



BETHEL COLLEGE

CHURCH RELATIONS

2025 Annual Report

Finding a voice in a loud, cluttered world isn't always easy. Students in our senior-level Bible and religion required course, Basic Issues of Faith and Life, have been engaging with two texts that delve into the struggles of facing injustice and problematic social constructs, yet each offers a vision of hope and redemption for the future: the book of *Isaiah* from the Old Testament, and *So We and Our Children May Live* by Sarah Augustine and Sherl Hostetler. Conversations on campus around justice, security, diversity, and inclusion abound. As President Jon Gering stated in his opening message to faculty and staff in the fall, borrowing from Walt Whitman, "we contain multitudes." We can disagree with each other, and even have conflicting feelings within ourselves, but our complexity makes us stronger as we work together towards a brighter future for campus and community.

The higher education climate is anything but normal right now. Bethel continues to take steps to secure our future and remain relevant in a quickly changing world. Our employment experiences program officially launched this fall, with every freshman student required to log 80 hours of work per semester. As it is with most new programs, there have been some issues to work out along the way. We are still on track to become a federally designated work college. Students are paid for this work in scholarships, reducing the amount of financial debt with which they will graduate. This unique designation and tuition help will position us as an attractive option as all colleges face the decline of graduating high school students.

With the completion of our *Engage the Future* capital campaign, construction began on the new Wellness Center. As of this writing, it is on schedule to be completed and open for the fall semester. A full size indoor court will ease practice schedules for student teams and also provide community members with options for basketball, volleyball, and pickleball. New cardio and weight equipment, and an indoor walking track, will serve students and the community better by separating them from team workouts. A spacious lobby with plenty of natural light will create a welcoming environment for all who wish to use the facility. Alongside this major physical improvement, the campaign provided funds for campus upgrades in technology, staffing, and more, all with a focus on student wellness.



We have also been working to secure our financial future with alternative revenue streams. Working with strategic partner Core Education Group, we have already launched a program of workforce development certificates. These online courses offer training in specific professional areas and are available to anyone worldwide through our website. Thirty-six programs are currently available directly to consumers, with more possible in the future and courses tailored specifically to business groups in the works. Other ideas for alternative revenue are also being discussed.

Thank you for your continued support!

Ben Lichti, coordinator for alumni and church relations