

## Campus Ministry Facilitator Position Proposal

**Why?** Social scientists and religious leaders have examined the rapid decline of religion in the United States and are dismayed in recent years. Pew Research's most recent modeling from 2022 identified that the population of the U.S. that identified as Christian had dropped to 64%, down from 90% 50 years prior, and further projected that this number would drop to below 50% in the next 50 years if recent trends continue.<sup>1</sup> Further, one of the places Pew has identified this decline is taking place among college graduates, where only 64% describe themselves as Christian compared to 71% of Americans with high school degrees, according to a 2017 study.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, present statistics also show that young Americans are significantly less likely to believe in God than their parents, with only 51% of 18-29 year olds indicating belief in God compared to over 69% of Americans over the age of 50.<sup>3</sup>

Among this data, an interesting trend has also emerged: Christians with college degrees displayed an overall stronger religious commitment than those who did not attend college. This indicates that while college campuses present certain challenging circumstances to faith, it also presents a great opportunity to reach new people while forming young Christians for greater devotion to Jesus.

**What?** For the sake of both reaching those who do not know Jesus and also catechizing believers, there is a need to invest in the lives of college students throughout our country. The Michigan District has an opportunity to be a leader in the LCMS and church at large by making an intentional investment in the future of campus ministry throughout the state of Michigan for the sake of the catechesis of our young people as well as mission to those who have not heard the Gospel. The proposal for the funding of the *Campus Ministry Facilitator* position is the first step in developing robust campus ministry to make disciples who serve Christ in his church and in the world.

**Why Now?** The significant reduction of staff, operations, and programming at CUAA means both the elimination of opportunity for Lutheran higher education for our LCMS youth in the state of Michigan as well as the elimination of mission opportunity to non-Christian students on campus in Ann Arbor. This reduction cannot mean an abandonment of mission to college students but rather a redirection of it. While we lament the closure of many of the programs at our Concordia University, the Michigan District now has a unique opportunity to make every university in the state of Michigan our university by supporting, revitalizing, and catalyzing the launch of an intentional, Gospel-centered Christian presence on every campus throughout our state.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2022/09/13/modeling-the-future-of-religion-in-america/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2017/04/26/in-america-does-more-education-equal-less-religion/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/religious-landscape-study/database/age-distribution/>