

LCU TO YOU

Focusing on Lincoln Christian University's mission to *nurture and equip Christian leaders with a biblical worldview to serve and lead in the church and the world*, on February 22, 2022, President Silas McCormick and Board Chair Tamsen Murray, announced a bold initiative to create a new model for Christian higher education that is responsive to a new era of Kingdom work.

The new model makes three primary changes to what LCU presently does:

First, though it continues the University's commitment to providing biblical, theological, and worldview educational opportunities for Kingdom leaders through academic degree programs, it narrows those programs to those most directly tied to vocational ministry -- specifically seminary programs along with two undergraduate programs in Bible & Theology and Christian Ministry.

Second, the model dramatically expands non-credit educational opportunities in the form of workshops, retreats, conferences, curricula, podcasts, and the like created by and led by LCU faculty.

Third, the model adapts to the fact that more and more churches are developing their own leaders in their existing contexts. In the new model, LCU will offer the biblical, theological, and worldview components of our curricula, and a number of partner churches will offer the practical ministry training through internship and residency experiences as well as serving as a voice in the creation of workshops, curricula, conferences, and consulting services on issues facing churches today. This approach builds on the strength of both partners and creates a model that can be repeated across any church that desires to nurture and equip its leaders.

We're calling this new model "LCU to You," because it means we will be reducing the number of activities and offerings on our main campus in Lincoln, and instead taking them out to the churches.

The new model will involve offering courses and training sites for our students in collaboration with partner churches, including Eastview Christian Church in Normal, Illinois, Harvester Christian Church in St. Charles, Missouri, West Side Christian Church, in Springfield, Illinois, with the possibility to add others in the coming months. We will also continue to offer courses online and at our main campus in Lincoln, Illinois.

"We have a tremendous opportunity here to reinvent how we educate and train Kingdom leaders. Obviously transitioning away from a more traditional, residential model comes with some profound losses, and we grieve those," President McCormick says. "But the sustainability of that model has been in doubt for a decade, and for us, it is simply no longer viable. I am enormously grateful for this unique opportunity to take our core identity and mission and make new history and tradition alongside collaborative partners who are themselves doing innovative things in preparing the next generation of Kingdom leaders."

Below are a few key points from the plan. For a more in-depth explanation, we have made a memorandum available at www.LincolnChristian.edu/LCUtoYou.

Sustainability

- LCU's total fall 2021 enrollment was 527 students. That's a decline of about 50% over ten years, and reflects a residential student population that is the smallest we have seen since prior to 1950.
- Since 2012, operating expenses have exceeded operating revenue by more than \$3.5 million.

Strategy

- Many of our constituents value us for offering academically rigorous biblical, theological, and worldview educational opportunities.
- Poor student and staff morale (often due to being chronically under-resourced, deteriorating facilities, and our (perceived) undesirable location in Lincoln) has contributed to recruitment and retention challenges for both prospective students and prospective employees.

Solutions

- We have a deep base of support for (1) offering degree programs in biblical studies, theology, Christian thought, and ministry, (2) partnering with churches that can teach the practical ministry portions of our programs for students not already working in ministry, and (3) devoting as much time to offering educational opportunities outside of credit-bearing courses as within.

- ***Nothing about our mission, vision, core values, philosophy of education, or statement of faith needs to be changed to adopt this new model.*** Indeed, the goals of moving to a new model are to (1) focus our efforts on our mission, (2) secure the resources to pursue that mission long into the future, and (3) treat our students, faculty, and staff better than we are able to do in our current model.
- Narrowing our program offerings, reducing the expense of residential undergraduate education, and offering students the opportunity to learn the foundations from us while doing ministry alongside our partners will allow us to focus on what we do well, and attract students, faculty, and staff interested in participating in a mission that builds upon and carries forward our historic dedication to Kingdom growth for years to come.