



GCS News

A Newsletter for Students and Alumni of Grace Communion Seminary

November 2016

Dear GCS students, alumni and donors,

As the fall semester comes to a close I wanted to get in touch with you all again before Thanksgiving and Christmas and then the spring semester.

Since being appointed as president of GCS I've come to know and appreciate all the work that goes on behind the scenes to make this educational program work and maintain its quality. And more than that, the people that make it possible. So before I share some important announcements at the end of this letter, let me say something about "my team."

If you've taken classes you know at least some of the faculty who teach for us. Without them there would be no seminary at all. I've gotten to know most of them a little and a few a lot better. Some of that happens through the regular faculty meetings we have. There we discuss anything that relates to teaching the course from the schedule to the Moodle internet platform we use to host our online courses. We also look over the student surveys from the most recent semester to see student perceptions of the courses offered. I'm grateful for each and every one. They contribute directly, not only to students and the online classroom experience, but also to maintaining, growing, and improving what we offer. I'm especially grateful since it is not all that easy to find people who have the necessary background and training, who can teach part-time, and on the basis of our Trinitarian and incarnational theological foundation. But we have a sufficient number to be able to offer all the courses needed to support two MA degrees. That is no small feat.

Alongside the faculty meetings, we also hold regular curriculum committee meetings. At these times a smaller group of faculty meet with me and our dean of faculty Dr. Michael Morrison to evaluate the quality and content of our existing courses, making sure they meet the accreditation standards set by the Distance Education Accreditation Commission. That committee also considers all significant changes to existing courses and potential new courses to add to our curriculum. This is important and rigorous work to maintaining the coherence and quality of our degree programs while also fostering growth and development.

Of course, none of what was dreamed up, decided or evaluated would come to pass unless there were persons who put "wheels" on those things in the day to day operations. Implementation comes thanks to two persons. Susan Williams serves as our registrar. As you probably already know by experience, she communicates with students about everything else outside the classroom that is necessary to become and be a student and go on to graduate from GCS. Dr. Michael Morrison, who is Dean of Faculty, sits at the heart of all the machinery that makes everything go and keeps all the parts moving together—including monitoring and assisting faculty with the online platform, Moodle. Besides teaching a number of courses, he chairs the faculty meetings and curriculum committee. Communicating with faculty, setting out our academic calendar and keeping track of all the policy and academic quality issues, including our GCS catalogue and student handbook are just a few of the many ways he serves us.

I must also mention the GCS Board who stands behind it all and keeps me in line! The board oversees the whole operation and whose main purpose is to keep us on mission. But it also has financial accountability and oversight and, of course, reviews all strategic and policy changes and recommendations and develops new initiatives. The members makes sure the smaller pieces fit with the bigger pattern and plan of GCS. If you've been with GCI for a while you'll recognize most of the names of the members: GCI president Dr. Joseph Tkach chairs the board, which includes Dr. Mike Fezell, Dr. Dan Rogers, Ms. Pat Shaw, Mr. Ron Kelly, Dr. John McKenna, Mr. Mat Morgan (GCI/GCS Treasurer) and me. The board helps keep everyone on target and accountable. Their commitment to the mission, health and flourishing of the seminary is to be commended.

One final person to be mentioned is, in a way, my right-hand man. Former GCS president, Dr. Russell Duke, is always at hand to counsel and advise me and fill me in on the GCS history and the intricacies of its operation. I am particularly grateful that he has continued to serve as our Liaison to the DEAC since he was largely responsible for leading GCS to its accreditation through that commission, an important achievement in the history of GCS. He will continue to facilitate our relationship with them as we maintain our accreditation.

Let me now share with you some important announcements.

First of all—a landmark. We anticipate the graduation of over 40 students at our Denominational Conference in August of 2017 in Orlando! That's quite an achievement for both the school and these students. If you can join us on August 4th, for the ceremony we would be delighted to have you. It will be quite a celebration. The Registrar will send emails and updates to those graduating.

As previously announced, on January 1, 2017, tuition is increasing from \$150 to \$200 a unit. So a typical three unit course will now cost \$600. As you may know, tuition at nearly all, if not all, educational institutions does not cover all expenses. Our tuition covered just over one-third of what it cost us to provide our degree programs in 2015. Our tuition increase will help close that gap. Tuition will now cover about 45% of our expenses. You should know that scholarships from a variety of sources and grants from GCI are what enabled us to meet our annual budget and that will continue. Also you should know that a GCS master's degree is still one of the best deals around, one of the lowest available from DEAC accredited institutions and far less expensive than ATS theological seminaries.

We are attempting to find more outside scholarship funding and will continue to offer our scholarship program for interns and pastors at the same rates. We are especially keen to provide increased help to international GCI leaders and pastors as we are able. Please consider donating to the GCS scholarship fund to assist our international and pastoral students as they further their theological education.

Finally, I need to notify you that after serving us faithfully for nearly two years, Susan Williams will be leaving her post as Registrar to work for GCI in accounting, starting in January. She's been wonderful to work with and I know we'll all miss her. But not to worry. A capable replacement has already been lined up. Janet Morrison has been appointed to take up where Susan has left off. (And yes, if you don't know, she is Dean Morrison's wife with long-time involvement in GCI.) Janet will be the one you'll hear from in corresponding with GCS starting in January. I know you'll welcome her as she joins the team.

As I close, let me remind you that you are our best representatives and recruiters. If you know of someone who might benefit from studying with GCS, taking just one or two courses or aiming for a degree, direct them to our website and send them to the Registrar! We'd love to welcome more students to join us.

Let me say again, it's been a privilege to serve you. Be assured we appreciate your prayers for GCS and all those involved, of course, including me. Donations are also appreciated to support international and pastoral scholarships. Please give as you are able to Grace Communion Seminary by mail to PO Box 875, Glendora, CA 91740 or donate online at gcs.edu/donate

Grace and peace in Jesus Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gary Deddo". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Gary W. Deddo
President
Grace Communion Seminary