

Waterloo Lutheran Seminary Report to Eastern Synod Assembly 2014-2016

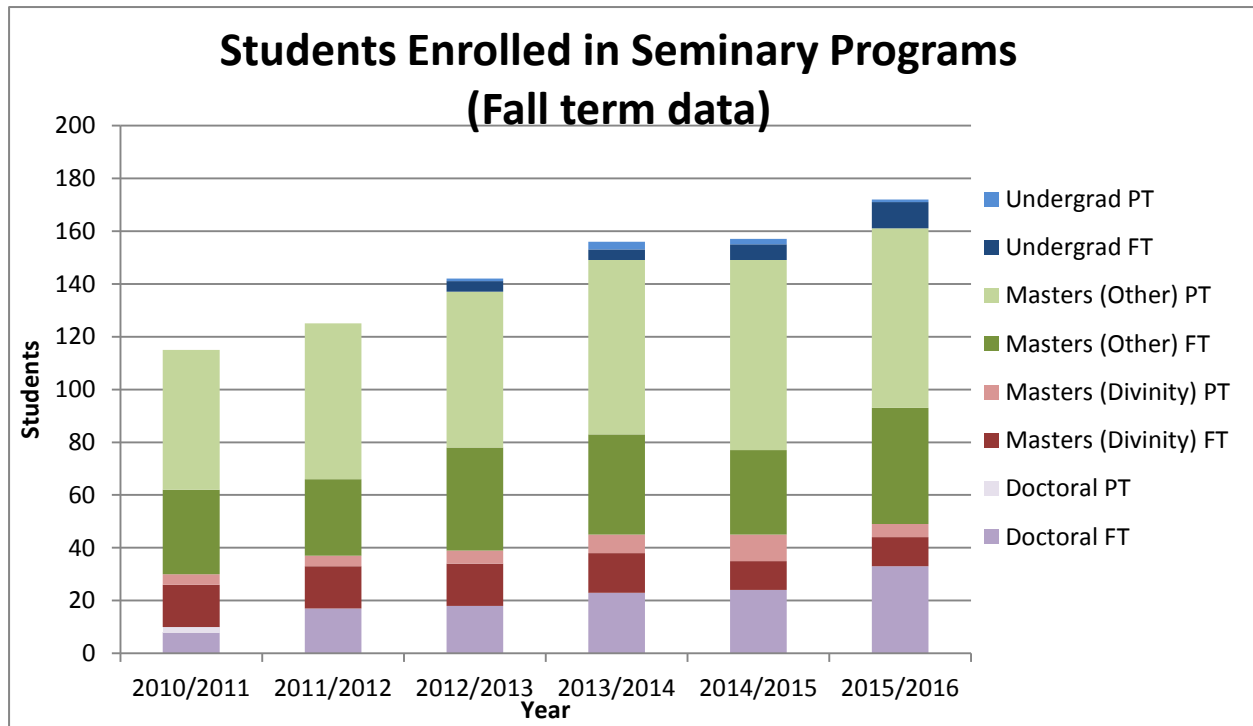
When the **Evangelical Lutheran Theological Seminary of Eastern Canada** was founded in Waterloo in 1911, it was established by the Lutheran congregations of eastern Canada solely as a means of preparing pastors to serve in congregations. Two years later, when legal documents were filed, the school was incorporated as the **Evangelical Lutheran Seminary of Canada**. Within three years of its founding, it became apparent that more was needed, both to better prepare future seminary students and in response to the educational needs of wider community. Thus, **Waterloo College School** was launched in 1914, growing to become the **Waterloo College of Arts** in 1924, granting undergraduate degrees in partnership with the **University of Western Ontario**. In 1956, the **Waterloo College Associate Faculties** was established. Seeking to expand upon the programs offered through **Waterloo College**, the **Associate Faculties** moved down the street and applied to become the **University of Waterloo**. **Waterloo Lutheran University** was enacted in 1959 and, 13 years later became **Wilfrid Laurier University** in 1972, with **Waterloo Lutheran Seminary** as a federated school. Since then, in the last 45 years, the various programs of study at the seminary have continued to grow and evolve in response to the changing needs of the church and Canadian society.

I begin with this brief, historical synopsis as a way of illustrating that change and evolution has been part of the DNA of this school of the church since its founding. Reflecting our Lutheran commitment to education for clergy and laity, and in response to shifting opportunities and needs in Canadian society, this school has consistently been both an expression and extension of the church's mission.

This is why, after providing a brief snapshot of the seminary's current enrolment, the balance of my report will largely focus on life at the seminary through the lens of the **Synod's Vision for Mission 2014-2016**. Over the past biennium, the seminary has joined with congregations across the Eastern Synod in finding lively and creative ways to reflect these mission priorities in our common life. I will conclude with comments pertaining to the capital redevelopment of the facility and the renaming of **Waterloo Lutheran Seminary**.

Current Enrolment at the Seminary

WLS continues to develop and refine its programs under the academic plan approved by the Board of Governors in 2015. While graduate enrolment has effectively been capped by Laurier's funding formula, undergraduate enrolment continues to slowly increase. The first chart below illustrates the enrolment patterns for the past five years.

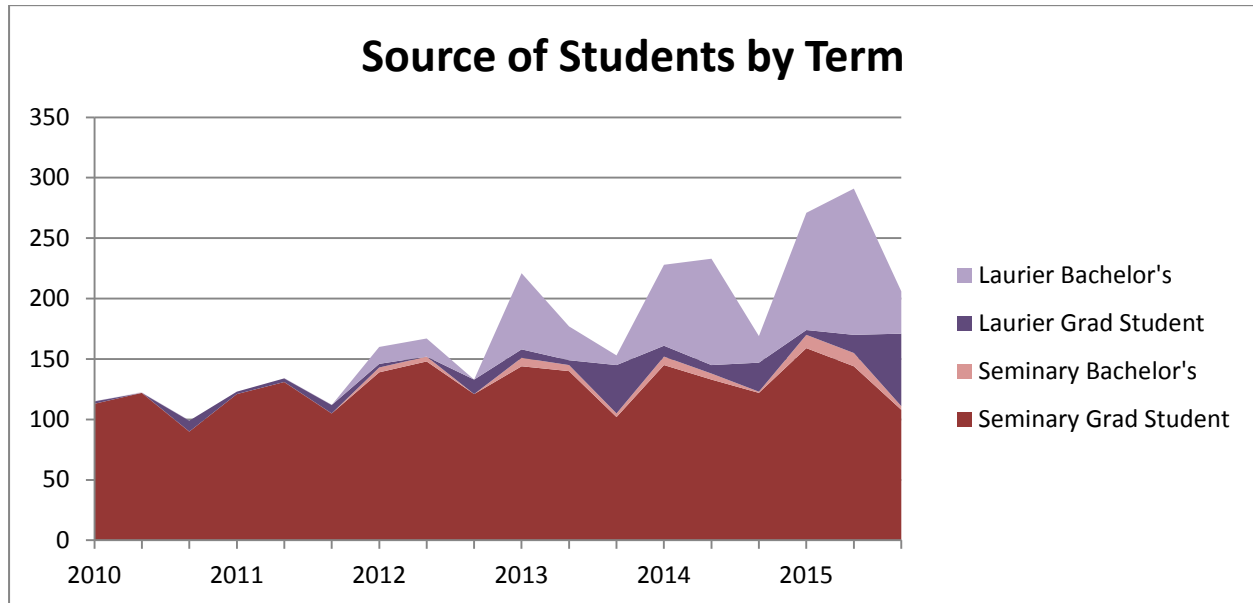


As is evident, the MDiv program remains a small but stable program. Introductory level theology and biblical courses are shared with spiritual care students, while advanced MDiv courses consist solely of MDiv students. Enrolment in the spiritual care programs remains strong. The BA program remains small, but has been slowly growing year-over-year.

WLS continues to develop its undergraduate program in Christian Studies and Global Citizenship. The Program Advisory Committee continues to refine the program and courses and consider new electives to meet the needs and interests of students.

Recruitment remains an important priority for the program. WLS now has 14 students registered in this program and we are celebrating our first graduation in June. It is noteworthy that, from the outset, it was never anticipated that the BA in Christian Studies and Global Citizenship would be a large program. However, as chart # 2 reflects, it provides access to a much larger body of potential students. The BA classes provide the opportunity for Laurier students, majoring in other fields of study, to register for classes at the seminary. For a growing number of university young people

who are looking for opportunities to explore Christianity or wrestle with issues of faith, life, and their own sense of vocation, this is a wonderful opportunity.



Across North America, Master of Divinity programs are either static or decreasing in enrolment among the member institutions of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). Enrolment in ELCA seminaries has dropped 50% in the last 10 years. In response to this and the growing number of MDiv students who are looking for programs which offer bi-vocational options, the seminary has added a MA/MDiv to the existing MDiv/MSW option. Consequently, our MDiv students now have multiple enrolment and vocational options.

Our programs in Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy, previously known as Pastoral Care, are currently the most highly subscribed programs at the seminary. The MA in Theology (in Spiritual Care and Psychotherapy) has recently been revised in order to comply with the new requirements of the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario and is in the process of applying for program accreditation with the college. This will enable students who successfully complete the program to more readily receive licensing.

Synodical Mission Priorities

While the seminary's enrolment statistics provide a high-level overview, they only provide a cursory perspective. For a picture of life at the seminary, it is helpful to consider the large variety of learning opportunities that are meant to supplement and enrich classroom learning, many of which are open to participation by pastors, congregational members, and those in the wider community. These not only express the

heart and soul of the seminary, they also clearly reflect the mission priorities of the Eastern Synod.

1: We will practice Spirited Discipleship

Worship and the study of Scripture are at the very heart of who we are as Waterloo Lutheran Seminary.

Each day, students and faculty gather for **noon-hour prayers** offered on behalf of our community and the world. On Wednesdays, at 5 p.m., we gather for **Open Door**, a community-wide Eucharist that includes the participation of faculty and students from across the campus; university choirs and musicians; as well as members of the wider community. We provide a hospitable welcome to all who wish to be nurtured in Word and Sacrament; inspired by the music; included in community; or to wrestle with issues of faith and life. This service is always followed by a simple community supper. We often welcome 150 or more participants for such gatherings.

The seminary is also the home for **thirdspace_**, a small but growing emergent community, sponsored by the Synod's Mission Committee. Under the pastoral leadership of Anne Anderson, **thirdspace_** is exploring a model for faithful discipleship, lived in community, that does not necessarily meet the criteria of a normal "congregation," but which appeals to the needs and questions of millennial youth and young adults, a demographic that is often absent from our congregations. The questions and learnings from this experience are feeding into course content and discussions, and will be made available as a resource for the wider church.

Spirited discipleship is also seen in our classrooms. We are, first and foremost, a theological school, so the study of Scripture and an ever-deepening exploration and understanding of faith is part of every program of study. Particularly in the undergraduate courses, we have students who have no faith-memory who are exploring what Christianity is all about; devout youth who were raised in the church; young people who are questioning and wrestling with their faith; and those who come from other faith traditions. All are working, studying, and exploring together what it means to be individuals of faith and conscience. In the process, we learn both about ourselves, our own traditions, and one another. It is an exciting learning environment.

We will pursue Compassionate Justice

WLS is home to 178 full-time and part-time students, and 248 Laurier students who took courses at the seminary. It's also home to 10 full-time, four part-time and 17 adjunct faculty. Thirty-one different faith traditions are represented within our community. What this means is that the seminary is no longer a Lutheran enclave as it once was.

Rather, the seminary has grown to exemplify reflect a cross-section of Canadian society. The way that we understand this, as a seminary, is that we are Lutheran hosts to a wonderfully diverse, ecumenical and multifaith community.

This is unfamiliar ground for many of us, but it is also the new frontier that we, as Canadian Lutherans, are called to navigate. It prompts the question, “how do we remain faithful to our own tradition while, at the same time, partnering with others to promote justice in God’s world?” It is a good question. At the same time, such a diverse community provides a rich learning environment in which to engage in these conversations, even as students develop the skills and nurture the relationships that make it possible to find common ground. We are learning that the development of such skills, a rootedness in one’s own tradition, yet a simultaneous openness to partner with diverse communities, is a crucial precursor to the pursuit of compassionate justice.

The **Delton Glebe Counselling Centre** is one of the means through which we pursue justice in our community. The centre has grown substantially over the past two years, thanks to the leadership provided by Eric Pierni. The Glebe Centre provides a wide range of wellness and counselling services to students and the public, as well as being a centre for research and the training. The centre has also sponsored several events for the training of volunteers working with Syrian refugees, to sensitize sponsors to cultural and possible mental health issues. The centre has also partnered with DART, the Domestic Assault Review Team of Waterloo Region, in offering training on the spiritual issues of domestic violence.

Through the **Centre for Public Ethics**, under the leadership of John Milloy and David Pfrimmer, the seminary engages issues at the crossroads of faith and public ethics. For example, the centre’s scholars write guest columns that are regularly published by mainstream news outlets, and have organized an invitation-only session for community leaders on physician-assisted dying. They have held a public lecture on faith and politics. And an upcoming workshop on socially responsible investment is being planned. There are also a number of courses in the undergrad curriculum that are concerned with public faith and public ethics.

The **Abrahamic Faiths Forum**, sponsored in partnership with Interfaith Grand River, provides opportunities for members of the Christian, Muslim, and Jewish communities to engage in conversation around issues of common concern. They gather twice-yearly for events that are open to the public.

We are also deeply engaging the call to promote right and renewed relationships with the Indigenous peoples of Canada. Through our **Circle of Dialogue** program, we provide twice-yearly learning days led by Indigenous leaders. We engaged the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) recommendations in noon hour chapel each week of the past academic year; we include trips to the Six Nations of the Grand

River in our undergrad core course requirements; we partner with the Good Hearted Women Singers drum circle; we devoted the May 2016 edition of the *Consensus* academic journal to articles on revisiting the relationships between First Nations and Christians; we work with Laurier's Office of Aboriginal Initiatives and the Aboriginal Student Centre; this spring we are offering a course on Indigenous Spirituality; we include the works of First Nations writers in a number of our courses; we acknowledge traditional treaty lands in our public gatherings; we have participated in a conference exploring the issues around the **Doctrine of Discovery**; and much more.

Through the work of the **Kanata Centre** and the **Inshallah** community choir, the seminary works at the intersection of music, faith, and justice to promote right relations, develop partnerships, increase awareness, and raise funds to support justice initiatives. Over the past year, nearly 130 singers have participated in Inshallah's eight public events, which have raised nearly \$14,000 to assist Syrian refugees, benefit Hospice of Waterloo Region, and build community.

A number of our core courses in the undergrad program in Christian Studies and Global Citizenship include a CSL (Community Service-Learning) component as part of the course curriculum. Students do not just study "public service," they put their faith and deepest values into practice through placements in community service agencies. This practice of linking in-class readings and discussion with community placement experience is proving to be a powerful and, in many cases, inspiring learning opportunity for our students.

We will strive to be a Healthy Synod

Since 1911, the seminary has provided theological education for the church's future leaders. While our educational opportunities have expanded far beyond that original vision, equipping faithful lay and ordained leaders has been the golden thread which has defined the fabric of the seminary to this day. While our current MDiv program is much smaller than it once was, it is still larger than in the seminary's first decades and continues to be a core reason for our existence as a school. Our double-degree options for the MDiv (MDiv/MSW and MA/MDiv) are efforts to expand the vocational option for pastors. Either of these programs equips pastors for a bi-vocation ministry: pastoral ministry and social work, or pastoral ministry and chaplaincy, counselling, or psychotherapy.

Each year, in partnership with the Eastern Synod, the seminary hosts the **Dubrick Summer Institute for Ministry** (formerly **Lutherhostel**). This is a continuing education event which runs each June. It is an opportunity for newly ordained pastors to deepen their skills for leadership in ministry.

In addition, many of the seminary's lectures, workshops, and continuing education opportunities held throughout the year provide an opportunity for pastors and laity to grow in faith, wrestle with current issues, or meet new partners. The seminary is once again planning to lead a study course in the Holy Land, during April-May 2017, to which all are invited. Further information on that opportunity will be provided at the Synod Assembly.

All of the seminary's programs – undergraduate, master's, and doctoral – are efforts to either equip lay persons for ministry in the world or to deepen the expertise of pastoral leaders to better serve in their settings. All of our students are engaged in biblical and theological studies and are wrestling with questions of what it means to be people of faith in the contemporary world. While a minority of those will end up leading or participating in Lutheran congregations, many confirm that they have found the seminary to be an educationally rich, safe and welcoming place to grow in their faith. That may not directly serve to make us a healthy synod, but it is a powerful witness to who we are as a Lutheran community, strengthening people of faith from many different traditions.

We will build Effective Partnerships

WLS enjoys a very positive relationship with Wilfrid Laurier University. As the founding institution for Wilfrid Laurier University, this historic contribution has been recognized and supported by the senior Laurier administration and many within the Laurier faculty. The current relationship traces its origins to "An Act respecting Wilfrid Laurier University (1973)" that was drafted at the time WLU became a provincial university.

Universities are currently being subjected to many pressures, resulting in significant changes. Laurier President Max Blouw has made it very clear that he and the Laurier Board see a place for the seminary at Laurier, and want it not just to survive but also to thrive. This process continues to evolve, both as the university is considering new funding models and as the seminary continues to work toward the development of a new and updated operating agreement with Laurier. It is hoped that this process can be completed within the next year.

WLS also enjoys many wider community partnerships. We have benefitted, over the last biennium, from a working relationship with the Grey Bruce health system and have conducted courses in Owen Sound. Likewise, the St. Joseph's Health System works closely with the seminary. We offered courses in Hamilton as part of their residency program in the hospital. We have been working to develop a teaching centre and Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) unit at Trinity Village, in Kitchener, which can be integrated with our academic programs. We have also had partnerships with chaplaincy programs at hospitals in Brantford, St. Catharine's, and in the Toronto area.

The Toronto School of Theology (TST) continues to be a significant partner institution. TST has undergone some restructuring which means we no longer have a seat on its Board. Nevertheless, we still are able to cross register students in courses.

WLS has benefits from the Face to Faith program. In 2013, the Eastern Synod signed a partnership agreement with the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL)**. One expression of that partnership is our biennial trip to the Holy Land, which includes visits to the holy sites but also time with our partner church and other significant multifaith actors and organizations. Our next trip is planned for May 2017. The seminary is also sponsoring a student from the ELCJHL. Rodney Said is now in his second year of academic work and will conclude his BA and MDiv in Waterloo, before returning to serve the ELCJHL. This summer (2016) we are also hosting two Liberian students (Lutheran) and two Iranian students (Muslim) who are with us for advanced counselling training. The Liberian students are working in the Liberian church's program that deals with the victims of the civil war and post-traumatic stress. The two Iranian students are learning about pastoral care, since this is not normally a part of the training of imams. These international visitors are a great blessing to our community.

Through the Glebe Centre, the seminary has been partnering with a number of community counselling and refugee settlement agencies. And through the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives at Laurier, we have been working with a number of First Nations groups. Through our community pastor (Anne Anderson), the seminary is partnering with the chaplaincy and diversity offices at Laurier, and with a number of Christian student groups on campus. And in partnership with Interfaith Grand River, we host a number of joint initiatives.

Capital Redevelopment

In April 2016, after several years of preliminary work, the Board of Governors voted to proceed with the redevelopment of the seminary facility. While there are deferred maintenance and asbestos abatement issues that will be addressed by the upgrade, the more pressing need is to address our growing enrolment. We have nearly outgrown our present facility and are looking at a reconfiguration of current space and expansion of administrative space to address these needs. The result of this renovation will be more classrooms that have been brought up-to-date, and increased common and office space. More information will be provided through a presentation at Assembly.

Renaming

Since 1911, the Evangelical Lutheran Theological Seminary of Eastern Canada has changed its name five times, not just for the sake of change, but because the current

name no longer, adequately reflected who this school was becoming. It is the same with the current situation. The name “seminary” is no longer adequate to convey who we have become as a school of the church. Indeed, it misconveys who we are to students, the university, our constituency, and the wider community. We will continue to have an MDiv program for the education of pastors, but we have also grown to be much more than that. This is why, with the support of Laurier and the approval of Synod Council and the Board of Governors, we are in the process of making application to the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities of Ontario to become known as **Martin Luther University College**. It is hoped that this can be realized in 2017, to mark the quincentennial of the Lutheran Reformation.

Concluding Remarks

These are challenging times in theological education. WLS has been working hard to adjust to the ever-changing world of post-secondary education and the changing needs of the church.

This year has seen a significant increase in faculty costs, as we are now back up to a full, faculty complement, with two biblical scholars two spiritual care faculty being hired in the past year. This not only enables us to expand our course offerings, it also deals with the only concern that was raised in our last Quality Assurance Cyclical Review that is part of our provincial accreditation. While WLS received an excellent report, faculty workload was a matter of concern that has now been addressed. We have very competent, dedicated, theologically interesting and creative faculty who are committed to their students, and to the church. I am very grateful to count them among my colleagues and friends.

On behalf of the WLS Board of Governors, the faculty, staff and all the students, I also wish to express our deep appreciation to the Eastern Synod for your support, encouragement and prayers. To Bishop Pryse and his staff, Synod Vice Chairperson Linda Grainger, Synod Treasurer Keith Myra, and Synod Secretary Wendell Grahman, we are most grateful. Among theological schools and synods, we enjoy a very unique and special partnership in ministry.

The Rev. Dr. Mark W. Harris
Principal-Dean

Waterloo Lutheran Seminary Faculty Updates

The following are some of the highlights of faculty involvements over the past six months, just to give an impression of activities in addition to regular teaching, advising, and administrative responsibilities.

Brice Balmer: Assistant Professor, Spiritual Care and Psychotherapy

Brice has been teaching five courses per year plus advising five Ph.D. students. He is also the Practicum coordinator for spiritual care and psychotherapy and on the WLU Research Ethics Board. He begins a six month sabbatical in July to study interfaith organization, primarily in U.K. and will later be working with Interfaith Conversation Canada, supported by Canadian Council of Churches. This spring, he is coordinating the visit of two Shi'a Muslim graduate students from the International Institute for Islamic Studies (Qom, Iran) taking courses at the seminary. He is also working with Immigration Partnership's interpretation and integration taskforce, coordinated the Abrahamic Faith Forums, edited 3 articles, and has numerous, community speaking engagements.

Olena Darewych: Assistant Professor, Spiritual Care and Psychotherapy

Olena is one of our new faculty members who did her doctoral work in Art Therapy. She has carried a full teaching, advising, and administrative schedule this year. At the Ontario Association on Developmental Disabilities Conference (April 6th-8th, 2016), she offered a research forum presentation entitled, "Digital Technology use in Art Therapy with adults with Developmental Disabilities." She has published several papers pertaining to her area of expertise.

Mark Harris: Principal-Dean, Professor of Functional Theology

A significant amount of Mark's time, over the past year, has been spent in getting up-to-speed on his new responsibilities as the Principal-Dean of the Seminary. While carrying a reduced teaching load, the administrative responsibilities have substantially increased. He is a member of the Ontario Provincial Commission on Theological Education (Anglican) and the ELCIC Program Committee on Leadership in Ministry. He recently was one of the presenters at the regional LARC (Lutheran, Anglican, Roman Catholic) gathering in Ancaster, and is in the midst of preparing an article on the "Biblical Hermeneutics of Ulrich Leupold" for the *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*, an international, 30 volume project being published in English by de Gruyter.

Kate Harper: Assistant Professor, Spiritual Care and Psychotherapy

Kate, another new faculty member, has taught 3 courses, Human Development, Theories of Change, and Assessment; assisting 3 doctoral students with their Ethics Board applications and literature reviews for their dissertation proposals; serves on the Senate and the Honorary Degree Committee; is doing research with Kristine Lund; has been working on an online Academic Integrity Training Module for new students; and has just submitted her PhD dissertation.

Allen Jorgenson: Professor of Systematic Theology, Assistant Dean

Allen spoke at St. Mark's Lutheran in Kitchener in January on the topic of Luther's Small Catechism, in Montreal in February on the Doctrine of Discovery and at the Abrahamic Faith Forum at WLS in February on "Eve and Creation." He presented a paper at the North American Luther Forum on April 9 on the topic of "Luther, Mary and Eve." He also preached at St John's Lutheran and St. Matthew's Lutheran in Montreal in February and St Matthew's Lutheran in Kitchener in March.

Florence Juma: Associate Professional Faculty

Florence Taught one course in the Winter; supervised PCE (Pastoral Counselling Education) students placed at Freeport Campus of Grand River Hospital (GRH); submitted an application to CASC Accreditation Committee for program approval on behalf of GRH in partnership with the WLS; completed her requirements for Associate Supervisory Education program with Canadian Association for Spiritual Care (CASC) in January; was elected Vice Chair for CASC Southwest Ontario Region – four year commitment; received a Recognition Award on International Women's Day for work with immigrant women in southwestern Ontario; and will be presenting a workshop on Postmodern, social construction and Narrative theories to a group of Spiritual Care Providers (Chaplains) in May.

Debbie Lou Ludolph: Dean of Chapel, Director of the Kanata Centre for Worship and Global Song

As well as overseeing the worship life of the seminary community, Debbie Lou oversees the Kanata Centre and directs Inshallah; oversees undergrad recruitment; taught a Christian Studies & Global Citizenship intro course at the seminary and Vocal Techniques for the Faculty of Music; serves on the BA advisory, BA recruitment, Inshallah advisory, Art advisory, Sing Fires advisory, and Community Pastor advisory committees; is co-editing the November 2016 issue of Consensus: Theology and the Arts; is overseeing and coordinating worship for Synod assembly 2016, in her role as ministry director; and is continuing to work on her PhD.

Kristine Lund: Professor, Assistant Principal, Director of Spiritual Care and Psychotherapy Programs

Kristine has continued to be very busy overseeing the MA in Theology: Spiritual Care and Psychotherapy and the PhD in Human Relationships. She is the Clinical Director at the Glebe Centre, supervising practicum students and professional therapists. She has published a number of articles including, "A Puppy's Touch: Destressing With Dogs in a University Environment"; coordinated 2 workshops for Refugee Sponsorship Groups, pertaining to some of the mental health issues faces by the incoming, Syrian refugees, and coordination a workshop with DART, the Domestic Assault Response Team of the Waterloo Region.

Daniel Maoz: Jewish Scholar in Residence, Instructor in Hebrew Texts

Daniel is a member of the steering committee, Abrahamic Faiths Panel, Waterloo Lutheran Seminary and the Abrahamic Faith Workshop, Renison University College; Co-founder and organizer of Scriptural Reasoning discussion group and the Christian-Jewish Text Discussion Group; Vice President of the Canadian Society for Jewish Studies and Program coordinator, Canadian Society for Jewish Studies Publications. Daniel has numerous speaking engagements and publications to his credit and is co-author of *The Christian Bible: Jewish and Christian Perspectives*, which is ready for submission to the publisher. He is also preparing for the presentation of "Animal Talk: How Creation Teaches Humans about the Environment" at an International Conference on Nature and Environment, Nazareth College, Rochester, NY.

John Milloy: Assistant Professor of Public Ethics, Co-director, Centre for Public Ethics Practitioner-in-Residence (Department of Political Science)

John has settled into his new role at the Seminary and enjoyed the Winter term teaching a class on major issues facing Canada. He used the class as an opportunity to welcome a number of community leaders to the Seminary as guest speakers. Part of John's role is to build bridges with the Department of Political Science where he is the practitioner in residence. He had a book launch for his publication, *Faith and Politics Matters*, writes a bi-weekly column on issues related to faith and politics for the news website National Newswatch. He is also a regular visitor on CBC and 570 News, speaking on matters of faith and public ethics, and has contributed a number of op-ed pieces to the KW Record

David Pfrimmer: Professor of Public Ethics, Co-director, Centre for Public Ethics

After concluding his term as Principal-Dean in August 2015, David has been on administrative leave for the current academic year. During this time he has continued to co-direct the Centre for Public Ethics, attended a number of conferences, and is doing the preliminary planning for the Holy Land Study Tour

in Spring, 2017. David will be returning to part-time teaching and administrative duties in Fall, 2017.

Mary Joy Philip: Assistant Professor of Lutheran Global Theology and Mission

As well as her course, advising, and committee responsibilities, Joy attended a conference and presented a paper on Luther's Two Kingdom Doctrine in Germany, presented a paper at the International Conference, "Fides and Ratio: Theological and Philosophical Motifs Elicited by Luther and the Reformation," in Brasil, was a plenary speaker at the Lutheran World Federation Conference on "Global Perspectives on the Reformation: Interactions between Theology, Politics and Economics," in Namibia, organized by the Department for Theology and Public Witness of the Lutheran World Federation, and presentation on the Role of Women in Reformation at the American Academy of Religions' Martin Luther and Global Traditions session at Atlanta. She continues to coedit *Consensus: A Journal of Public Theology*; and is an ELCIC rep to the Catholic - Lutheran dialogue.

Mona Tokarek LaFosse: Assistant Professor of Christian Scriptures and Sacred Texts

Mona is our third new faculty member. As well as a full teaching, advising, and administrative responsibilities, she facilitated an academic integrity workshop for full-time faculty, organized weekly readers for "Toward Right Relations," a time to read and reflect on the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as part of the Seminary's efforts to work toward reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples of Canada, contributed to the community's worship life, and volunteers at Aboriginal Centre. She is the Vice-President of Canadian Society of Patristic Studies (2014-2016) and recently presented on "Honour, shame and the New Testament" during the Adult Education hour at St. Mark's Lutheran, Kitchener.