

“..and I will show you a still more excellent way.¹” The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinthians encourages them to value, honor, use and strive for their spiritual gifts while directing them that love is the force behind developing all these gifts.

This academic year the offices of Church Relations and Religious Life, the University, and all of our employees were motivated by many reasons whether it be love for our students, of the University and its mission, or of God and of the Church to persevere and journey forward in a vastly different world than any of us expected.

The 2019-2020 academic year started off with some exciting new things. The Masters of Athletic Training program moved to the Fort Wayne campus, cementing that location’s role as the hub for MU graduate-level professional health science programs. The brand new Lockie and Augustus Chinworth Center was bustling on the North Manchester campus housing the College of Business, Student Financial Services, and much of Student Life.

Camp Mack Day was reinvigorated and brought 624 students, faculty and staff from both campuses to the shores of Lake Waubee for a day of recreation, fellowship and the great outdoors. This is a huge success from the 15 or so that attended in previous years. The faculty approved a surprise weekday during the fall semester when classes would be cancelled and we would all travel to Camp Mack to kick off the academic year. Students continue to name Camp Mack Day as one of their favorite traditions.

On the North Manchester campus we broke ground at homecoming for the new stadium that is nearly completed and awaiting student athletes. We dedicated the Harry H. Henney ’35 and Jeanette Henney Department of Education which will exponentially increase the impact of the education program by offering fellowships, clinical experiences, and creative collaborations to our students. We also hosted several opportunities for community-campus collaboration including a pot luck and discussion addressing relationships and hospitality between the University and the community as we live into our vision of being a regional university.

The Fort Wayne campus hosted a regional conference on health care for the vulnerable, underserved population featuring local and national speakers including keynote speaker Angie Settle, CEO of West Virginia Health Right Inc., West Virginia’s oldest and largest free and charitable clinic.

Notable achievements include being named one of the “Best in the Midwest” by the Princeton Review, being ranked among top 10 colleges for jobs in Indiana by Zippia.com, and receiving a \$300,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Violence Against Women to continue our efforts to raise awareness about sexual assault prevention and response.

¹ 1 Corinthians 12:31b, NRSV

Two new vice presidents were hired this academic year, Ryon Kaopuiki, vice president for enrollment and marketing, and Celia Cook-Huffman '86, vice president for academic affairs. Cook-Huffman came to us from Juniata College where she served as assistant provost and a professor in the peace and conflict studies program.

Notable speakers in our Values, Ideas and the Arts (VIA) programs were Siobhan McEvoy-Levy, Butler University professor of peace and conflict studies and her talk on "Entertaining Peace in Youth Cultures: from *Harry Potter* to *Hunger Games*," Tayna Fogle with the Poor People's Campaign spoke for the Martin Luther King, Jr. remembrance and rededication ceremony, and Stewart Copeland of the '80s new wave band The Police offered a VIA on his creative journey from rock star to opera performer and was present for the performance of his opera *The Invention of Morel* by Manchester University students, faculty, staff and community members.

Service events such as U Can Crush Hunger and the Special Olympics Polar Plunge brought participants from around the community with support of canned food and teams of jumpers for the plunge and instilled our deep value of service at Manchester University.

As we rounded the corner into our spring semester and the realities of our pandemic world Manchester University pivoted fast taking into consideration love and care for our students and employees and shifted to remote learning on March 17. Faculty and staff demonstrated resilience and creativity by offering courses, events and support in virtual ways.

The Radically Obedient Brethren Outreach Team (ROBOT), Manchester University's worship travel team, planned, wrote, and recorded a virtual worship service to share with churches across the region. So far at least 9 congregations across Indiana and Ohio have hosted the team either in person (before we left campus) or virtually tripling what we have typically offered. The Campus Interfaith Board and Peace Studies Department tackled the first ever virtual Peace Week offering programming every day March 30-April 3. Religious Life and Counseling Services teamed up to offer Wellness Wednesdays every Wednesday afternoon offering students, staff, and faculty opportunities to practice meditation and mindfulness together in hopes of lessening the stresses of learning and working in a pandemic. Simply Brethren hosted a discussion on the Compelling Vision Statement for the Church of the Brethren and brainstormed how the club might live into this vision in the 2020-2021 academic year.

The ways we show love to one another have changed drastically over the last several months, but our love for one another has not changed. As the University and the Church pave new ways to show love in and for the world we at Manchester University continue to be grateful for the many ways that the Church of the Brethren, its congregations, ministries and people faithfully support us through gifts of their time, resources, and prayers. We look forward to forging this excellent way together.