

Calvin University -- Canada East Regional Trustee Report to Classis

Rosanne Lopers-Sweetman, Toronto, ON -- September 2022

Bringing you greetings as a member of the Board of Trustees of Calvin University representing the Canada East Region, and providing an update on recent developments at Calvin.

President LeRoy steps down

President Michael LeRoy retired in June after faithfully leading Calvin for 10 years, serving with grace and humility in a time when challenges impact the academic world on many sides. The most visible change during his tenure may be the name change from Calvin College to Calvin University, part of a much larger vision to make the mission of Calvin “more accessible to a greater diversity of learners worldwide, to develop as a trusted partner, and to deepen and strengthen the institution’s commitment to the Reformed Christian faith”.

In the past 3 years a number of noteworthy developments include:

- Launch of the Calvin Global Campus, adding six new in-person and online graduate programs, with two more coming in August 2023
- Established the School of Business and completed a state-of-the-art building in time for fall 2022 classes. Similarly established the School of Health and appointed its first Dean. The creation of both these Schools was made possible through extraordinary donations
- Launched The de Vries institute for Global Faculty Development in an effort to deepen and strengthen the university’s commitment to the integration of faith and learning
- Awarded bachelor’s degrees to now three graduating classes of the Calvin Prison Initiative program during a Commencement ceremony held inside the confines of Handlon Correctional Facility in Ionia, Michigan
- Opened new doors for students with disabilities with the help of a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. This Ready for Life Program graduated its second class this year
- Became the first university in Michigan to pursue Solar-as-a-Service as an approach to accelerating the energy transition, signaling the deepening of a long-held commitment to sustainability and creation care, another step toward Calvin’s goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2057

Dr. Wiebe Boer Appointed

Wiebe Boer became Calvin’s 12th President on July 1, 2022. He was able to join Canadian faculty, staff and students on campus to mark Canada Day (President Boer holds Canadian citizenship, as well as Dutch and US.) Born in Nigeria to parents who graduated from Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary, Dr. Boer worked in several places in Africa and lived there for almost all of his adult years. Firmly rooted within the Calvinist tradition and Reformed heritage of Calvin University and globally connected, he is eager to lead Calvin to continue expanding its portfolio of learners and deepen its commitment to the integration of faith and learning from a Reformed perspective.

Pres. Boer has had an energetic start:

- meeting at Handlon Correctional Facility with U.S. Department of Education and Michigan Department of Corrections to see how the flagship prison program can expand across the United States “for the benefit of those within”

- signing a memorandum of understanding with Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services to establish a Calvin-Pine Rest partnership in a workforce-development strategy for current employees and for Calvin students interested in psychiatric nursing
- striking a task force made up of Calvin faculty, staff, students, board of trustees members, and CRC clergy to consider the decision by Synod 2022 to accept the recommendations which arose from the Human Sexuality Report, collaborating with CRCNA staff and the Council of Delegates
- continuing the efforts led by Pres. LeRoy to develop the campus to meet the needs of the student community
- meeting students, faculty, staff and board members to become acquainted with Calvin in 2022 and participating in the launch of the school year -- one where pandemic measures are largely unneeded

Enrolment

- 2022 admissions are record-setting in terms of ethnic and geographic diversity, with 173 incoming international students from 38 countries, and the most diverse incoming class ever with 18% (182 students) representing Asian, Black, Hispanic, and American Indian origins and students with more than one ethnicity
- more than 1,000 new undergraduate and graduate students entered Calvin this fall, the largest incoming class in the last 4 years. Total enrolment was about 3300 in 2021-22; 2022-23 total is pending
- slightly less than 30% of students come from Christian Reformed churches
- Canadian student enrolment has stood at 28-35, just under 1% of the total for the past 4 years, though 2022 represents the highest number of incoming students in 4 years -- these 15 new students represent 7 provinces

Financials

- completed three of the best fundraising years in Calvin's 147-year history in 2020 - 2022
- received an A- rating from S&P Global Ratings in an independent assessment of Calvin's financial position, giving Calvin a stable outlook
- fiscal years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 saw operating budget deficits necessitating cost-containment measures, including deeply regrettable faculty and staff layoffs/retirements, bringing the 2021-2022 budget back into balance
- Calvin provides financial aid to 100% of its students to help drive down the cost of tuition and room and board. A guarantee through the Calvin Promise provides at least \$21,000 in scholarships per year (for up to four years) to any admitted students with a 3.80 GPA or higher

Other

- please continue to alert students in your community to the quality of Calvin University and to consider Calvin too as a place to pursue a Reformed Christian education. Our society needs as many people as possible to learn how to think deeply, act justly, and live wholeheartedly as Christ's agents of renewal in the world, and Calvin is one of several places to do that well
- please be in prayer for the Board of Trustees, meeting again October 27-28, with most of us attending in person. Besides me, Canada has three Canadian representatives on the 32-member Board: Rick Mast, representing Region 1 -- Canada West, alumni trustee Alice Klamer, and at-large trustee Tony Kamphuis, newly appointed to replace Pastor Willemina Zwart
- questions or comments are welcome: rosanne.lopers@gmail.com. I will do my best to reply or relay inquiries to the appropriate person at Calvin.