



## 2021 Annual Report to the Synods

*Wartburg College is dedicated to challenging and nurturing students for lives of leadership and service as a spirited expression of their faith and learning.*

Again called upon to pursue our mission amidst the ongoing pandemic, our faculty, staff, and students continued demonstrating uncommon resiliency. Guided by our vision, we are answering the call to be the leading institution in educating the whole person, persevering to create an inclusive community combining diverse curricular and co-curricular experiences that prepare students for lives of leadership and service.

### Changes in Senior Leadership

- In September, President Darrel Colson announced his retirement effective June 2022, bringing a close to a 13-year tenure. A search committee comprising Board of Regents members and representatives from the faculty, staff, and student body began its work in November to search for Wartburg's 18<sup>th</sup> president.
- Dr. Debora Johnson-Ross was named vice president for academic affairs and dean of the faculty in January. Prior to her work at Wartburg, she was director of the Mayor's Scholars Program at Baltimore City Community College, senior vice president of academic innovation at BridgeEdU, and associate dean for academic affairs at McDaniel College.
- Rick Willis was named vice president for student recruitment in August following the retirement of Dr. Edie Waldstein. He brings 25 years of leadership and recruitment experience to the position as Wartburg's former executive director of athletics and wellness and head football coach.
- Dr. Dan Kittle, vice president for student life and dean of students since 2015, was named president of Dakota Wesleyan University in November. He has served Wartburg for 16 years in various roles, including faculty development, community engagement, strategic planning, and COVID-19 mitigation and response, along with teaching leadership and first-year seminar courses.

### Strategic Planning

In October, the Board of Regents approved the naming of the College's new strategic plan *Our Brightest Days: Realizing Purpose, Leading Change*. Work to prioritize strategies and fundraising opportunities and determine implementation timelines is nearing completion.

### Enrollment

- Fall 2021 enrollment was 1,543 students from 36 U.S. states and 66 countries and more than 30 world religions. This number included 94 international students and 186 U.S. students of color.
- The five majors with highest enrollment are business administration, biology, psychology, elementary education, and exercise science. The online Master of Arts in Leadership program began in summer 2021 with a cohort of 18 students.

### Academic and Co-Curricular Programs

- Wartburg launched the public phase of a \$9 million capital campaign in October to renovate Centennial and Vollmer halls, two of the oldest residence halls, which house first-year students. Construction commenced on an addition in December; other work will be completed in summer 2022 and summer 2023. Updates include a new HVAC system, new restroom and shower facilities, an electrical and plumbing overhaul, and the creation of suites and individual rooms to better serve student needs. The campaign marks the largest fundraising goal for a single project in the College's history.
- The Meyer Strength & Conditioning Annex to the Wartburg-Waverly Sports & Wellness Center was dedicated at Homecoming. The \$3.7 million project also included renovation of the former strength and conditioning space to create the Wuertz Health & Human Performance Center, which features the

Anderson Human Performance Lab, Ott Anatomy and Physiology Lab, and faculty offices, which also were dedicated at Homecoming.

- Kay Grigsby was named the Grant Price Endowed Archivist, established with a \$1.2 million gift from David McCartney and James Petersen of Iowa City to support the College's Archives and the Archives of Iowa Broadcasting. This marks the 21<sup>st</sup> endowed faculty or staff position and 8<sup>th</sup> in the past decade.

### **Spiritual Life and Campus Ministry**

- In October, the Rev. Dr. Brian Beckstrom, Herbert and Cora Moehlmann Chaplaincy Chair and dean of spiritual life, accepted a call to serve as the assistant vice president for mission, church, and ministry at Valparaiso University. The Rev. Halcyon Bjornstad, who in 2018-19 was the inaugural director of the college's Accelerated Ministry Program, a joint B.A./M.Div. program with Wartburg Theological Seminary, is serving in an interim capacity.
- The Accelerated Ministry Program, now in its fourth year, welcomed a cohort of five in Fall 2021, bringing the total number to 17.
- O. Jay and Pat Tomson of Mason City, longtime supporters of private, liberal arts education, received the 2021 Graven Award in its 32<sup>nd</sup> year. The annual award for Christian vocation highlights the powerful and positive effect of a strong sense of Christian vocation as it interfaces with service to community, the church, and the world. Their gifts have helped create endowed faculty positions at a number of Midwest colleges. They have also supported scholarships for students enrolled in the Accelerated Ministry Program.
- Dr. Karen Black, the Rudi Inselmann Endowed Professor of Organ, released a CD, *Ein feste Burg*, in honor of the Wartburg Chapel Dobson Organ's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of installation. A number of special concerts also marked the occasion.
- SLCM continued to partner with several offices across campus, particularly Student Life, to provide care for community members who were sick, respond to increased needs for counseling due to a rise in anxiety, and advance campuswide diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

### **Recognition**

- New Board of Regents members include the Rev. Kevin Jones, bishop of the Northeastern Iowa Synod, Mason City; the Rev. Amy Current, bishop of the Southeastern Iowa Synod, Dubuque; Kerri Blobaum '94, materials scientist, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, California; Ben Shanno '04, vice president/general merchandise manager, Family Dollar, Virginia Beach, Virginia; and Alicia Faust '12 (alumni board president-elect), executive director, Willis Dady Homeless Services, Cedar Rapids.
- Longtime Wartburg supporters Dr. Ann Henninger and Shirley Walker received the Wartburg Medal in recognition of sustained service to the College. Henninger is a professor emerita of biology and Walker is a generous donor and volunteer. They both live in Waverly.
- Dr. Michael Bechtel, associate professor of science education, received funding from the Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council's STEM Scale-up Program to make available an aquaponics program to PK-12 teachers, libraries, and other educational programs.
- Caleb Lines, a junior biochemistry major from Nashua, was awarded the Barry Goldwater Scholarship, a national scholarship for students who intend to pursue research careers in mathematics, the natural sciences, or engineering.
- Three Wartburg students were awarded \$10,000 grants from the Davis Projects for Peace program to carry out service projects around the world. Junior Mildred Mahatlane constructed a new classroom at Mafhikana Primary School in Botswana. Sophomore Shanta Nagarkoti returned to Nepal to construct a washroom and hand-washing station and water filtration system for a school. Junior Mercy Umba of South Sudan partnered with Kajo Keji Health Training Institute in Uganda to work with refugee communities.

We are blessed to work with gifted students who are committed to changing the world through leadership and service. Thank you for encouraging your students to join Wartburg's rich tradition as they share their gifts to enrich our community of learning.

**Darrel D. Colson, President**