

**2023 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 stepped down from serving as the Board's Secretary and, consequently, upon the Executive Committee of the Board. Replacing me in these positions is the Rev. Matt Filbert of the First RPC of Beaver Falls. 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. Both men also serve as Trustees. The current Chair of the Corporators' Board of Trustees is Mr. Joel Silverman of our Southside congregation. Dr. de Jong is the Vice Chair.

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.

Since the last stated meeting of Presbytery, the Board of Corporators has met twice. The first was at the Wyndham Conference Center near the Indianapolis airport on Saturday, 24 June, 2022 at 2:22 PM, the day after Synod. The second was on Saturday, 11 February, 2023 at the Presidents' Dining Room in Alexander Hall on the College Campus. I was unable to attend the June meeting, as had happened the previous year, due to Presbytery deciding to meet in Marion on that day at the same time.

There continues to be concern about enrollment. Since Geneva has a relatively small endowment, its finances are heavily tuition-dependent. The birthrate is going down all over the country, including the main area from which prospective Geneva College students come, and there is a seeming cultural change in seeing the desirability of higher education. Nonetheless, due to prayer and fine work from the Admissions department, we are thankful that the incoming classes have been growing in size slightly over the past two years. I should further note that the growth in freshman enrollment is better than the majority of both Christian and secular private schools are experiencing and

that it aligns with a strategic enrollment plan, part of the larger strategic plan that the Board of Trustees has approved.

One member of our Presbytery raised a concern with me about Geneva's "Justice Week" from 6 to 11 February of this year. Concerns included perceptions that there seemed to be "new age" influence, as well as social justice stands. President Troup noted that the College is much like an old house – one fixes a problem only to have new ones appear that were not even suspected. He assured us that he would be seeking better ways to address student concerns.

There are several other matters that the Board learned about, or learned further. Racial reconciliation initiatives with alumni seem to be changing attitudes. This is an appropriate set of actions to pursue, seeing Geneva's history in these matters, brought out strongly in Ray Wilcox' and Bob Copeland's fairly newly published work, *A Candle against the Dark*. In Bible Department matters, the funding for preparing Rut Etheridge for work as a professor has come through, and he is nearly done with his doctoral studies at Westminster. There will soon be several retirements in that department. We, as a Presbytery, need to be praying for God to raise up men for this vital mission of our church. Relevant to this is the ongoing chapel situation. It continues to go well. Sermons are now about 20 minutes and a testimony time is included. Both are appreciated by the students. Further, a Sabbath evening prayer and praise time has become popular. It is at 9 PM so as not to compete with local church evening services.

Many of you may have heard about the valuable property along the banks of the Beaver River, partly contiguous with College property, that has been donated to Geneva. There seems to be much optimism about the new property's usefulness to the College's mission.

Capital campaigns continue to do well, but the finances of the College continue to be a concern, mainly due to the aforementioned enrollment situation. However, there is no long-term debt. Giving is strong to the annual fund, and the campaign is progressing well.

Finally, in the June meeting, the Board elected Trustees. This recent meeting took time to discuss possible candidates for new members of both Trustees and Corporators, as well as incumbents whose terms are about to expire – like me.

The new Strategic Plan is guiding the College well. There are many professedly Christian colleges and universities that claim to integrate faith with their academic disciplines and campus life, but few truly do. Most, at best, have Christianity in conjunction with academia. Geneva seeks better and better actually to integrate.

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.

Synod reelected me to this Board four years ago, so that I am nearly done with 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 again thank you for your confidence in me. I continue blessed in serving you in this way.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip H. Pockras