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#### **STAFF**

Bernard “Chris” Dorsey, President

Luke Soderstrom, Development Coordinator and Assistant to the President

Toni Reynolds, Leadership Fellows Program Coordinator

Jonathan Barnes, Director for Higher Education and Communications

Lisa Hubbard, Ministry Associate

### **HIGHER EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP MINISTRIES REPORT TO THE GENERAL BOARD OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**

#### **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

***Higher Education and Leadership Ministries works with wider church and higher education partners to develop and nurture Christian leaders who are transforming church, society and world.***

Higher Education and Leadership Ministries continues to promote Disciples higher education institutions and provide cutting edge leadership development programming throughout the church. This is accomplished most effectively by working closely with Disciples colleges, universities, theological institutions, congregations, regions, and general ministries of the church.

## Colleges and Universities

HELM has continued to work closely with the leadership of Disciples Colleges and Universities to strengthen the relationship between Disciples schools and the church. Here are a few highlights:

- Enrollment remains fairly strong, but the pandemic has led to uncertainty and challenges. Recruitment efforts continue, but students are faced with making decisions based on a number of shifting realities.
- Several schools had new presidents begin their tenures this past year:
  - University of Lynchburg—Dr. Alison Morrison-Shetlar
  - Transylvania University—Dr. Brien Lewis
  - Culver-Stockton—Douglas B. Palmer
- HELM continues to hold info sessions at churches, regional assemblies, and racial ethnic constituency gatherings, to share information with high school students and with their parents. At the end of 2020, HELM updated the colleges and universities brochure to include Tougaloo College and to update the information for each of the other schools. HELM will begin distributing the new brochures in 2021
- The plans to hold a Higher Education summit was put on hold, due to covid travel restrictions. But there is still a desire to hold a future summit where representatives from all Disciples colleges and universities will be invited to Indianapolis to learn about the church; network with persons from other Disciples schools; and engage in conversations about how to strengthen the connections between the church and the schools.

## Theological Education

- The Council of Theological Education met virtually through zoom this year and have focused on supportive conversations around how to provide theological education during the pandemic, with flexible and dynamic learning environments.
- HELM leadership has been teaching courses at various Disciples theological institutions. Jon Barnes has taught at Brite Divinity School, Christian Theological Seminary, and Lexington Theological Seminary. Chris Dorsey has taught at Christian Theological Seminary and Lexington Theological Seminary.

## Leadership Programs

- In the fall, HELM's Leadership Fellows program welcomed 9 new students into the program and held the annual Leadership Fellows program for a total of 33 new and returning fellows. This year's retreat was held virtually via zoom. The focus on the retreat was learning more about the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
  - GMP Rev. Terri Hord Owens presented to the students and engaged in meaningful dialogue about the current state and the future of the church.

- Students also heard from Lee Hull Moses, Chief of Staff for OGMP, on the subject of generosity.
- Rev. Darnell Fennel, Director of Social Entrepreneurship for the National Benevolent Association, engaged the students on the work of NBA and opportunities for future involvement in creative and socially transformative ministry.

## **Grants and Scholarships**

- HELM distributed over \$140,000 in scholarships and grants to over 52 undergraduate and graduate students.
- One of the most significant changes in scholarship distribution this past year was the addition of the HELM Seminarian Grants. 14 Seminarians students received grants in 2020. These awards were made possible by funds distributed to HELM from the Christian Church Foundation and from congregations and individuals committed to preparing leaders for church and society.

## **CONCLUSION**

HELM continues to discern how best to meet the needs of the church, with respect to the established mission of its ministry.

With gratefulness to God and enthusiasm for continued commitment to ministry, HELM hereby submits this report to the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Yours in Christ,



Bernard "Chris" Dorsey

## **BOARD**

*(date indicates end of term)*

Lonora Graves (Chair), Northern California-Nevada, '22 Lay Person  
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## **Ex Officio**

Colleges and Universities  
Lester Newman, Hawkins, Texas

Theological Education  
Charisse Gillett, Lexington, Kentucky

Ministries in Higher Education  
Michelle Scott-Huffman, Springfield, Missouri

General Minister and President  
Teresa "Terri" Hord Owens, Indianapolis, Indiana

## **DISCIPLES AFFILIATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

Barton College  
200 ACC Dr, NW  
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Douglas N. Searcy, President  
[www.barton.edu](http://www.barton.edu)

Columbia College  
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Bethany College  
31 East Campus Drive  
Bethany, WV 26032  
(304) 829-7111  
Tamara Nichols Rodenberg, President  
[www.bethanywv.edu](http://www.bethanywv.edu)

Culver-Stockton College  
One College Hill  
Canton, MO 63435-1257  
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PR 7631 at Hwy 80 E,  
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[twitter.com/tcu](https://twitter.com/tcu)

Tougaloo College  
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Carmen J Walters, President  
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Transylvania University  
300 N Broadway  
Lexington, KY 40508-1797  
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John Williams, Interim President  
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University of Lynchburg  
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Lynchburg, VA 24501-3199  
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[facebook.com/lynchburgcollege](https://facebook.com/lynchburgcollege)

William Woods University  
One University Ave  
Fulton, MO 65251-1098  
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## SEMINARIES

Brite Divinity School  
Texas Christian University  
TCU Box 298130  
Fort Worth, TX 76129  
2925 Princeton St  
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[www.brite.edu](http://www.brite.edu)  
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Christian Theological Seminary  
1000 W 42nd St  
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Lexington Theological Seminary  
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[facebook.com/phillipsseminary](https://facebook.com/phillipsseminary)  
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## SEMINARY FOUNDATION HOUSES

Disciples Divinity House of the  
University of Chicago  
1156 E 57<sup>th</sup> St  
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Beth Patillo, Interim Dean  
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Disciples Seminary Foundation  
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Belva Brown Jordan, Interim President  
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## SEMINARY ASSOCIATES

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## SPECIALIZED INSTITUTIONS

Christian College of Georgia  
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[www.thedisciplescollege.org](http://www.thedisciplescollege.org)

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## HISTORICALLY RELATED COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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Earl F. Martin, President  
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