academic work, or impacted how you do your work?

My Gordon-Conwell education served to solidify my theological understanding and passion for pastoral and spiritual formation. In a culture of constant change and brokenness, only Christ can show us the way forward. In a world of pain, loss, and exhaustion, only life flowing from intimate, constant connection with Christ can give us the abundant life (John 10:10) that, many times, we find so elusive.