

# BETHEL COLLEGE

Report to Mosaic Mennonite Conference

September 2020

The last year at Bethel College provided times of celebration and times of introspection, and of course the unique challenges that a global pandemic places upon a community of higher learning. Bethel's mission is to prepare students for meaningful lives of work and service. As always, it is the hard work and dedication of our talented faculty and staff that makes it possible to provide students with a place that focuses on creating opportunities for their futures. Our core values continue to guide us to make this happen:

**Creative approaches for living harmoniously.** In fall of 2019 we welcomed our largest freshman class in over 30 years. To help the increasing number of students coming from low-income backgrounds, we opened a food pantry so no student will have to go without a meal.

**Vocational discernment.** We continue to work toward a work-college model in which every student will leave college with vocational experience. This model will also help with our commitment to graduate students with less debt. Bethel was named one of the best colleges for financial aid by the website lendEDU.

**Dialogue that transforms conflict.** Recent convocations have opened up the conversation dealing with issues of sexual assault that the college, and the nation as a whole, must confront.

**Holistic wellness.** A group of students took the initiative to create the Bethel Worship Center, a Sunday morning ecumenical worship experience open to all students, faculty, staff, and community members. The services feature student-led music and student speakers. It is a welcome addition to weekly chapel services.

**Peace and justice.** We continue to welcome speakers and events that focus on peace and justice issues. The annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day event, biennial Worship and the Arts Symposium, annual Peace Lecture series provide educational experiences, and we will welcome Cesar Garcia, president of Mennonite World Conference, for this year's Menno Simons Lectures.

**Community with global consciousness.** Students traveled to Mexico and eastern Europe during Interterm. Students at Bethel come from 13 different countries. An interfaith room was established so students from all faith backgrounds can have a place to worship.

**High standards and expectations.** Bethel took the steps necessary to avoid being put on probation in November after that recommendation had been made to our accrediting body in May. As we refocus on our core values we achieved a fall-to-spring retention rate of 90% among all students.

We thank you for your continued support and prayers.