**2025 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 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. Dr. Richard Holdeman currently serves on the Trustees, as well. The current Chair of the Corporators’ Board of Trustees is Mr. Joel Silverman of our Southside congregation. Dr. de Jong serves as the Chair of the Academic Affairs committee of the Trustees.

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, maintaining liaison between the Boards and allowing Synod, in effect, to have direct placement of some Trustees. Dr. de Jong and Mr. Reynolds are examples.

To remind you, the website for the College is at [www.geneva.edu](http://www.geneva.edu). Much information is at that site on all sorts of matters pertaining to the College.

Previously, there was great concern about enrollments, which had, as in many institutions of higher learning around the country, been in decline for several years; however, the incoming class in fall of 2024 is nearly 100 students larger than the previous two classes, and this trend is continuing in projections for the class in fall of 2025. In addition, retention rates have been strong, which bodes well for the college. As with most institutions of higher education, Geneva’s finances are heavily tuition-dependent. The enrollment challenge is due in part to the birthrate going down all over the country, including the main regions from which prospective Geneva College students come, partly because there is a seeming cultural change in seeing the desirability of higher education, and partly because of a strong tendency towards homogenization of students who are increasingly targeting large state universities. Nonetheless, due to prayer and fine work from the college’s admissions department, we are thankful that the current freshman class and the new incoming class for next year have grown so much. Further, the growth in freshman enrollment is much better than the majority of both Christian and secular private schools are experiencing. As in any situation of this sort, a sudden surge in enrollment brings on “growing pains”, but these are being worked through as they appear.

In Bible Department matters, the funding for preparing Rutledge Etheridge for work as a professor has come through, and he is nearly done with his doctoral studies at Westminster. The College secured the Rev. Zach Kail to be the new head of the Bible Department. He has formerly been the minister of the Broomall congregation near Philadelphia, and more recently, a minister in the Greek Evangelical Church of Cyprus. We, as a Presbytery, need to continue praying for God to raise up men for this vital mission of our church. Relevant to this is the ongoing chapel program. It continues to go well. Sermons are now about 20 minutes and a testimony time is included each week. 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.

There are other faculty and staff positions open at the College that you can find at geneva.edu/employment. Please pray for God’s provision of these needed people.

Many of you may have heard about the valuable property along the banks of the Beaver River, contiguous with College property, that has been donated to Geneva. As the property includes a very large and almost new facility, amenable to many different uses, there is much optimism about the new property’s usefulness to the College’s mission.

Capital campaigns continue to do well, supporting the construction of a new facility to be used for supporting enrollment and admissions, as well as outreach to schools and churches with the concepts of Biblical education. The finances of the College are not dependent on the campaign, mainly due to the aforementioned enrollment situation, but the campaign is allowing for capital improvements on campus, as well as supporting initiatives in developing the college’s focus on the integration of the Biblical faith into all areas of life, as well as increasing the strength of the endowment. In addition, there is no long-term debt, as long-term notes have been paid off several years ago. Giving is strong to the annual fund, and the campaign is progressing well.

One new development, announced to apply to students beginning this academic year, was the “Geneva Tuition Promise”. The College launched the Geneva Tuition Promise: a continued commitment to the affordability and accessibility of quality independent Christian higher education. The Geneva Tuition Promise is a future commitment to students, beginning with the incoming freshman class of 2024, that all eligible Pennsylvania students from families with income less than $70,000 annually will pay no undergraduate tuition at Geneva College. Specific details and eligibility requirements can be found on the [Geneva Tuition Promise page](https://www.geneva.edu/promise). There is need for prayer for this initiative, as much depends on a prompt publishing of the new FAFSA forms. Without their publication by the federal government, this program cannot be implemented. The sooner that the new forms can be available, the sooner the risk of losing students to Grove City or to Hillsdale is reduced.

Another development mentioned last year is the Center for Faith and Life. You can learn further about it at <https://www.geneva.edu/cfl/>. To quote College Provost Dr. Melinda Stephens, “The Center for Faith and Life will allow us to strengthen and share the work that has long been a foundation of our academic program to prepare our students for vocations that honor God and neighbor." 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 a Biblical foundation to all the areas of teaching and scholarship, which makes it more and more unusual in the current mix of colleges and universities. The College is seeking special relationships with Christian schools that will benefit both these high school students as they seek a college or university education, and our college as well.

The new Welcome Center, sited near the front entrance to the College, has had groundbreaking and is proceeding. There were concerns about building according to original plans, since prices for labor and materials had jumped with inflation. With improved finances, work is now proceeding.

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.

Synod reelected me to this Board two years ago, from your nomination, so that I have nearly three years left in this latest term. I have served our Presbytery, our Synod, and our College this way since 1998, and I thank Presbytery for its nominations. I again thank you for your confidence in me. I continue blessed in serving you in this way.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip H. Pockras with help from Kenneth de Jong