

**2021 Report of Presbytery's Nominee
to the Board of Corporators
of Geneva College**

Dear brothers:

I am reporting to you again as your nominee to Synod to serve on the Board of Corporators of Geneva College. I currently serve as the Board's Secretary and, consequently, upon the Executive Committee of the Board. I continue to serve with two other Corporators from our Presbytery, elected by Synod: Dr. Kenneth de Jong of our Bloomington congregation and Session, and Mr. Scott Reynolds, also of our Bloomington congregation. Dr. de Jong also serves as a Trustee. The current Chair of the Corporators' Board of Trustees is Mr. Joel Silverman of our Southside congregation.

As always, I'll repeat a paragraph that I place in every year's report, because some delegates to Presbytery may not be familiar with the governance of Geneva College. To refresh you, the Board of Corporators has twelve members, all elected by Synod. Each of the North American Presbyteries have nominees to Synod, with Synod's Nominating Committee nominating the others. All must be members in good standing in the RPCNA. We each serve four-year terms. The Corporators are the legal owners of the College. They are the members of the Corporation chartered by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Corporators' main tasks, under the Bylaws it originates, are to govern the College through a Board of Trustees it has created and whose members it elects, to elect a President of the College, to steward the Bylaws, and maintain a strong connection to the Synod of the RPCNA. The Board does its governing through the Trustees, who operate the College on the Corporators' behalf. Half of the Corporators serve as Trustees, as well, thus maintaining useful liaison between the Boards and allowing Synod, in effect, to have direct placement of some Trustees. Dr. de Jong is an example of this.

Most of the remainder of this report was written by Mr. David Schaefer, Alleghenies Presbytery's nominee to the Board, with his permission. I was unable to attend the latest meeting of the Board due to my wife's surgical recovery.

COVID has been the primary driver for much of the activities of the College in the past year. During the Spring semester, the Governor of Pennsylvania declared a mandatory closure of all college and university campuses. Geneva complied with that order, transitioning rapidly to an online learning format to complete the semester, but was severely financially impacted by our decision to return the remainder of the semester's room and board fees to the residential students.

The College received relief at the end of the school year due to the passage of the Federal CARES Act and was able to obtain a refundable loan under that act which substantially offset the financial impact of closing residential services in the middle of the semester. However, we were left with a large unknown: What would the impact of COVID-19 be on the coming year? Would students enroll at all? Would athletic programs continue? What physical changes would be required on campus to reduce the possible spread of the disease? How would the College address things like quarantine requirements for those potentially exposed? What would the financial impact be of another mandatory closure?

With of these considerations in mind, the College planned a budget for the 2020-2021 year which included salary reductions, deficit spending, accelerated fundraising, benefit reductions and several additional contingency plans given the uncertainty in the coming months. In addition, a weekly prayer program was started with Faculty, Staff, students, parents, and alumni, providing direction around a shared message and critical issues, and commending a weekly day of fasting for those who were willing and able to participate.

The Lord has blessed. Although we are only partway through the Fall semester, enrollment was significantly above our conservative projections, which has allowed the college to avoid the proposed salary reductions. The student body has been extremely cooperative with the safety precautions put in place, and currently there is only one documented case of COVID infection in the campus community. That number has gone up and down throughout the semester, at times requiring the president to vacate his home so that it could be used for quarantine containment for potentially exposed students. However, there has not been any large-scale infection, and the precautions being taken have had good effect. The campus has responded well to the transition of the Chapel program to online delivery, and attendance has been full and regular. The Governor has announced that in the event of a larger infection rate in the state, his direction for colleges and universities will be to “shelter in place”, rather than sending students away from the campus, where they could be carriers of the disease.

On another note, we were greatly saddened by the loss of Phil Duguid in the early fall. Phil has been a member of the Board of Corporators and a Trustee of the college for many years, and his love of the College and his wisdom have been greatly appreciated. He will be a difficult member to replace on both Boards.

The establishment of the Geneva College Foundation is complete, and the foundation directors will now assume a large part of the responsibility for fund raising efforts on behalf of the College. Pray that this will be a good opportunity for those who have close relationships with the College but are not willing or able to serve on one of the Boards to be actively engaged with the College’s ministry.

Pray that the Lord will be pleased to sustain the work of the College through these challenging times. The College is working to develop our strategic vision for the next several years, which is a real challenge as current events are causing the landscape of Higher Education to shift radically. Thank you all for your continued support of Geneva College as a ministry of this denomination.

ynod just reelected me to this Board three years ago, so that I am three quarters through this latest term. I have served our Presbytery, our Synod, and our College this way since 1998, and I thank Presbytery for its previous and current nominations. I am beginning prayerfully to consider whether to continue to accept nomination to the Board, or to allow another man to take my place.

To remind you, the website for the College is at www.geneva.edu. Much information is there on all sorts of matters pertaining to the College.

I again thank you for your confidence in me. I continue blessed in serving you in this way.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip H. Pockras