

**Presentation from Student Recruitment and Tuition Task Group
at the Annual General Meeting of the Friends of CCS**

Maylanne – OVERVIEW

The Student Recruitment and Tuition Task Group was formed following the September 2011 meeting of Central Council with a mandate to “consider ways and means of increasing student enrolment and tuition revenue, to report back to the next face-to-face meeting of Central Council.”

In addition to myself, the Task Group consisted of

Walter Deller – an Anglican member of Central Council, former principal of Emmanuel St. Chad’s College in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan (where he still lives), a biblical scholar in Hebrew Scripture, a musician and a friend.

Alice Watson – a student at the Centre for Christian Studies, in her second year of study, doing a Field Placement at Zion United Church in Ashcroft, BC. I am her primary instructor so we know each other well for our mutually missed deadlines!

Keith Simmonds – a diaconal minister in Trail BC, a graduate of CCS, and a resource person to the new Candidacy Pathway being tested in BC. Also serves on the Promotion and Publicity Committee.

The Task Group has met eight times by conference calls – often on the run, a few missed by one or the other of us. We have been working individually and together to:

- Gather data on student attendance at CCS for the past ten years
- Compare CCS’s program and patterns of enrolment to that of other theological schools
- Study processes for determining tuition and compare CCS’s tuition to other theological schools and adult ed programs
- Consider and recommend changes that will strengthen CCS’s program for United Church students and make CCS more attractive to other audiences.

Walter has interviewed Anglican students who participate in the Leadership Development Module. Alice surveyed classmates about what drew them to CCS and what continues to make it appealing, and Keith liaised with the Publicity and Promotion Committee of CCS, and with the BC Candidacy and Admissions Board which is piloting a new Candidacy Pathway process. (

Walter – INTERVIEWING ANGLICANS

My research has involved contacting all Anglican participants in the Centre's Programs from over the past 11 years. This work is not yet completed, but initial feedback includes:

1. The key attraction to study with the Centre is its dispersed program--the LDM is offered in various places in Canada.
2. The second key attraction is the justice focus of the Centre, and also its educational stance.
3. The former students spoke very highly of their experience of the Faculty of the Centre.
4. All identified significant ways their training had impacted on their ministry--learning models, theological reflection models, and group facilitation skills, among other things.

The former students I have spoken to thus far represent Anglicans who would be on the far liberal left of the Anglican spectrum to somewhere on the more conservative side of centre.

In commenting on what they saw as issues relating to the Centre's developing an Anglican stream of diaconal training, to this point most identified two sorts of "cultural" issues:

- A. They spoke of the need for the Centre to find a more effective way to engage with the non-centralized Anglican ecclesiological structures--the fact that ultimately, decisions about ordination and even whether a diocese has vocational deacons, rest at the level of bishops and dioceses, and to some extent this includes training requirements and programs--especially for diaconate.
- B. Reflecting on their own experience of the Centre program, they identified "cultural" issues internal to the Centre. Key among these were liturgical style, and a need for the centre to grapple more with what it means to be rooted in a theological tradition that values highly the inheritance of the long past.

Alice Watson – Surveying current and recent students in Diploma program

We interviewed students as to how they discovered CCS and diaconal ministry. Many students had not heard of diaconal ministry until they did the research required during the discernment process. A number of graduates and students said that the belief statements on the CCS website captured their interest immediately. The statements resonated with the kind of person the student was and/or wanted to become. They wanted to know more.

From feedback, it became clear that the unique and leading edge learning process at CCS captures students right away. This is learning that requires dialogue, inquiry, critical thinking, research, goal setting, and theological reflection as the norm as well as within the community learning circles twice a year.

Quotes from recent grads were read, hopefully to re-invigorate our understanding of the value of CCS and diaconal ministry. Here is a sample:

Student 1: "Through my education at CCS I expanded my experience. I had a chance to work with the summer team at Naramata centre, I travelled to Africa and lived in a village. I have a clearer understanding of my role in God's creation. I would absolutely recommend it to others. The Leadership

Development Module at CCS is fantastic as a stand-alone program. I know several people who have done it just for personal development and I have to say that it truly changed my life.”

Student 2: “What appealed to me most was

1. The integrative nature of all the learning – the action/reflection learning model enriched and deepened everything I learned;
2. Self-directed learning and goal-setting (within the context of the theme years) – particularly because it allowed/forced me to analyze what skills and gifts I came to the program with and then to focus my learning assignments in the direction where I saw the greatest need and opportunity for growth;
3. Learning circles – the intensity of the learning experiences and the learning based in community;
4. Creative opportunities – each assignment encouraged us to find a way to express our learning in expressive ways (this was a rich stretch for me).”

Keith – BC Candidacy and Admissions Board & Communications and Promotion Committee

The Communications Committee has reported to the AGM on our activities in general. While a great deal of energy is going into the anniversary homecoming, we have also spent time considering the needs of the church. The United Church has identified changes in its recognition of ministry and the Anglican Church is looking for a focus on outreach ministry and training folk within the diocese. Some of our thoughts have focused on how to get the word out about our existing programs, while others have centred around ways in which we might offer transformational leadership in forms that meet the needs of folk in various kinds of ministry.

As part of the BC Conference Candidacy and Admissions Board I have - together with Christine Dudley - tried to provide a diaconal voice on the committee and to encourage the committee to consider the Centre for Christian Studies as it takes on responsibility for Education for ministry in the Conference. As the CAB also looks after a new discernment process, I've been part of including diaconal ministry in the discernment weekends offered by the conference. I've been able to provide the CAB with resources from the CCS website as it considers setting up committees to walk with students in presbyteries. I've also tried to encourage the admissions section of the committee to replace the question about general agreement with the basis of Union to one about being generally focused on justice.

In general, I wonder if CCS can offer to partner with institutions like VST who are struggling with providing programs and smarting under funding decisions that CCS has also had to deal with. As we have a history of partnership with all theological colleges in the country (whose courses we accept) perhaps we could offer them the ability to take on our justice/community/pastoral care focused courses as part of their offerings, in much the same way. There is also a move towards transformational leadership within many elements of society, some religious, and some secular. I wonder how CCS can offer what we do so well to people from all walks of life?

We're 120 years old, we're in the black, we're doing a ministry of justice on the ground, we build bridges. How about you?

THREE QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND FEEDBACK

We've done (some of) our part. Now we'd like to get your own thoughts and suggestions in reply to these three sets of questions:

1. **Likes** - If you are or were a student, what brought you to CCS and what kept you here? If you weren't a student, what draws you and keeps you connected? How would you use that experience to encourage other students to enrol at CCS?
2. **Strengths** – What are the unique strengths and gifts that CCS possesses? What steps should we take now to make them known and used by the wider community?
3. **Looking ahead** - What are your hopes and fears for the future of diaconal ministry (Anglican and United)? How should CCS promote or adapt its program (a) if our status as a *testamur* granting institution for the United Church of Canada were to change? (b) in order to accommodate Anglican ecclesiology and structures?