

## **GOVERNING BOARD OF KNOX COLLEGE**

Interim Report, May 2020

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

What is the task of a theological college today? What are we trying to do? How can we help individuals and the church face the changes within Canadian society and culture? These are some of the questions the board, faculty and members of the broader Knox College community have been considering as we have sought to develop a deeper understanding of our institutional vocation. Since our foundation in 1844, education at Knox has focused on preparing ministers for service in the church. That role has changed, including helping to provide missionaries and assisting in the education of deaconesses (later diaconal ministers), as well as post-graduate theological education but the focus on educating for leadership in the church has dominated how Knox has understood its mission. This important task will continue to be one we seek to fulfil; however, significant changes in Canada, in our world and in theological education require us to think deeply and consider new ways in which we can serve Christ and Christ's church.

The strategic planning process undertaken over the last few years and completed by the board in October 2019 has sought to build on our strengths, while moving into a new and different future. We are deeply aware that the place of the church in society has altered dramatically since 1961 when Christians (predominately Roman Catholic and Protestant) constituted 95% of Canadian society. That same figure now stands at 65%, and those claiming "no religion" have grown from under 1% to over 24%. Canadian society has changed. Knox, alongside other theological colleges, needs to work to prepare graduates for this changed reality. Our strategic rationale speaks of the importance of Knox College working with church leaders to see what is working and considering why that might be, and of providing assistance as people seek to adapt to our changed contexts. We are also aware of a growing need for those who can offer guidance and counselling in institutions outside of traditional church settings as the pressures of modern society continue to grow. While we are conscious of the changes within Canada, we are also aware of the changes within Christianity globally and in theological education in North America as a whole. These are all realities that have been carefully considered as Knox has worked to renew its sense of institutional vocation, mission, and vision. Our new mission statement:

Knox College educates people to think deeply about God, live authentically in Christian faith and lead courageously in shifting spiritual and social landscapes.

Building on the vision, the mission, and other work done in the strategic planning process, the Knox College Board has established five strategic priorities which will shape our work over the next five years and beyond. The five objectives are:

1. Congregational vitality and growth – we will equip churches in the Reformed tradition to engage their communities, grow and plant new churches.
2. Intercultural and global focus – we will reposition Knox to be an intercultural seminary in Canada with a global reach.
3. Spiritual and mental health – we will be leaders in helping professionals and churches respond to the increasing spiritual and mental health needs in our society.
4. Thought leadership in Christian faith – we will deepen our commitment to a critical approach to faith, and producing knowledge in the service of the church, the university, and society.
5. Mission-focused facilities – we will optimize the use of our current and future facilities to support our mission.

Each of these priorities has specific initiatives and goals. For example, in order to assist the church in congregational vitality and growth we plan to establish a centre for Biblical preaching and communicating the gospel. Our intention is to continue to serve the church as we have always done, while at the same time pivoting to help meet new and changing needs in our culture and society. We ask the General Assembly, and all in our denomination, to pray for and with us, as we seek to serve in new and exciting ways.

### **SPECIAL FOUNDING DAY CONVOCATION**

On November 5, 2019, Knox College held a special Founding Day Convocation service to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the first Knox College classes, which were held on November 5, 1844. At the service, Knox College granted the degree Doctor of Divinity (honoris causa) to three people: the Rev. Dr. Terry LeBlanc, Dr. Stephanie

Ling, and the Rev. Dr. Pearce J. Carefoote. Knox College also presented Distinguished Leadership Awards to two people: Ms. Beverly Grace LeBlanc and Dr. Peter N. Ross.

The Board of Governors, on the recommendation of the Principal, Faculty, and Academic Committee, was also pleased to recognize the Rev. Dr. J. Dorcas Gordon's long-standing and continuing association with Knox College and her distinguished leadership in theological education, with the status of Principal Emerita. For 18 years, 1999–2017, Dr. Gordon served with distinction as Principal of Knox College.

The convocation address, "What Goes Around: Circular Theology in a Linear Age", by The Rev. Dr. Terry LeBlanc was well received by the large crowd in attendance. It was important, as we prepare for the future, to celebrate this anniversary in such a joyous manner.

## **176TH CONVOCATION**

At the writing of this report, plans are underway for the 176th Convocation which will be held on May 13, 2020 at Knox Presbyterian Church, Toronto. Twenty students are currently on track to complete their program studies in order to graduate at Convocation 2020. It is anticipated that the following degrees and certificates will be conferred: PhD (1), ThM (4), MA (1), MDiv (7), MPS (4), MTS (1), MRE (1), CTS (1).

The convocation speaker will be Dr. Dana Robert, Truman Collins Professor of World Christianity and History of Mission, and Director of the Center for Global Christianity and Mission.

## **BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

The Board of Governors of Knox College consists of 18 members, 15 members appointed at large by the General Assembly, the Principal, one faculty representative, and one Knox Ewart Graduate Association (KEGA) representative. The board held two regular meetings (October, February) and is planning for a third in May. The board is responsible for fiduciary, strategic and generative work on behalf of the General Assembly. In 2019, in addition to its regular work, the board has been working on the implementation of the new strategic plan for the college, has completed its plan for the investment of the college's endowment funds and has begun the work of preparing for the college's next accreditation review by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) that will happen in fall 2021.

## **FACULTY**

### **Core Faculty**

The core teaching faculty consists of eight professors: the Rev. Dr. Esther Acolatse, Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology and Intercultural Studies; the Rev. Dr. Charles Fensham, Professor of Systematic Theology; Dr. Brian Irwin, Associate Professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures; the Rev. Dr. Stuart Macdonald, Professor of Church and Society; the Rev. Dr. Bradley McLean, Professor of New Testament Language and Literature; Dr. Angela Schmidt, Director of Experiential and Innovative Learning and Assistant Professor of Leadership; Dr. Nam Soon Song, Ewart Professor of Christian Education and Youth Ministry and the Rev. Dr. John Vissers, Principal and Professor of Historical Theology. We are delighted to continue to have the Rev. Dr. Stephen Farris with us as Visiting Professor of Preaching on a part-time basis.

Prof. Charles Fensham was on research leave in the fall 2019 term and Prof. Nam Soon Song was on research leave in the winter 2020 term. Principal John Vissers has also been on research leave this winter 2020 term. We are grateful for John's leadership and we pray that this might be a time of renewal, both personally and in the academic reading and writing undertaken during this leave.

### **Adjunct Faculty and Sessional Lecturers**

As one might imagine there are, within a small faculty, challenges of resourcing teaching, academic administration and student advising. Knox is fortunate to be situated in a large city where there are highly qualified ministers and leaders who are able and willing to serve as adjunct faculty and sessional lecturers. The adjunct faculty and sessional lecturers for the 2019–2020 academic year were: the Rev. Dr. Kathy Edmison, (Psycho-Spiritual Distress, Crises and Therapeutic Directions), Dr. Kim Bokyoung (Understanding New Testament), the Rev. Dr. Frank Kovacs (New Testament Greek and Greek Exegesis), Dr. Nik Ansell (Theology of Religions::Diversity, Plurality and the Christian Message), the Rev. Dr. Clyde Ervine (Congregational Leadership), the Rev. Dr. Chun Hoi Heo (History and Polity of Korean Evangelical Holiness Church), the Rev. Dr. Hye Kyung Heo (Christian Ethics for Biosphere and Context), the Rev. Dr. Glenn McCullough (Worry and Anxiety), the Rev. Dr. Sarah Travis (Basics of Biblical

Preaching and Reformed Worship), the Rev. Dr. Harris Athanasiadis (Reformed Theology in Dialogue), and the Rev. Dr. Emily Bisset (Preaching Practicum).

### **Experiential Learning Supervisors**

We thank the many congregational ministers who serve each year as theological field education (TFE) supervisors and the chaplains and spiritual care workers who provide supervised pastoral education. Their important work creates opportunities for experiential learning in congregational, clinical, institutional, and intercultural settings that are vital to preparation for ministry. In 2019–2020 there were eight Presbyterian ministers who served as TFE supervisors and ten CASC (Canadian Association of Spiritual Care) approved supervisors and educators.

### **COLLEGE ADMINISTRATION**

Knox College is fortunate to have a very able and hardworking management, administration, and support staff. The executive staff consists of the Rev. Dr. John Vissers as Principal, the Rev. Dr. Stuart Macdonald as Vice Principal and Director of Graduate Studies, Dr. Dong-Ha Kim as Director of Basic Degree Studies, Mr. Shawn Stovell as Registrar and Director of Enrolment Management, Mr. Robert Adams as Director of Finance and Administration and Ms. Joan Pries as Chief Librarian and information technology liaison. These individuals serve as resource staff to the Board of Governors.

### **THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA**

Knox College participated actively in the Theological Education Liaison Group (TELG) which met once in person, and once by teleconference. One of the items discussed related to Overture No. 8, 2020 from the Presbytery of Huron-Perth regarding the development of a program in environmental theology. TELG believes this is an important issue and plans to consult with the drafters of the overture to better understand specifically how the concerns raised can be best addressed.

The Rev. Amanda Currie, Moderator of the 2019 General Assembly, preached at the Knox College Community Worship Service on October 1, 2019. She also preached the following day at the Toronto School of Theology's 12th annual Agape Service that was held at Knox College.

### **TORONTO SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY (TST)**

Knox College continues to participate actively in the Toronto School of Theology (TST) which is comprised of seven different theological schools representing four different Christian traditions (Anglican, United, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic). Dr. Dorcas Gordon's term as interim-Director concluded at the end of December 2019 and the TST appointed a new Director, the Rev. Dr. Pamela Couture from Emmanuel College to serve in this capacity. One of the key responsibilities will be preparing TST for an accreditation process mandated by the University of Toronto.

### **STUDENTS**

#### **Enrolment Management**

In 2019–2020 Knox College enrolled a total of 110 students in degree programs: 70 in basic degree programs (which are primarily professional masters programs), and 40 students in graduate degree programs (academic masters and doctoral programs). This includes both full-time and part-time students. As we look to the future, we recognize the challenging work of recruiting well-qualified students for all our programs. We continue to rely on our graduates, sessions, congregations and presbyteries to identify prospective students for Christian ministry and leadership. Mr. Shawn Stovell serves as Registrar and Director of Enrolment Management. Ms. Megan Shin, a graduate of Knox College works as Recruitment Officer and Admissions Counsellor. Knox's new website was launched in the fall of 2019.

#### **Bursaries**

Since September 2018 Knox College has been able to offer The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Leadership Bursaries. These are full tuition bursaries for qualified full-time students in the Master of Divinity program who are certified by a presbytery of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and plan to serve as congregational ministers after graduation.

## **ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

### **Degree Programs**

Knox College currently offers seven academic degree programs and one certificate program: three at the basic degree (professional masters) and four at the graduate degree (advanced academic and professional).

Basic Degree: Master of Divinity, Master of Pastoral Studies, Master of Theological Studies. In fall 2019 Knox College began admitting students to a new Certificate in Theological Studies program (seven courses), available online on a part-time basis or on campus on a full-time basis. The Master of Pastoral Studies is a program that is seeing considerable growth, indicating that this is meeting both an interest among students and a need within Canadian society.

Graduate Degree: Master of Arts, Master of Theology, Doctor of Ministry, and Doctor of Philosophy in Theological Studies.

## **LIBRARY SERVICES**

In August 2019, Knox College bid a sad farewell at the retirement of Ms. Susan Sheridan, a member of our library team for the past ten years. Susan was a great resource for student and faculty, in particular finding information in the Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly. She was an enthusiastic employee whose positive, cheerful presence will be missed.

The library warmly welcomed Dr. Laura Alary to our team in September 2019. As a Knox graduate, Laura brings her theological knowledge as well as her gifts of creativity and organization to the library. She provides knowledgeable oversight to the McKay Educational Resource Centre – a collection of resources related to Christian education, faith formation and congregational life. Laura's knowledge and expertise in areas such as children and worship (Laura is the author of ten children's books), as well as spirituality and practice allow her to enhance the McKay resources in new ways.

The Caven Library continues to be a centre for research for faculty, staff, the public at large and members of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

## **FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

Knox College is funded through six main sources of revenue: tuition, bequests and donations, endowment income, operations, government grants and The Presbyterian Church in Canada support. In recent years, the Board of Governors and the administration have been diligent and delivered balanced annual budgets. In the most recent completed fiscal year, May 1, 2018 to April 30, 2019, Knox was able to have a surplus, which allowed us to make improvements throughout the building and residence area including fire doors upgrades. Going forward, as Knox seeks to fulfill its mission while maintaining economic equilibrium, this will be an increasing challenge for the following reasons: (1) government funding is declining (2) The Presbyterian Church in Canada grants to colleges from Presbyterians Sharing are declining (3) deferred maintenance on the Knox building, including a current \$3.5 million mortgage from recent renovations (2014). These challenges notwithstanding, the results for the current fiscal year (2019–2020) should be within the board approved balanced budget.

## **ADVANCEMENT, FUNDRAISING AND ALUMNI RELATIONS**

Knox College is grateful to all who have supported our work through donations, both to special appeals and our annual fund. We are pleased that support for our annual fund continues to grow. Knox College launched the publication *Vocations* in the winter of 2020 (replacing *Connexions*) as a way of communicating with alumni, donors and the broader community. The initial response has been very positive. As the board and faculty consider carefully the priorities outlined in the new strategic framework, the work of the Advancement Committee will help determine how and what funding for those priorities might be realized.

## **THE KNOX-EWART GRADUATES ASSOCIATION (KEGA) AND KNOX FORMER RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION (KNOXFRA)**

The college continues to be grateful for the ongoing interest and support of its many graduates, from both Ewart College and Knox College and its many former residents who continue to feel a strong bond to the college. At the college this year, KEGA hosted a community worship service and reception to nurture student-alumni relations.

**CENTRE FOR ASIAN-CANADIAN THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY**

Meaningful research and engaging public events have come to define the Centre for Asian-Canadian Theology and Ministry. The grant from the Louisville Institute has enabled the Centre and the core research members (Dr. Nam Soon Song, Knox College Ewart Professor of Christian Education and Youth Ministry, the Rev. In Kee Kim, St. Timothy Korean Church, Dr. Dong Ha Kim, Knox College's Director of Basic Degree Studies and Director of the Centre for Asian-Canadian Theology and Ministry and Prof. Ben Kuo, University of Windsor) to conduct an important research project throughout the 2018–2019 years. This past year, the same grant has also enabled the research team to share its findings in the form of a book project entitled, *People of Faith, People of Jeong* (Qing). This project-in-progress will be undertaken with Wipf & Stock Publisher. In fall of 2019, the centre hosted a special bi-annual event known as the "Music Celebration of Thanksgiving". Held at Vaughan Community Church, 12 interdenominational choirs came together to create a truly wondrous, multicultural musical experience, all the while strengthening our cultural heritage as well as providing a way to embrace intergenerational fellowship and harmony.

**APPRECIATION**

Three members of the Board of Governors will be leaving in 2020 having completed their final term: Mr. Peter McKinnon (convener), Mr. Michael Nettleton, and Ms. Joan Stellmach. In the summer, the Rev. Gail Johnson-Murdock resigned from the board after serving for two years. The board wishes to record its gratitude to these members who have served with excellence in the areas of governance, academics, administration and audit. Mr. Sachin Ramprakash newly appointed to the board in June 2019 was subsequently unable to accept the position. The board is pleased that Ms. Carol Jackson is eligible for re-appointment to the board and willing to serve. The board nominated five candidates to replace departing members, each with specific gifts and experiences which fulfill the board's skills matrix and the board's commitment to intercultural diversity. The Principal and the Board of Governors also express gratitude to the faculty and staff of the college who work diligently on a daily basis to ensure that the mission of the college is fulfilled and its resources stewarded, in the service of our students and to the glory of God. Finally, the Board of Governors expresses its gratitude to the General Assembly for its support in the work of educating and equipping faithful Christian leaders for our time.

Peter McKinnon  
Convener

Stuart Macdonald  
Acting Principal