



2020 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.

Just as Wartburg College has overcome trials and tribulations in its 169-year history, so it met head-on the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 global pandemic in 2020. Thanks to the resiliency, adaptability, and extraordinary efforts of our faculty and staff, Wartburg responded by adjusting student services, instruction methods, and academic calendars in an environment of mitigated normalcy.

New Vision Statement

In February, the Board of Regents approved a new vision statement as part of an ongoing collaborative planning effort involving Regents, faculty, and staff: “Wartburg College is called to be the leading institution in education of the whole person. Together, we create an inclusive community combining diverse curricular and co-curricular experiences to prepare students to be resilient leaders of positive change through service in a complex world.”

Enrollment

Despite COVID-19, Fall 2020 enrollment was 1,564 students (the highest since 2014) from 38 U.S. states and a record 61 countries. This number included 117 international students and 199 U.S. students of color including a record 72 Hispanic students. The top five majors are business administration, biology, psychology, music therapy, and elementary education. First-to-second year retention was the highest since 1997 at 83 percent and 87.6 percent overall. More than 25 Christian denominations and seven world religions are represented.

Academic and Co-Curricular Programs

- Wartburg received approval from the Higher Learning Commission to offer an online Master of Arts in Leadership starting in Summer 2021. The program leverages the popular leadership minor for undergraduates and builds on the College’s new online graduate leadership certificate.
- Three faculty members were named to existing endowed positions: Dr. Abbylynn Helgevold, assistant professor of religion – Board of Regents Distinguished Professor in Ethics; Pamela Ohrt, associate professor of journalism and communication – R.J. McElroy Chair in Communication; and Dr. Nana Quaicoe, assistant professor of economics – James A. Leach Chair in Banking and Monetary Economics.
- A \$1.2 million gift from David McCartney and James Petersen of Iowa City has created the Grant Price Endowed Archivist position, named for the pioneering Iowa broadcast journalist and former chair of Wartburg’s communication arts department. This marks Wartburg’s 21st endowed faculty or staff position and 8th in the past decade.
- Because the pandemic interrupted so many activities in 2020 – and to ensure students receive the full benefit of a Wartburg education – Wartburg will offer a fifth year tuition free for students enrolled full time during the 2020-21 school year.
- Construction began on the Meyer Strength & Conditioning Annex to the Wartburg-Waverly Sports & Wellness Center. The current strength and conditioning space will be renovated to create the Wuertz Health & Human Performance Center, which will feature two exercise science laboratories and offices for Department of Health & Human Performance faculty. Mike Murphy ’89 of Ankeny, Board of Regents member and father to three Wartburg student-athletes, made a \$1 million gift commitment to the \$3.7 million project, slated to open May 2021.
- Jack ’82 and Sarah ’82 Salzwedel of Madison, Wis., made a \$750,000 challenge gift to spur completion of the last phase of the Outdoor Athletics Facilities project that created new spectator seating at the soccer, baseball, and softball facilities and enhanced the lacrosse/multipurpose field, Max Cross Country Course, and parking areas.

Spiritual Life and Campus Ministry

- Felecia Boone '93, diversity, equity, and inclusion consultant for Hennepin County, Minn., was the 2020 Graven Award recipient. 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. Boone is vice president of the Minneapolis Area Synod of the ELCA and is a member of the ELCA Multicultural Leadership Event 2021 core team.
- Pastoral Intern Rebecca Baird '18 completed her clinical pastoral education (CPE) at the University of Colorado Hospital. She continues to work part-time (20-25 hours/week) while taking classes online through Wartburg Theological Seminary's Collaborative Learning Program.
- Wartburg assumed oversight from Wartburg Theological Seminary of the Kern Foundation grant that funds the B.A.-M.Div. Accelerated Ministry Program, now in its third year. Dean of Spiritual Life Rev. Dr. Brian Beckstrom is serving as director.
 - The program welcomed a cohort of six in Fall 2020 bringing the total number to 15.
 - O. Jay and Pat Tomson of Mason City have made a lead challenge gift of \$200,000 for student scholarships each year since the program was initiated in 2018.
 - Samantha Pfab '20 joined the SLCM team in October as program associate to support current students and recruit future cohorts.
 - Rev. Dr. Kristin Wendland '00, assistant professor of religion, serves as program academic advisor.
 - Beckstrom teaches seminar courses on spiritual practices for Christian ministry, discernment, and pastoral identity.
- SLCM partnered 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 campus-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. Staff also created online and socially distanced options for campus ministry programming, worship, and other spiritual resources.
- Kris Steege, office coordinator in the humanities, joined the SLCM staff in a part-time capacity following the retirement of office assistant Kathy Traetow.

Recognition

- Shelby Davis, co-founder of the Davis United World College Scholars Program, received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from Wartburg in February. Wartburg first partnered with the program in 2007 and since then has enrolled 218 students with Davis-UWC scholarships from 28 countries.
- New Board of Regents members include Felecia Boone '93, diversity, equity, and inclusion consultant for Hennepin County, Minn.; Jim Buchheim '85, community and social impact officer, American Family Insurance, Madison, Wis.; and Greg Schmitz '83, president of CVT Group, New Hartford. Bishop Steve Ullestad '75 stepped off the Board in May upon his retirement.
- Devout Lutherans and longtime Wartburg supporters Ed and Rennie Scharlau, both 1961 graduates, received the Wartburg Medal in recognition of sustained service to the College. Ed is a founding board member of Water to Thrive, a faith-based nonprofit dedicated to bringing clean, safe water to rural Africa. Formerly of Austin, Texas, the Scharlaus now reside in Waverly.
- Dr. Caryn Riswold, professor of religion and the Mike and Marge McCoy Family Distinguished Chair in Lutheran Heritage and Mission, was elected to a second four-year term on the National Network Board of the Lilly Fellows Program.
- President Darrel Colson continues to serve on the board of directors of the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities (NECU) and on the Council of Independent College's NetVUE Advisory Board.

Wartburg continues to deliver on a vibrant mission that transforms the entire college community as together we learn, serve, and demonstrate care for each other. Thank you for your prayerful support of our efforts to strengthen Lutheran higher education.

Darrel D. Colson, President