



ABUNDANCE & GRACE

NOVEMBER 13, 2023

GRATITUDE

Rev. Dr. Victor Aloyo, Jr., President

"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

-1 Thessalonians 5:18

Another Thanksgiving week is upon us. For many, this time of year is busy visiting with family and friends, enjoying hearty meals, and cheering on our favorite football teams. It also means that on campus, we are preparing for the final academic push of the semester: projects, papers, exams, and end-of-calendar-year tasks. I encourage each of you to take good care of yourself over the Resilience & Gratitude days and the holiday break and to rest and rejuvenate so we all return ready for the demands and excitement that come with the end of the academic term.

During this season of gratitude, I want to thank all our students, faculty, staff, and alumni—all of whom contribute in countless ways to make Columbia Seminary a truly special place.

On the other hand, I also recognize that this time of year may be challenging for many. With the ravages of war in many parts of the world, the gun violence being experienced in numerous streets around the country, and the loss of loved ones embedded in the hearts and minds of residents in our community, we hold true in our

intercessory prayers our solidarity with families both near and far.

While it is joyful, the holiday season can bring on, or heighten, feelings of stress, anxiety, loss, and depression. The respect and concern that we demonstrate for others has always been a hallmark of the Columbia Seminary community, and I encourage you to take care with friends and colleagues who may need support and encouragement during this season of gratitude.

May all of you have a blessed Gratitude season in abundance and grace with your family and friends.

With a Grateful Heart,

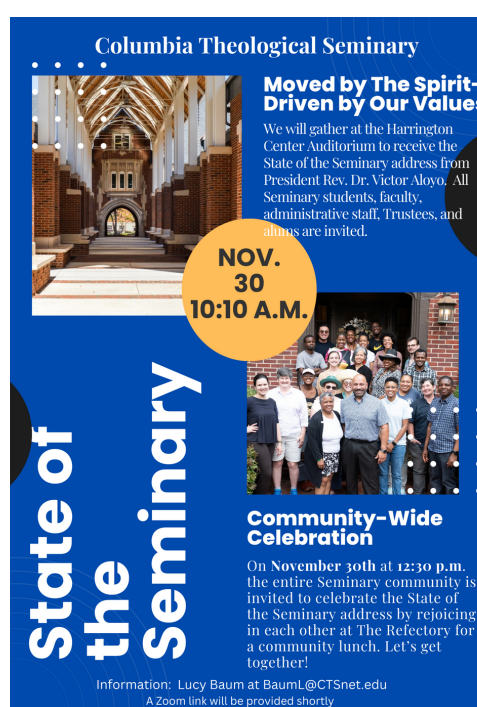
Rev. Dr. Victor Aloyo, Jr.
President

Special Note:

In my travels during these past 16 days, I have been engaged with alumni, congregations, denominational leaders, and Seminary partners who are enthused by Columbia's commitment to living out its mission of being an integral partner as an educational institution of the church. They especially speak highly of our faculty, the resources of the Library, and our Center for Lifelong Learning! ***#columbiaseminaryrise***



- Great Cloud of Witnesses:** On November 2, the Seminary community organized the 1st part of a series of activities honoring the faithful servants of faculty and administrators who laid a strong foundation for the building of our beloved institution. With the guidance of the President's Advisory Commission on the Arts & Campus Impact, the President's Council has designated two areas in the Richards Center for an interactive learning space where our history can be appreciated thoroughly. The portraits in the Refectory will be repositioned in these two areas, and a second ceremony will occur before the beginning of the Spring 2024 semester when these designated spaces will be commissioned.
- Conscious Inclusivity:** On December 1, all administrative staff and academic administration will participate in the second installment of the Seminary's professional development series. All offices, including the Library will be closed from 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Information: SaulsK@CTSnet.edu.
- Community Forum:** This Thursday, November 16 at 10:10 a.m., The Rev. Maureen Gerald, our **JEDI Mapping** Partner will provide an overview as to her progress in assisting the institution to determine a roadmap for engaging collaboratively in matters of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in a framework of social justice. Information: GeraldM@CTSnet.edu
- Campus Master Plan:** I am grateful for the leadership of our Shepherding Committee, co-chaired by Marty Sadler and Mel Walker, who have begun work on developing a Campus Master Plan. The participation of students, faculty, staff, and trustees has been formidable! We have substantive insights and suggestions as move forward steadily in this important process. Information: SadlerM@CTSnet.edu.
- International Student Emergency Fund:** I am grateful for the fine work of the SFCC team in collaboration with EMVO in developing a protocol, approved by the President's Council for the distribution of these funds. This information has been forwarded to the international students. Information: ThreadgillK@CTSnet.edu
- We have also committed ourselves as a community to grow our **intercultural intelligence**.** This is spelled out in the Strategic Blueprint in CC Goal #2, but it is also precisely the goal of the **Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)** adopted last spring. We are grateful that the second phase of the **Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)** implementation plan has taken place where our incoming students and faculty have taken the IDI in the fall 2023 semester. Information: BaumL@CTSnet.edu
- Campbell Hall:** The Elevator Replacement project is well under way and it is our hope that we will have a fully functional and operational elevator before the end of 2023 if all the equipment and necessary parts are available. Information: SadlerM@CTSnet.edu.
- Student Information System:** I am grateful for the time, energy, commitment, and efforts that is going beyond due diligence by so many in our CTS team. Your persistence is seen and collaboration in making this happen encouraged!



- The Columbia's Preachers Studio for Renewal:** Columbia has received a \$1.25 million grant from the Lilly Endowment for The Columbia Preachers Studio for Renewal. The initiative aims to foster and support preaching that inspires, encourages, and guides people to come to know and love God and to live out their Christian faith more fully. The five-year grant program seeks to foster more compelling preaching among its constituents as it honors Columbia's rich history in pastoral formation and embraces the many strengths and passion of its current homiletical faculty. Please join me in congratulating the project co-directors, Dr. Jake Myers and Dr. Anna Carter Florence!
- PCUSA Partnership Pilot** - Through the visionary efforts of Dean Kathryn Threadgill, Dr. Ria Martin, Director of Intercultural & Global Services, and with the full support of the President's Council, an intentional partnership-building initiative is currently taking place. As our Strategic Blueprint encourages the building of constructive partnerships with denominational offices and leaders, this initiative seeks to invite middle governing bodies to support our international student community with resources that would be mutually beneficial. Information: MartinR@CTSnet.edu.
- Partners In Ministry:** At Trinity Presbyterian Church on October 18, we hosted over 250 partners for lunch and shared through student testimonies and presentations CTS' forward-looking trajectory.
- FTESEA:** I am grateful for the bridging efforts of Dr. Christine Hong, CTS had the opportunity of hosting the board of the Fund for Theological Education of Southeast Asia at the President's
- FTESEA (continued)** - Residence on November 2. It is our hope that we continue to forge new partnership with the partners of this organization.
- Partners in Ministry (continued):** As a result, the event proved to be a HUGE success as we received considerable gifts and pledges for the next three years. The Partners in Ministry events are held twice an academic year, with the Spring dates being April 10, 2024 at Fourth Presbyterian Church in Greenville, SC. I am grateful to the entire Advancement Team and all Seminary collaborators in making these partnership events vital for the sustenance of the Seminary's mission. Information: HuffineD@CTSnet.edu
- State of the Seminary:** On November 30, 2023 at 10:10 a.m., the Seminary community will gather in the Harrington Center Auditorium to receive my second State of the Seminary address. I am grateful for all the accomplishments and challenges experienced during these past 15 months of my tenure as your President. I look forward to seeing you there. A livestream link will be forthcoming. Information: BaumL@CTSnet.edu.
- Partnership-Building:** I have been given the honor to represent Columbia Seminary at multiple venues throughout these past few weeks. From Chicago to Indianapolis to Ft. Worth, TX, Savannah, GA, to Philadelphia then to Little Rock, Arkansas, back to San Antonio, TX then to New Jersey, I am in awe by the dedication and commitment of our alumni, donors, and friends. A more detailed review will be forthcoming! Thanks to all for your prayers!