

2013 Report to the ELCA Synod Assemblies

A Minor in Ethics and a Pre-Seminary Program

To continue to provide a rigorous and relevant education for our liberal arts college graduates in the 21st century, Augustana has introduced several new majors over recent years—many of them stemming from strong minor programs or concentrations, and most in response to student demand. Among these new majors are environmental studies, international business, multimedia journalism and mass communication, and neuroscience.

Starting with the 2012-13 academic year, Augustana also has introduced two programs directly related to our relationship with the church: ethics and pre-seminary studies.

As a church-related college, Augustana has a long and rich history of preparing students for entrance into seminaries and divinity schools to prepare for careers as ordained ministers or other church leaders. The college's **new pre-seminary program** now formalizes and better organizes the advising and training that our Department of Religion and others at Augustana have always offered students focused on the seminary.

The new pre-seminary program was designed with input from pastors around the country, deans and faculty from various seminaries, and Augustana alumni who entered the seminary after graduation. Courses of study include classes in religion, philosophy and Greek, with recommendations for electives in church music, sociology and social work. The program works in tandem with campus ministries and our on-campus Center for Vocational Reflection.

Augustana's **new minor in ethics** is the result of a three-year collaboration between Augustana's religion and philosophy departments, and began with the request of a student to his Christian ethics professor. While an ethics program is rare among colleges in the Midwest, we believe the study of ethics—or the study of right and wrong, good and bad, and the reasoning behind such judgments—is highly appropriate for students majoring in any discipline. Students in public-focused fields such as business, education, law or the health professions are excellent candidates for an ethics minor.

Dr. Laura Hartman of Augustana's religion department has noted that ethical questions are raised whenever new technology is introduced. For example:

How should we think about drone warfare?

Is it OK to select the genes I want my child to have?

Does agricultural technology harm the world, or feed the planet?

Augustana graduates who minor in ethics will have the knowledge and experience to address such questions rationally and readily.

Together, these two new academic paths for our students support the college's mission to challenge and prepare our students for lives of leadership and service in a complex, changing world.



Steven C. Bahls, President