

Abundance & Grace

President Aloyo's Weekly Expressions

Volume 2, Issue #2
September 25, 2023



Core Value: Belonging & Becoming



Matthew asked, “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Matt 22:36–40:36). In living into this core value of belonging and becoming, we must reflect on the implications of this passage from the outset. The task of belonging and becoming may include the search for justice, equality, and fairness, but its primary focus is to enable all people to love God, neighbor, and self. Every other goal is secondary and deeply connected to this primary relational dynamic.



On Campus Prospective
Student Experience!

October 23-24, 2023

COLUMBIA
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Reflecting on the incarnation as a radical reframing of our responses to difference is interesting. That which is profoundly different (Jesus-who-is-God) enters into deep friendships with humans who are radically different from God to create a community of genuine belonging.

We aim to resonate with John 1:4: “The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone.” Here, John seems to suggest that something of God is present in all humans. If so, all human encounters are, in principle, holy encounters wherein we meet God in the other. While our encounter with the weak and the vulnerable might be a particular instance of encountering God in the other, this passage strongly indicates that recognizing Jesus in human relationships is foundational to the creaturely life. The only question is whether we look properly and recognize Jesus in one another.



Relationships are the most essential part of life. We all desire to be connected to others. The greatest joy a human can feel is the joy of being securely connected or attached to others. The most significant type of pain a human can feel is relational pain, experienced through loss, rejection, and loneliness.

The human brain is more concerned with who our connections are than with who we are as individuals. It is not that individual identity is not essential because it definitely is. The point is that belonging and becoming in community is even more critical to our personal and corporate identity. We all need a place to belong, and the greatest joy in life is to feel the safety and security of this type of connection to become who God has created us to be!

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President's Council

The President's Council meets every week to discuss matters about every component of institutional life. We have adopted a mode of operation where we seek the assistance of task forces, working groups, and advisory commissions composed of students, administrative staff, faculty, alums, and members of the Board of Trustees. Honoring the multitude of talents, experiences, scholarship, and capacity within our community is critical to cultivating a different mode of operation. We are grateful for the participation of the Seminary community! Information: bauml@ctsnet.edu

2024 Application is Live

Grateful for the due diligence of the Enrollment Management and Vocational Outreach (EMVO) team, in partnership with students, faculty, and staff, for meeting the mark of producing a live application for our degree programs. In addition to creating and implementing a robust vocational outreach schedule in the months ahead, we are enthused by our efforts in walking with prospective students as they determine if Columbia Seminary will be a significant tool in their discernment process. More information: nicholsona@ctsnet.edu



JOIN US FOR COMMUNITY FORUM

September's Core Value: **Belonging & Becoming**



September 28: Community Forum | 10:10 am,
Ellis Room/Zoom: Campus Master Planning
Conversation with Architectural Consultants,
Lord Aeck Sargent

Community Forum

The Community Forum on Thursday mornings is for the Seminary community. It is an opportunity to share ideas, receive pertinent information, and contribute to the formation of our community. This coming Thursday, September 28, the first step in communicating with the Seminary community the essential elements in reimagining our campus space to develop and implement our mission, vision, and strategic directives will promptly occur in the Ellis Room at 10:10 a.m. The Architectural Consultants, Lord Aeck Sargent, will give a special presentation.



Core Value

September 2023

Belonging & Becoming



SCOTUS Decision

After the Supreme Court of The United States handed a decision regarding affirmative action and the use of race in admissions decisions, the impact on institutions of higher education, both private and public, have been both direct and ambiguous. I formed a Review Team: Matt Rich, Marty Sadler, Jane Fahey, Ann Henley Nicholson, Charles Wiley, Rosy Kandathil, Damon Williams, and Carlene Knights to analyze the implications of this decision. With the guidance of our legal counsel, the goal is to have a series of recommendations to the President's Council by the beginning of December 2023. This past week, the team had its first meeting. Information: aloyov@ctsnet.edu

COTE Meeting

On September 17-20, the Committee on Theological Education (COTE), a committee composed of elected commissioners of the General Assembly of the PCUSA, staff from its Mission Agency, and presidents from the 10 PCUSA seminaries and the two seminaries with covenantal relationships, met at the University of Dubuque in Iowa. For the first time in the collective histories of our seminaries, seven of the 12 institutions have new presidents, and the diversity is more prominent when the majority are persons of color. A significant discussion at this gathering was the recognition of how all the institutions are exploring creative modes of learning, recognizing current and projected demographic shifts.



Conscious Inclusivity

Flourishing in the Workplace – Fostering Conscious Inclusivity: On October 6 and December 1, both from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Ms. Magda N. Yrizarry, former Senior Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer at Verizon and member of Columbia Seminary's Board of Trustees will facilitate this professional development series for all administrative staff, including administrative faculty. This series will take place in the Ellis Room. Within this coming week, more prep information will be communicated. Information: saulsj@ctsnet.edu.