

**An Augsburg Community:
Diversity, Commitment, and Education for Service**

Revised Report

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presented by the diversity commission:

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Prologue: Begging the Question

I. Introduction: "A Passionate Defense of Human Empathy"

What do we mean by "diversity"?

What do we mean by "community"?

II. Diversity and Community Now: Augsburg's Present Situation

III. Augsburg College: Reconciling Community & Diversity

A. *Diversity at a College of the Church:*

A Distinctively Lutheran Philosophy of Education

B. *The Usable Past: Historical Tensions & Commitments*

IV. "An Intentionally Diverse Campus Community":

Focusing Our Commitment

A. *An Augsburg Community*

B. *Diversity, Commitment, and Education for Service*

Why Value Diversity?

How We Value Diversity

C. *Recommendations*

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Prologue: Begging the Question

To misappropriate a phrase from a famous love poem by Andrew Marvell, "had we world enough, and time," we would write a better paper. Like so many committees, the "diversity commission" began with what seemed like a clear charge—to answer this question: **What distinguishes Augsburg's reconciliation of diversity and community from that attempted and advertised by our competitors?** But the constructive criticism of the first draft by so many of the college's friends, as well as our own assessment, confirm for us that we have, as one colleague suggested, answered a different question: **Why and how should Augsburg College value diversity?** In other words, as our work proceeded, we moved gradually away from the overt marketing implications of our charge and more deeply into the traditions, history, and current state of the college as they relate to diversity. In pursuing this path of inquiry, perhaps we have failed to help the college clarify and declare this aspect of its mission to itself and to others. We hope not.

Of course, this report does not necessarily represent the views of each individual on the diversity commission; it summarizes our best communal deliberative efforts up to this point. But as every academic knows, deadlines are deadlines. Still we believe that by examining some of the sources of Augsburg's current commitment to and concerns about diversity, we have laid a foundation on which others can build—both the requisite marketing plan and a realization of the college mission.

I. Introduction: "A Passionate Defense of Human Empathy"

In his beautifully written memoir, James McBride, the African-American writer and musician, recalls asking his mother, a Russian Jewish immigrant who had

converted to Christianity, "What color is God's spirit?" His mother answers, "It doesn't have a color. . . . God is the color of water. Water doesn't have a color."¹ In tribute to his mother, McBride acknowledges the visionary force of this statement of our unity and equality as human beings in the sight of a God who is more than a mere reflection of ourselves. But his memoir also reveals that, in this world at least, the truth is not so transparent: for better and worse, especially given the complex history of the U.S. as an evolving pluralistic society, our differences will tell.

Our Question:

Why and how should Augsburg College
value diversity?

Our commission has been
struggling with this complex history,
one of the central crises of American
society, as it manifests itself at

Augsburg: Why and how should Augsburg College value diversity? We at the college are grappling locally with matters and forces now confronting the whole of American society and indeed the world: How do different peoples form civil societies and institutions that serve their various needs and justly resolve or adjudicate their disputes? Augsburg College cannot, of course, solve such a global question, but we—with our urban setting and our mission's commitment to "an intentionally diverse campus community"—can serve as a self-conscious laboratory for imagining, building, sustaining, perhaps even modeling, and certainly questioning our own and others' attempts at reconciling diversity and community. It is a charge worthy a liberal arts college that is also dedicated to "Education for Service."

Needless to say, there are certain assumptions built into this commission's task. In its original formulation, our question spoke of Augsburg's "reconciliation of

¹James McBride, *The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1996), 39.

diversity and community." The three key terms here—diversity, community, and even reconciliation—seem transparent and timeless, but in fact are complex and contingent. Indeed, "diversity" and "community" are extremely difficult to use effectively because of their debased currency in the media and other forms of publicity. How does one revitalize words that appear in such phrases as the "fundraising community" or "everyone is diverse," which are at best sloppy and at worst meaningless? In our case, we think that to understand diversity and community at Augsburg, we have to look to the college's past: it is our peculiar history that sheds light on diversity as one of the core values of Augsburg's mission—that can help us determine the interplay between diversity and community at the college.

The key terms present other problems, too. They imply that diversity and community are mutually exclusive or otherwise disparate, that Augsburg has achieved a reconciliation between them, and hence that we are doing something different and presumably better than others with regard to diversity. Behind these presuppositions lie even more basic assumptions: that Augsburg is diverse, that it ought to be diverse, that community exists at Augsburg, and that there must and can be reconciliation between diversity and community. In the tensions among these assumptions one can locate the source of the various kinds of discontent we have found in informal surveys of and meetings with weekend and day students, as well as our experience of faculty, staff, and administrative discussion of the matter. Some will dispute that Augsburg is diverse, even though—at least statistically—our students are racially more diverse than most other schools in the area, especially other private colleges. Others feel that our embracing diversity has led to the relaxation of past standards, presumably to accommodate a changing student

body.² How can we bridge the gap between such widely divergent views of the college's commitment to diversity as outlined in the Mission Statement? In what sense does Augsburg constitute a community that is committed to diversity?

To answer that question, we need at least working definitions of diversity, as well as community. We offer definitions or descriptions of these two terms based on the college's history and experience, though these are undoubtedly related to larger issues in American society. **Diversity** can be thought of in two different but not entirely unconnected ways—one taxonomic and demographic, the other conceptual and philosophic.

The first grows out of the redress effected by the civil rights movement as well as the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America's own commitment to social justice. **Promoting and valuing diversity entails categorizing people in order to promote and assess equitable opportunity, treatment, and sometimes representation at all levels of institutional organization.** The chief categories are those, like race and gender, with which governmental redress of past discrimination is concerned, and others, like religious affiliation, in which the college's own history and its ties to the church encourage an interest. Ethnic culture and geographical origin, including the distinctions among rural, suburban, and urban, are other

²See the October 1996 position papers on Quality by Kathryn Swanson and Sandra Olmsted. For the good of our community, Augsburg may wish to address such presumptions by providing data about entrance GPA and ACT scores, college GPA, retention and graduation rates for various groups. It may also wish to gather qualitative data on the complexity of students' lives as factors affecting these numbers and on the role of experience in facilitating their learning. Implicit in the questions about quality and "standards" are concerns about increased costs of support and the need to adjust curriculum and pedagogy for students of less homogeneous backgrounds and abilities. Whether or not diversity of students is a complicating factor in their abilities, as a college we will need to make a clear decision about whether our goal is to attract and serve *primarily* the highest ability students or whether part of the uniqueness of our mission is to serve well students whose potential for growth and improvement exceeds that of already high ability students.

related and significant categories. In addition, implicit in Augsburg's history as a college of first-generation children of immigrants, is its equitable treatment of people from all socioeconomic classes. Over the last decade and a half, particularly through the development of Weekend College and the CLASS program,³ the college has extended and acknowledged its commitment to students of non-traditional age and to those with physical or learning disabilities: consequently, we are ever more conscious of differences in learning styles—an awareness resulting in new and varied pedagogical techniques that help us better meet our students' needs. Finally, Augsburg has more recently made explicit its urban ties by subscribing to the provisions of the Minneapolis Civil Rights Code, which covers many of the categories above as well as others, most notably sexual orientation. The college's ongoing struggles to accommodate and acknowledge this provision, which is complicated by the church's own debate over homosexuality, suggest how notions of diversity and pluralism evolve and how this Lutheran college's commitment to diversity will entail periodic if not continual rethinking and reassessment.

This latter process, the reflection and dialogue through which we face the challenges of and to our commitment to a workable and just

What do we mean by "diversity"?

Demographics: Promoting and valuing diversity entails categorizing people in order to promote and assess equitable opportunity, treatment, and sometimes representation at all levels of institutional organization.

Philosophy: Facing the challenges of and to our commitment to a workable and just pluralism requires reflection and dialogue, continual rethinking and reassessment, because notions of diversity and pluralism evolve; we seek to model free investigation and exploration of ideas.

Goal: Working towards a liberal society is based not on consensus or shared values, but on our capacity to understand moral worlds different from our own.

³CLASS is the Center for Learning and Adaptive Student Services.

pluralism, constitutes the second aspect of diversity as conceptual and intellectual. In other words, diversity would mean little if we were to bring together different people who all thought alike. We presume that they will not—and that there is much to learn from each other's different viewpoints. Perhaps the great Isaiah Berlin—an unabashed proponent of Western liberalism in the broad original sense that would unite everyone from the late Rev. King to former President Reagan—best expresses the importance of such differences in a pluralistic democracy like our own: "The precondition of a liberal society was not consensus or shared values, . . . but our capacity to *understand* moral worlds different from our own."⁴ That is the rationale for Augsburg's "intentionally diverse campus community," the sense in which we consciously seek to bring together people of varying background and views—among our faculty, staff, and students—so that we might learn from, against, and with each other in a college that promotes and models the free investigation and exploration of ideas.

Indeed, the diversity commission itself has been grappling with some of the chief problems that arise from the interplay of demographic and intellectual diversity: the reduction of diversity to quotas and tokenism, on the one hand, and the presumption, on the other, that each demographic group holds a single or even consistent viewpoint. Just as American liberals (in today's popular sense) have not adequately addressed the conservative critique of affirmative action, so we have no nice, neat response to these problems. We do not feel that the college has reached the stage where demographics can be ignored: indeed, even maintaining a Lutheran presence among faculty, staff, and students requires counting, with all its attendant problems. But we are troubled by the sense of filling "slots" and of presuming to know what every Lutheran or every person of color or every homosexual thinks just

⁴Michael Ignatieff et al., "On Isaiah Berlin (1909-1997)," *The New York Review of Books* 44, no. 20 (Dec 18, 1997), p.10, italics added.

by categorizing him or her. The categories themselves are, of course, far more complicated than any of us at Augsburg generally admit. For example, how conscious should we be of the increasing number of biracial students and/or adopted students of color (not to mention faculty and staff)—groups fairly common in Minnesota though too few of us consider their perspectives or experiences. Honestly discussing and addressing such complexities is not easy.

Defining community as it manifests itself at Augsburg College is as difficult as defining diversity, but Berlin's statement may suggest one of the principles to which we as a college (should) subscribe—"a passionate defense of human empathy,"⁵ based on the inherent worth of mutual understanding. In our informal surveys and interviews with various constituents of the college, we found those who thought Augsburg a warm and caring place and those who came, learned, and left without feeling any sense of attachment. Many people, including some of us on the commission, feel that there is not a single campus community, but various communities on one campus. Perhaps it is the same on other campuses. And yet when the North Central review committee came a year ago, they were impressed that *everyone* they met knew the mission statement—even students. Of course, knowing the college's mission and subscribing to its implied values are as different as knowing the national anthem and subscribing to its emotional glorification of nationalism.

But the general knowledge of the mission is a place to start: if we want community at Augsburg in an age of demographic and intellectual diversity we will have to build it. We will have to ask that our students look at, reflect on, debate, and act on the mission of the college, each in her or his own way; we will have to emphasize that the mission is built into the curriculum, especially in the general

⁵Michael Ignatieff et al., 10.

education perspectives, as a way of thinking and acting that we expect students to try out, to question, and to debate. We will have to clarify the ways in which Augsburg's mission is offered as a set of values worthy our understanding—even if

**What do we mean by
"community"?**

Foundation: an intellectual and ethical enterprise based on thoughtful reflection and debate about the mission's values

Ideal: forging a society of disparate peoples through human empathy and mutual understanding.

some of us cannot finally subscribe to them. **The college can and should unite around the mission as a repository of values, a basis for action, and the locus of thoughtful**

reflection and debate, which means at the very least that those who desire to come here and those who do come here need to know that they will encounter and ultimately participate in debates about the mission's values, summed up in one of the college's mottoes: "Education for Service."

We want to stress that if we are a community, what we share is less a set of values than an intellectual and ethical enterprise that we believe contributes to individual development and ultimately social improvement. The tensions among us, which often arise from our myriad differences, are anchored in the entire college's willingness to regard its mission as a great experiment. Given the plural nature of our urban setting and of American society generally, not to mention our increasing awareness of globalization, it is no surprise that diversity is one of the mission's central elements. We do not have to—and, given the state of the national debate, probably cannot and will not—agree on the characteristics and functions of diversity, the benefits and the abuses that are attributed to it. But we at Augsburg College fall short of our other motto's ideal, "Through Truth to Freedom," when we fail to take up an issue—how to forge a society of disparate peoples—that has troubled American society since before this college was founded and that was, as

we shall see, of central concern to our founders, particularly the Presidents Sverdrup and Oftedal.

The remainder of this paper will explore what we see as the productive tensions between diversity and community at Augsburg College. It will first outline the current situation at the college, largely in terms of available demographics and present perceptions and policies. It will then present an overview of Augsburg's "usable past," the ways in which aspects of the college's history offer a distinctive model of who we are and where we should be going. Finally, it will lay out a vision for the future that clarifies the place and function of diversity and community at the college. We on the commission undertake this task in the spirit of Augsburg's perhaps paradoxical ideal of "an intentionally diverse campus community," and of Isaiah Berlin's "passionate defense of human empathy," in which we find a rationale for espousing this paradox at the core of the college.

II. Diversity and Community Now: Augsburg's Present Situation

In terms of demographics, the 2866 Augsburg students who are enrolled for the 1997-1998 academic year are predominantly Minnesotan, white, and female.⁶ The largest number of students (42%) is between the ages of 18 and 22. Among those who responded to the question on religious affiliation, 55% are Lutheran or Catholic. But we should note that 36% of the students either did not respond (27%) or listed themselves as "Other" (9%). Since our current categories specify only Catholicism, Judaism, and several Protestant denominations, we feel fairly sure that the 36% reflects the growing number of Muslims and adherents to East Asian religions, to name but two groups, on campus. A majority of students in the day program (52%) live off campus. Notwithstanding these data, the remaining figures

⁶Data are from the *Demographic Portrait 1997-1998 Academic Year, Fall Term*, prepared by the Office of Institutional Research, Kathleen Kuross, Coordinator.

indicate a broad range of diversity: 14% of students identified themselves as Asian, Black, Hispanic, or American Indian.⁷ The 88 international students come from 38 countries, representing every continent in the world. Graduate programs and Weekend College attract students who reflect various racial and ethnic groups and a broader range of ages than the day school population. BAGLS is a functioning organization that provides support and community for bisexual, gay, and lesbian students and their supporters. CLASS is a widely acclaimed and highly successful support program serving students with disabilities.

Demographic data for faculty are available from the "1997-98 Report on Faculty and Administration" submitted to the ELCA Division for Higher Education and Schools. The 130 full-time faculty are equally female and male and predominantly white; part-time faculty have a similar profile.⁸ Of the total of 282 full and part-time faculty, there are 27 persons of color or 9.6% of the total faculty. All part-time faculty of color are at the rank of instructor; none is tenured. Among the full-time faculty of color, one holds the rank of full professor, three are associate, and five are assistant professor; one is an instructor. The majority of faculty are from 36 to 55 years old. No data are available for disabilities and sexual orientation. Administrative personnel include persons of color in eight full-time positions and none in part-time positions. Data for support staff indicate that the eleven maintenance staff are all white males; the 26 custodial staff members are also

⁷While use of census categories may aid standard reporting functions, Augsburg may wish to consider how we collect such data. Increasingly individuals are biracial or choose to identify themselves with a culture, such as a particular American Indian tribe, which is not their predominant "race" by blood quantum.

⁸Of 130 full time faculty, 65 are male, 65 are female. Of these, there are 5 Black, 1 American Indian, 2 Hispanic, and 2 Asian for a total 10 or 8%. There are 152 part-time faculty, 17 are of color: 5 Black, 7 American Indian, 0 Hispanic, and 2 Asian, who comprise 11% of part-time faculty.

predominantly white and male; and the 105 "secretarial/clerical" staff are primarily white and female.

There are no standing committees listed in the faculty handbook with a specific focus on diversity or on community building. In 1991 the Board of Regents, at the suggestion of the President, established a standing committee on diversity whose 10-14 members included students, staff, faculty, and regents and whose charge was to "a. engage in studies to improve the climate for campus diversity and cross cultural understanding, b. monitor current activities, and c. propose needed action to the President for implementation." At its beginning, an Assistant to the President for Diversity provided support for the committee, and the committee chair was an advisory member of the Board of Regents with privileges to attend meetings and present reports to the Board. There is no longer an assistant to the president for diversity, and the commission is unaware of any occasions on which the diversity committee reported to the Board. The committee administered Bremer grant funds for educational projects related to racism, and it counts among its accomplishments advocacy for students, attention to inclusiveness in hiring practices, and preparation of a philosophy and mission statement for the committee. This fall President Frame presented a new charge to the committee, but to our knowledge there have been no formal or public reports of the committee's work this year.

In terms of practices, an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission statement (EEOC) appears on all documents. According to the College's Affirmative Action Officer, Lori Steil, there is no Affirmative Action Statement in place; however, she expects to have one completed by summer 1998. The *Student Guide* sets forth standards of conduct conducive to providing "a community that protects each student's freedom to learn and seeks the orderly resolution of human problems

while honoring the fundamental rights of all."⁹ Augsburg provides several curricular opportunities and service programs designed to address the needs of our diverse student population and to serve various communities. A partial listing follows on the next page.

The demographics of diversity at Augsburg and our varied programs contribute to an array of views about diversity and community. The following perceptions of the current situation at Augsburg come from the commission's open forum last fall, the commission's retreat, collected quick-write observations from dozens of students, and discussion at a dinner in February with people representing diverse campus groups.

From this information the following picture emerges. Augsburg is well-intentioned in relation to diversity and more diverse than many other private college campuses, but we could do more to help the various people who come here become a community; some individuals and groups feel a sense of "aloneness" or marginalization and others seek models for talking about the differences and difficult issues that divide us. We need better communication and integration of programs and better training for faculty and staff who are outside the CLASS office and student services programs about serving and educating students who have disabilities or who are from cultural groups unfamiliar to the faculty and staff. We have no formal means of assessing and are not sure about whether programs on campus are dealing effectively with the needs of faculty, staff, and students of color, with people who have disabilities, with adult learners, with non-Christians or non-Lutherans, and with non-heterosexuals. In many cases, we do not know or we have not systematically addressed whether people in these groups feel safe, accepted and welcome here.

⁹*Student Guide*, p. 183. Soon the college council and board will consider a recommended revision of these standards to apply to all faculty, staff, and students.

Diversity in Curriculum

Intercultural Awareness perspective
general education courses explain ways they attend to gender and diversity
Metro-Urban Studies major; HECUA & MUST programs
Women's Studies minor & ACTC consortial major
International Relations major
East Asian Studies major
American Indian Studies minor
Canadian Studies
Russian Area Studies & conference
Nordic Studies
courses in African-American studies
courses components address contributions and issues of varied peoples and cultures
Diversity Week
Center for Global Education
The Nordic Center
MMEP (Minnesota Minority Education Partnership)*
Inter-Race (International Institute for Interracial Interaction)*

*connection to Augsburg unclear

Serving Diverse Populations

American Indian Student Services**
Hispanic/Latino Student Services**
Pan-Afrikan Student Services**
Pan-Asian Student Services**
Center for Learning & Adaptive Student Services (CLASS)
non-discrimination policy specifically includes sexual orientation
accessible campus
adult learners in all programs
Step-up program (students recovering from alcohol and chemical dependency)
BAGLS (Bisexual and Gay/Lesbian Support)
Augsburg-Central Nursing Center
AWARE (Augsburg Women's Activities, Resources & Education)
scholarships and mentor programs
Community Service through the Center for Service, Work, and Learning
Youth and Family Institute of Augsburg College
Augsburg College of the Third Age
Elderhostel
Teachers of Color program(s) and
The Richard Green Institute (in development)

**leaders of these programs maintain strong community ties as well

We do know that many African-American, American Indian, Asian-American, and Hispanic/Latino faculty, staff, and students experience racism at Augsburg and that many gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students, faculty, and staff experience heterosexism and homophobia at Augsburg. We also know that many Caucasian people have not reflected on the significance of "whiteness" and that many straight people are unaware of the unearned advantages of heterocentric society. Similarly, many of those with sufficient financial means do not know the challenges of poverty; the presently able-bodied may not recognize the difficulties and possibilities of disabilities; and many men do not acknowledge what male privilege affords.

One obvious thing that Augsburg is doing differently than other ELCA and ACTC schools and all other private colleges in Minnesota except one, is that we have support programs for each of the four major ethnic populations. Our numbers of students of color reflect this. Schools that have had individual support programs and then switched to a multicultural model have "lost" the students of color. Mainstream private colleges are exclusive by nature, and the "majority" student population is white. Quality education may not be enough to lure bright, talented students of color to Augsburg because they have many other options. Though not perfect (see pp. 6-7), the support programs designed to address their needs suggest to prospective students that we know Augsburg's environment may not be entirely welcoming to students of color, that we as an institution recognize the needs of these students are in some ways different from those of the majority students, and that the college welcomes and values them.

This snapshot of where we are now is, of course, just a starting point. How have we become what we are? What values from the college's history and its Lutheran heritage will help us make the most of the differences among us—to see them as a potential source of constructive debate and knowledge? How does our

increasingly diverse campus population and urban setting square with Augsburg as a community of learners? Why should Augsburg College value diversity?

III. Augsburg College: Reconciling Community & Diversity

A. Diversity at a College of the Church: A Distinctively Lutheran Philosophy of Education

Though our mission statement does not quite say so, Augsburg is not—and should not be—simply a college “shaped by the faith and values of the Christian Church.” It is a college of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and has its roots in the older Lutheran Free Church.¹⁰ Ironically, though the current nomenclature was probably adopted to accommodate more people in an increasingly diverse city and society, acknowledging—and examining—our Lutheran tradition(s) may constitute a valuable first step in coming to terms with the dual commitments of diversity and community expressed in our mission statement.

When he visited here in 1995 to participate in the Christensen Symposium, George Marsden noted that Augsburg, like all church-affiliated schools today, is being compelled to choose between offering an increasingly secular education and retaining its Christian character. He sees the call for greater diversity among students, faculty, and staff as particularly threatening to church-affiliated schools because it diminishes the critical mass of avowed Christians necessary to sustain a community of faith on campus. In the end, Marsden contends, schools that succumb to the forces of secularism and diversity will end up looking just like the Ivy League and other liberal arts colleges and universities where religious affiliations have simply withered away; there will be little to distinguish us from other private and

¹⁰As Professor Chrislock pointed out in our discussions, it is more accurate to say that the Lutheran Free Church sprang from the college as the “Friends of Augsburg.”

public institutions of higher learning. In other words, we will offer students no alternative to the prevailing system of higher education.

We—Lutherans and non-Lutherans alike—believe that Augsburg College ought not abandon its distinctive Lutheran heritage, its status as the premier urban college of the ELCA. Having said that, we wish to make clear that, given the urban and regional communities that Augsburg serves and the pool of faculty and staff from which it must—despite limited resources—select those who can best serve students' needs, we are not advocating a return to narrow sectarianism nor to the intra-Lutheran doctrinal debates of the turn of the last century. The ecumenism of the late President of the College Bernard Christensen and the dedication to serving the city evident in the administrations of both Oscar Anderson and Charles Anderson mitigate against such narrowness. Rather we must find a way of drawing on the college's Lutheran heritage to help us meet our aspiration of being "an intentionally diverse campus community." In the face of Marsden's warnings, we should not retreat but find ways to adapt the college's Lutheran past to accomplish in our day what early founders Georg Sverdrup and Sven Oftedal sought in theirs: Sverdrup and Oftedal rejected the model of assimilation in which groups simply give up their cultures of origin. As Professor Carl Chrislock has shown, Sverdrup and Oftedal believed that Norwegian immigrants would only contribute significantly to American society by knowing and building on the culture they were bringing to this country. Similarly, if we at Augsburg are to contribute significantly to our college and to the pluralistic America of which we are a part, then we must willingly and actively examine and foster the intersections between our own histories and the Norwegian-Lutheran tradition of the college to which we have come. Grafting our diverse branches onto Augsburg's Norwegian-Lutheran stock does not mean surrendering our differences. We believe that this conjunction could serve as a model for forging community in a diverse society. Neither branches nor

tree will flourish alone. But together they can bear new fruit to nourish an increasingly fragmented society.

How are we to draw on the college's past, particularly its Lutheran heritage, to accomplish so lofty an end? Here we may have to emphasize strands of the Lutheran past that best accommodate the pluralism of our world. In such strands Lutheranism—as Richard Hughes's article, "How the Lutheran Worldview Can Sustain the Life of the Mind," suggests—is richly blessed.¹¹ Indeed, according to Hughes, Lutheranism can accommodate—though it has not always done so—the intellectual investigation of this world without the perspectival limitations of the Reformed tradition, which—at least in the doctrinaire form Hughes describes—demands that subjects be taught from a, or even *the*, Christian perspective. Nor is Augsburg beset by the doctrinal obstacles to investigation that Catholicism sometimes poses. Yet the significant achievements, great successes, and broad appeal of both Reformed and Catholic institutions of higher learning in America have such great influence that Augsburg and other Lutheran schools have increasingly adopted aspects of these versions of Christian education, especially of the Reformed model. Lutheran schools like Augsburg have forgotten what their distinctive tradition has to offer.

But we think that certain Lutheran principles can provide a different model of Christian education, one that acknowledges the diversity of the world we study and that can accommodate the plurality of perspectives and backgrounds that constitute the Augsburg community. Despite the risks of absolutism, on the one hand, and relativism, on the other, Richard Hughes lays out two Lutheran principles that coincide with and support the kind of difficult inquiry that we expect at liberal arts

¹¹Richard T. Hughes, "How the Lutheran Worldview Can Sustain the Life of the Mind" (Papers and Proceedings of the 83rd Annual Meeting Lutheran Educational Conference of North America, February 1–4, 1997), 8-17.

colleges: 1) "Luther's insistence on human finitude and the sovereignty of God," a belief which implies that "every scholar must always confess that he or she could be

Valuing a Distinctively Lutheran Philosophy of Education

- Cherish our distinctive Lutheran heritage while not returning to narrow sectarianism.
- Take care not to let religious affiliations simply wither away.
- Avoid equating diversity with secularism.
- View diversity not as assimilation of different "others" but as contributing to the evolution and transformation of Augsburg's Norwegian-Lutheran heritage.
- Humbly engage in serious inquiry about all aspects of the secular world without presuming there is one Christian worldview or imposing a particular church's traditional doctrines.
- Model lively dialogue and serious respect among different people.

wrong";¹² 2) "Luther's notion of paradox," especially that inherent in the "Two Kingdoms," which reminds us that we live in both "the world of nature and the world of grace," allows that "serious engagement in the secular world" is consonant with Christian faith, and encourages our bringing

those two kingdoms into "genuine conversation."¹³ Taken together, these two principles support the kind of liberal arts and Christian education Augsburg at its best has offered—one that "sustains dialogue and resists homogeneous conformity to imperialistic understandings."¹⁴

Our country and our world will need Christians who can talk and work with others toward mutual understanding and justice, just as it will need people of other faiths and non-believers who can talk and work with Christians and each other toward these same ends. As both a Lutheran college and a diverse urban campus,

¹²Hughes, 14. Obviously, though emphasized by Luther, a belief in "human finitude and the sovereignty of God" is not exclusively Lutheran.

¹³Hughes, 15.

¹⁴Hughes, 15.

Augsburg can model lively dialogue and serious respect among different people. Instead of aspiring to ivory-tower isolation or sectarian retreat from a troubled society, the college can provide our society an example of communal pluralism.

B. The Usable Past: Historical Tensions & Commitments

Anyone who has the pleasure of reading Professor Carl Chrislock's centennial history of Augsburg College, *From Fjord to Freeway*, will learn a great deal about the rather arcane and (at least from the outside) slightly amusing world of Lutheran church politics and synodical rivalries, both here and in late 19th-century Norway.¹⁵ But one will also see in the history of Augsburg's struggle to survive a clear reflection of the college today—from its precarious financial state and underpaid faculty and staff to its invisibility and conflicting aims. That "distant mirror" is both heartening and discouraging—heartening because Augsburg has often survived and surmounted the obstacles of the past, discouraging because it seems doomed to learn again—the hard way—lessons it should have learned before.

In particular, Professor Chrislock's history sheds some significant light on the present tensions surrounding Augsburg's self-identification as "an intentionally diverse campus community." Though the constituents have changed, historical tensions between community and diversity at the college are being replayed today in our own version of the national debate over multiculturalism and affirmative action. Here are some of the historical tensions still evident in, resembling, and/or analogous to current disagreements:

- Christian uniqueness vs. Norwegian-Lutheran emphasis on social responsibility
- seminary vs. liberal arts college

¹⁵Carl H. Chrislock, *From Fjord to Freeway* (Minneapolis: Augsburg College, 1969).

- faith vs. humanism
- practical education vs. intellectualism (knowledge for its own sake)
- city vs. country and/or suburb
- ethnic contribution to American culture vs. assimilation to American values as they are

Anyone who has been following the debates over how to balance our "church-relatedness" with our conscious commitment to diversity, both vital parts of our current mission, will see in the list above the historical precedents that have made diversity the prickliest thorn in the side of this Lutheran college.

But if we are repeating the past, perhaps we are doing so because such tensions as those between tradition and change, between faith and secularism, between custom and innovation take on new meanings in each succeeding generation, especially given America's congenital myopia when it comes to the past. If, for example, American secularism is less a threat now than in the past to Augsburg's Christian commitment, the presence and assertion of religious differences on campus creates a greater though subtler unease: a Lutheran minority is at best "hosting" a diverse, but decidedly non-Lutheran majority. What then constitutes the Christian mission of this college when the population is increasingly not only non-Lutheran but non-Christian? And what responsibility do the majority have to the Lutheran traditions that have shaped the school? Answering such questions may be nearly impossible, but facing them offers remarkable intellectual, personal, and educational challenges.

And therein lies some hope. We need not settle for a future of white suburban anxiety about and sometimes downright hostility toward unfamiliar classmates of color or for students of color whose primary relief is wisecracking about rural "crackers." Though current versions of the historical tensions outlined

above are neither always nor simply problems to be solved, they can be opportunities for inquiry and exploration; ultimately, they are occasions for institutional—for communal—reflection and self-examination. Gerald Graff suggests that, instead of hiding intellectual differences, professors engage students in our disciplinary and interdisciplinary debates as a means of engaging them.¹⁶ If so, Augsburg could and should make the tensions between Christian faith and intentional diversity, whether perceived or real, part of an

ongoing campus discussion. Our general education curriculum, for instance, provides at least two or three opportunities to do so: most notably in the Christian Faith and Intercultural Awareness perspectives, but perhaps also in the City, Western Heritage, and other perspectives. In other words, if Augsburg were to see itself as a laboratory of diversity, we might avoid the disillusionment that derives from the currently fashionable, but vapid celebration of superficial differences without ever having addressed the differences that matter. We would not reduce diversity, as so much current cant does, to the resolution of tensions, but rather find in our diversity the conditions for an ongoing process of education and negotiation.

IV. "An Intentionally Diverse Campus Community": Focusing Our Commitment

¹⁶Gerald Graff, *Beyond the Culture Wars: How Teaching the Conflicts Can Revitalize American Education* (New York: Norton, 1992).

Learning from Our Past to Face Our Present

Augsburg's past struggles mirror those of our present.

Facing present questions about the college mission and the responsibilities of a non-Lutheran majority to the Lutheran traditions of the school offers intellectual, personal, and educational challenges and opportunities for inquiry and exploration; current tensions are occasions for institutional and communal reflection and self-examination.

Augsburg could and should make the tensions between Christian faith and intentional diversity, whether perceived or real, part of an ongoing campus discussion.

A. An Augsburg Community

At its heart, Augsburg College is about learning. If we are a community at all, we are a community focused on learning because—beyond the fact that we are human—that is our single unifying element. Those gathered here come from many different backgrounds and parts of the world. We are of different ages and we have different life experiences. Some of us are deeply grounded in Christian faith, some profess other religious beliefs, and others affirm no particular creed. Some of us are called students, while others are faculty, staff, or members of the board of regents. Learning is at the heart of all these roles.

Learning is also the reason to be an “an intentionally diverse community.” We do not seek diversity at Augsburg College for its own sake, but because we live in a society and a world where it is a given. None of us will succeed on our individual life paths, and the College will not succeed in its work, if we live in denial of that reality. The alternative is to embrace diversity, not in an unthinking feel-good way, but rather as a condition that we at Augsburg conscientiously explore and learn from. Doing so has the potential for a revolutionary impact on our institution and its infrastructure. We will have to reconsider our understandings of the academic disciplines, expand our worldviews, and develop new canons that reflect and embody our revisions of what we—and our fields—know. Far-reaching changes will be visible across our academic and administrative departments, in our curricula and our pedagogy, in the broader aspects of our life together, and in our urban community.

B. Diversity, Commitment, and Education for Service

Our vision for the Augsburg community is one that values diversity and commitment as essentials of education for service.

Augsburg embraces diversity as an essential feature of education for a variety of reasons. First, our commitment to diversity is not *de facto* but "intentional." That is, while demographic trends suggest the increasing racial/ethnic diversity of the "vital metropolitan setting" in which we find ourselves, Augsburg's embrace of diversity is not merely a reflection of our changing urban environment. Along these lines, neither does "intentionally diverse campus community" mean simply that we intend to beat out our competitors in chasing this particular growing market niche.

While valuing diversity may be essential for our survival, we are not valuing diversity simply or

primarily for survival

reasons. Second, one of the

college mottoes, "through

truth to freedom,"

highlights the importance of

truth as a core aspect of

liberal arts education. While

the various perspectives of

Augsburg's general

education curriculum aim to

provide students with diverse ways of seeing, these ways of seeing themselves are enhanced by the variety of people who adopt them and with whom students "see"—with whom they study and learn. Diversity in our community of learning thus contributes to our ability to learn and to seek the truth. Third, commitments to social justice, whether growing out of the radical example of Jesus and the inclusiveness of the Christian gospel or springing from other religions or moral and political philosophies, insist that we value all people. So the goal of serving the whole world demands our understanding of the full variety of who we are as

Why Value Diversity?

Not simply as a feature of our "vital metropolitan setting,"

nor to beat out our competitors in chasing this particular growing market niche, but in the service of our search for truth and through it our goal of freedom—

because the various perspectives of Augsburg's general education curriculum are enhanced by the variety of people who adopt them and with whom students see,

because commitments to social justice insist that we value all people, and

because affirming diversity and community simply acknowledges the complex beauty and reality of the world as we are coming to know it.

servants and people in need. Fourth, variety and community are (at least metaphorically in the latter case) present in nature; in this sense, affirming diversity and community is simply acknowledging the complex beauty and reality of the world as we are coming to know it.

Commitment, likewise, is an essential component of a community whose goal is education for service. In our vision, commitment entails a complex understanding of our values. Thus even as we at Augsburg value diversity, we do so not simply for its own sake or in isolation, but rather in the context of other values to which we are committed. In terms of the educational development of college students, we do not want students, staff, and faculty simply to stop at the Perry scheme's "multiplicity" stage, where we realize that others are different from us in terms of race, sexual orientation, faith, economic position, rural/urban/suburban background, academic interests, political opinions, and so on.¹⁷ Instead, we want students, staff, and faculty to be able to understand the ways in which such factors guide who we are and how we think, what values we hold and what criteria and practices shape the ways we talk about them (Perry's "relativism" stage). We want students, faculty, and staff to recognize that we all agree to live and work within the rules and expectations of different communities—e.g., scholarly disciplines, neighborhoods, institutional work cultures, and faith communities—and that even with uncertainty about some of our decisions, we will make commitments (Perry's "commitment" stage)—either short term (e.g., to a particular career or place of employment) or lifelong (e.g., to a spouse or partner). Diversity, in other words, need not mean relinquishing the particular commitments and home communities that continue to shape who we are. Instead, diversity can be the foundation for an expectation that we, as an ever-changing community at Augsburg, will develop or agree to common

¹⁷William Graves Perry, Jr., *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years: A Scheme* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970).

expectations for who we will be as a community—one of whose chief values will be to hear, understand, and learn from the interests, perspectives, and experiences of those who differ from us, both as groups and as individuals.

To understand some of the ramifications of the combination of both diversity and commitment as essential for our future vision, consider the following scenario. In their continuum on becoming an anti-racist multicultural institution, Crossroads ministry contrasts an exclusive segregated institution (phase 1) with an inclusive transformed institution (phase 6), which they describe in this way:

Anti-racist multicultural diversity is an institutionalized asset. Institution's life reflects full participation and shared power with diverse racial, cultural and economic groups in determining its mission, structure, constituency, policies and practices. Full participation in decisions that shape the institution, and inclusion of diverse cultures, lifestyles and interests. A sense of community and mutual caring. Commitment to continue to dismantle racism within institution and broader community. Allies with others in combating social oppression.¹⁸

In order for Augsburg to adopt such a notion of a transformed institution as part of our vision, we need to be clear about what we would be saying. There may be some aspects of what Augsburg is that we cannot allow even so noble a goal to compromise—those being the other elements of our current mission statement: liberal arts, faith and values of the Christian Church, and vital metropolitan setting, with a goal of service to the world. We might agree that the broad-based group envisioned in this phase-six transformed institution should deliberate together to give flesh to these components and commitments of the college's mission, but we may not want to recommend, at this point, that Augsburg should throw its mission open to whatever such a group, so constituted, would recommend. In other words, **diversity should help to shape and refine our institutional commitments, but it**

¹⁸Crossroads Ministry, "Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Institution," no publisher or date.

should not be the only commitment or the sole or primary defining agent of those commitments.

A careful combination of commitment and diversity allows Augsburg to be a distinctive community with a clear focus that is welcoming to a variety of people. It allows for specificity without prescribing uniformity. For example, with careful attention to nurturing spiritual life on campus and to how we tell the Augsburg story, Augsburg can embrace its Lutheran heritage, even some of the Lutheran Free Church traditions that gave it birth, while also maintaining its status

How We Value Diversity

- Understanding the ways in which differences shape our thoughts, values, and commitments
- Shaping expectations for community in relation to other values of our mission
- Understanding and learning from those who differ from us
- Holding institutional commitments without prescribing uniformity of individual values
- Expecting civil behavior, engaging in moral deliberation, and educating ourselves and one another without legislating attitudes

as a college of the ELCA and being a home for faculty, staff, students, and alumni from non-Lutheran denominations or religious faiths other than Christianity. Similarly, just as institutional

commitments should not prescribe individual faith commitments of the students we recruit or the faculty and staff we hire (no one should insist that employees be Lutheran or Christian), so Augsburg can and should support civil rights and job-related benefits for our lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender employees (as our existing non-discrimination clause suggests) and fight the homophobia and heterosexism that many of our employees and students experience, without insisting that each person in our community must affirm what some may still view as morally unacceptable behavior.¹⁹ As a community we must expect civil behavior even as

¹⁹In "What Was That You Called Me?" *Daughters of Sarah* (May/June 1988), p. 16, Virginia Ramey Mollenkott observes that "heterosexism is a pervasive social system, a set of attitudes that are so widespread that they seem to be a necessary and

we engage in difficult religious and moral deliberation, educating ourselves and one another, but we can neither legislate attitudes nor prescribe a set of moral or religious values.

C. Recommendations

In order to work towards this vision of an Augsburg community that values diversity and commitment as essentials of education for service, we offer the following recommendations, organized into four areas: defining, initiating, educating, and serving. These four areas follow the path of an Augsburg student or employee from her or his first awareness of the college through its reputation and marketing materials to joining the campus community, engaging in the "soul-shaping" process of the educational endeavor, and adopting the college's vision of education for service. We expect that each recommendation may involve several steps; in certain cases the commission has suggested some possible early steps. Ultimately, however, specific initiatives will have to arise from the campus community itself.

DEFINING

Defining refers to the ways that Augsburg intentionally shapes its reputation in the world through the work that we do, the comments of tour guides, what our alumni say and what their employers think about Augsburg, and through the marketing materials used both on and off campus to describe who we are. Through the process of preparing and deliberating the commission reports and adapting

universal aspect of reality," according to which "people must be heterosexual—or at least *appear* to be so—in order to deserve first-class citizenship." Fighting against heterosexism does not mean excluding those who hold heterosexist attitudes anymore than we exclude racists or sexists from our community, rather it involves education, maintaining a safe atmosphere for dialogue, expecting civil behavior, replacing misinformation with information, and combatting myths and stereotypes.

them to develop a unified vision for our future, we expect that Augsburg will reaffirm its commitment to being and becoming "an intentionally diverse campus

Defining

- clarify and reaffirm our commitment to being "an intentionally diverse campus community"
- walk the diversity talk

community." As part of this renewed commitment, we will need to clarify our understanding of this phrase in the mission statement so that key leadership, including board members, administrators, faculty, many

staff and students—particularly tour guides—are able to articulate and affirm its significance and its relation to other aspects of the mission.

Our board of regents has a key role, not only as advisors and fund-raisers, but as decision-makers, ensuring that resources are allocated in a manner consistent with Augsburg's vision. This obviously requires a board that understands and reflects the vision of the college it wants to lead. **If diversity is a reality of our life and if intentional diversity is essential to our mission, then our board must be prepared to direct the development of the institution in our diversity efforts. To provide such direction, the board itself must become more diverse and its "buy-in" to the concept of Augsburg as "an intentionally diverse campus community" must be obvious in its decision-making.**

As part of defining and describing our commitment to an "intentionally diverse campus community," we will also need to describe our understanding of this mission phrase in formal documents and in orientation programs for new faculty, staff, and students. Individuals at Augsburg and the community as a whole should exemplify the ability to integrate other particular commitments with the institutional value of diversity. Augsburg's reputation in various communities should be that we walk the diversity talk.

To walk our talk within and outside our community demands critical internal changes on the part of each individual and careful examination of our educational enterprise to ensure that it not only allows students to sample various perspectives and apprentices them in particular disciplinary skills and worldview but teaches them to question, to explore, to be involved in decision-making and, where appropriate, boldly to challenge the status quo. These internal changes also manifest themselves in a highly collaborative, team-driven management style which invites input on all aspects of employer-employee relations. In such a management paradigm, cooperation is the defining profile rather than control or competition. Rankings and hierarchical titles become secondary to each person being committed to the common good as stated in our mission statement. Augsburg thus identifies and models the ways in which we would like our graduates to function as they encounter the diverse local communities and global contexts in which they live and work.

INITIATING

At the same time as we are engaged in the process of defining and describing ourselves by articulating the kind of community Augsburg would like to be and the interrelationships among diversity and the other components of our mission, Augsburg will also be inviting new students, staff, and faculty to join our educational endeavor and initiating them into our community.

Historically, the word "initiate" implied the changes one made when moving from childhood to adulthood. As an adult, one assumed the responsibility for all members of the community because survival meant cooperative strategies for achieving the common good. In our more contemporary setting, cooperative measures invite us to engage courageously and honestly in difficult conversations

about expectations and standards.²⁰ Then, without compromising standards—including a commitment not merely to feel comfortable with and to support the

Initiating

- hold difficult conversations about standards.
- seek variety in our applicant pools for all positions.
- select students with varied backgrounds who will embrace and eventually embody Augsburg's mission.
- facilitate a smooth transition to learning and working at the college, initiating newcomers into the expectations, values, and commitments of our community, and expecting them to enhance the mission of the college.
- provide training that promotes respectful dialogue and that contributes to the dismantling of systems of oppression.
- maintain positive climate for living and learning.

mission of the college, but to articulate and advance it—we would seek variety in our applicant pools for all positions. Similarly, within our standards and without regard for financial need, we would select our incoming student cohorts to include students with varied backgrounds, abilities,

interests, and potential vocational goals who will embrace and eventually embody Augsburg's mission.

Selecting our student body in this way means informing and asking prospective students—including those in the WEC program—about the college's mission and its centrality to the educational experience at Augsburg. We would support all of the faculty and staff we hire and all of the students we admit, helping them make a smooth transition to learning and working at the college, initiating them into the expectations, values, and commitments of our community, connecting them with opportunities where they may learn, develop, and serve within the Augsburg community and beyond it, and expecting them to enhance the mission of

²⁰The term "standards" is difficult for our commission because we too often hear colleagues presume, without citing any supporting evidence, that increasing the diversity of our student body or of our faculty and staff means lowering our standards. We do not see diversity and quality as competing goals.

the college. In particular, Augsburg would provide training to both current and new members of our community that promotes respectful dialogue and interactions, that facilitates listening across differences, and that contributes to the dismantling of systems of oppression.

Finally, the climate for living and learning in our classrooms, residence halls, offices, and other campus facilities would affirm and respect the differences in who we are as learners and peers and the contributions each of us brings to the common efforts of learning a subject, playing a sport, creating community in a living space, working together, and/or engaging in other co-curricular activities.

EDUCATING

While retaining its foundation "in the liberal arts and [its heritage] shaped by the faith and values of the Christian Church," Augsburg would regularly examine our curricular assumptions and structures and transform these to incorporate multiple worldviews and to teach students, staff, and faculty to discern our individual and communal commitments among these. Our pedagogical styles and methodologies would attend to the diverse points of view, learning styles, backgrounds, and motivations of students who may be reflecting worldviews perhaps far different from that of the instructor. Faculty and staff development programs would provide ongoing support for these efforts.

Even in the charged atmosphere of the debate over Eurocentrism and multiculturalism, Augsburg has begun taking up the challenge of broadening its students' horizons, as well as their sense of the past. Our general education program exposes students to the Western traditions that they often live or encounter but do not recognize as such, even as it includes exploration of non-Western cultures both in our midst and around the world. Ideally, in its emphasis on both instruction in and "critique" of a discipline or perspective, our general education program

encourages questioning—even of fundamental assumptions. This is a first step in organizing a curriculum that can “help students develop cross-cultural competency, which consists of the abilities, attitudes, and understandings students need to function effectively within the American national culture, within their own ethnic subsocieties, and within and across different ethnic subsocieties and cultures.”²¹ Through experiences in and out of the classroom, students, faculty, and staff can enhance “cross-cultural competency” and skills in building and sustaining community as we embody and promote the freedom to speak and freely exchange expertise and ideas, as well as the willingness to take positions and constructively critique them as part of deliberative dialogue.

The seamless movement of teaching and learning is underscored when connections are made for students inside and outside the classroom. Campuswide activities are a vehicle for creating a supportive climate, and peer relationships are essential to the learning process. First year programs can pay particular attention to the differing factors that enable all students to feel at home. Networks of informal and formal activities support constructive interaction among students. These activities are authentic expressions of the students’ varied cultural backgrounds and everyday experiences, reflective of their interests with unique, ethnic variations on the theme of community. For example, informal approaches could include performances by visiting artists, rap sessions in the dorms, cultural evenings or festivals and visits by community leaders. Formal approaches could include visits by these same community leaders in the classrooms who could lead either seminars or forums, highlighting the tensions and difficulties related to incorporating differences into one’s daily life practices.

²¹James A. Banks, *Teaching Strategies for Ethnic Studies*, 5th ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1991), 5.

"Teaching in the multicultural classroom is more than getting non-English names straight, using small groups, and adding a few women authors or non-Western texts to the syllabus. Good teaching has always had a single goal, student learning."²² Student learning is achieved in an inclusive classroom—an emphasis which has significant implications for changing the way courses are designed and taught. It challenges pedagogy without context—separated from experience; it requires institutional and personal transformations because inclusiveness challenges the structure of disciplines as well as the classroom. No longer can classrooms be homogeneous, with learning environments defined exclusively by competitive, writing-intensive, analytical rules.

In the many areas where our pedagogy has been moving and will move from a style in which content mastery is often understood to mean "mastery of the professor's interpretation of content" to engagement and interaction, students will

not be passive receptors of information but involved as decision-makers in their learning and supported in the search for the relevancy of information to their lives. More and more context will be incorporated as real world experiences are related to theoretical

Educating

- examine curricular assumptions and transform these to incorporate multiple worldviews.
- develop "cross-cultural competency" and skills in building and sustaining community.
- promote constructive critique and deliberative dialogue.
- value pedagogies of engagement that may include experiential education and service-learning.
- develop, maintain, and monitor flexible organizational structures and administrative practices that affirm anti-racist, multicultural diversity as an institutional asset and that guide dismantling of systemic discrimination.

frameworks. Experiential programs will be valued as viable alternatives to the

²²Laura Border and Nancy Van Note Chism, eds, *Teaching for Diversity* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992), 42.

classroom, and engagement within the classroom will be the norm. Service learning may well take center stage as Augsburg moves even further into the larger metropolitan community.

To support such an educational vision, Augsburg would develop, maintain, and monitor organizational structures and administrative practices that are flexible enough to value and incorporate differences. The administration, together with students, faculty, and staff, would carry out college operations in ways that foster community and affirm anti-racist, multicultural diversity as an institutional asset. To achieve this goal, the administration would guide Augsburg's commitment and efforts to dismantle racism, sexism, heterosexism, ageism and all forms of individual prejudice and systemic discrimination.

SERVING

This fourth area of vision includes ways that Augsburg as an institution serves its external communities as well as ways that we equip our graduates for service in communities beyond Augsburg; it names an attitude that overlaps and shapes the previous three areas. This area also reflects some of the tensions and unresolved questions about Augsburg's future.

Who are the communities Augsburg wants to serve? Are they primarily students from small town Minnesota who may still understand "community" and help to nourish it on campus at Augsburg? Are they urban neighborhoods with increasing numbers of African American, American Indian, Asian American, and Hispanic/Latino students? Are they people from both rural and urban areas who are part of what recent ethics seminar speaker Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer referred to as the "underclass"—people who may see a college education as their way out of poverty? Are they predominantly Christian, particularly students from the approximately 700 ELCA congregations that "own" Augsburg? What is our

commitment to serving students with physical and learning disabilities? We have a nationally acclaimed CLASS program, yet we sometimes seem reluctant to advertise it widely—perhaps not wanting to get too many of “those” students. Does our institutional financial picture and level of tuition-dependence prohibit us from being too selective in admissions so that we deserve the reputation we have among some high school students: “well . . . , you can always go to Augsburg”?²³

As Augsburg refines our focus and names our distinctiveness through dialogue about these commission papers, we recommend, in admission practices and design of college programs, consciously choosing access to education and providing needed services for those qualified for college education rather than narrowing our vision to cater primarily or exclusively to the highest ability students. Needed services would include maintaining excellent CLASS and Honors programs, strengthening American Indian, Hispanic/Latino, Pan-African, and Pan-Asian student services programs, welcoming and supporting gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students, providing adequate financial aid for able but needy students, and educating ourselves and all of our students about the value and challenges of the differences we bring to learning together and serving the world.

As an integral part of our educational enterprise and a distinguishing aspect of our mission and our urban location, we recommend nurturing commitments to service within diverse urban communities by faculty, staff, and students—perhaps even developing an expectation that everyone engage in such service. This could be done through community service-learning as well as faculty and staff development programs. It would also involve cultivating an understanding of vocation as, in Frederick Buechner’s words, “the place where your deep gladness and the world’s

²³Several faculty and staff have also mentioned encountering some students who were surprised they got in or worried they might not be able to survive.

deep hunger meet"²⁴ and encouraging students and employees to engage in such service.²⁵ Faculty likewise are encouraged to view and introduce their disciplines as offering perspectives and skills which can help us serve with and on behalf of others.

Combining our motto of "education for service" with our commitment to "an intentionally diverse campus community" also means continuing to work creatively and closely with urban neighborhoods and other constituent communities to identify learning projects of mutual benefit to the community and Augsburg. The Center for Global Education, the Institute for Youth and Family Ministry of Augsburg College, and the Richard Green Institute are examples of such creative

Serving

- identify the communities we choose to serve, affirming access.
- nurture commitments to service.
- identify and promote educational endeavors that serve communities.

thinking combining education with serving communities. Augsburg might consider strengthening our commitment to serving diverse communities by identifying a group of such Augsburg-

sponsored educational endeavors and expecting our students to participate in at least one of these programs as a graduation requirement. Faculty and staff could model the importance of this commitment to service by participating also in these programs. Such programs should provide our graduates with an understanding of some of their privileges and prejudices as well as strengthening their abilities to

²⁴Frederick Buechner, *Listening to Your Life* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992), 186.

²⁵This understanding of vocation means that not all employees will see their work at Augsburg as a vocation—for some it may simply be a job. Cultivating this service-minded understanding of vocation and providing educational benefits should allow some of these employees to prepare themselves for other jobs (perhaps not at Augsburg) in which they could have a sense of vocation as gladness in service.

work with others different from themselves as they join neighborhoods and professions that expect and require their abilities to serve and work with diverse communities. They will also provide opportunities for recognizing diversity as an asset and for enhancing creative thinking and leadership skills in addressing the many problems facing our urban centers and the global community.

1891

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been admitted to the membership of the Society since the last meeting. The names are given in alphabetical order of the surnames.