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From the Editor

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From the Editor | ROBERT D. HAAK

THE PAPERS INCLUDED in this issue were first presented at the annual “Vocation of a Lutheran College” conference held at Midland College in Fremont, Nebraska on August 3-6, 2006. The next conference in this series will be hosted by Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois on August 2-4, 2007. The theme will be “The Vocation of a Lutheran College—Engaging the World.” Those interested in attending can be in contact with their Dean or Provost to inquire about application for the conference. You can be assured of productive and spirited conversation. We look forward to seeing you there.

The question of the relation between the liberal arts and the professions is one that is alive and well on most (all?) campuses that house departments associated with the traditional “liberal arts” alongside those more often associated with “the professions”—business, education, nursing, and the like. (Both Lake Lambert and Gail Summer in their offerings in this issue, in good Lutheran fashion, question whether this definition of the question is really productive!) This conversation is also taking place at the twenty-eight ELCA colleges and universities. Some faculty have been heard to say, “There isn’t much place for professional programs at *our* liberal arts college!” Deans and financial officers of campuses often populated primarily with students in professional and pre-professional programs would be quick to respond that if all these students left our campuses, there would be some very unpleasant and un-liberal economic consequences.

Is there a “Lutheran” perspective on this issue? The papers included here would answer “Yes.” According to their view, professional programs may be considered “second-class citizens” on other campuses, but **not** on Lutheran college campuses. Both Lutheran theology (see Kathryn Johnson’s piece) and Lutheran practice tell us that the professions are not just tolerated on our campuses but are integral to who we are as Lutherans engaging the world. In Stan Olsen’s mantra, “Because of Christ, the world; because of the world, vocation; because of vocation, education.” This should be good news to our colleagues in the Business Department who sometimes may feel estranged from

others on campus. What they do is fundamental, not incidental, to the work of our colleges. And, if truth be told, it is also good news for the world. Our students, grounded in the liberal arts and the liberating good news, have an impact on the whole community. (Steve Bahls would style them “philosopher-servants.”) That impact is a good thing and a fact that we can be proud of as those who labor in Lutheran higher education.

A parting comment on ‘labor’: I would like to thank Matt Marohl, visiting professor of New Testament at Augustana, for helping with the editing of this issue (and I hope more into the future). His good humor and sound judgment have made my work easier and he is much appreciated.

Again, I invite you to consider submission of materials that speak to the concerns of the Purpose Statement at the front of this issue. Please submit your work (preferably in electronic MLA format) to me at BobHaak@augustana.edu.

The vast majority of copies of *Intersections* are distributed through an office on your campus (different on each campus). If you find this forum valuable—and want to ensure that you receive your own copy and not be at the mercy of whomever distributes the newsletter at your institution—please send a note indicating your interest to LauraOMelia@augustana.edu. You will be added to our direct mailing list.

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