



OPENING OF THE YEAR REPORT

September 2007

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Welcome. What an exciting time this is for Augsburg College! More than 575 new undergraduate students are beginning in our day program, and we expect to welcome more than 350 new students in our adult undergraduate and graduate programs.

As we begin another academic year, **I am reminded of the promises we make to our students.** We promise to engage them in mission-based academic and social experiences that prepare them for meaningful work and service in the world. We promise to prepare them for intelligent understanding, full of curiosity and a commitment to dialogue. And we offer them remarkable opportunities for relevant experience, learning to apply what they have learned and lead others.

Augsburg College is blessed with remarkable faculty and staff who, along with our students, engage in the work necessary to keep these promises. **This is an amazing community filled with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and thoughts,** yet connected by the understanding that we are all:

- **Gifted**—a gift to us and the world, to be cared for, educated, and nurtured.
- **Called**—on a vocational path that our community helps us discern and navigate.
- **Accountable**—persons of responsibility and integrity.

During the last year, I have enjoyed the rich conversations we have shared about our hopes and aspirations for this great place. These conversations frequently bring me back to our common work and the promises we've made to each other. And there is evidence that we are keeping our promises—in our daily activities and collaborations. We experience it in our interactions with each other. It is apparent in our decision-making—how we use our space on campus, how we teach and learn together, and how we strengthen our relationships with each other and our neighborhood.

I am grateful that you have chosen Augsburg College as the place to study, teach, share your gifts, and serve. Let me bring you up to date on a few of the promises we're honoring to our students and to each other.

We are committed to shaping meaningful and memorable experiences for all.

Those of you who were here last year will notice some changes as you walk through the campus. Most noticeable is the beautiful new Oren Gateway Center. Please take time to visit this wonderful gateway to the city. Our new Nabo café and Barnes and Noble bookstore are great stops along the way! The Oren Center will be the source of many new experiences for our campus community this year and into the future as it gives our college a new front door on Riverside Avenue.

Augsburg inaugurated a new **Commencement schedule** in 2007 that reflects our diverse student population and different academic calendars. We will continue to celebrate the accomplishments of our students in the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies

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program and students in the undergraduate day program at our May ceremony. The June ceremony will celebrate the accomplishments of students in the undergraduate Weekend College; Rochester; and United, Mercy, and Unity Hospitals programs, and our graduate students. Our 2007-08 commencement theme will honor the 25th anniversary of the Center for Global Education—"Global Learning." Look for more news about commencement speakers and honorary degree recipients in the next few months.

Our commitment to recognizing our diverse student populations also led to the scheduling of our Opening Convocations. Augsburg will hold an inaugural **Opening Convocation** for adult learners on September 8, the first Saturday of the fall trimester. This convocation will mirror the Opening Convocation that will be held for day students on September 4. This is a wonderfully celebratory welcome for our new students.

Augsburg has a rich tradition of and commitment to including chapel as part of its community life. Many of us will share 20 minutes together Monday–Friday mornings. Our Weekend College students and colleagues will have the same opportunity to experience a Sabbath community time every Saturday that Weekend College classes are scheduled. And in order to meet the continuing needs of a college that is diverse, engaged, and growing, our campus ministry staff has expanded. We look forward to introducing these new staff members to you in the days ahead.

We will continue to address and improve accessibility issues on campus.

The **Christensen Center elevator** project is completed! The old elevator, as many of you know, did not provide the service that our community or guests deserve. The updated elevator has new hydraulic mechanicals and state-of-the-art electronic controls, along with a new interior cab that has been completely refurbished, including the addition of ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) railings and flooring. So what does this mean for you? The elevator is faster, more accessible, cleaner, and reliable!

Last year we **increased the hours** that the library and the workout center are open and available to students. Enrollment Management is responding to the needs of students by extending their hours on Tuesdays. The new Oren Center will have longer bookstore and café hours.

The **Public Safety Department** is continuing to implement recommendations from the Public Safety Task Force. We are increasing the public safety presence on campus with the purchase of a second vehicle and the addition of a full-time dispatch position. Additionally, we are adding cameras to the music building and setting up a card access system to the Oren Gateway Center, Kennedy Center, and Memorial Hall.

We have heard the concerns about the difficulty in crossing 23rd Avenue in a wheelchair. To provide safer passageway across this street in front of Melby Hall, a crosswalk has been painted that aligns with the ADA-compliant curb already in place.

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We also will be redoing the **elevator buttons in our older buildings**, granting easier access for our students with disabilities.

We are enhancing our commitment to excellence in teaching and learning for all our students.

A major investment in classrooms will be evident when classes begin. In addition to 10 beautiful new classrooms in Kennedy Center and Oren Gateway Center, 16 classrooms have been completely refurbished this summer. This investment in teaching and learning space means that you will find furniture that is flexible and comfortable, standardized technology, and more pleasing overall room aesthetics (carpet and paint). A better teaching and learning environment!

The Lindell Library and IT staff are collaborating on an exciting reconfiguration of their services for students. A new **Learning Commons** concept will merge the traditional reference desk with technology help and expanded computing on the main floor of Lindell, providing for students the ultimate place for their academic work. This initiative will create one point of service for both research and basic technology assistance, double the number of computers, ample space for groups to comfortably collaborate, and a student multimedia lab for creation of digital sound and video projects. Although some improvements are already in place, the finished Learning Commons will officially open in time for spring semester.

Augsburg for Adults is the new name for the College's adult programs. We are searching for a director for Augsburg for Adults who will work with faculty and staff to identify new markets, e-learning initiatives, retention strategies, and continuous improvement opportunities. Our attention to Augsburg's adult programs will enhance our ability to better serve our non-traditional learners.

The Kennedy and Oren Gateway Center buildings create new demands for our **information technology** capacity, triggering major upgrades to our campus network and telecommunications switch. In mid-July, we went live with a new telephone system utilizing Voice-Over-IP (VOIP), a new technology that uses the campus computer network to deliver phone traffic. This convergence of telephone and computer is an important industry trend that, for Augsburg, will lower the cost of future campus expansion and open new possibilities for call center initiatives that can improve our service in critical administrative areas.

We will continue to create new spaces on campus that offer new ways to connect with each other.

The Oren Gateway Center serves as a wonderful gateway with our community—inviting our neighbors in and sending our campus out. The OGC lobby and adjacent Johnson Center conference rooms will be completed in time for our **October 12 celebration and**

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dedication. This beautiful new building offers classrooms, conference rooms that will better support our teaching and learning initiatives, and student living space that is alcohol free. It also will serve as the primary classroom space for weekend Sunday classes.

Our new **Barnes and Noble @ Augsburg College** bookstore presents a well-lit, visitor-friendly environment. In addition to more retail space, it provides space for children's reading times, an area for Fair Trade goods, and offers through its window mural a reminder of the rich legacy we carry on. It is a great example of how we live out our commitments to education and community. Enjoy the new outdoor seating on the Oren plaza as well (while you still can!).

Our new campus restaurant, **Nabo: A Neighborhood Café**, is just that! Created with our students and campus in mind, it is also a place for our neighborhood to eat, socialize, and relax. (Nabo—pronounced “náh-bu”—is the Norwegian word for neighbor.) It offers Peace Coffee, healthier food, and extended hours that serve our campus and community seven days a week. The neighborhood commitment is not just a part of the café's name; the bread comes from Franklin Street Bakery, an establishment that is an important part of our Seward community.

The **Christensen Center Task Force** continues its good work on creating a student space that supports student, faculty, and staff interaction while providing a sense of welcome and serving as “home” for our commuter students. Meetings with the architects began last March as a follow-up to input the committee received from an online survey last December. Several priorities rose to the top: accessibility, flexibility, security, technology, aesthetics, acoustics, and staffing. The vacated bookstore space will become a temporary student lounge later this year. Watch for more information this fall!

As a community, we are shaped and strengthened by the relationships that exist within it.

Daily chapel is a central part of our community life as we gather together to worship and build community. Our commitment to a daily chapel service is grounded in our mission as a college of the Lutheran Church, which illustrates our belief in the deep links between faith and learning. This is Sabbath time for our community, and whether or not you choose to attend the chapel service, we will continue the College's policy of closing offices during the chapel time. **We ask all offices to honor this commitment.** (Chapel postings are available from Amanda Peterson in the president's office.)

Last year through **Project Table Talk**, more than 10,000 meals were enjoyed by staff and faculty who gathered daily at lunchtime or dinnertime to enjoy a subsidized meal with other faculty, staff, and students. We will continue this opportunity to come together for informal table fellowship this year; the College will subsidize the normal lunch and dinner prices so that faculty and staff pay only \$3 for lunch or \$6 for dinner.

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Our **Wednesday Gatherings** will continue on the first Wednesday of the month between 11:00–1:30 in the East Commons. This free lunch for staff and faculty—soup, salad, and dessert—supports our commitment to building community and practicing our common work. Those who work in the evenings will enjoy the same opportunity to take a break from work and share a free meal together. Find someone new to eat with—get to know each other, exchange ideas, and collaborate.

Our monthly **community time** will continue on the last Tuesday of the month. This year our social time will begin at 3:45 to accommodate faculty who are teaching until 3:40. A short discussion on critical issues at 4:00 will support our campus communication loop, and we'll continue socializing after that!

We believe we are called to serve our neighbor.

An important part of the College's mission, tradition, and legacy is our commitment to serving others. Last year our college community donated 4,000+ pounds of food to the **Brian Coyle Community Center**. We will continue this practice this year at special events, asking you to bring foodstuffs to honor our commitment to our neighbors in Cedar-Riverside.

Campus Kitchen at Augsburg College is becoming a signature example of our commitment to serving our neighbors. I encourage you to join me and many of your student, faculty, and staff colleagues in volunteering for this project. Shifts are available during the afternoons and evenings. Check out the website at www.augsburg.edu/campuskitchen for more information.

Watch for opportunities to be included in **neighborhood planning for Cedar-Riverside**. We are a college in the city, and with that comes a responsibility to be good partners and stewards. Augsburg College has listened to concerns of our friends and neighbors, and we are leading the way in creating a planning process that will help create an even more vibrant and healthier neighborhood.

We begin this new academic year grateful for all we have, full of hope for all that is to come, and deeply aware of the promises we make and keep. I look forward to an exciting year ahead of working, learning and serving with you.