

Dear Friends:

March 2016

As we approach our sesquicentennial year in 2019, Augsburg College continues to advance our Augsburg2019 strategic plan ([augsburg.edu/augsburg2019](http://augsburg.edu/augsburg2019)) and live into our vision to be **a new kind of student-centered, urban university that is small to our students and big for the world.**

We achieved a significant milestone in that strategic plan in May, when we reached the \$50 million fundraising goal for the College's newest and largest academic building, **the Norman and Evangeline Hagfors Center for Science, Business, and Religion.** The interdisciplinary Hagfors Center is designed to foster intersections among areas of study, support active learning, and connect the College to the community. It embodies Augsburg's commitment to **student learning, urban placemaking, and thoughtful stewardship** and creates opportunities and spaces for education across religion, business, and the sciences. Construction of the Hagfors Center will begin in May, and it will open and host classes beginning January 2018. Read more and view renderings of the new building at [augsburg.edu/hagforscenter](http://augsburg.edu/hagforscenter).

On a national scale, Augsburg continues to attract attention for its work in diversity and inclusion. The College earned a **2015 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award** from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine and, for the second year in a row, was named a **finalist in the interfaith category of the President's Higher Education Community Service award** – making Augsburg the only institution in the nation to be named a finalist in both 2014 and 2015. Augsburg's commitment to interfaith dialogue is demonstrated through initiatives such as the Augsburg College Interfaith Scholars program, in which students engage in interreligious dialogue and explore the religious diversity of the College, the Twin Cities community, and the United States, and through innovations such as the new Muslim Student Advisor position that the College established this year in Campus Ministry. The College of Independent Colleges has requested a copy of the job description for that position to use as a national model for other colleges and universities seeking to support interreligious dialogue in their institutions. For more information about these programs, see [augsburg.edu/campusministry/youth-groups](http://augsburg.edu/campusministry/youth-groups).

Augsburg also placed **No. 6 on the UCLA Higher Education Research Institute's 2015 Rankings of the Best Christian Colleges and Universities.** There are many ways that the congregations associated with the Augsburg Corporation can connect with Augsburg's faith-based work. For example, Urban Plunge is a student-led, faith-based overnight campus experience for middle school and high school youth groups. Another program, Interfaith Bridge Building, invites middle school and high school students of all faiths to engage with holy texts, sacred spaces, and leaders from a variety of faith traditions – inspiring spiritual growth and invigorating our commitment to God and the people around us. Finally, Augsburg's Youth Theology Institute brings high school students to Augsburg's urban campus each summer for an intense week of engaging theological questions, classroom learning, worship, contemplation, and action. The program was recently awarded a three-year, \$445,000 Lilly Endowment grant to expand participation and develop a fellowship program for youth ministers.

Finally, Augsburg is preparing to **celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation** through several faculty-led study seminars in Europe. Religion professors Mark Tranvik and Hans Wiersma will lead a trip for alumni, parents, family, and friends of the College to Germany and the city of Prague in late October and early November. For more detail about this trip, see [augsburg.edu/alumni/travel](http://augsburg.edu/alumni/travel).

It's an exciting time at Augsburg – a time of celebrating our Lutheran heritage and of building for the future. We are grateful to continue to be able to answer the call to serve our neighbor and to provide a 21st century educational experience grounded in our Lutheran faith and values.

Yours in faith and service,



Dr. Paul C. Pribbenow  
President



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